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ISLAMISM IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Assessing Ideology, Actors, and Objectives

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INTERNATIONAL LAW AND POLICY INSTITUTE – ILPI

Preface

The growth of Islamism in the Horn of Africa is a phenomenon capturing the attention of many actors with different interests in the region. The intention of this report is to go beyond the discourse on Islamism as interpreted from the perspective of the "war on terror" paradigm, in order to appreciate the complexities of the phenomenon. Nuances of local culture and traditions, political frameworks and international relations, historical trajectories and current realities play into and influence the development and appearances of Islamism in all its contexts.

International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI) is convinced that unbiased scholarly interpretation of empirical realities will best serve decision makers at various levels in their development of policies to tackle the growth of Islamism in the Horn of Africa. In such concern, we hope this report will serve as a relevant tool of knowledge to engage with this field of policy. Likewise, in the report we have identified specific areas of concern where the international community lack empirical based knowledge on the processes of Islamism in the Horn of Africa; we thus hope that resources can be put aside to fill these lacunas.

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Executive summary

Islamism has been present in the Horn of Africa for decades, and is currently making significant impacts upon the region. Yet, as very little research has been devoted to this area, our knowledge of the current situation is limited. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview over Islamism in the Horn, to identify what is known and to point to areas in need of further research. The report applies a broad approach to Islamism as a phenomenon, seeing it as a heterogeneous phenomenon encompassing a variety of actors and ideological traits. As a conceptual point of departure, it distinguishes between Political Islamism, Reformist Islamism and Jihadi Islamism, and discusses these categories in relation to the issue of political power and to the wider public sphere.

THE ISLAMIST ACTORS IN THE HORN

With the exception of Djibouti, Islamist groups are active all over the Horn. In Eritrea, the initial Islamist group was the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), established in 1980 and gaining increased strength as it merged with other groups in 1988. EIJM later changed its name to the Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement (EIRM). Other Eritrean Islamist groups are the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement/Eritrean Party for Justice and Development (EISM/EPJD) and the recently established Eritrean Islamic Congress. Currently, these groups are operating under the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA).

The 1991 political transition in Ethiopia created a favourable climate for religious activism and led to the expansion of Islamism, represented by the Salafi movement, the Jamat al-Tabligh and the so-called Intellectualist movement. The Salafi movement arrived in Ethiopia in the late 1940s, and re-surfaced with renewed strength in the post-Derg period. Since then, the Salafis have been faced with internal divisions, giving rise to the Ahl al-Sunna, a faction advocating a stricter version of Salafism. A far stauncher group is the Takfir wal Hijra, gaining momentum in the mid-1990s, and which recently has re-emerged in the Jimma-area.

The Tabligh is probably the numerically largest Islamist movement in Ethiopia, devoted to the task of *dawa* ("mission") among fellow Muslims. Its core stronghold is among the Gurage community in Addis Ababa, and as it is very much secluded to its main centre and to a network of mosques, very little is known about the Tabligh. The Intellectualist movement is highly informal and devoid of any organisational structures. It emerged in Addis Ababa University and its constituency is largely students and young urban intellectuals.

Islamism in Somalia is characterised by uneven developments, by a plethora of different groups and intersected with a high degree of violence. The main actors in the early 1990s were the al-Itihad al-Islamiyya (IAIA), involved in armed struggle within Somalia and in Ethiopia's Somali-region and the *shari'a* courts movement. The latter emerged with renewed strength in 2004 as the United Islamic Courts (UIC), managing to establish control over Mogadishu in mid-2006. UIC's rule was, however, effectively ended by the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006.

The main Islamist actors in today's Somalia are the al-Shabaab and the Hizb al-Islam. The former group emerged from UIC, gained increased strength in the wake of the Ethiopian intervention and is currently controlling larger parts of southern Somalia. The Hizb al-Islam was established by Hassan Dahir Aweys in April 2009 and is a coalition of minor Islamist groups. The relations between the two have been rather strenuous – with repeated violent clashes. The two groups have recently been facing internal problems, seen by growing rifts in the Hizb al-Islam coalition and by emerging schisms within the al-Shabaab leadership.

Islamism in Sudan emerged and expanded in a political conservative environment and has been integrated in the political establishment – as pressure groups, as opposition political parties and as the governing regime. The first Islamist party was the Islamic Charter Front (ICF), founded by Hassan al-Turabi in 1964 and ideologically affiliated to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In 1985, the Islamists organised themselves in the National Islamic Front (NIF), assumed power in 1989 and started the process of making the Islamic state.

ISLAMISM, POLITICS AND THE STATE

The various Islamist groups in the Horn harbour different attitudes on the issue of politics. The opinions range from a seemingly acceptance of liberal democracy, to the establishment of the caliphate; a political order based on exclusivist religious preferences.

Djibouti remains constantly concerned over the potential spill-over effect from its southern neighbour. Hosting the headquarter of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and American military bases, the authorities are also realising that the country could be a target for terrorist activities. The regime is hence monitoring Islamist activities in Somalia, and is, at the same time, seeking to control what it sees as un-wanted movements within Djibouti.

Although Eritrean Islamist movement has the word *jihad* attached to its name, and even if it has been accused of having links to global jihadism, the movement has exclusively focused on domestic affairs, in turn making it relevant to categorise it as Political Islamism. The ideological trajectory of Eritrean Islamism is far from clear, yet there seems to be a development away from advocating religiously-based violence to the acceptance of democratic principles. The Islamists are, however, contesting the regime in Asmara, which over the last decade has restricted the space for religious communities; recognising only Islam and a few Christian denominations. Whereas persecution of Christians is fairly well-documented, very little is known about the repressive measures towards the Muslims. Clearly, the regime's efforts in controlling the Muslim community must be related to the presence of the Islamist movement, and it is clear that continued marginalisation could potentially lead to increased radicalisation among the Muslims.

Whereas the resurgence of Islamism in Ethiopia by many is seen as an expansion of politicised Islam, findings from the field suggest otherwise. Both the Salafi and the Tabligh movements are exclusively focused on the quest of reforming the religious sphere, and have refrained from forwarding any political statements. Even if the zealousness of Takfir wal Hijra has fuelled intra- and inter-religious tensions, both movements could best be characterised as Reformist Islamists. The Intellectualists, which are ideologically attached to the Muslim Brotherhood, are in contrast those with the most elaborate view on politics. supporting the a secular form of government as the best option for Ethiopia's diverse religious landscape, they are actively seeking to enhance the representation of Muslims in public and political life, and strive for improved parity between the country's religious groups.

While the post-1991 political climate proved favourable for the Muslim's engagement in public life, this initial freedom was severely curtailed from the mid-1990s. Concerned over increased religious activism, which the regime interpreted as a radicalisation of Islam, several incidents during 1995/96 led the authorities on a campaign of closing down Muslim organisations and arresting a number of individuals. This new situation has consequently left the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) – closely linked to the regime – as the sole actor claiming to represent Muslim interests, and has moreover contributed to the de-institutional character of contemporary Ethiopian Islam.

The different Islamist groups in Somalia have held different opinions on the relations between religion and politics. While the UIC, as a highly compound movement, had no clear-cut stand

on this, the establishment of an Islamic state was an explicit objective of the IAIA. This was, however, something to be realised within the confines of the Somali nation, and points to a noticeable aspect of Somali Islamism, namely the merger of Islamism with pan-Somali nationalism – which framed the notion of *jihad* and the Islamic state within a Somali context. The arrival of al-Shabaab accentuated the religious preferences and brought the armed struggle closer to the notion of global *jihad.* This has been generated by a growing presence of foreign jihadists, which has, on the other hand, produced a rift between those who see the resistance as a Somali one and those advocating its connection to the global Islamist struggle. Whereas former Somali governments have had a distinct secular profile, the election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as the president of TFG in 2009 signalled a development in an Islamist direction. Introducing *shari'a* as part of the legal system, the president has assured the sceptics that the Islamic laws would not be similar to the al-Shabaab's understanding. The TFG is determined to fight the Islamist insurgents, yet remain at present clearly on the defensive. The recent agreement reached with the Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ), involved in fighting the Islamist insurgents, may broaden TGF's power-base. The ASWJ is said to represent Sufism and "traditional" Islam in Somalia, and constitutes an interesting case of an apolitical group assuming a militant strategy.

With the formation of the ICF, the Islamic discourse in Sudan became increasingly politicised. Core issues were the implementation of the *shari'a* and the establishment of an Islamic political order. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Islamists gradually sought to influence Sudanese politics in an Islamist direction, and from 1989, Islamism became part of the state's policy. Sudanese Islamism has, however, been profoundly affected by the 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) – reconfiguring the relations between politics and religion, the status of religion in the public as well as the exclusiveness of Islam in the political sphere. Bound by CPA, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is forced to reassess its ideological stand and to apply a pragmatic policy which places the *shari'a* on equal grounds with other sources of legislations. This has consequently led to the emergence of other Islamist groups and individuals, contesting what they see as the compromising policy of NCP. The status of Islamism in Sudan will in the near future depend on the outcome of the referendum scheduled to take place in early 2011, which is likely to intensify the debate over Islam and its role in relation to politics.

ISLAMISM AND THE PUBLIC IN THE HORN

The Salafis' attacks on Sufi practices have clearly strained intra-religious relations in Ethiopia. This was exacerbated in the 1990s, when the Ahl al-Sunna was lamenting the use of alcohol and *khat*, listening to Western pop-music, as well as making the shortening of trousers, the veiling of women and the growing of beard among males mandatory. At the same time, developments in recent years – of which virtually nothing is known – have moved intra-religious relations in an unexpected direction. In 2007 a delegation of Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organisations facilitated the establishment of a committee of scholars from the Salafi movement and from the Sufi-oriented community, engaging each other in a doctrinal debate. The committee which came to be known as the Addis Ababa Ulema Unity Forum (AAUUF) managed to reach an agreement on several points and made promises to alleviate intra-religious tensions. The AAUUF was, however, due to unknown reasons closed down in 2009.

The intra-religious tensions have in Somalia been marked by a high degree of violence and are linked to the attempts of forcefully implementing the *shari'a*. Groups such as the al-Shabaab are clearly guided by this principle, seeing it as pivotal in the creation of an Islamic state. While the use of force has been intrinsic to the implementation of *shari'a,* leading to numerous violations of human rights, it is nevertheless clear it the law and order it created was welcomed by many Somalis. It is also clear that the implementation involved certain processes of negotiations between the actors involved. The strict interpretation of the *shari'a*

and the inclusion of corporal punishment, produced in many cases strong reaction from the populace – in turn forcing the Islamist to adjust their positions.

A growing presence of Islamism has also produced more fragile Christian-Muslim relations in countries like Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. Increased religious activism from both the Christian and Muslim communities has generated mutual suspicions and accusations towards the other. In Ethiopia the Muslims are condemning the Protestants' evangelising efforts and criticise the Orthodox for continuing discriminatory attitudes. The Christians are, on their part accusing the Muslims of uprooting Ethiopia's religious equilibrium. Most of the actual confrontations between the two religious communities have been related to the competition over public space; the construction of mosques & churches and the celebrations of religious holidays. While clashes have been of a local nature and with few casualties, the situation was different during the inter-religious conflicts around Jimma and in Beghi (Wollega). Both the range of the conflict and the scale of the violence took many by surprise. The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to construe the trajectory of the conflict, yet it seems clear that the Takfir wal Hijra group was active in aggravating the tensions.

ISLAMISM ACROSS AND BEYOND THE HORN

The range of connections across the Horn of Africa is to large degree determined by the character of the different Islamist groups. Jihadi Islamists would obviously be less bound by national borders. This would also be true for Reformist Islamists, whereas Political Islamists would be more focused on particular domestic affairs.

Refugees have proved important in the formation of Islamism as a transnational movement. Eritrean exiles in Sudan were important in the establishment of the Eritrean Islamist movement, and Muslim refugees returning to Ethiopia from Somalia played a decisive role in the expansion of Salafism in the 1990s. However, the potential role of refugees in interconnecting Salafism across the Horn is clearly understudied. The same is true for traders and trading networks across the Horn. While much of the trade moves beyond the region, a thriving contraband-trade between Somalia and its neighbours – across porous and poorly guarded boundaries – would enable Islamists to transport arms and exchange intelligence. Improved infrastructure within the region could enhance trade across the region, yet will, on the other hand, enhance the interaction of ideologically likeminded actors and lead to more proliferated Islamist networks.

In general, there are at present few signs of cooperation between the various Islamist movements operating in the Horn. Much of this is because most of them have their own parochial objectives – rather than focusing on a wider geographical area. In addition, countries like Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti are active in taking pre-emptive measures to curb such developments.

Connections between Islamism in the Horn and the wider world of Islam are much related to the "war on terror" narrative. The focus has largely been on the issue of foreign funding of Islamist activities, generating a renewed interest in the role of Islamic NGOs within the region. While such NGOs only to a lesser degree have been present in Eritrea and Djibouti, they were relatively active in Ethiopia in the early 1990s. Islamic NGOs have been very important in Somalia over the last decades, providing humanitarian assistance to the war-ridden population. Several of these organisations were accused of supporting Islamist insurgents, and were after 9/11 targeted by the US; closing their offices and disrupting their activities.

Reports on al-Qaida presence in the Horn are highly contradictive. It seems clear that al-Qaida was active in Somalia during the 1990s, yet the scale of such operations remains unclear. Al-Qaida's focus on the Horn increased after the Ethiopian intervention, and al-Shabaab has

issued repeated statements of allegiance to the movement. An important question is, however, whether this alliance is equally recognised by the al-Shabaab leadership and by its rank-and-file. Recent reports have, as noted, indicated a growing schism within the movement – over the role of foreign involvement and over the connections to a global *jihad.*

Prospective connections between Islamists in Yemen and Somalia have gained increased attention in recent years. The Islamist movement in Yemen emerged with renewed strength after the establishment of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2006, and has issued statements promising support to the Islamist struggle in Somalia. Although recent reports claim that jihadists are sent from Yemen to partake in the Somali insurgency, it is too early to ascertain what concrete implications this may have.

Islamism in the Horn is moreover connected to the wider world through diaspora communities in the West. While Somali diaspora communities in general have remained critical to Islamist activities in the homeland, an increasing number of young Somalis have in recent years signed up to participate in the Islamist insurgency. This may indicate a growing religious zeal among young Somalis in the West, yet their involvement must also be related to the Ethiopian intervention which produced a distinct nationalist fervour. In contrast to the Somali diaspora, exacerbating tensions at home, the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora has been actively involved in promoting peace and reconciliations in Ethiopia. Holding talks with representatives from the regime, the civil society and religious leaders, Muslim diaspora organisations from Europe and North America have advocated inter-religious cooperation, democracy and development. While this represents an interesting development, it remains to be seen whether such efforts will be embraced by the more marginal and zealous Muslim groups in Ethiopia.

Acronyms

AAUUF	Addis Ababa Ulema Unity Forum
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQAP	Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia
ASWJ	Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a
ATRP	Alliance against Terrorism and the Restoration of Peace
CJFT-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
EDA	Eritrean Democratic Alliance
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EIJM	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
EIRM	Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement
EISM	Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPJD	Eritrean Party for Justice and Development
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
IAIA	Al-Itihad al-Islamiyya
ICF	Islamic Charter Front
ICP	Islamic Centrist Party
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organisation
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PCP	Popular Congress Party
PFDJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice
SCP	Sudan Communist Party
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UIC	United Islamic Courts

Glossary

Al-Islah	Reform, Islamic reform
Bid'a	Innovation, associating something with God
Hajj	Pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina
Harakat	Movement
Hizb	Party
Jama'at	A gathering of people, a community or a congregation
Khat	A mild narcotic plant widely consumed on the Horn of Africa
Kuffar	(sg *Kafir*) Infidel, non-believer
Markaz	Religious centre
Mawlid al-Nabi	The birthday of the Prophet Muhammed
Mufti	A religious authority, a scholar of Islamic law
Mushrikun	(sg *Mushrik*) The one who commits idolatry
Niqab	Scarf used by women to cover their face
Shura	Consultation, council; also used for parliament
Takfir	The act of declaring a fellow Muslim an unbeliever
Timket	Epiphany, holiday in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Turuq	(sg *Tariqah)* Sufi brotherhood
Ummah	The community of believers
Ulama	(sg *Alim*) Islamic scholar

Main actors

Djibouti

Djibouti Youth Movement:	Islamist (?) group active in the early 1990s

Eritrea

Abu Suhail Organisation:	Islamist group (now defunct)
Eritrean Islamic Congress:	Eritrean Islamic party
Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement:	The oldest and most known Islamist group
Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement:	The successor to the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement:	Islamist movement formed in the last decade
Eritrean Party for Justice and Development:	The successor to Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement
National Eritrean Islamic Liberation Front:	Islamist group (now defunct)
Organisation of Eritrean Pioneer Muslims:	Islamist group (now defunct)

Ethiopia

Addis Ababa Ulema Unity Forum:	Dialogue forum between Salafis and Sufis (2007-2009)
Ahl al-Sunna:	Salafi fraction emerging in the 1990s
Badr International Ethiopian Muslims Federation:	Muslim diaspora organisation
Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council:	Semi-official body representing Ethiopia's Muslims
Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency:	The main local Muslim NGO
The Intellectualist movement:	Islamist group associated to the Muslim Brotherhood
Jamat al-Tabligh:	Purist *dawa* movement
The Madkhaliyya:	Salafi fraction ideologically attached to Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali (Saudi Arabia)
Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe:	Muslim diaspora organisation
Takfir wal Hijra:	Radical Salafi fraction emerging in the 1990s

Somalia

Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya:	Salafi group emerging in the 1970s

Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia:	Oppositional group to the TFG, formed in Eritrea. Divided into a "Djibouti" and "Asmara" fraction
Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a:	Sufi movement engaging in fighting Islamist insurgents
Al-Itihad al-Islamiyya:	Main Islamist group in the 1990s
Al-Itihad ee Somaliya Galbeed:	Branch of AIAI operating in the Ogaden
Harakat al-Islah:	Early Islamist group (1970s) ideologically attached to the Muslim Brotherhood
Harakat al-Shabaab:	Main Islamist group fighting the TFG
Hizb al-Islam:	Islamist group led by Hassan Dahir Aweys fighting the TFG
Jama'at al-Ahl al-Islaami:	Early Islamist group (1970s) ideologically attached to the Muslim Brotherhood
United Islamic Courts:	Compound Islamic movement, ousted by the Ethiopian forces in 2006
Waxda al-Shabab al-Islami:	Early Islamist group (1970s) ideologically attached to the Muslim Brotherhood

Sudan

Ansar al-Suna:	Islamist movement
Islamic Charter Front:	Early Islamist party founded by al-Turabi in 1964
Islamic Centrist Party:	Recently established Islamist mainstream party
National Congress Party:	The ruling party of Sudan
National Islamic Front:	Islamist party taking power in 1989
Popular Congress Party:	Islamist party established by al-Turabi in 2000

Others

Al-Haramain:	Saudi NGO accused of funding terrorism
Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula:	Jihadi movement comprising Saudi and Yemeni branches of al-Qaida
International Islamic Relief Organisation:	NGO attached to the Muslim World League
The Muslim Brotherhood:	Islamist movement formed in Egypt in the 1920s

1 INTRODUCTION

Islam has been integral to the Horn of Africa from the time of the religion's inception. From when the first believers found refuge with the king of Axum (in current-day Tigray regional state of Ethiopia), to when the new faith gained foothold along the littoral; from the establishment of Islamic principalities and subsequent conflicts with the Christian kingdom to the continued processes of Islamisation through trade and migrations – this diverse history has generated a rich variety of Islamic cultures with both distinct and shared features. The diversity is also a product of the region's strategic location, as integrated into the Indian Ocean trade. It is furthermore closely interrelated to the complex religo-political reality in the Horn; the long history and dominant position of Christianity, producing its own religious fault lines.

The geo-political importance of the Horn has not diminished over time. Subject to repeated violent political transitions, interstate- and civil wars as well as recurrent droughts, the Horn of Africa must be considered a highly unstable region. While much of this is directly related to political, social and economical factors, it is clear, however, that religion has played an important accompanying role in recent history – becoming more accentuated in the last decades. Relevant examples are the Islamist takeover in Sudan in 1989 and the role of Islamist insurgents in the ongoing Somali civil war. The region's proximity to the Muslim world, its precarious political environments, with on the one side weak and/or failed states and on the other authoritarian states, all with vast and porous borders would at the outset constitute conducive factors for the expansion of Islamism in the Horn.

In spite of this, the Islamic factor in the Horn of Africa has largely been ignored, leaving us ill-prepared to understand the ongoing complex dynamics in the region. Sudan is somewhat in a better position, and the religious developments in Somalia are currently getting increased attention. While there is a growing interest in contemporary Islam in Ethiopia, virtually no research has been carried out on Djibouti and Eritrea.

1.1 OBJECTIVES & CONCEPTUAL FRAME

This study will provide an overview over Islamism in today's Horn of Africa, covering Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.[1] The aim is to survey the main actors, to discuss their major ideological tenets in relation to political power, to analyse how religious discourses affect the wider public sphere, as well as to explore how Islamism is interlinked in the Horn – and beyond. The study will first of all review what is known about this phenomenon and, secondly, identify areas in need for future research. As intersected, it will also provide suggestions on relevant perspectives deemed fruitful for an enhanced understanding of Islamism in the Horn of Africa.

The Horn of Africa has, according to the former US ambassador to Ethiopia, David Shinn, in recent years "become a breeding ground for terrorism" (2004: 38). With reference to the turmoil in Somalia where Islamist insurgents are gaining ground, Shinn's view represents a

[1] As far as Somalia is concerned, most attention has been paid to the southern areas; the main theatre for Islamist actors, and with less focus on Somaliland and the Puntland region.

growing concern in the Western world. Yet the pertinent questions would be if this is a trend encompassing the region as a whole, and whether Islamism uncritically can be equated with terrorism. The statement clearly represents a tendency of viewing any movement within contemporary Muslim communities through the lens of terrorism – a concept used instrumentally by actors with divergent agendas and for legitimising counter-terrorist interventions (Elliot and Holzer 2009).[2] This study does not deny the real presence of terrorism, yet sees it as a too narrow conceptual point of departure. Rather, Islamism will be treated as a heterogeneous and multi-faceted movement, as dynamic and as intrinsically linked to the disparate political and social discourses within the Horn.

While Islamism commonly is understood as an ideology which, based on Islam's authoritative scriptures, seeks the merger of religion and politics for the creation of an Islamic state, some writers (Bayat 1996) have claimed that the present is characterised by post-Islamism – without specifying what has succeeded Islamism in this "post" period. Others have pointed to the failure of Islamism (Roy 1994) and the emergence of neo-fundamentalism; an apolitical movement focused on individual moral and religiosity (Roy 2004). Whereas it arguably would be a little too soon to bury Islamism as a phenomenon, a more fruitful approach would instead be to construe it as less monolithic, as ideological diverse and as consisting of parallel movements. This entails perspectives which recognise the different strategic considerations and the objectives of Islamist groupings in a more inclusive and encompassing approach. It means paying attention to the trajectory of the various movements, seeing them as intersected with social and political developments in their respective localities and analysing the agendas of the actors involved.

Drawing from a number of suggested typologies (Dekmejian 1995; Gerges 2005; Kepel 2003; Rubin 1998; Wiktorowicz 2006), yet developing our own set of arguments, this study perceives Islamism according to three main categories: *Political Islamism, Reformist Islamism* and *Jihadi Islamism.*[3] Like any other categorisation, neither this one would be considered waterproof. There are groups and actors that do not easily fit into any of the categories, and ideological developments together with changing political circumstances may lead to changes over time; that a group falling into one category would be categorised as different at the next junction.

Political Islamism denotes groups which limit their activism within a defined local or national scene, and which seek to attain power and influence within this defined area. It contains groups that strive for the improvement of Muslim rights and parity with other religions, those working for a social order permeated by Islamic values as well as those seeking the establishment of an Islamic state. They may advocate the use of violence, or would adhere to a non-violent struggle. Political Islamism often draws inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly the tradition stemming from Hassan al-Banna, as well as from the Qatar-based Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. They usually organise themselves as movements (*harakat*) or as parties (*hizb*), and are often recognised by the use of the word "reform" (*al-Islah*) in their names. One important aspect is that while the Muslim Brotherhood has been characterised by the use of violence, the movement has in recent years increasingly participated in, and accepted, democratic processes.

[2] Marchal (2007: 1100f.) has argued that terms such as "terrorism" applied to enhance our understanding of a particular situation, often obscures it, leaving a number of questions unanswered.

[3] This corresponds to some degree with the categorisation applied by the International Crisis Group (2005) – operating with the *political, missionary* and *jihadi* strand, and with the distinction made by Hegghammer and Lacroix (2004) of the reformist, rejectionist and jihadist trends within Salafism.

Reformist Islamism refers to groups that focus on reforming the religious sphere; combating practices perceived as un-Islamic and infusing a stronger emphasis on individual piety. The most important movements within this category are the Salafis and the Jama'a al-Tabligh.[4] Even if groups within this category at the outset do not have an explicit political agenda, there are several cases in which many of them have moved in such a direction (and the other way around). Moreover, their exclusivist positions pertaining religious purity may have political implications, as it often spurs increased inter- and intra-religious tensions and causes communal unrest.[5]

In contrast to the Political Islamism, the **Jihadi Islamists** have a much wider scope, focusing on the worldwide struggle of liberating the *ummah* (the Muslim community) from the onslaught of Western forces and on establishing the Islamic caliphate. It is represented by groups which indirectly or directly are interlinked with each other, and although they may operate within a defined territorial battleground or feed on local conflicts, they usually perceive themselves as part of a global *jihad* (Gerges 2005).[6]

The typology would obviously have to be related to the relevant social realities. Such a localised approach entails an examination of the ideological currents informing local Islamists, yet puts an emphasis on analysing how these ideologies are construed, received, appropriated and transformed in the local context. It challenges the oft-used dichotomy between "Islam in Africa" and "African Islam"; the former representing a foreign, radical and violent version of Islam, and distinctively different from the latter; construed as indigenous and tolerant Islam (Rosander 1997).[7] While this dichotomy is often used to differentiate between "moderates" and "radicals", and to identify who the West can "do business" with, this study will point to the deficiency in such an understanding and amply demonstrate that religious landscapes contain more colours than black and white.

1.2 METHOD & SOURCES

The study is organised as a desk study, surveying the available literature on Islamism in the Horn of Africa. It draws from scholarly works, reports, policy documents and briefs, where findings, perspectives and positions have been assessed and evaluated. The study has moreover benefitted from the author's in-depth knowledge of the area and long-term field-research, in which the inclusion of concrete findings from the field and the ability to critically review the available sources has enriched the study.

The study is organised through a combination of thematical and geographical foci. Lack of literature has, however, contributed to some imbalance – with some areas more covered than others. As many of the available studies have not been based on extensive field-research, the results are often shallow analyses of isolated incidents being detached from interconnected processes and discourses. Many studies uncritically juxtapose various media-reports and

[4] Salafism refers in this study to the religious teaching of Sheikh Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, often dubbed Wahhabism, and is distinguished from the Egyptian *Salafiyya* movement of Jamal al-Din Afghani, Muhammed Abduh and Rashid Rida. Whereas the latter was more "modern" in its outlook, favouring a selective appropriation of Western ideas, the former was predominantly concerned with reforms in the religious sphere; advocating the return to the "true tenets of Islam". See Halldén (2007: 12) for more details.

[5] This is by Hegghammer (2007: 62) labelled religious vigilantism, produced through increased focus on religious purism and the demarcation of boundaries towards non-Muslims as well as other Muslims.

[6] The ideological roots of Jihadi Islamism stem from the Qutbist tradition (from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb), and in more recent years, from Salafism. While these two often has been conceived as opposing positions, there is also a tendency to mix the two, producing the term Jihadi-Salafism. For a discussion of this term, see Hegghammer (2009: 251f.).

[7] For a critique of this dichotomy, see Otayek and Soares (2007) and Seesemann (2006).

secondary information. There are, as a consequence, many references to profiled Islamist groups, but few qualified discussions relating these to the wider political, religious, cultural and social developments. This is clearly the case for reports produced by various think-tanks and security-affiliated institutions. Many of these reports are commissioned by Western governments, and written under terms of references which reflect the interest and perceptions of these stakeholders. This is affected by the post-9/11 realities, in which security concerns have been the point of orientation, where the term "terrorism" serves as the core reference, and which have made such writings to be rather normative, clearly seen through titles such as" Combating Terrorism" or "Countering Terrorism".[8]

[8] A relevant example is the recommendations forwarded by a group of researchers saying that "terrorists" in the region had to be "sought out, captured, and/or killed" (West 2005: 3).

2 ISLAMISM IN THE HORN: THE ACTORS

While Islamism in the Horn of Africa has been construed as a phenomenon emerging in the 1990s, its antecedents dates back to the 1960s and the 1970s. The initial arrival in the Horn is similar to patterns found elsewhere on the continent, in which socio-economic changes and the development of infrastructure contributed to the emergence of new social actors transcending local boundaries and becoming exposed to alternative religious ideas. Finding their ways into neighbouring areas, across the Red Sea, to Egypt or to other parts of the Muslim world, this "new *ulama"* (Coulon 1987) represented a category different from the traditional learned men of Islam; merchants, people with a secular education and, eventually, migrant workers. Returning home with new ideas, the different localities in the Horn became as a consequence increasingly exposed to a variety of religious impetuses.

Islamism in the Horn is in some cases represented by concrete groups and movements, having their own names, organisational structure and an explicit program, while may, in other cases, occur as more diffuse movements, unorganised and merely having the character of an ideological current shared by a number of individuals. The problem of identifying the relevant actors is exacerbated by ideological fluidity, internal discourses and individual preferences – generating a situation where groups emerge and vanish, merge with others, change their names or adopt different ideological outlooks.

2.1 THE PRESENCE OF ISLAMISM IN DJIBOUTI?

Djibouti is the area of the Horn where virtually nothing is known about the potential presence of any Islamist movement. There are no studies available, and the country has only received passing remarks in different reports. Hardly any religiously-based violent incidents have been reported, making it reasonable to assume that Islamist groups have made little impact in Djibouti. The only reference made is to the obscure Djibouti Youth Movement, claiming responsibility for two grenade attacks in Djibouti on 27 September 1990.[9] A similar dubious reporting was forwarded in an USIP-report, saying that a "young cleric in the most important mosque in Djibouti City reportedly was trained in a Cairo theological center known for its radical Islamist doctrine" (2004: 7). No additional information was included, not on the person or on the ideological content of his preaching.

It is clear that Djibouti's location; its proximity to the Arabian Peninsula, its role as a trading-hub, as well as the porous borders to neighbouring Somalia makes the country relevant as a thoroughfare for Islamists operating in neighbouring areas. A case in point was how funds to the Somali Islamist insurgent group, al-Itihad al-Islamiyya (IAIA) was channelled through Djibouti by a Saudi national and a representative of the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO). Hosting the head office of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), a large French military base and the main base of the U.S-led Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) from 2002, Djibouti may risk

[9] The first attack on the Café de Paris killed one French boy and wounded 15 French adults. The second attack was on the Café L'Historil, where the grenade failed to explode. The only source mentioning the Djibouti Youth Movement is the webpage http://www.berkshirepublishing.com/assets/pdf/pogt/Part4_Chronology.pdf, accessed 29 March 2010.

becoming a target for violent attacks. This is a concern for the CJTF-HOA, and has led to a "hearts-and-minds outreach" which includes humanitarian aid aimed at preventing the emergence of what is conceived as terrorist activities (Hiel 2009).

2.2 JIHADISTS AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN ERITREA

Similar to Djibouti, Islam in general and Islamism in particular in Eritrea have received little attention. Studies on the historical trajectory are limited, with investigations on the contemporary situation virtually non-existent.[10] While the history of Islam in Eritrea for obvious reasons was integrated with that of Ethiopia, the development of a particular "Islam in Eritrea" and of an Eritrean Muslim consciousness started with the confinement of Eritrea as an Italian colony at the late 19th century and was augmented through the colonial policies of both the Italians and the British. This led to the emergence of a Muslim urban intelligentsia, frequenting different parts of the Muslim world, and which was to play an important role in the early nationalist movement in Eritrea.

The first liberation movement, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), established in 1960 was overrepresented by Muslims, while the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), formed in 1977 was dominated by Christians. Internal divisions during the 1980s and a growing influx of Islamist ideas led to the formation of a variety of Eritrean Islamist groups, most notably the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM). Very little is known about the details of this development, and the accounts produced are to some degree contradictory. Some claim that the EIJM emerged as a breakaway fraction of ELF already in 1975, and that it was formally established in 1980. Additional groups, such as the National Eritrean Islamic Liberation Front, the Organisation of Eritrean Pioneer Muslims, the Abu Suhail Organisation and the Islamic Awakening are said to have been established in the 1980s, merging with EIJM in 1988 (Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa2007: 83).[11] Others say that two organisations were created in 1982; the National Islamic Front for the Liberation of Eritrea and the Islamic Vanguard, and that these two merged in 1988, forming the EIJM (Connell 2005: 76f.; Miran 2005: 212f.; Tesfatsion Medhanie 1995: 78f.). Prior to Eritrea's independence in 1993, these groups were involved in the liberation struggle, and subsequently in clashes with the current regime in Asmara. Their military strength has, however, been limited, and they do not pose any immediate threat to the current regime in Eritrea. Since 2003, there have not been any reports of violent attacks by these groups.

From 2003, the name EIJM disappeared from the scene, as it changed its name to the Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement (EIRM). In the meantime, the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement appeared (EISM), later changing its name to the Eritrean Party for Justice and Development (EPJD) (Miran 2005: 212f.). It is claimed that this latter party is the same as the former EIJM (Connell 2005: 81), but this is contested by Khalil Mohammed Amer, the Secretary General of the EISM.[12] Although the available information is highly contradictory, both the EIRM and the EISM/EPJD are said to be members of the umbrella organisation the

[10] For studies on the history of Islam in Eritrea, see Trimingham (1952) and Zwermer (1936). For a discussion on more contemporary aspects, see Miran (2005)

[11] It is said that the merger was a result of a unity congress held between 23 and 30 November 1988 in Sudan (Tesfatsion Medhanie 1995: 81).

[12] An important figure within the Islamist movement in Eritrea has been Khalil Muhammed Amer. In many sources he is said to have been the leader of EIJM, whereas he in other sources is listed as the leader of the EIRM. In an interview he claims to be the Secretary General of the EISM, yet in an overview of the members of the Eritrean Democratic Alliance from 2008, he is again listed as the leader of the EIRM (Eritrean Opposition Organizations: New Push Towards Alliance 2008).

Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA).[13] In 2008, a new group, named the Eritrean Islamic Congress appeared on the scene.[14] The group is said to be led by Abul Bara Hassan Salman, who previously featured as the Deputy Amir of the EIJM.

There is, in other words, much uncertainty regarding the current status for the main Eritrean Islamist groups. Lack of qualified research makes it difficult to ascertain whether the appearance of new names points to the formation of additional groups or whether they are to be seen as continuation of the same organisations under new guises. What is clear, as we will return to in the next chapter, is that there has been a significant ideological development within Eritrean Islamism.

2.3 THE RESURGENCE OF ISLAMIC REFORM IN POST-1991 ETHIOPIA

The new policies of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF), assuming power in 1991, contributed to a favourable climate for religion in Ethiopia and boosted religious activities. The new regime brought an end to former restrictions on the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), suspended the ban on import of religious literature and lifted the constraints on construction of mosques and religious schools (Hussein Ahmed 1994: 791). The new openness paved the way for marked enthusiasm, produced a new consciousness among the Muslim population, generated new religious affiliations and made Islam in Ethiopia more visible compared with the past (Østebø 1998: 443f.). The post-Derg era also led to the resurgence of Islamism in Ethiopia, represented by three main movements, the Salafis, the Jamat al-Tabligh and what is here labelled the Intellectualist movement.[15] While they expanded rapidly in the 1990s, some of them had, however, a much longer history.

The Salafi movement, or the Wahhabi movement, as it is referred to by most Ethiopians, is the movement which has received most attention.[16] Its initial emergence dates back to the late 1940s, when it first was introduced in Hargere, and then to Arsi and Bale in the 1960s. The expansion was due to two main reasons; firstly as a result of the emergence of a new class of merchants which through a growing translocal trade brought new impulses back to their respective localities, and secondly, as a consequence of an increasing number of Muslims returning back from studies in Saudi Arabia.[17] The Derg-regime's repressive policy on religion encumbered on much of the Salafis' activities, yet did not manage to eradicate it. Re-emerging in 1991, the Salafi movement was able to consolidate its position, expanded to new localities, but experienced, at the same time, internal fragmentation. In the mid-1990s, a fraction led by the younger generation, often referred to as the Ahl al-Sunna emerged. This fraction favoured a stricter interpretation of the Salafi tenets, in many instances leading to conflict with the senior Salafis. The most radical wing of the Ahl al-Sunna came to be

[13] Leading members of the Islamist groups are represented in the leadership of the EDA. In a meeting in Addis Ababa in 2002, Taher Shengeb of the Eritrean People's Congress (believed to be the political wing of the EIRM) was elected as the Deputy Secretary General and Hamid Turki of the EISM was elected to the head of the political office of EDA. An overview of members of EDA published by awate.com (see footnote 15) includes the EIRM, but has no mentioning of the EISM. Another listing omits the EIRM, but includes the EPJD (Eritrean Democratic Alliance: About EDA 2010).

[14] Also referred to as the Islamic Congress Party.

[15] The most detailed overview of these movements has been made by this author (Østebø 2008b). The following account is based on this.

[16] There is a growing body of literature on Salafism in Ethiopia. For details on Wollo, see Abbink (2007); for Addis Ababa, see Bauer Oumer (2006); for Harar, see Desplat (2005), for Arsi, see Temam Haji (2002); for Bale, see Østebø (2008a).

[17] Saudi Arabia's role in providing religious education for foreigners grew dramatically with the establishment of the Muslim University in Medina (1961) and other institutions of higher learning from the 1960s.

represented by the Takfir wal Hijra grouping, introduced to Gondar in 1992 by a certain Amin Muhammed returning from exile in Sudan.[18] This group moved to Addis Ababa in 1994, gaining a foothold in Terro, a northern suburb of the capital. It made a significant impact on the young generation of Salafis in the years that followed, but was denounced by the Salafi establishment and by Muslim scholars in general. When Amin Muhammed died in 2004, the group lost much of its momentum, yet did not completely vanish. An interesting development – of which virtually nothing is known – is its expansion to Jimma and the role it allegedly played in the Christian-Muslim conflicts there in 2006.

Another schism appeared in 2006 with the emergence of the Madkhaliyya group in Addis Ababa. Organised around a certain radiologist in Mercato, this group adhere to the teaching of the quietist Saudi Arabian Salafi scholar, Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, and is seen as advocating a strict puritan lifestyle, as well as being ardently critical to the teaching of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Madkhaliyya group has later split into two fractions; a stauncher fraction called the Abrariun (after the main leader, Abrar) and a moderate fraction. The Abrariun has denounced the teaching of Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali and developed ideological links to Yemeni Salafism, particularly the teaching of the Yemeni Salafi scholar Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi.[19]

The Tabligh is probably the numerically largest Islamist movement in Ethiopia. In spite of this, very little is known about its history and current activities. The Tabligh is found wherever there are Muslims and is the world's largest *dawa* ("missionary") movement, created by Muhammed Iliyas in India in 1929. It seems to have arrived in Ethiopia during the 1970s, introduced by South African and Kenyan Tabligh missionaries. Their activities were facilitated by a Gurage merchant, Sheikh Musa, resulting in the expansion of the movement among the Gurage community in Addis Ababa. Like the Salafi movement, the Tabligh's activities remained limited during the Derg-period, before it resurfaced in 1991. Extensively focused on *dawa,* Tabligh missionaries are sent out from its *markaz* (centre) in Kolfe area in Addis Ababa to various parts of the country, on either three- or forty-day journeys, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in busloads. Visiting mosques and Muslim neighbourhoods, the tactics of the missionaries are to establish new Tabligh groups (*jama'at*), which then will send out their own missionaries. In accordance with Tabligh's principle of self-reliance, all the missionaries are supposed to take care of their own expenses, thus making the movement independent from any outside funding.

The so-called Intellectualist movement is somewhat difficult to categorise. Highly informal and devoid of any organisational structure, it evolved around certain individuals advocating a set of ideas rather than initiating a particular movement. It first surfaced on the campuses of Addis Ababa University and other institutions of higher learning in the early 1990s, where it soon gained popularity among the Muslim students. Organised in small *jama'at*, led by individual figures referred to as an *amir,* and by offering lectures and initiating study-circles, the movement acted unofficially as the Muslim student movement, becoming important in fighting for the rights of Muslim students. Outside the campuses, the movement was able to exert influence through public lectures and through regular contributions in the Bilal magazine. Further, prominent members of the movement have been active in publishing books through the Najashi Publishing House. Although individuals within the movement still

[18] Takfir wal Hijra first emerged in Egypt in 1977, where its leader, Shukri Mustafa advocated a radical interpretation of Islam, labelling any Muslims except his own followers as *kuffar* (infidels). In Sudan there are reports that the group was behind several attacks on mosques in the 1990s, and that they tried to assassinate Osama bin Laden in 1994. For more details, see Carney (2005: 122).

[19] Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi is regarded as the main founder of Salafism in Yemen, and despite his death in 2001, he remains one of the major references of quietist and apolitical Salafism. For more details, see Bonnefoy (2009a).

disseminate their ideas through lectures and seminars in Addis Ababa and its surroundings, the movement has lost much of its strength on the campuses. Instead, it has remained a rather elitist phenomenon, with its leaders and followers mainly being young university graduates and urban intellectuals.

2.4 SOMALIA: FRAGMENTED ISLAMISM

Islamism in Somalia is represented by a variety of actors and a conglomerate of different groups, which over the last decades have been overlapping, intersecting, cooperating and fighting against each other. Adding to this complexity is the manner in which Islamist groups in many cases have been organised according to the familiar pattern of clan and kinship, as well as the absence of a central government enabling individuals and groups to ascend to power for their own private interests.

The initial emergence of Islamism in Somalia is in the literature largely treated in retrospect, serving as background material for the current developments. The available information on this formative period is very limited, and Roland Marchal, a profiled authority on the subject, even claimed that "there is no hard evidence of the influence – even sometimes of the existence – of those groups" (2004: 120). He nevertheless refers to early Islamism as represented by the Waxda al-Shabab al-Islami and the Jama'at al-Ahl al-Islaami, both ideologically affiliated to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and established in the 1960s. As a result of increasing migration to Saudi Arabia in the early 1970s, a growing number of Somalis returning home with a Salafi ideology became important in setting up of the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. Another important group was the Harakat al-Islah (the Reform Movement, hereafter; al-Islah), established in 1978; also ideologically linked to the Muslim Brotherhood (Marchal 2004: 119f.). Although the reign of General Siyad Barre restricted their manoeuvring ground, they proved to be formative for the developments to come.

Al-Itihad al-Islamiyya (IAIA) is the group which has received the most attention in Somalia, and its history is well-documented elsewhere (Bryden 2003: 28f.; Le Sage 2004: 88f.; Marchal 2004; Somalia's Islamists 2005). It emerged as a result of the merger between al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and Wadhat al-Shabab al-Islamiyya sometimes between 1982 and 1984, soon attracting students and youngsters in Mogadishu. IAIA boosted its activities in the early 1990s, and as Hassan Dahir Aweys, a former colonel in Siyad Barre's army joined AIAI in 1993, it moved in the direction of armed struggle. The group was, however, soon subject to pressure from the warlords which ousted it from their bases in the northeast area of Puntland and in Kismayo – forcing the IAIA fighters to retreat to Luuq where they established their last garrison. As an section of IAIA, the al-Itihad ee Somaliya Galbeed (the Islamic Union of Western Somalia) was seeking the unification of Ogaden with Somalia. Activities were initially confined to the Ogaden region, but in 1995, the organisation took responsibility for bomb blasts at a market in Dirre Dawa and at two hotels in Addis Ababa and Dirre Dawa (Shinn 2002: 5). Consequently, Ethiopian armed forces launched its attacks on the IAIA Luuq base in 1996 and 1997. Following these attacks, IAIA was severely weakened and ceased to exist as a structured organisation by the late 1990s.

After the defeat of IAIA, the Islamist movement in Somalia was devoid of structural organisations and lacked hierarchical leadership. It was not until the re-emergence of *shari'a* courts movement at the turn of the century, that Islamism in Somalia again could gain ground.[20] In 2000 several independent courts formed a Joint Islamic Courts Council with its

[20] The first *shari'a* courts were established in 1991, yet it was not until 1994 that a more lasting structure evolved. The courts were largely organised according to clan-system, and although it managed to establish

own militia force, and gradually the movement extended its influence and managed to establish a certain degree of order in the war-ridden society. This was to change, however, when the courts were integrated into the Transitional National Government (TNG) created by the Arta agreement (Djibouti). The judges became employees of the Somali Ministry of Justice, and the militia was incorporated into the police force. When the TNG later dismissed the courts' judges and disarmed the militias, the court movement's range of influence was severely curbed (Le Sage 2005: 46).

The failure of the TNG and the internal divisions of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) created space for the establishment of what came to be known as the United Islamic Courts (UIC) under the leadership of Hassan Dahir Aweys and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. The new organisation proved to be a success, not the least due to the establishment of a joint militia and the pooling of each of the courts' weaponry. Alarmed by UIC's increasing power, the warlords organised themselves under the US-supported Alliance against Terrorism and the Restoration of Peace (ATRP) and embarked on an offensive against the UIC. The warlords were, however, quickly defeated by the UIC which took control over Mogadishu in June 2006. The developments that continued are well-known; in late December 2006 the Ethiopian forces intervened and through a short and intense campaign they defeated the weak, yet overconfident UIC militias and ousted the movement from power.

While not sufficient, the analyses of the developments up to this point are far better compared with the period leading up to the present (2010). Most of the information on the different Islamist groups and figures which later have emerged are based on secondary sources, unconfirmed news-reports, and are to a large degree contradictory. One important exception is the study by Marchall (2009) on the Harakat al-Shabaab (the Youth Movement, hereafter; al-Shabaab), the most vibrant Islamist grouping in today's Somalia.[21] Seeking to capture the dynamics involved in the formation and developments of this group, the study provides much-needed information on the current situation.

Al-shabaab emerged as the militia of the Ifka Halane court led by Hassan Dahir Aweys already in 2000. A key figure in its establishment was Aden Hashi Ayro, who due to his years in Afghanistan held a staunch jihadi outlook.[22] It seems, however, that Aden Hashi Ayro (killed in May 2008) and his associates gradually departed from Hassan Dahir Aweys, establishing a more independent structure. This became apparent in 2006, when al-Shabaab emerged as an autonomous movement in UIC's fighting against the ATRP, and later the same year, when it managed to secure a high number of seats in the UIC institutions in Mogadishu (Marchal 2009: 390). The Ethiopian intervention, which eliminated much of UIC's military capacity created more room for the al-Shabaab. While the reminiscences of the UIC regrouped in Asmara and established, together with other opposition groups, the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS), the al-Shabaab military command remained behind and distanced itself from this front and opted for a more autonomous role. Since then, al-Shabaab has presented itself as an independent and unified movement and has gained control over large areas in south Somalia. Although it is difficult to determine its actual strength, Marchal estimated that in January 2009, the movement counted around 100 full members, while probably having "more than 3000 sympathisers who act on orders" (Marchal 2009: 397). While there are many uncertainties regarding the leadership structure, it seems that the main

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some sort of order, the forces of clanism impinged on the range of their jurisdiction during the 1990s. For more details on the movement's early history, see Le Sage (2004: 134f.); Marchal (2004: 132f.); Le Sage (2005: 38f.); *Somalia's Islamists* (2005: 19f.) *Can the Somali Crisis be Contained* (2006: 9f.); Barnes (2007).

[21] Taarnby and Hallunbaek's (2010) study contains some interesting data, whereas Elliot and Holzer (2009) have contributed with substantiated analyses of the developments up to 2009.

[22] Other important figures in the *al-Shabaab* leadership were Mukhtar Robow/Abu Mansour, Ahmed Aw Abdi Godane, Abdullahi Ma'allin (killed in early 2007), Ibrahim al-Afghani and Khalif Adale.

leader is Ahmed Godane who is responsible to the al-Shabaab *shura* (council). Yet, the leadership is relatively flat, with the various commanders having a great deal of autonomy.[23]

The other main Islamist group involved in fighting against the TFG is the Hizb al-Islam, established by Hassan Dahir Aweys when he returned from Asmara to Somalia in April 2009. This group is actually a coalition between other small groups in southern Somalia (Bruton 2010: 10),[24] and has entertained a rather strenuous relationship to the al-Shabaab. Despite numerous attempts to patch up their differences, al-Shabaab has continued with its violent attacks on Hizb al-Islam leaders and followers (Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia 2010: 7). Although reliable data are lacking, a recent report claims that the group is in a process of "inexorable disintegration", in which some of the groups have left the coalition (Report on the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008) 2010: 16).

In addition to the militant groups we find the al-Ansar as-Sunna, which broke with IAIA in 1991, and the Jama'at al-Tabligh. The former group denounced the armed struggle of IAIA and championed reforms restricted to the religious sphere; focusing on reforming Sufi-practices and improving individual morale. It had, however, a rather short lifespan, disappearing from the scene a few years after its inception. The Tabligh has retained a quietist position, and is a good example of a "blank spot" in our knowledge of Islamism in Somalia. It is said to have the largest numbers of followers of all the Islamic organisations in Somalia and owns by far the highest number of mosques and educational institutions (Marchal 2004: 126; Somalia's Islamists 2005: 18). The critical question is what impact recent years' developments have had on these quietist movements – whether they have affected their positions, their ideological stand and their strategies.

The Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ), taking up arms against al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam represents an interesting case of an apolitical group assuming a militant strategy. It may be inaccurate to label it as Islamist, as it is said to represent the Sufi *turuq* (brotherhoods) and "traditional" Islam in Somalia. Emerging as an offshoot of Majma Ulimadda Islaamka ee Soomaaliya (Assembly of Islamic Scholars in Somalia) in 1991, it was actively supported by General Farah Aideed who sought to counterweight the growing Islamist influence in Somalia (Bryden 2003: 38, fn. 45). In 2002, the movement reorganised itself with a more structured organisation, forming their own militia with the aim of defeating what it conceived to be "foreign Islam" (Le Sage 2004: 234). In contrast to its earlier apolitical stand, it has increasingly forwarded statements with a political character, advocating the establishment of a Somali government that would govern in accordance with the Shafite School of Islamic law.

It needs to be underscored that the Islamist groups and activities discussed refer to the southern parts of Somalia. As far as the breakaway region of Puntland and the secessionist republic of Somaliland are concerned, there is very little known of similar groups and activities. Incidents in 2003 and 2004 drew, however, increased attention to Somalialand and led to the speculation of Islamist forces at play there. In October 2003, an Italian nun and two British teachers were shot and killed. This was followed by an attack on a German aid-agency vehicle in March 2004, leaving a Kenyan national dead and a German wounded. Subsequent interrogations and arrests revealed that the perpetrators had links to the IAIA (Le Sage 2004: 238).

[23] Email correspondence with Stig Jarle Hansen, 15 May 2010.
[24] These groups are ARS-Asmara, Jabhat al-Islamiyya, Mu'askar Ras Kamboni and Mu'skar Anole (McGregor 2009: 19).

2.5 ISLAMISM AND PARTY POLITICS IN SUDAN

Religion has always been the foundation of political domination in Sudan. In spite of the secular outlook of the educated elite who led the struggle of independence in the 1940s and 1950s, Islam was the base of the two leading conservative political forces that backed the independence struggle: the Khatmyyia Sufi brotherhood and the Ansar community, which both had extensive support from the colonial authority.[25] The secular elite were conscious that the alliance with these two forces was unavoidable to ensure popular support, legitimacy and attain independence. The two forces were the basis of the newly born political parties, the Unionist Party and the National Oumma Party, respectively.

This explains largely the specificity of Islamism in Sudan: contrary to similar trends in Muslim societies, it emerged and grew in a conducive conservative political environment from the early years of independence. In spite of the ideological differences between Sufism and Islamism, the Islamist movement in Sudan has always been part of the ruling Establishment, first as a sound pressure group and later as an opposition political party.

The first Islamist party, the Islamic Charter Front (ICF), was founded in 1964 by Hassan al-Turabi, by then a young and brilliant lawyer. He led a distinct trend within the mother organisation of Muslim Brothers that was established by young Sudanese educated in Egypt, where they were members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Others were the more conservative Salafi Ansar al-Sunna group and the reformist Republican Brothers, of Mahmoud M. Taha. The latter emerged as a political party, active during the struggle for independence in the 1940s, and only later becoming a reformist religious movement. Yet, it was the Muslim Brotherhood which was most visible among these groups, yet without a distinct political agenda.

During the democratic interval of 1985 to 1989, the Islamists organised themselves in the newly established party; the National Islamic Front (NIF). This became the most organised and influential political group, and in addition to being the main opposition party, it also became part of the government of grand coalition with the two conservative parties in 1988.

After seizing power in 1989, the NIF set out to implement their political program: *shari'a* was declared the law of the country, federalism was adopted and allowed Southern Sudan to be exempted from Islamic laws; yet Sudanese youth was mobilised in the name of *jihad* to fight the SPLM. Broad efforts were made in order to eliminate opposition parties and figures from administration and to ensure tight control over the society and public space. Moreover, an aggressive foreign policy provided support to active Islamist groups and figures (Hamas, Osama Bin Laden) and produced a vehement religious rhetoric which portrayed the West as the enemy of Islam.

[25] The policy of the colonial administration was to promote the influence, wealth and status of the leaders of the two brotherhoods

2.6 AREAS IN NEED OF FURTHER RESEARCH:

- The religious landscape of Djibouti and the potential presence of Islamist groups
- The possible impacts of Somali Islamists upon Djibouti
- The current situation of Eritrean Islamism; the main actors, organisational structures, bases for recruitment and leadership
- Salafism in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on the Takfir wal Hijrah and the Madkhaliyya movements
- The Tabligh and the Intellectualist movements in Ethiopia; the main actors, organisational structures, bases for recruitment and leadership
- The al-Shabaab in Somalia; the organisational structure, military strength and leadership figures
- The role of Hizb al-Islam; the organisational structure, military strength, internal leadership and relations towards al-Shabaab and the TFG
- Oppositions to Islamism and quietist Islamist groups in Somalia; focusing on the ASWJ and the Tabligh movement

3 ISLAMISM, POLITICS AND THE STATE

This present chapter reviews, firstly, the main ideological features of the Islamists actors in the Horn – with particular reference to the question of political power. It pays duly attention to the diversity found among and within the different movements, and provides suggestions on how to construe this complexity. Secondly, the chapter explores the policies of the regimes in the Horn; surveying their opinions and measures towards Islamist groups, as well as discussing how such policies reciprocally have affected these groups in particular and the political situation in general.

3.1 IDEOLOGIES & ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICAL POWER

While Islamism at the outset has been seen as aiming for the establishment of an Islamic state, the lack of elaborate thinking on the nature of such a state has made it difficult to ascertain what this actually mean. Moreover, the increasingly heterogeneous character of Islamist ideology has made this issue even more complicated. The variety of opinions range from a seemingly acceptance of liberal democracy, to those struggling to establish the caliphate; a theocracy based on strict and exclusivist religious preferences. Clearly, such opinions would be related to, and to some degree determined by the political environment in which the Islamists operate.

3.1.1 Eritrea: Evolving Islamism

Although religion was interwoven with the emerging struggle for independence, it was not driven by Islamist political motives, or by the wish to create an Islamic state. Instead, the Eritrean exiles establishing ELF in Cairo in 1960, was more inspired by General Abd al-Nasser's pan-Arabism and Arab nationalist movements in countries like Algeria and Palestine (Tekeste Negash 1997). Yet, the secular nationalist ideas remained intersected with the perception that Eritrea's Muslims were marginalised and suppressed by the Christians, pointing to the maintenance of the religious dimension throughout the struggle.[26]

While it is claimed that a major reason for the initial emergence of the Islamist groups is said to come from disagreement over the conscription of women to the armed struggle (Tesfatsion Medhanie 1995: 80), the political attitudes and the ideological underpinnings for the continued struggle of EIJM and other Islamist groups in Eritrea are far from clear. The lack of reliable data has made it difficult to specify the main ideological tenets and to understand how they have evolved over time. The merger of groups, the change of names and a seemingly adjustment of ideological preferences reveals a certain degree of fluidity and less demarcated doctrinal boundaries.

[26] Tekeste Negash (1997: 152) has argued that the ELF harboured a pan-Islamic and pan-Arab ideology – without distinguishing between the two. This contributes to obscuring the picture, as the former has clear religious features, and the latter represents a largely secular ideology. It is clear that ELF was closer to the pan-Arab rather than the pan-Islamic ideals. Erlich has moreover claimed that Uthman Salih Sabbe, a prominent Eritrean nationalist and a member of the ELF's leadership held an ideology explicitly based on Islamic traditions (2007: 110f.). The fact that Sabbe entertained relations with the Yasser Arafat and Libya's Muhammed Qaddafi makes Erlich's claim somewhat contradicting.

The early Islamist movement is said to have harboured a jihadi ideology aimed at establishing what is dubbed "an Islamic caliphate" in Eritrea. The fraction led by Abu Suhail (Muhammed Ahmed Saleh), a former Afghan fighter returning to Eritrea in the early 1990s, was, according to documents found in Afghanistan, allegedly linked to al-Qaida (Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa 2007: 83).[27] While this has been used to connect Eritrean Islamism to global jihadism, statements from the movement itself points in the direction of an agenda confined to the Eritrean political reality. In an interview with the now defunct Nida'ul Islam webpage (The Governing Regime is a Terrorist Regime Which Acts With Enmity Against the Eritrea People 1998), the Deputy Amir of the EIJM, Abul Bara Hassan Salman pointed to the Christian regime in Eritrea and the country's "hypocrites" as the movement's enemies. Although there were references to the "Jews" and to the American "imperialists", the EIJM's aim was to wage a *jihad* against the EPLF regime, which was delegitimized due to the regime's actions towards the Muslims; alleged killings and imprisonment of Muslim individuals, the closing down of religious institutions and a general lack of freedom.

Although we find the word *jihad* attached to their names, it would thus be misleading to categorise the Eritrean Islamist groups as Jihadi Islamists. Rather than advocating *jihad* as a global concern and being concerned with the worldwide *ummah,* their focus has been directed towards the Eritrean political situation and their concern for the country's Muslim population. The fact that they referred to themselves as *Eritrean* and were involved in the struggle for independence – as well as in the struggle against the current regime – makes it more fitting to label them as Political Islamists.

Ideological developments over the last decade seem to confirm this picture. References to an Islamic state and to a struggle based on religious preferences have become rather scarce, and statements point instead to political liberalisation based on democratic principles. In an interview from 2004, the General Secretary of EISM, Khalil Muhammed Amir refutes that there are any Eritrean Jihadi Islamic group, and refers instead to two movements, EIRM and EISM, each with different ideological orientation; that of the Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi-inspired Salafism. Although he refrains from identifying any of the groups with each of these ideologies, the word *al-Islah* (reform) makes it be likely to assume that EIRM subscribes to that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Assessing the statements forwarded in the interview, the language he uses is quite different from the earlier Eritrean Islamist rhetoric. Emphasising *dawa* and the importance of education and enlightenment, he denounces terror and violence, underscores the need for peaceful coexistence of both Christians and Muslims as well as the compatibility of Islam with liberal democracy (Interview: Khalil M. Amer/Eritrean Islamic Salvation Front 2004).

A similar position was recently forwarded by Abul Bara Hassan Salman in a paper called "National Harmony and the Question of Government and Religion".[28] In clear contrast to the interview he gave to Nida'ul Islam in 1998, he here underscores the notion of national unity, the need for peaceful religious coexistence and democratic rule. He moreover argues for separating religion from the state, yet remains somewhat ambiguous towards the role of *shari'a.* Exclusive religious laws, he argues, "should operate independent of constitutional instruments", but says, at the same time, that this would be something decided upon by the people in a democratic process.

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[27] In an overview of Eritrean opposition parties, Abu Suhail is listed as the Secretary General of the EIRM (Update: State of the Eritrean Opposition & Eritrean Government 2006).

[28] The paper was presented to a conference organised by Citizens for Democratic Rights in Eritrea in London, 9 January 2010 (Michael Abraha 2010).

It would, however, obviously be impossible to draw any final conclusions based on a few statements in the media. The lack of reliable data and in-depth studies on today's Islamism in Eritrea has left us with a number of unanswered questions. Only further investigations could provide answers about the specifics of the movement's ideology, about the potential role of Islam in the continued struggle, as well as about how the Islamists envision the political organisation of future Eritrea.

3.1.2 Ethiopia: Seeking religious parity or Political Power?

The resurgence of Islamism in Ethiopia has spurred concern both among Ethiopians and foreign observers. It has been claimed that the country has the "potential to become a prime breeding ground for Islamist militant groups" (Erich 2005: 4). Quite strong statements have also been forwarded in the public debate, where Quranic schools have been charged of being "brain washing sessions and jihad factories nurturing potential bin Ladens…" and where "innocent Ethiopian kids are taken to various countries in the Middle East for military training, and then return home to participate in the meticulously planned and widely coordinated jihad" (Alem Zele-Alem 2003). Such claims are supported with passing remarks to increased Christian-Muslim tensions, with reference to the rapid growth of mosques as well as by pointing to the IAIA activities in Somalia in the 1990s. Findings from the field, by this author and by others, suggest, however, otherwise.

Devoted to the quest of purifying Islam from so-called un-Islamic elements and focused on reforming religious practices, the Salafis in Ethiopia could best be characterised as Reformist Islamists. Although Haggai Erlich has claimed that the Salafis are working for the "political victory of Islam" (2007: 176), this is not reflected in the Salafi rhetoric in Ethiopia. Recognising the country's religious plurality, their position is that freedom and equality for the different groups could only be secured under a secular government. While there are elements among the Salafis which would welcome an expansion of the *shari'a* courts' jurisdiction, and include corporal punishments, the mainstream Salafi understanding is that incorporating *shari'a* into the governing system would be impossible in Ethiopia.

The Salafi Oromo has, on the other hand, been clearly supportive of the Oromo ethno-nationalist movement. This represents a highly important aspect of Salafism in Ethiopia, as it indicates that Salafism as a transnational movement has been unable to surpass ethnic boundaries. In Bale, one of the strongholds of Salafism and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Salafis were during most of the 1990s advocating for the notion of *Oromumma,* a community based on ethnic exclusiveness, rather than that of the *Ummah,* based on religious exclusiveness. Not only does this illustrate the continuous strength of ethnic identity, but as faith was considered an individual matter and ethnicity the collective marker, it also demonstrate a largely secularist thinking among the Salafis, detaching religion from public and political life. Developments in recent years, such as the internal frictions within OLF, seem to have defused much of the ethno-nationalistic fervour among the Oromo and increased their disillusions. The pertinent question is whether this could lead to the strengthening of a Salafi identity.

The resurgence of the Takfir wal Hijra in Jimma, where the movement has gained increased influence among the rural young Muslims seems to point in this direction. In spite of efforts made by senior Salafis and by Muslim scholars to ease their zealousness, the Takfiris have remained unbending, and have been fuelling intra- and inter-religious tensions. They played a central role in the Christian-Muslim conflicts in 2006 (see below), and have, in accordance with their name, taken a strict exclusivist position towards both Salafi and non-Salafi

Muslims.[29] The Takfiris have moreover assumed a radical position toward the Ethiopian state, seen among others by their refusal to hold id-cards and to pay tax. While this had been their attitude for some years, the issue was put to the forefront in 2009 when Takfiri followers around Jimma publicly announced this. The authorities consequently sent forces into the area, leading to violent clashes with the Takfiris determined to defend themselves. Easily defeating them, the regime continued with a roundup campaign and allegedly arrested over 1500 men and women.[30] It may be reasonable to assume that while the Takfiris see the establishment of an Islamist political order as far beyond their reach, they may opt for an isolationist strategy, detaching themselves from state- and societal structures, seeking to carve out space for the realisation of their ideological preferences.

Compared with the Salafis, the Tabligh movement has sought an even clearer avoidance of political involvement. This has been a main principle for Tabligh internationally, which rather than engaging in political affairs, has argued for Islamisation of society through the efforts of Muslim individuals; to lead others to Islam and to uphold the Islamic virtues.[31] However, the movement's networks have in many areas been exploited by other groups, creating a situation where it has often been equated with Islamism (Kepel 2002: 45). In both Somalia and Uganda, such groups have managed to develop Tabligh in a more politicised direction (Chande 2000: 355f.; Somalia's Islamists 2005: 18). In Ethiopia, Tabligh has overtly operated in compliance with the general principles of the movement and maintained a very low profile. Withdrawn to its *markaz* and to selected mosques in Addis Ababa, it has remained rather imperceptible and to a large degree secluded from any involvement in political and public life.

The Intellectualist movement is, on the other hand, the one with the most elaborate view on politics. It has been ideologically affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, where the views of Hassan al-Banna, and in particular that of Yusuf al-Qaradawi were disseminated among its followers. It needs to be noted that the Muslim Brotherhood was never formally established in Ethiopia. Rather, it was the ideas of the movement that were disseminated; ideas being selectively chosen and interpreted within the particular Ethiopian context. This was reflected through the spread of Muslim Brotherhood literature, through public lectures and through articles in the Bilal magazine. Yet the Intellectualists were careful never to mention the names of the Muslim Brotherhood or its ideologues, wanting to avoid becoming too closely linked to a particular movement and fearing that an association with the Muslim Brotherhood would spark interventions from the side of the government (Hussein Ahmed 1998: 98).

The movement is much concerned with the legitimate place of Muslims' in Ethiopian society. Referring to discrimination found in Ethiopia's past, the Intellectualists have been seeking to redress such earlier injustices, worked for equal representation of Christians and Muslims in public life and have argued for the creation of a political environment facilitating mutual respect and co-existence between the two religions. What is of particular interest is their claim that only a secular government would be able to safeguard the interests of the country's different religious groups. This shows their attachment to the current views of the Muslim Brotherhood – recognising a secular system, democratic rules and advocating for Muslims' engagement in this.

An increased number of mosques and higher representations of Muslims in public life can hardly qualify as evidence for a politicisation of Islam in Ethiopia. It has not been uncommon,

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[29] *Takfir* refers to the issue of declaring a fellow Muslim an apostate. The practical consequences in Ethiopia has been that followers of the Takfir wal Hijra refuse to pray with other Muslims in the mosques and organise their own celebrations of Muslim holidays.
[30] Oral interview, Addis Ababa 20 February 2010.
[31] For an enlightening discussion on Tabligh's relations towards political activity, see Sikand (2006).

however, to equate Muslim demands of better representation with a politicisation of Islam. This could be a reflection of how current trends within contemporary Islam accompanied with geo-political tensions are luring us to apply rather narrow categories which unfortunately are limiting our understanding of a dynamic and heterogeneous phenomenon. However, it should be underscored that this is a temporary conclusion. Currents and discourses in the wider Muslim world, geo-political developments in the region and the relative strength of religion and ethnicity as points of orientations – all represent factors relevant for the politicisation of religion.

3.1.3 Somalia: Contesting Ideologies in the Making of an Islamist State

Whereas the Islamists in Eritrea have modified the notion of *jihad*, the development in Somalia has been quite opposite. The early history of Islamism in Somalia reveals that the early groupings were divided between those affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood and those inspired by Saudi-oriented Salafism (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 2). The former were focused on awareness-raising, education and seeking social change, while the latter was devoted to reforms in the religious sphere. Al-Islah, the main Muslim Brotherhood associated group, has continued this gradualist approach, rejected the use of violence and come to embrace the concept of liberal democracy. The Salafis are still committed to the quest of purifying Islam, but have at the same time moved in the direction of armed struggle with the notion of *jihad* as a point of reference.

Within the AIAI, the question of armed struggle, arising in the early 1990s, created some internal disagreements. As former Somali Afghan-fighters increased their influence, and when Hassan Dahir ascended to the leadership in 1993, the militants got the upper hand. AIAI then adopted an explicit Political Islamist program, aimed at establishing an Islamic state governed by the principles of *shari'a*. Although there were frequent references to the notion of *jihad,* and in spite of being listed as a terrorist group by the US, AIAI "never spelled out an international terrorist agenda" (Marchal 2004: 140).

While the UIC's expansion from the middle of the 1990s was widely seen as a clear evidence of the creeping influence of Islamism in Somalia, the movement was highly heterogeneous, drawing its support from a wide array of disparate constituencies (Sufis, Salafis, the business community and adherents of the Muslim Brotherhood). Loosely organised, in which the various courts retained their own disparate ideological preferences, there were only a few that could be characterised as radical Islamists. The establishment of the Joint Islamic Courts Council in 2000 enabled, however, the Islamists to increase their influence. Hassan Dahir Aweys, who had set up several courts in western Mogadishu and Merka, ascended to the leadership, and managed to disseminate an ideology similar to that of AIAI. This produced tensions within the movement, which surfaced in 2004-2006 between the accommodating wing led by the Chairman of UIC's Executive Council, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and the militant fraction led by Hassan Dahir Aweys.[32] This conflict continued in the course of developments leading up to the Ethiopian intervention in 2006, in which Sheikh Sharif was favourable to negotiations with the TFG and opposed to any attacks against it.

A noticeable aspect of Somali Islamism has been its merger with pan-Somali nationalism. Seen from AIAI's early involvement in the struggle in Ogaden and their links to ONLF, this engagement was clearly motivated by the aim of uniting the Ethiopian Somali-inhabited

[32] Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the current president of the TFG is an interesting figure. As a religious scholar and a declared Sufi formerly associated with the Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a, he was clearly at odds with Hassan Dahir Aweys.

territory with Somalia. It was similarly evident in the developments leading up to the Ethiopian intervention in 2006. Whereas the word *jihad* was used, the nationalist sentiment was clear in Hassan Dahir Aweys famous "*jihad* statement" on the 17 November 2006, saying that "We will leave no stone unturned to integrate our Somali brothers in Kenya and Ethiopia and restore their freedom to live with their ancestors in Somalia" (Mohammed Olad Hassan 2006). Echoing the idea of "Greater Somalia",[33] the religious dimension added to the fervour, in which the Ethiopians were both seen as representing the Somali archenemy and portrayed as infidels intruding upon a Muslim population. It was less about waging a global *jihad,* but more about retaining Somali independence and uniting the Somali people under a Somali Islamic state. The Ethiopian intervention in December 2006 thus managed to "revive a vibrant Somali nationalism" (Marchal 2009: 392), and enabled the Islamist groups to attract a large number of Somali youth during 2006. In contrast, when the Ethiopian forces left Somalia in January 2009, most of these left the struggle.

The nationalistic aspect is particularly evident within the Hizb al-Islam. Its leader, Hassan Dahir Aweys have criticised the involvement of foreign jihadists, and called for national unity (Bruton 2010: 11). Although he has been calling for the establishment of an Islamic state, terms such as "freedom", "nationhood" and "independence" are more prominent in his rhetoric – having clear references to Ethiopian involvement in Somali affairs (Weinstein 2009). Although Hizb al-Islam has been determined to oust the TFG, it has been more accommodating and welcomed TFG's decision to implement *shari'a* in Somalia (see below).

The issues of nationalism and Islamism would obviously be related to that of clanism. Representing a highly complex dimension of Somali society, it would be beyond the scope of this study to embark on a lengthy discussion of this aspect. Whereas most of the Islamist actors, from AIAI, UIC to al-Shabaab have tried to surpass the clan as the basis for organisation, clanism has, however, proved to be of lasting relevance, impinging on the Islamists attempts to produce an Islamic point of orientation. In some cases, Islamists groups have remained confined within a particular clan constituency – obviously restricting their range of influence. Al-Shabaab, for example, emerged out of Habar Gir/Air sub-clan, and although it has sought to broaden its constituency, this sub-clan is still dominating much of the leadership (Marchal 2009: 395; Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State 2008). In other cases, where Islamist groups established territorial control, they were often forced to rely on existing clan-structures to secure their power (Holzer 2008: 27).

Influenced by figures with fighting-experience from Afghanistan and who allegedly had been involved in terror attacks within the Horn, the al-Shabaab embraced a Salafi-Jihadist ideology, framed its struggle more explicitly within a jihadi narrative and, as we will return to, made allegiance to al-Qaida. Informed by developments in areas such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, their struggle against TFG, the Ethiopian forces and the AU peacekeepers (AMISOM) was seen as a prolongation of a war against the US and Western forces (Marchal 2009: 388). There are, however, some disagreement about the prominence of *jihad* within al-Shabaab and whether the leadership is united over this issue. While Michael Taarnby and Lars Hallundbaek (2010) underscores *jihad* as cemented within al-Shabaab, Marchal (2009) sees the movement as far more heterogeneous, and claims that there is a clear discrepancy between the leadership's view and that of the movement's rank-and-file.

So far, the jihadi struggle has been directed towards the Ethiopian forces and the TFG. We will return to the question of al-Qaida connections, which has complicated the issue of *jihad*

[33] This idea was first formulated by the Somali Youth League in the 1920s, and was based upon the notion that the formation of a Somali nation could only be made possible with the unification of the former Italian, British and French colonies and the Somali-inhabited portions of Ethiopia and Kenya (Touval 1963: 2, 86f.).

in Somalia. Although further investigations are needed, it is reasonable to suggest that this notion would not gain wide support among the Somali populace. This seems also to be acknowledged by the al-Shabaab leadership. Statements forwarded by the al-Shabaab*'s* spokesman, Sheikh Mukthar Robow in an interview with Al-Jazeera on March 3 2009, reveal a position that can be categorised as strategic pragmatism. Still committed to implementing *shari'a,* fighting Western forces and to the establishment of an Islamic state, he said that the latter goal was something that would happen in stages and that it would not happen in the near future. He also stressed the need of "not go ahead of the people", and advised against measures, such as the destruction of shrines, possibly turning people away from them (Weinstein 2009).

Recent reports have also suggested increasing tensions have emerged within the al-Shabaab, particularly after the bombing of a graduation ceremony of medical students at Shamo hotel in Mogadishu December 2009 (Somalia Ministers Killed by Hotel Suicide Bomb 2009). The incident which killed 25 people (including 3 ministers from TFG) was condemned by the Somalis in general, as well as by certain elements within al-Shabaab, which reacted to the killing of civilian Somalis. According to a report from the Monitoring Group on Somalia, there is a growing division within the leadership; one faction determined to the waging of *jihad,* and another more open to political engagement and dialogue (2010: 14). Another report has even claimed that al-Shabaab has split into two, leading to the formation of a group called Milatu Ibrahim (Somalia: Al-Shabaab Split into two Groups 2010). Very little is so far known about this development, yet it seems that the foreign jihadists have joined the group, and that it has caused a rift between Ahmed Godane and Ibrahim Jama Afghani, two leading figures within al-Shabaab.[34]

Ideological boundaries in Somalia have, as noted by Marchal, often been fluid in the sense that "sympathisers may shift from one group to the other" (2004: 127). Important reasons for this would be the continuant loyalties to the clans-structure – competing with that of religious affiliation – the issue of warlordism and the manners in which the civil-war has impinged on the establishment of lasting structures within the Islamist movement. While this situation may have affected ideological boundaries in a conventional sense, a perhaps more fruitful approach would be to view this as a process of localisation and to explore how the particular social reality produce additional ideological categories, generate other boundaries and influence the demarcation of these.

3.1.4 Sudan: The Role of Islamism in the Reshaping of Sudan

While the main focus of the more conservative Islamists was on *dawa* activities, the approach and strategy of the ICF was clearly different from the other conservative religious groups – as it was more political oriented. However, it was also different from the Muslim Brotherhood, in the sense that the ICF called for an Islamic state first, while the Muslim Brotherhood's priority was an Islamic society.[35]

The projects of creating an Islamic constitution based solely on the Sharia Law and an Islamic state in Sudan were well elaborated in a political program of ICF. Although the other religious

[34] Some have argued that the two are divided over the question of foreign involvement, with Afghani as the rallying point for the foreign jihadists, and with Godane advocating a stronger nationalist-Islamist agenda (Shabab's Mixed Message 2010). Others claim that the rift is structured according to clan-differences (Somalia: Al-Shabaab Split into two Groups 2010).

[35] In regard to this period, it is important to mention that most of the figures of the Muslim Brotherhood were fundamentally opposed and hostile to the person of al-Turabi and his political ambitions. Yet, there were never any open confrontations.

groups and the two conservative parties referred to Sharia and certainly longed for an Islamic State (particularly the formers), they never formulated these in an explicit political program and none of them had a clear common definition of what an Islamic State would be.

Being represented in the Parliament during 1964-69, the ICF called and lobbied for an Islamic constitution. The ideological and political battle was mainly against the then powerful Sudan Communist Party (SCP). Together with the Unionist Party and the Oumma Party, all three succeeded in banning the SCP. This was a major achievement for the ICF.

The Islamists were also part of the grand coalition of opposition parties in exile that carried the struggle during the 70s against the military regime of Nemeiri (1969-85). Throughout the 1970s, the Islamists set out to implement their discrete strategy of empowerment. Empowerment soon became a watchword which meant the progressive control of the vital sectors of the society and state: economy, the army and the legal sphere with the ultimate aim to control the State (Al-Turabi 1995). The opening of Nemeiri's regime towards the opposition (National Reconciliation) in late 1970s allowed the Islamists to operate more freely. Al-Turabi was appointed General Attorney, a position which contributed largely to the Islamisation of the banking system. By the early 1980s, the group managed to build their financial empire (Islamic Banks and Investments Companies) and succeeded to infiltrate the army.[36]

As part of the grand coalition in the end of the 1980s, the NIF targeted the key position of the Ministry of Justice, and accepted to exempt the South from the jurisdiction of the *shari'a*. This represented a significant shift from the Islamists' initial intransigent position of the 1960s which was an Islamic Constitution and order for the entire Sudan. Yet, an internal strategy document on Southern Sudan conflict spelled out explicitly the exclusivist position and strategy of the party: the resolution of the conflict was either Islamisation of the South or military victory. The unyielding rhetoric of Islamists during this period thus added a religious dimension to the conflict with SPLM, and reinforced, on the other hand, the ideological stance and secular rhetoric of the Southern regionalism. The project and ideology of "New secular and Socialist Sudan that acknowledges its African identity on equal grounds with its Arab identity" of John Garang, the leader and founder of SPLM in 1983 was then born. The ideological confrontation between these two projects of society, "New Sudan" and "Islamic Order" was at its peak. The secularism of the SPLM was shared openly by leftist trends, the SCP and Baath Party that did not have any significant political weight.

After seizing power in 1989, the Islamists were able to implement their political program: *shari'a* was declared the law of the country, federalism was adopted and allowed Southern Sudan to be exempted from Islamic laws; yet Sudanese youth was mobilised in the name of *jihad* to fight the SPLM. Broad efforts were made in order to eliminate opposition parties and figures from administration and to ensure tight control over the society and public space. Moreover, an aggressive foreign policy provided support to active Islamist groups and figures (Hamas, Osama Bin Laden) and produced a vehement religious rhetoric that portrayed the West as the enemy of Islam.

Islamism in the post conflict "New Sudan" has been profoundly affected by the signing in 2005 of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), between the ruling party, the National Congress Party (NCP), and the Sudan Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM/A). The

[36] In spite of this growing influence, it is important to mention two important historical facts: the Islamists were not behind the decision of President Nemeiri to adopt and impose the contested Sharia Laws (the September-laws); and the emergence of SPLM/A in the South was not due to the September-laws but rather because of the decision of the regime to disregard the political autonomy of Southern Sudan.

constraints of running the state, the struggle to survive as a regime (and as a dominant group), the pressure of the international community and the new political realities and dynamics caused by the CPA, are all factors which have seriously impinged on the Islamist ideology. Consequently, relations between state and religion, the status of religion in the public and political spheres as well as the morphology of political Islam (actors, strategies and objectives) have all been affected.

The CPA served, on the one hand, as a moderating factor for groups such as the NCP (see below), yet led, on the other hand, to the politicisation of other religious groups and to the re-shaping of religious actors becoming increasingly engaged in the public sphere. In essence, all major religious groups such as Muslim Brotherhood, Ansar al-Suna, minor Salafi trends like the Liberal Islamic Party and more radical Salafi figures are against the CPA because it relegates the status of Islam and defines citizenship on the basis of equal rights and duties of all Sudanese irrespective of their religion. All these groups continue to hold on to radical positions, but with the exception of some Salafi figures and the Liberal Islamic Party, they never express them vehemently in public. The Ansar al-Sunna group, which were essentially opposed to politics, has pushed their members into the Government of National Unity and been active at the local level. The group nominated some of its leading figures at the local level for the 2010 elections, while the leadership at the same time publically declared its support to the NCP's candidates.

The process of moderation has led to reactions from well-known uncompromising Salafi intellectuals who are leading religious institutions such as the Religious League of Ulama and/or occupying key positions in main universities. Both the Association of Ulama of Sudan and the Religious League of Ulama have adopted exclusivist positions inciting violence and excommunication (*takfir*) towards groups such as the SCP and the SPLM (and all those who support them). They have also attacked the benchmarks of the CPA; such as the right for self-determination and elections. "Spreading Islam in Southern Sudan is a duty of every Muslim" is the priority. Yet, there has not been active political campaigning or lobbying against the referendum which is widely believed to lead to the separation of Southern Sudan.

These Salafi groups and figures remain, however, a minority within the religio-political landscape. In spite of their radical public positions, they are not hostile to the NCP who manage successfully to control and appease them by co-opting them in many newly created bodies. Following the episode of indictment of al-Bahir by the International Criminal Court, the Association of Ulama of Sudan has even issued a *fatwa* stating that travelling outside the country of al-Bashir constitutes a threat to his life. Although the Religious League of Ulama headed by Dr Abd al-Kareem has ties with similar Salafi groups and figures, particularly in Saudi Arabia, an active and wide-scale involvement with these is most unlikely.[37] The NCP is perfectly conscious that such activism is not of their interest to remain in power.

In reaction to this development, the Islamic Centrist Party (ICP) emerged in 2004, founded by Youssif al-Koda – a lawyer and a political activist once belonging to the Ansar al-Sunna group.[38] The ideology of the ICP is "to re-consider Political Islam in Sudan, to counter religious extremism and radicalism, to diffuse the culture of religious moderation and centrism among Muslims and to empower women who represent an inescapable political

[37] It is strongly believed that he receives funds from the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. What is certain is that he has important support from well known Salafi figures in these countries. The late declaration in which the right for self determination is ex-communicated was signed by many Salafi intellectuals from these countries.
[38] His brother is a member of the NCP and was appointed Commissioner of the locality of Khartoum till 2008. He belongs to a family who is a follower of Khatmyyia Brotherhood.

force".[39] Although it is a party which refers to Islam and to the Islamic heritage, the party leaders confirm that its membership is open to non Muslims as well. For the party leader, the ICP represents "the silent majority" which is the moderate and tolerant majority of Muslims.

3.2 ISLAMISM AND THE POLITICAL REGIMES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The strength of governments and the degree of political stability are obviously important for the leeways and operational space for Islamist groups. An inclusive political climate could at the outset increase the influence of Islamism, whereas regimes' hostile attitudes to such movements – which often are the case – encumber upon their manoeuvring ground, and produces a situation of marginalisation which in the next round could spur increased radicalisations and tensions. Strong regimes would manage to control unwanted movements, whereas lack of functional governments creates an environment in which informal power structures flourish. Countries like Eritrea and Ethiopia are examples of the former case, and the collapsed state of Somalia a case in point of the latter.

3.2.1 Djibouti: Containing the Spill-over from Somalia

Djibouti constitutes a relatively stable part of the Horn, although recent domestic political events may threaten this stability.[40] Much of this is due to the French military presence and to the CJFT-HOA bases. The regime is, because of the country's location and the porous borders with Somalia, well-aware of the risk of Islamist activities and concerned with potential spill-over effects from its southern neighbour. Djibouti's intelligence service is therefore continuously monitoring developments in the different parts of Somalia, a task being coordinated with the US-led forces. At the same time, the regime in Djibouti has embarked on a strategy of seeking to mend the political crisis in Somalia. It has been continually engaged in Somali issues, playing an active role brokering the Arta peace agreement and in the negotiations between the ARS and the TFG in 2008.

As far as the potential presence of Djiboutian Islamism is concerned, the regime's policy is a mix of controlling and accommodating religious movements. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments provides subsidises for mosques and pays the salaries for imams. The regime is, on the other hand, strongly opposed to what they see as Islamic "fundamentalism and an efficient internal security apparatus keeps a close watch on the movements of radical groups" (Rabasa 2009: 14, 30).

3.2.2 Eritrea: Totalitarianism and Religious Freedom

Independent Eritrea was in the early 1990s viewed with much optimism. Preparations and promises for a new democratic future was much welcomed and created clear expectations among the people. EPFL, which became People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) in 1994, forwarded a policy recognising the country's ethnic, linguistic and religious mixture, yet underscored, at the same time the notion of Eritreanness – a common national ideology emphasising "unity in diversity", largely created through the struggle for independence. This diversity was enshrined in the (not yet implemented) constitution, which with regard to religion guarantied every person's right of belief (Art 19.1) and the freedom to practice any

[39] Interview with Youssif al-Koda, in February 2010.
[40] The President is seeking a third term in office, which together with other political grievances and the lingering Afar-Issa conflict, has sparked political protest (see http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2010/06/deteriorating-political-atmosphere-in.html).

religion (Art 19.4). As far as the Muslims were concerned, this new political climate led to a revitalisation of Muslim life and institutions. The Office of the *Mufti* was reopened, *shari'a* courts were reinstated and religious schools and institutes were established (Miran 2005: 213).

The optimistic atmosphere was, however, gradually subdued by disappointments as the regime in Asmara increasingly was restricting democratic rights. Described as the "worst of the worst" and listed as the world's most repressive regimes in 2009, its movement towards increased totalitarianism has austerely limited the space of the civil society – including the religious communities (Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies 2009). Under the new provisions, the regime is currently recognising only two religions; Islam and Christianity (in addition to adherents of traditional beliefs) and three Christian denominations; the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Eritrean Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Catholic Church.[41] Followers of other denominations, such as the Jehova's Witnesses have been harassed, imprisoned and tortured. Whereas the repressions of Christians are fairly well-documented, less is known about measures towards Muslims. Some few incidents have been reported, yet little is said about their background, context and consequences. In 1994, when Eritrea broke off its diplomatic relations with Sudan, a number of Muslims were arrested in Keren and elsewhere in Eritrea. Similar events took place in 2001 and in 2005; young males were arrested and accused of harbouring "Wahhabi" (Salafi) ideas (Eritrea: Religious Persecution 2005). The latest incidence took place in 2008, when over 30 Muslim elders and religious leaders were arrested in Senafe town. The reason behind these arrests and the whereabouts of the detainees are still not known (Tronvoll 2009: 92). Similarly, little is known about the situation for the *shari'a* courts and Muslim religious institutions. It is likely to assume that their freedom is severely curtailed by the regime.

The regime's policy towards the Muslim population must obviously be seen in relation to the existence of Islamist movements. Whereas these groups (as described above) do not pose any immediate threat to the regime, the authorities are cautious about any potential linkages between these groups and the Muslim population. It would be imperative to follow the religio-political development in Eritrea closely, as there is a pertinent risk that continued suppression and marginalisation could easily spur growing radicalisation that eventually could boomerang on the regime. Recent trends in the Eritrean diaspora signals a stronger degree of political consciousness among the Muslim Eritreans; demanding that the Eritrean second republic must accommodate the lowland Muslim groups' aspirations for power (Tronvoll 2009b). The fragile situation is exacerbated by the Eritrean regime's support to Islamist movements in the region, most notably in Somalia. Contradictory in terms, and intersected with the geo-political situation in the Horn, this policy has led to increased isolation from the international (Western) community and brought the regime into closer contacts with countries like Iran. If the country becomes more dependent on support from such sources, and if Asmara becomes a hub for a variety of regionally-based Islamist opposition movements, this would potentially have severe impact both on Eritrea and the region as such (Kfir 2008: 837).

3.2.3 Ethiopia: Guarded Religious Tolerance & Monitoring Islam

As already noted, EPRDF's policies aimed at securing the rights of the country's many ethnic and religious groups, proved favourable for the Muslims' engagement in the public. It spurred the formations of Muslim organisations, newspapers and magazines and brought Muslims to assume governmental and administrative positions. Whereas these developments went

[41] Religious freedom was severely curtailed in the wake of the 2001 political crackdown, and in 2002 all religious groups had to register in order to operate in the country (Tronvoll 2009: 96).

relatively unchecked in the first half of the 1990s, the years 1995 and, to some degree, 1996 became a watershed for organised Muslim activities.

The regime had already showed signs of concern over increased religious activism, which they perceived to be a trend of politicisation of Islam. This fear was amplified by the demonstration in November 1994, when Muslims demanded that the *sharia* should be included as one of the bases for the national constitution.[42] Three incidents in the years that followed would augment this concern and cause the regime to reassert its policy towards Islam. When worshippers at the al-Anwar mosque in Addis Ababa clashed with the police on 21 February 1995, leaving nine people killed and over one hundred wounded, the regime used this as an opportunity to crack down on the movements within the Muslim community.[43] In the following days, hundreds of Muslims were imprisoned, suspected of involvement, and on the 22nd of February, armed police surrounded the offices of the Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association. All those present were arrested, and the offices were closed. The situation worsened after a failed assassination attempt against the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak during his visit to Addis Ababa on the 26th of June the same year. Five of the attackers were killed on the spot, and it was later learned that the Egyptian organisation Jama'a al-Islamiyya, allegedly with the assistance of Sudan, was responsible for the assassination attempt.[44] The incident led to continued arrests, and to the extradition of Egyptian and Sudanese nationals.[45] In addition, the bomb attacks by AIAI on Ethiopian soil from May 1995 to April 1996 – and Ethiopia's retaliation – clearly fuelled the tensions.

The regime's reactions deprived the Muslims of much of the public space they had acquired since 1991, and with the closure of Islamic organisations, it left the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) to emerge as the sole actor claiming to represent the Muslim population as a whole.[46] The council's close links with the regime and its vast apparatus has effectively enabled the government to monitor and control developments within the Muslim community, and the council has on its side proved to be a loyal instrument in curbing unwanted movements – in particular the Salafi movement. In January 2004, EIASC voted to remove all the executive members of the council, replacing them with staunch anti-Salafis. Interesting to note is that the voting session was attended by a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[47] The hegemonic position of the EIASC has consequently impinged on the possibilities of forming alternative organisations, which has contributed to the highly informal and de-institutionalised character of contemporary Ethiopian Islam. This has in turn enhanced the importance of the mosque, which to a certain degree represents

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[42] The Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association was important in organising the demonstration, which also included several other demands forwarded to the Prime Minister (Muslims Stage Huge Demonstration 1995; Muslims Stage Mammoth Rally 1995).

[43] The incident seems to have been spurred by internal rivalry within the Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (Abbink 1998: 118; Hussein Ahmed 2006: 17).

[44] This was according to reports in *Addis Zemen*, 27 June and 5 July (1995) and in *Africa Confidential,* 7 June (1995).

[45] A prominent figure among the arrested was Siraj Muhammed Hussein, a Sudanese national. He was said to be affiliated to the Addis Ababa branch of Moafak al-Hariya (Blessed Relief), a Sudanese agency. See "Calling the Shots after Addis Ababa" in *Africa Confidential* 7 July (1995).

[46] EIASC was de facto formed in 1975, and formally established in 1991. It has since been restructured several times.

[47] The reshuffling of the council was presented to the public by a well-orchestrated media campaign, where former members of the council were accused of intending to spend four million Saudi Riyals to influence the council. The executive members of the council were consequently dismissed on charges of corruption. See "Members of the Majlis for Ethiopia's Islamic Affairs have been Dismissed" in *The Monitor* (2004) and "Wahhabis have been Active in Ethiopia Using 4 Million Riyals for the Majlis Elections" in *The Reporter* (2003). According to informants close to the council, the ghost of Salafism has repeatedly been used as an excuse in settling various quarrels among its members.

closed space for the authorities – paradoxically reducing the regime's possibility to monitor the movements of the Islamic community. Realising this, the regime issued in 2009 a registration-form to the country's mosques, ordering them to submit information on how they are run, on the sources for income and whether the mosque is linked to any outside donors.[48]

The Ethiopian policy on religious affairs has moreover been coloured by its intervention into Somalia. While it was based on a concern for the growth of Islamism in Somalia, the regime was also conscious about the potential effects this could have on its own Muslim population (Barnes and Hassan 2007: 4; Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead 2007: 4f.). Ethiopia has a long history of meddling into Somali affairs, and has since the inception of the civil-war sought out allies in its efforts to counterweight the formation of a unified Somalia. From being aligned with secularist movements, i.e. clan-based warlords, it is interesting to note Ethiopia's increasing support to Islamist groupings; through the backing of the TFG under Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and through the brokering of the deal between the TFG and the ASWJ early in 2010 (see below). Two reasons for this can be suggested. First, Ethiopia see the merger of TFG and ASJW as important in the struggle against the militant Islamists. Secondly, the ideological features of ASWJ fit into the Ethiopian regime's binary perception of contemporary Islam, in which the group is seen as representing "home-grown" Islam; tolerant, inclusive, peaceful and in contrast to the intolerant and expansive agenda of the Islamist insurgents. The same perspective is used on the domestic scene, where the Salafis particularly are perceived as representing "foreign" Islam. In its efforts to marginalise the movement, the regime has provided symbolic and concrete support for the Sufi-oriented Muslims.[49] The regime's involvement in generating augmented intra-religious polarisation, coupled with the stigmatisation of one group over the other, clearly augments the potential for increased radicalisation.

The regime's measures towards the Muslim communities have increased from 2009. No information on the background and reasons for this is available, but it seems that regional instability, increased inter-religious tensions and Muslim student-demonstrations against restrictions on religious practices in institutions of higher learning have produced a tense situation. Neither do we know much about the actual actions taken. Unconfirmed reports claim that the security apparatus issued a list of nearly 100 Muslims to be arrested,[50] and on 23 February 2009, the regime issued a ban on all Muslim religious activities which had not been approved on beforehand by the EIASC.[51] Another case was the January 2010 arrest of Ezedin Muhammed, the editor of the Muslim newspaper al-Quds, for criticising the prime minister's characterisation of Ethiopia as "Orthodox Christian".[52]

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[48] Although the order was formally issued by EIASC (letter to the district Islamic Affairs Bureaus, 25 March 2009), there is no doubt that the real force behind it was the regime. The registration-form is available at http://blog.ethiopianmuslims.net/negashi/?p=353, accessed 29 April 2010.

[49] A case in point is the authorities' involvement in the development of the Sheikh Hussein shrine in Bale; building new roads, installing electricity and portable water. Also interesting is the donation of US$ 25 600 by the US embassy for the preservation of the shrine (Awareness Creation on Cultural Preservation in Dire Sheikh Hussein 2005).

[50] These have been posted on the website http://blog.ethiopianmuslims.net/negashi/ saying that the regime in February/March 2009 planned to carry out a massive campaign against the Muslims.

[51] "Information on the decrees made by the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council", letter from EIASC, 23 February 2009.

[52] Ezedin Muhammed had, together with Maria Kadim (publisher of al-Quds) and Ibrahim Muhammed Ali (editor of Salafiyya), been arrested in February 2008 for criticising the restrictions on religious practices in public schools (Ethiopia: Third newspaper editor jailed 2010).

3.2.4 Somalia: TFG's Version of Islamism

Obviously, the many unsuccessful attempts to establish a central government in Somalia and the limited legitimacy and lack of territorial control these failed regimes have held, makes it difficult to speak of consistent governmental policies towards Islamism. However, as actors claim representative power and are empowered and recognised internationally, they have become intrinsically involved in the religious discourse. This has certainly been the case both for the TNG and the TFG; formulating policies on religion and/or becoming targets for Islamist insurgents.

There are different opinions on the connections between the TNG and Islamism. Some have seen the strong influence of people from the al-Islah movement as proof of TNG's Islamist character, claiming that the al-Islah in fact was identical to AIAI (Medhane Tadesse 2002).[53] Far more convincing are the readings by Marchal (2004) and André Le Sage (2004), who although confirming the influence of al-Islah, argue that the TNG did not have a clear Islamist agenda. The TNG represented a far wider constituency, and consisted only of a limited number of al-Islah members (Le Sage 2004: 173). It should be noted, moreover, that the al-Islah was, as already discussed, by then harbouring an Islamist ideology which favoured democratisation and political liberalisation.

The TFG held from the start an explicit anti-Islamist stand. Its first president, Abdullahi Yusuf, who previously had been active in fighting the AIAI from his home in Puntland, resented the expansion of the UIC. He deliberately played out the terrorist card for attracting the attention of the West, portraying the fragile government as encroached by jihadi forces. The fact was that he saw the growing influence of Islamism as a threat to his (Darod) clan-based power, and his position became overtly clear when he "invited" Ethiopian troops to assist TGF in overthrowing the UIC in 2006.

The election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as TFG's new president in January 2009 gave signal of a development in an Islamist direction (Preston McGhie 2010: 20f.). His first move was to set up an *ulama* council, which was intended to serve as a religious authority providing moral leadership to the people. Represented by some of the most respected Islamic scholars in Somalia, it has (without much success) tried to mediate between the TFG and the different Islamist insurgents, and played a decisive role in the adoption of *shari'a* as the basis for legal system in March 2010 (Anonymous 2010: 96f.). The introduction of *shari'a* was met with scepticism from the outside as well as from many Somalis. Although Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed have assured that it would not be the "strict version forwarded by al-Shabaab, but a more "modern variant" (Weinstein 2009), very little is known about the background and context for this move; whether it was done to accommodate the Islamist insurgents, or if reflected a genuine TGF policy. Neither do we know much about the practical consequences, the juridical aspects, how *shari'a* in fact is implemented and how this is perceived by the general population.

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has, on the one hand, stated his willingness to engage the Islamist insurgents in negotiations, yet has, on the other hand, been determined to fight them. Portraying them as foreign intruders, as terrorists associated with *al-Qaida,* he has moreover denounced alleged statements from *al-Qaida,* saying that since it "has not given us any support so I urge them to leave us alone" (Hoehne 2009: 24). TFG has during this spring (2010) repeatedly announced the launching of a major offensive against the Islamist insurgents. It has secured support from the EU in training of soldiers, as well as help from

[53] The study of Medhane Tadesse should be treated with some caution. In addition to the numerous factual errors, the views presented are to a large extent congruent to those of the Ethiopian regime.

Kenya, said to secretly be preparing Somali youth for battle. The offensive is, however, yet to be launched.

The ASWJ, which shares TFG's objectives in fighting the al-Shabaab has until recently operated independent of the governmental forces. Yet, on 15 March 2010, after long and difficult negotiations, brokered (and pressured) by Ethiopia, AU and the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), the two signed an agreement of cooperation in Addis Ababa.[54] The agreement soon brought rifts within the ASJW, allegedly between more secularist military leaders and a "clerical fraction" consisting of religious scholars. The former fraction has been characterised by the latter as warlords, seeking to reap personal benefits from the agreement, while the latter has opposed the agreement because they see the TFG as harbouring what they call Wahhabi ideas similar to the al-Shabaab (No to the Tripartite Plot: Islamist Government Soon to Come: Part II 2010).[55] Adding to the unclear picture is the familiar pattern of divisions along clan-lines. It would be important to closely monitor further developments in order to determine what implications the agreement may have.

3.2.5 Sudan: Islamism as State Policy

Sudan is different from other parts of the region as Islamism from 1989 was explicitly integrated into politics, making Sudan one of the few examples of an Islamist run state. However, internal divisions within the political leadership, the ongoing civil-war, the conflict in Darfur and the future organisation of the country are all factors which have affected the trajectory of Sudanese Islamism.

Attempts to introduce the *shari'a* were made prior to 1989, with the adoption of the so-called September-laws by President Nimeiri in 1983. Although the laws remained *de facto* unapplied, it paved the way for a stronger inclusion of an Islamist ideology into the legal sphere, seen for example by the definition of apostasy as a crime in the Penal Law.[56] It also created an intense political debate among politicians, religious leaders and intellectuals on the issues of *shari'a* and the Islamic state. The two conservative parties were in favor of suspending the September-laws and instead organise an inclusive national dialogue to debate the issue, while the Islamists called for a revision of the controversial September-laws version. During this period, the NIF represented the radical force in the political spectrum of Sudan, backed by the main religious groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, Ansar al-Sunna (although completely apolitical) and many Salafi intellectual figures.[57]

After seizing power in 1989 and implementing an Islamist political program, the ideological effervescence and zeal of Islamism followed over the years a different course as the Islamist regime was confronted with the constraints of ruling within a hostile regional environment and maintaining its domination in relation to international public opinion. The "New Sudan" of today is neither what the Islamists nor the SPLM imagined. It is a society which has experienced twenty years of civil war and a totalitarian regime, an untamed policy of economic liberalisation without any parallel development plans, serious factional competitions among the leading parties in the North and South and mounting international pressure. Islamism was at the heart of these mutations and has thus significantly changed.

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[54] There were also other agreements made, in late 2009 and on 15 February 2010.
[55] It has later been reported that the disagreements within ASWJ have been solved, yet it needs to be seen whether the agreement will last.
[56] The law allowed the execution of the leader of the Republican Brothers, Mahmoud M.Taha thus putting an end to his very rich reformist trend.
[57] For details of the position of these groups towards the Islamist regime, see Ahmed (2007).

The first significant outcome of the above mentioned factors is the retreat of ideology in favour of political pragmatism. This is absolutely not to conclude that Islam does not play a key role in political and public spheres. It remains (and will remain) the main source of domination and legitimacy of the main political forces, and the main source of social norms in Northern Sudan. However, it is the religion's exclusivity which is in question today.

In terms of State structure, Sudan is presently governed by the CPA. The Interim National Constitution is based on this agreement, which limits the implementation of *shari'a* to Northern Sudan only, while "Popular consensus, values and customs of people of Sudan" are the source of legislation in the South.[58] In fact, the CPA places *shari'a* on equal grounds with other sources of legislations, and by accepting the principle of one State, two systems (i.e. a state which is not exclusively associated to Islam), it represents a significant concession from the Islamists' ultimate objective and a non-negotiable principle. Readjusting their view on Islam's exclusive status in society arguably reflects an acknowledgement of the political reality, and that changes were needed for the regime to survive.

In relation to the political sphere, Islamism was seriously affected by the division that occurred in 1999 that led to the formation of a new party in 2000, the Popular Congress Party (PCP). This also reflects the marginalisation of al-Turabi who initiated the party. Although, the PCP does not have a political weight and could not by any means compete with the NCP, the split has nevertheless symbolically seriously damaged the credibility of the Islamists trend within the Sudanese society.

From an ideological perspective, the NCP and PCP express less religious dogmatism when it comes to the issues of the Islamic state and the role of *shari'a*. The issues of self-determination and the conflict in Darfur have created new realities and priorities which were clearly reflected in the two parties' recent electoral campaigns, and which consequently have placed them more at the centre of the political spectrum. Within this spectrum, the most radical populist party is the newly born Forum for Just Peace, of Al-Tayeb Mustapha. Although, he is a well known ex-member of the NCP and of the NIF, we cannot conclude that his party in fact represents Islamism. Moreover, the CPA legitimises the SPLM as the principal partner of the NCP and as an important political force to be taken into consideration. The entry of the SPLM in the political scene as the main secular party have enforced (although relatively) the secular currents but most importantly has resulted in de-sacralising of the rhetoric of the NCP.[59] In this regard, the political realism of NCP is also significantly perceptible in the sphere of foreign policy. The policy of 1990s of supporting Islamist movements is abandoned to the benefit of a more cooperative policy with the West on the issue of terrorism.

The status of Islamism in Sudan in the very near future will depend further on the outcome of referendum scheduled to take place in early 2011. If the outcome is in favor of unity (which is most unlikely), the current status of political autonomy of Southern Sudan and the state structure will continue per the CPA. One might expect that the issue of religion could be an issue of controversy particularly in the capital Khartoum where there is an important community of non Muslims (although there is a special Commission for the Protection of the Rights on Non Muslims in the North). In this case, some of the religious groups mentioned above are expected to be more politically active. If the result of vote is in favour of division (which is most likely), the intensity of the debate over Islamism will be less as the political

[58] This was according to article 3.2.3 in the Machakos Protocol, signed 20 July 2002.
[59] It is interesting to see how the 2010 electoral campaign of President al-Bashir, the NCP candidate and other Islamist leaders emphasised the government's economic (infrastructure and public services projects) and political (the CPA) achievements as well as the sovereignty of Sudan against external threats.

sphere will be entirely dominated by conservative groups. In addition, the recent political history of Sudan is well illustrative of the limits of the alliances between the traditional conservative parties and leftists parties. However, the issue of non-Muslims Southerners will remain a matter of concern (but also that of Muslims in Northern Sudan). Yet, this will depend on the quality of negotiations on the post referendum arrangements between the NCP and SPLM which includes this important issue for the stability of both entities. It will also depend on how NCP and SPLM will manage extreme religious groups on both sides. In both scenarios, Islamism in Sudan will definitely have to be-redefined.

3.3 AREAS IN NEED OF FURTHER RESEARCH

- The role of Islam in the struggle for independence and the potential impact on contemporary politics in Eritrea
- The trajectory of Eritrean Islamism and its ideological development
- The Eritrean regime's policy towards Muslims and Muslim institutions, with particular focus on the human rights situation
- Processes of re-defining the Eritrean "second republic" among Muslim Eritreans in diaspora, with demands of greater Muslim representation in political power
- The Ethiopian Islamists' views on political power in general, and their attitudes towards the current regime in particular
- The ideological features of the Takfir wal Hijrah group; its perception of politics and self-understanding in relation to the wider Ethiopian society
- The recent measures taken by the Ethiopian regime towards Muslim actors, and the background for these actions
- The ideological features of the main Islamist actors in Somalia; with particular reference to the notion of global *jihad* and to the aim of establishing an Islamic political order
- The organisational structures and ideological coherency of Somali Islamist groups
- The relationship between Islamism, clanism and Somali nationalism
- TFG's self-understanding in relation to Islam, with particular reference to the introduction of *shari'a*
- The impact of CPA on Sudanese Islamism; assessing potential moderations of the regime and the emergence of new actors
- The role Islamism in relation to the Sudanese referendum; the prospect of secularisation and the possible acceptance of alternative ideologies

4 ISLAMISM AND THE PUBLIC IN THE HORN

Restricting the discussion of Islamism in the Horn merely to state-power and state-institutions would not have rendered full justice to the complexity of the picture. As an additional dimension, Islamists of all three categories have through their presence and activities also made decisive, yet incongruent impacts on societal and public life. A common denominator has been the exacerbation of intra-religious tensions, and, in some areas, more fragile inter-religious relations. Islam has not only become important as a point for political orientation, but is also increasingly becoming relevant as a source for identity-formation, both on an individual and on a collective level. Such processes may have significant impacts on societal life, with the potential of aggravating communal unrest.

4.1 ISLAMISM AND INTRA-RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS

A common trend within Muslim communities in Africa is how the growth of Islamism has produced increased intra-religious tensions, often resulting in skirmishes between groups such as puritan Salafis and Sufis seeking to defend the status quo. Conflicts have often revolved around questions of accepted religious practice, such as the pilgrimages to shrines, veneration of Muslim saints and the celebration of *Mawlid al-Nabi* (the Prophet's birthday). In addition to such aspects usually associated with Sufism, tensions also relate to issues such as enforcing a modest dress code and targeting acts perceived as vices; dancing, drinking and watching TV. Seeking to construe such processes, Ahmed Rashid (2010) has introduced the concept of Talibanisation, which refers to the issue of applying mechanisms for social control in the implementation of rules for a desired form of religious practice, conduct and moral, as well as the application of harsh punishment when these prescribed rules are violated. While it has been claimed that novel standards and notions are enforced by Islamists upon a people who becomes victims in a climate of fear, the reality is, as we will see, more complex. Not to deny the aspect of social pressure in reform processes, the adaptation of new religious practice and the reshaping of religious symbols are often processes with an active involvement of various actors, and not only something exerted by oppressive leaders. Seeing such processes played out in the various localities in the Horn, their particular trajectories would be determined by the nature of those involved, be coloured by the religious and socio-cultural environment and be intersected with socio-political dynamics within the locality.

Whereas intra-religious discourses in most cases occur outside of what is commonly considered the political sphere, they are likely to have political implications with the involvement of the state. Often we find political authorities becoming involved in such conflicts, either in response to groups appealing for protection, or by actively seeking to curb intra-religious tensions. While government involvement could ease tensions, it may also intensify conflicts, as official support to some groups would easily lead to the marginalisation of other groups.

4.1.1 Ethiopia: Tensions and Reconciliations

The Salafis' attacks on pilgrimage to shrines, on saint veneration and on other practices seen as contaminating the true faith have provoked tensions and divisions among the Muslims in Ethiopia.[60] Questions concerning morality and individual religiosity gained increased relevance among the young generation in the 1990s. Agitating against the use of alcohol, tobacco and *khat,* as well as prohibiting watching TV and listening to pop-music, the Ahl al-Sunna activists sought to savour the youngsters from the negative effects of modern life. In addition, they claimed that issues like the growing of beard, shortening the trousers to above the ankles and the use of *niqab* (covering the face of the woman) were obligatory to every Muslim. Quite zealous and uncompromising, the approaches of the Ahl al-Sunna soon aggravated tensions between them and more Sufi-oriented Muslim, and led moreover to frictions within the Salafi movement. The senior Salafis were denouncing the Ahl al-Sunna's radical approaches and strict doctrinal position, and were in turn heavily criticised by the Ahl al-Sunna activists for being religiously lax.[61]

Whereas the level of intra-religious violence has in general been relatively low, there have been incidents in which zealous youngsters have attacked pilgrims and destroyed shrines. Such violence could best be described as religious vigilantism, understood as seeking to retain Muslim purity versus non-Muslims and other Muslims. Coupled with religious exclusiveness and the demarcation of doctrinal boundaries, processes of fragmentation and the emergence of divergent fractions could turn such unrest into a vicious circle, having potentially far-reaching consequences. This would obviously be linked to the question of power, in which the control by some and the marginalisation of others could exacerbate the conflicts. A pertinent dilemma is that the de-institutionalised character of Ethiopian Islam and the importance of the mosque have proven conducive to the emergence of a variety of independent figures promoting disparate ideas. Increased intra-religious tensions have also affected the wider public's image of contemporary Islam in Ethiopia and, as we will return to, Christian-Muslim relations. It has fuelled the perception of Islam becoming increasingly radicalised, and of the Islamists gaining a strong footing in the Muslim community.

One important aspect of the intra-religious discourse in Ethiopia is its intersection with the ethnic factor, having clear impact on Muslim unanimity. While ethnicity has received much attention in the literature, the reciprocal relationship between religion and ethnicity has largely been ignored. Although not waterproof, there is a clear correlation between ethnic affinity and affiliation to the different Islamist movements; the Salafi movement being dominated by Oromo, the Tabligh being strongly linked to the Gurage (in Addis Ababa) and the Intellectualists largely recruited from the northern areas. This picture has affected the intra-religious situation and enhanced the antagonism between the different movements – clearly noticeable by the way the current discourse on ethnicity is situated alongside existing ideological differences, and in the manner in which categorisation of a religious and an ethnic character consequently leads to the reinforcement of both religious and ethnic boundaries. Reflected in the derogatory labels the different Muslim groups apply to each other, the labels placed upon, for instance, the Tabligh by the Salafis are interchangeably drawn from a religious terminology and from characteristics with clear ethnic connotations. The Gurage are equated with Tabligh, in which they both as an ethnic group and as a religious movement are labelled as being deviant from the true Islam, as Sufis and *mushrikun* (idolaters). Similar derogatory labels are applied to the Intellectualists, who by the Salafis are seen as being in league with the Amhara, and collectively categorised as Sufis and as neglectful of Islam's

[60] This is extensively discussed by this author (Østebø 2008a) and Desplat (2008). See also Abbink (2007) and Ishihara (1996).
[61] See Østebø (2009a) for more details on these controversies.

doctrines. The Salafis are, on the other hand, despised, particularly by the members of the Intellectualist movement, as backward literalists and criticised of playing a destructive role in the development of the Muslim community in Ethiopia; debilitating the unity among the country's Muslims and creating unnecessary conflicts within the community.

Having said this, some highly interesting – yet virtually unknown – developments in recent years have moved intra-religious relations in a quite unexpected direction.[62] In April 2007, a nine member delegation from the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora, representing the US-based Badr International Ethiopian Muslims Federation and the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe visited Ethiopia. During their one month long stay, they initiated and facilitated negotiations between scholars from the Salafi movement and from the Sufi-oriented community. A committee which came to be known as the Addis Ababa Ulama Unity Forum (AAUUF) was established, consisting of 21 individuals – nine from each party and with two Muslim scholars from Addis Ababa University serving as neutral facilitators. The Salafi party was led by Dr. Jeylan Galata, a distinguished Salafi scholar based in Addis Ababa (Air Tena), whereas the Sufi camp was headed by Hajji Umer Idris, the president of the Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council; also referred to as the *Mufti* of Ethiopia. Allegedly, the discussions lasted for three months, with the parties meeting every week. The discussion revolved around nine issues mutually recognised as constituting significant points of difference, including the celebration of *Mawlid al-Nabi* and the pilgrimage to shrines. Quite remarkable is that they managed to reach an agreement on some of the major points, as well as promising to respect each others' positions. This included the call to adopt a more careful approach when dealing with opposing views and to counteract polarisation. An interesting curiosity was that this year's celebration of the *Mawlid al-Nabi* in Addis Ababa was done with the approval – and even participation of the Salafis.[63] The AAUUF continued to operate under the leadership of Hajji Umer Idris until March 2009. After a process of reshuffling of both the Federal and the Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, the Federal Council ordered the Addis Ababa Council to shut down the forum. The reasons for the closure remain unclear ("Suspend the Ulema Unity Forum": the First Directive of the New Majlis 2009).

It is at present too early to say what implications the agreement will have. It does demonstrate, however, that there is a increasing yearning for building unity among Ethiopia's Muslims, and reveals that religion is gaining ground as point of identification. One question is whether this will supersede ethnic boundaries, and another question is how the Ethiopian regime and the public will react to this development. The lack of a real democratisation process, the continued marginalisation of the Muslim communities – coupled with regional tensions and global conflicts – could easily produce a situation where the strengthening of Muslim unity is conjugated with increased polarisation within the Ethiopian society.

4.1.2 Somalia: Shari'a & Creating a Pious Nation

Sufism has a long history in Somalia, represents an integral aspect of the Islamic legacy and has served as a centripetal force counterweighing the centrifugal force of clanism. Somalia has also hosted a rich tradition of Islamic scholarship, which survived the repressive policy of Siyyad Barre, and emerged with renewed strength in the early 1990s. The religious reforms being initiated in the recent decades, which denounced earlier practices and introduced new rules for ritual performance, are by many Somalis conceived alien and as "un-Somali". Particular to the Somali situation is that these reforms are intrinsically linked with the attempts

[62] The following account is based on a brief discussion of the main events by Dereje Feyissa (2010) and on oral interviews made in Addis Ababa in February 2010 by the author.
[63] Oral interview, Addis Ababa, 19 February 2010.

to implement the *shari'a* and that they are enforced with a high degree of violence. This would, at the outset, represent a clear example of Talibanisation.

The situation is, however, far more complex. During the 1990s an increasing number of young Somalis flocked to the mosques and women started to dress more modestly. Islam represented for many a force providing comfort in the midst of the havoc, and an Islamist dress code became a symbol of marking distance to warlordism (Marchal 2004: 123). In the chaotic environment, the Islamist forces' display of order and discipline earned them the respect of the surroundings. It is moreover interesting to note that the early attempts to implement the *shari'a* was well received in Somalia, particularly among the business community for which it created favourable conditions for mercantile activities, and by the general population because it provided law and order. The *shari'a* courts movement also tried to impose corporal punishment (*hudud*), including amputations, but this was practiced differently by the various courts. When the IUC emerged in 2004, *shari'a* was enforced in a more coherent manner, starting with Supreme Council's decree that the celebration of the New Year was an offence punishable with death, as it was not sanctioned as an Islamic holiday (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 21). Several courts also took action in closing down cinemas in Mogadishu, and in 2006, women were forced to dress modestly, playing music and watching TV were prohibited, and the use of *khat* was sought banned. Some of this has been discussed by Le Sage (2005), but more research is needed on the legal proceedings, how this was framed within (apparently disparate) ideological narratives and how the inherent Somali cultural setting as well as the turmoil of the civil-war shaped and affected the implementation of Islamic law.

The creation of a pious nation was one of the core objectives of the AIAI, and was implemented in the areas where the movement gained territorial control. Through the establishment of "Islamic Associations", an Islamic curriculum was introduced in the schools and law and order were exercised with reference to the *shari'a*. This meant the inclusion of corporal punishment, the enforced veiling of women as well as banning of *khat* and tobacco (Menkhaus 2004: 57f.).

Without ignoring the issue of force used in imposing such regulations, it is nevertheless clear that they were applied through rounds of negotiations between the involved actors. In many cases, new rules for ethical and ritual conduct were met with popular demonstrations, forcing the Islamists to adjust their positions. For example in Merka in January 2000, when the local court militia's attack on the celebration of an international NGO due to the inclusion of traditional dancing, the local business community withheld its funding, in turn forcing the court to reassert its position (Marchal 2004: 137). Similarly, when Sheikh Ali Dheere, being in charge of several courts in north Mogadishu included amputations in his sentences in 1993, he was met with fierce resistance from the populace – forcing him to end the practice (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 20f.). A somewhat curious, yet important issue is that it has been the banning of *khat* which has sparked the most intense reactions – leading to violence and riots. Deeply immersed in Somali culture and social life, the controversy serves as a reminder of how the pertinent issues at stake not necessarily are of a deep doctrinal character.

With the growing influence of al-Shabaab, a more uncompromising enforcement of religious reforms has been noticeable. Corporal punishments, including flogging, stoning and amputations have increased, as has stricter regulations on dress code, such as demanding veil for women and making the growing of beard mandatory for men. Al-Shabaab also went at length in cleansing Somali Islam from *bid'a* (unlawful innovations), targeting Sufi practices and destroying shrines in areas under their control. This has led, however, to violent clashes between the al-Shabaab and the defenders of the shrines, causing the al-Shabaab to moderate their actions (Marchal 2009: 399).

The loose structure of the al-Shabaab has evaded a coherent policy in addressing these issues. While some elements have been more uncompromising, others have taken a more lenient

position. There exists an awareness that the achievement of their objectives depend on some degree of public support, and that moving "ahead of the people" would be counterproductive. The al-Shabaab has therefore made a point of actively courting the civilian population. Touring rural areas, visits to villages included clerics addressing public rallies and negotiations with clan-leaders. Food was distributed to the poor and crime was combated by setting up mobile *shari'a* courts passing quick verdicts (Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State 2008: 12). Interesting is to note that the al-Shabaab has not been able to forward a consistent stand on the use of *khat*. While some of the al-Shabaab leaders argued for a total prohibition, others have limited the ban to the chewing in public (Marchal 2009: 391; Taarnby and Hallundbaek 2010: 13).

A recent Human Rights Watch report (2010) has documented in details the numerous violations of human rights committed by the al-Shabaab (as well as by the TFG and the AMISOM forces). While this needs our full attention, our ability to deal with such issues requires a comprehensive understanding of the actors, agendas and aims involved in these complex discourses. Extensive research is needed to identify with accuracy the plethora of religious currents available to the Somali populace, to construe how these currents produce discourses related to questions of morality and to understand how this dynamics are coloured by the ongoing political developments.

4.1.3 Sudan: Islamism and Intra-religious Discourses

Beyond these significant transformations in the political and religious spheres, visible and remarkable symbolic changes have occurred in the public sphere as well. Public space is becoming less and less "Islamised". Pictures of President al-Bashir are omnipresent, modern electronic boards of commercial publicities typical of a modern consumerist society, sometimes with images which are not conform to "Islamic norms", have invaded the main streets of the capital. In spite that the Public Order Act is still in force and of episodic harassments committed by the Police of Public Order (particularly against women), public spaces are less controlled than before. Many restaurants and cafes are open to public during Ramadan, the holy fasting month. It is interesting to mention that this issue was publically debated few years back.[64]

4.2 ISLAMISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

The issue of Christian-Muslim relations is for obvious reasons most relevant in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. As far as Ethiopia and Eritrea are concerned, the smooth relations between Christians and Muslims have long been celebrated as marked by peace, coexistence and inter-religious pragmatism. This image is, however, increasingly being challenged by those calling for a reappraisal of Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The perspective of this study is that inter-religious relations in these countries contains two parallel dimensions of conflict and cooperation, that it is a product of a pattern of asymmetry between the two religious communities and that it is being reconfigured by demarcation of local symbolic boundaries and by the religious discourses taking place locally, regionally and globally.

[64] There was a consensus even among leading religious figures that opening the restaurants during Ramadan is not against Islam.

4.2.1 Eritrea: Secularism and Christian-Muslim Relations

The religious dimension remained intrinsic to the Eritrean struggle for independence, yet represents an aspect highly understudied. The first rebellion against Ethiopian rule emerged among the Muslims in the lowland areas, whose resistance was generated by the Ethiopian policy of religious marginalisation and alienation (Erlich 1994: 95f.; Erlich 2007: 39f.; Miran 2005: 201f.; Seifudin Ahmed Hussein 1998: 164f.; Tekeste Negash 1997: 111f.). As already noted, the ELF, in spite of being dominated by Muslims and inspired by currents in the Arab world, did not harbour an Islamist ideology. However, the coupling of secular nationalist ideas with the perception that Eritrea's Muslims were marginalised and suppressed by the Christians, led to the accentuation of the religious dimension when the EPLF, which was contesting the position of ELF, claimed that the ELF was a Muslim organisation with an anti-Christian agenda (Tekeste Negash 1997: 156). While the EPLF, as noted, harboured a secularist Marxist-Leninist ideology, it was at the same time overtly dominated by Christians, influenced by Tigrinya cultural perceptions and biases and, moreover, informed by the legacy of Christian-Muslim relations in Eritrea (Bereket Habteselassie 2010). Similar to Ethiopia, as we will see, the presence and dominance of Orthodox Christianity has demarcated clear inter-religious boundaries and produced clear-cut and often negative images of the Muslim population. The Christian highlanders, historically affiliated to the Ethiopian polity and church have dominated the political and cultural life, consequently leaving the Muslims with a status as secondary citizens. As EPLF assumed the leading role in the struggle for independence, and forwarded its program of secularist nationalism, there was little room left for the religious dimension. This does not mean, however, that it remained irrelevant. The Eritrean Islamist movements came to view the secularist ideology of the EPLF and the Christian background of its leadership as impinging on the rights of the Muslims.

Whereas the secularist nationalist policy continued by EPLF/PFDJ after Eritrea's independence and the regime's increasingly totalitarian character affected both the Christian and Muslim communities, it has, according to the Muslims, been hitting hardest on the Muslims (Interview: Khalil M. Amer/Eritrean Islamic Salvation Front 2004). The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to verify this notion, and leaves us with a great deal of uncertainty in trying to establish the level of discontent harboured by the Muslim population towards the current regime. But a growing protest among Muslim Eritreans in diaspora against the Christian Tigrinya dominance in political and public affairs indicate that this grievance is also felt within the country.[65]

As far as religious divisions in Eritrea are concerned, they are intersected with socio-economic, linguistic and geographical differences.[66] It would therefore be important to explore how issues like the neglect of pastoral rights and that of language of instruction in the public schools may have affected the Muslims attitudes to their Christian counterparts (Tronvoll 2009b). Although both Tigrinya and Arabic are officially recognised as languages of instruction in public schools and each ethnic group in principle is free to use their own language as a medium in the schools, Tigrinya is clearly overrepresented; both in governmental institutions and in schools. Most Muslim communities have chosen Arabic over their own mother languages, resulting in the development of Arabic as the lingua franca among Eritrean Muslims. The regime has, on its part, viewed this trend as an expression of

[65] See the debates sparked by the presentation of the document "the Eritrean Covenant" at the Eritrean website www.awate.com.

[66] The Christians are mostly highlanders, Tigriniya-speaker and sedentary agriculturalists, whereas the Muslims inhabit the lowland areas, are divided among eight ethnic groups (see Tronvoll 1998). Muslims in the highlands (the Jabarti) have traditionally been denied access to land, thus forced to take up trade and various crafts.

resistance towards its nationalist ideology and as a sign of increased allegiance to the wider Muslim world (Tronvoll 2009).

4.2.2 Ethiopia: Exacerbating Religious Tensions

Inter-religious relations in Ethiopia have in recent decades deteriorated, with an increase of skirmishes and violent clashes between Christians and Muslims. This development is also being reflected in a growing literature on the issue, although very few of the available studies provide much in-depth analyses. Many foreign observes and (Christian) Ethiopians have related this to the resurgence of Islamism and increased Muslim activities. While this remains part of the picture, it is arguably more complex. It involves a wider range of actors, is related to the particular legacy of Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia and to the religious discourses both within the Christian and Muslim communities.

Increased religious activities as a result of the new political climate have generated mutual suspicion and increased accusations towards the other. The Muslims are in particular condemning the Protestants' efforts in evangelising the Muslims, and are accusing the Orthodox' references to Ethiopia as a "Christian island" as a continuation of past discriminatory sentiments. The Christians are, on the other hand, seeing the rapid growth of mosques and Muslim representation in public life as a proof of a strategy of Islamisation. Other contagious issues include alleged desecration of religious texts and the question of religious demography; i.e. the relative number of Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia. Intersected with each other, these issues have led to increased polarisation and to a stronger demarcation of religiously marked boundaries. This divide is aggravated through the production of polemic literature and audio-visual materials, through which both Muslims and Christians are forwarding negative images of the other. Books, VCDs, CDs and DVDs of this nature are made available for mass-consumption, both as translations and as locally produced material.[67] It has been common that production of audio-visual materials is being generated in the wake of violent incidents; forwarding evidence of the other's crimes. Such materials have thus had the reciprocal effect of feeding into a circle of mutual suspicion and hostility.

Many of the concrete conflicts between Christians and Muslims have been over the competition over public space in the literal sense – connected to construction of mosques or churches, as well as to celebrations of religious holidays.[68] Clashes have mostly been of a local nature, the level of violence have been relatively low and do not reflect religiously coordinated efforts in augmenting tensions. Therefore, the inter-religious conflict and the high degree of violence that occurred around Jimma and in Beghi (Wollega) came as a surprise to many. A recent master thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University by Zelalem Temesgen (2010) provides us with much valuable data on the trajectory of the conflict in Jimma area, yet has, on the other hand, limited analytical value and contains several important misconceptions. One important misunderstanding forwarded in the thesis, as well as in other reports of the incidents, is that a group called the Khawarij was allegedly responsible for the violence.[69] This group is said to represent a new and extreme sect, heavily funded from

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[67] Important contributions from the Christian (Orthodox) side include the writings of the Orthodox priest, Abba Samuel (2007): *Ewen be Itiyopia ye Haymanot Mechachel Allen?* (*Is there Religious Tolerance in Ethiopia*); Ephrem Eshete (2008): *Akrari Islimina be Itiyopia* (*Islamic Fundamentalism in Ethiopia*). Contributions from the Muslim side include translations of the works of Ahmed Deedat and Zakir Naik. For relevant discussions on this, see Abbink (2009) and Samson Abebe Bezabeh (2009).

[68] Clashes often arise if a mosque or a church is built too close to the other's place of worship, or if religious processions are moving in the proximity of the other's mosque or church – seen as acts of provocation.

[69] See reports by Nursefa Kemal in the Islamic newspaper *al-Quds,* 6 October (2006), by Tedla Yeneakal in *The Capital,* 8 October (2006) and "Sectarian Violence in Aggaro" in *The Reporter*, 18 October (2006).

abroad; from Pakistan and Somalia. What Zelalem Temesgen fails to understand is that the Khawarij is a word the Muslims through history repeatedly have applied as a label for an "extremist", as an insult and to delineate anyone seen as deviant from the accepted norm.[70] Drawing from Zelalem Temesgen's description of this group, said to "oppose paying tax to the government" and detaching themselves from the Christians and denouncing other Muslims (2010: 81), it is, however, clear that it actually was the already mentioned Takfir wal Hijrah which were responsible for much of the violence. Having said this, it is clear that the conflict was far more complex; illustrating the need for further investigations of this and other violent incidents.

The current inter-religious situation cannot be fully understood without paying attention to the historical dimension. With the defeat of Ahmed Gragn by the Christians in the 16th century, Islam evaporated as a political force in Ethiopia and laid the foundation for an asymmetric relationship between the two religious groups. The political and religio-cultural hegemony of the Christians led to the definition of Ethiopianess on the basis of a nationalistic orthodox Christianity and placed the Muslims as secondary citizens. Starting from the revolution in 1974, this pattern has in the post-Derg period been dramatically reversed through constitutional changes and political reforms, and has, as a consequence, produced both feelings of hope and expectations as well as discomfort and fear and from the Muslim and Christian communities.

The Orthodox Christians are highly uncomfortable with this new situation. Seeing the growth of Protestantism and the increased visibility of the Muslims, they have developed a kind of "siege" mentality, in which the present is contrasted with the past and where they see the nation as being lost. For many orthodox, real equality and just inter-religious relations were in fact practiced in the past; and consequently they regret that "contemporary religious equilibrium is collapsing very quickly" (Medhane Tadesse 2003). Adding to this, and reinforcing the discomfort, is the fear of "Islamic fundamentalism" produced by local discourses, regional tensions and the global "war on terror" narrative. Whereas this notion is equally shared by the Protestants, they tend to add a dimension of spiritual warfare in combating the evil forces of Islam, and at the same time aiming to convert the Muslims.

The Muslims are, on their part, caught in between rising expectations and negotiations over public space. As already discussed, many of the achievements they gained in the early 1990s were reversed in 1995/96, and the more fragile relationship towards the Christians has produced intense discourses about their position in the Ethiopian society and vis-à-vis the other religious groups. It has rekindled the image of being victimised, both in relation to the orthodox' understanding of "being Ethiopian" and in connection to the Protestants evangelising activities.[71] It has also led to a re-evaluation of the regime's policy towards religion. From being strong supporters of the federalist system and subscribing to the secularist ideology of the state's non-involvement in religious affairs, the Muslims are becoming more reluctant towards the regime. The lack of democratisation in general, the perceived biasness towards the Christians, the intervention in Somalia and the monitoring of the Muslim community are seen as a continuation of past discriminatory policies on Islam. A particular burning issue has been the regime's interference in the EIASC, which not only is seen as a breach of their constitutional rights, but also as depriving the Muslims of independent representations and as dividing them as a community.

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[70] The word Khawarij stems from "those who go out" and the word "outlaws". The Khawarij were originally a group supporting Ali in his struggle for the caliphate in the 7th century.

[71] The Muslims were highly provoked by the extensive celebration of *Timket* (Epiphany) in 2010. They saw it as an explicit demonstration of orthodox power, and viewed its semi-official character as a proof of the authorities' religious biases (Oral interview, Addis Ababa 16 February 2010).

In sum, increased religious activism and fragile inter-religious relations have spurred Protestants, Orthodox and Muslims to create their own, and largely competing narratives on the meaning of Ethiopia. Drawing upon Ethiopian historiography in a highly selective manner, each of these narratives has generated clear-cut categories of the "other".[72] From the Muslim side, there are indications of a stronger internal unity being built, seen from the Salafi-Sufi negotiations – and that this is producing a more coherent front towards the Christians. At the same time, increased inter-religious polarisation could potentially radicalise the Muslims and lead to the emergence of groups favouring stronger detachment from the wider society and forwarding a more exclusivist agenda. Such a development would be closely related to the geo-political situation and much dependent on the ways the Ethiopian regime will tackle the situation. It leaves us with a range of uncertain implications, and makes it imperative to monitor the developments attentively.

4.3 AREAS IN NEED OF FURTHER RESEARCH

- The trajectory and features of the intra-religious situation in today's Eritrea
- The possible political implications of increased intra-religious tensions in Ethiopia
- The relative strength of ethnicity and Islam and the consequences this could have for the production of a Muslim unity in Ethiopia
- The Sufi-Salafi debate in Ethiopia; issues at stake, actors involved, the reached agreement and more long-term implications
- The grass-root discourses in Somalia revolving around questions of ritual practices, moral and individual piety; with a particular focus on the situation for women
- The application and practice of *shari'a* in Somalia, and perceptions among the people
- Christian-Muslim relations in Eritrea and the way the political situation may have proved detrimental for this
- The main tenet of the inter-religious polemics in Ethiopia and the aims and agendas of both Christian and Muslims involved in this discourse
- The background and trajectories of inter-religious conflicts in Ethiopia, with particular focus on exacerbating violence

[72] An important case in point is the divergent interpretations of the Nejashi-story; whether the king actually converted as a result of the Axumite *hijrah,* and its impacts on national identification. See Dereje Feyissa (2010) for an enlightening discussion of the topic.

5 ISLAMISM ACROSS & BEYOND THE HORN

Studies on Islam and on Islamism in the Horn of Africa are largely organised according to the particular national borders, paying little attention to the transnational aspect of Islamism. Even studies with a broader scope, aimed at encapsulating Islamism in the Horn, are structured in similar ways, with separate sections on Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, etc. In cases where interconnectivity within the region is addressed, the perspective is largely state-centred with the focus on political actors, and not on Islamist movements. This reflects a pertinent gap in the study of Islamism as a transnational movement, which often is situated within state-centred international relations. For example, the *jihad* in Afghanistan during the 1980s was largely framed in Cold War politics and the Lebanese Hizbullah is seen as connected to the Teheran regime. Such perspectives arguably obscure the more real grass-root aspects of transnational Islamism and overlook the ways it operates outside state control – often interconnected in informal and de-institutional manners. To understand the transnational character of Islamism means to consider the range of actors involved, to identify the multiple points of connectivity and to distinguish between the different levels of transnationalism.

Applying this perspective to our discussion of the Horn, we will in the following pay attention to Islamist connections both with and beyond the region. It will include an analysis of the actors involved, how events and developments in one part of the region may influence other parts and what effects the different Islamist groups might have on the religious discourses. This latter aspect refers to the impacts made by currents outside the region, to the issue of local appropriation and to the production of mutual influences – with the potential of generating both ideological similarity and heterogeneity.

5.1 CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE HORN OF AFRICA

The range of connections across the Horn of Africa is to a large degree determined by the character of the different Islamist groups. Those falling within the category of Jihadi Islamism would obviously have a wider scope for their activities. Similarly, the universalist ambitions of the Reformist Islamists aimed at cleansing Islam from un-wanted innovations and cultural connections and instating a new morale would be less bound by national borders, whereas Political Islamist movements in contrast would be more focused on particular domestic affairs. Even if they may be involved in armed insurgency and seeking the establishment of an Islamic political order, their transnational vision may be weak. As their program often is intersected with an ethnic component, their objectives will in many cases be irrelevant for others. Islamism in Somalia represents, as we have seen, a case in point. Although it is increasingly being framed within a jihadi narrative, the merger of a pan-Somali nationalism and Islamism has restricted the scope to the Somali scene. Involvement in the global struggle has so far only been of a rhetorical nature.

5.1.1 The Role of Refugees: Reciprocal Influences

Conflicts, both within the countries in the Horn and across borders have in the last decades created a large number of IDPs and refugees. Whereas much attention has been paid to this disastrous situation, particularly from a humanitarian perspective, there has been less focus on the impact it may have on religious developments and the production of Islamist movements. It is, as noted, clear that Eritrean Islamist groups had important operational ground among

Eritreans living in exile in Sudan (Tesfatsion Medhanie 1995: 78f.), and that, more recently, al-Shabaab and other Somali Islamist groups have actively been seeking recruits among Somali refugees in Kenya (Harsh War 2010: 54f.). The author of this study (Østebø 2008a) noted in his study of Salafism in Eastern Ethiopia the important role of the *qawetti* in the resurgence of Salafism in the 1990s.[73] Forced to flee to Somalia as a result of the Ogaden-war in the end of the 1970s, these Muslim Oromo when returning to Bale, Arsi and Hararge in the beginning of the 1990s, brought back strong impetuses for change according to a Salafi ideology. While it is clear that they were influenced by the mounting Islamism in Somalia, informants were underscoring the role of Oromo Salafis teaching in the refugee-camps (2008a: 236f.). The potential impact of Muslim refugees in the Horn is far from exhausted, and points to an important aspect in the transmission of Islamist ideas. In addition to the aspect of mobility, the precarious situation of refugees and the painstaking aspect of camp-life, with idleness and insecurity, do create fertile ground for recruitment into different Islamist groupings.

5.1.2 Traders & Trading-networks

Muslims in the Horn of Africa has a long tradition of mercantile engagement, and trade and trading-networks have historically been an important factor in processes of Islamisation across the region. Transcending local boundaries and bringing input from the wider world of Islam within reach, traders were crucial as agents of change and in facilitating the movement of religious ideas.

Trade and trading-networks have similarly played a significant role for the production and trajectory of Islamism in Africa in general, and in the Horn in particular.[74] Traders were similarly important in the early emergence of Salafism in Eastern Ethiopia, introducing new ideas from the neighbouring areas and from Addis Ababa (Østebø 2008a: 135f.). The same has been the case in Somalia, yet this issue has only received attention in recent years; much due to the business community's support to Islamist movements like the UIC.

The inclination towards Salafism among traders in Somalia has been noted by several scholars (Marchal 2004; Medhane Tadesse 2002; Somalia's Islamists 2005). This linkage is usually related to the aspect of *shari'a* in regulating mercantile activities, and sometimes reduced to a means of attract business partners in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf States (De Waal 2007; Holzer 2008; Le Sage 2005). Yet this is only part of the picture. Similar to other parts of Muslim Africa, traders in the Horn have actively embraced a Salafi ideology, seeing it as fitting to their mercantile endeavours. In Ethiopia, for example, traders were fiercely opposing what they see as economic exploitation and lavish expenditure in connection to Sufi practices, and came to be important advocates for the introduction of Salafism in their respective localities. For them, Salafism served as an ideology providing doctrinal justifications for their emphasis on self-reliance and profit-making. In Somalia, the current thriving business community is largely dominated by a younger generation less attached to parochial system of clan and kinship, and adhering to Salafi doctrines. Many are trained abroad, are familiar with rules of international trade and have an "entrepreneurial" attitude (Cassanelli 2010: 43). These two cases demonstrate how Salafism corresponds to an "individualistic ethic" evolving within trading communities in the Horn. Upwardly mobile and ambitious, they admonish lavish expenditures, and underscore hard work and economic independence as true Islamic virtues. It would, however, be misleading to think of such attitudes as expressions of niggardliness;

[73] The word means refugee in Somali, and was used as a term for Muslim Oromo returning from exile in Somalia.
[74] See for example Brenner (2001), Kaba (1974), Soares (2005) and Warms (1992).

much of their wealth has been spent for the reinforcement of Islam – financing religious infrastructure such as mosques and educational institutions.[75]

Much of the trade in the Horn is linked to export and import beyond the region, as well as revolving around local domestic markets. Yet, there are substantial regional networks, seen not at least through a thriving contraband trade between Somalia and its neighbours. Very little is known about such regional trading and the impacts they may have in generating transnational Islamist networks. It is clear that porous borders could enable Islamists to transport arms and to exchange intelligence, yet it is difficult to ascertain to which degree this actually is taking place. Whereas the younger generation of Somali business men have been active in seeking to expand wider regional trade, poor infrastructure and political insecurity are factors impinging on this development. A somewhat paradoxical situation is that peace and stability in the region which would improve transnational trade could easily produce an environment for increased interaction of ideologically likeminded actors, for the transference of Islamist thinking and possibly lead to the establishment of more proliferated Islamist networks.

So far, there are few signs of cooperation and coordination between the various Islamist groupings operating in the Horn. They have their own divergent objectives and ideological underpinnings, and are as well more concerned with their immediate contexts – rather than focusing on the wider geographical area. Albeit Eritrea has become a harbour for political and Islamist organisations fighting the Ethiopian regime – due to the proxy warfare between these two countries – the Eritrean government actively clamp down upon Islamism within the country. Furthermore, countries like Ethiopia and Djibouti are clearly taking pre-emptive measures to curb such developments – measures that are actively sanctioned by outside actors such as the USA. On the other hand, the potential for more coordinated activities by Islamist insurgency groups and the spillover effect from the more unstable parts of the region are certainly real. The lack of empirical data has, however, placed us in a vulnerable position in understanding how this may be played out and the potential implications it may have.

5.2 CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE HORN OF AFRICA

The transnational character of Islamism linking the Horn to the wider world of Islam has largely been understood in terms of foreign state-powers' involvement, the impact of international terrorist-networks and the issue of outside funding of Islamist activities in the region. Whereas this represents relevant dimensions of transnational Islamism, the available literature often fail to recognise the complexity inherent in such connections. This is both because of the lack of reliable data and due to the tendency of framing them within a simplified "war on terror" narrative.

5.2.1 Islamic NGOs

In the wake of 9/11, much effort has been made to identify and trace patterns of funding for terrorist activities. This has in turn spurred renewed interest in the role of Islamic NGOs, suspected of providing such funding. This suspicion has been augmented by such NGOs failure to implement global standards for accountability and transparency – in turn making them ill prepared to defend them against such accusations. The issue of external funding is moreover a sensitive issue, and many of the local actors receiving external support are

[75] See Østebø (2009b) for a more detailed discussion on this issue.

reluctant to disclose detailed information on the sources and amount of the funds.[76] In addition, when some organisations, generally involved in humanitarian aid, unknowingly or knowingly in some cases may have provided financial support for terrorist activities, they are immediately and in general branded as a terrorist organisation. In other cases, the mere existence of foreign NGOs, such as the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) is considered as proof of funding of unwanted movements. A relevant example is the dubious report on Saudi support for a new Islamic Centre as well as for the construction of numerous mosques in Djibouti, something which was equalled with the expansion of radical Islamism (Terrorism in the Horn of Africa 2004: 7).

References to Islamic NGOs in the Horn are largely in the form of passing remarks, with little or no qualified analyses available of their objectives, strategies and activities. Except IIRO there is no mentioning of other Islamic NGOs in Djibouti, and the only organisation in Eritrea seems to be the Eritrean Islamic Relief Association. Haggai Erlich has forwarded some data on the role of Saudi-based organisations operating in Ethiopia, yet his presumptive approach has produced rather unqualified conclusions. Preliminary research carried out by this author (2008a) on this topic revealed an increase of foreign Islamic charities in Ethiopia in the early 1990s. Only a few of these established organisational presence in Ethiopia, but were working through local Islamic organisations.[77] Most of the local NGOs were closed down in 1995/96, when the regime curbed much of the foreign funding, and similar measures were taken after 9/11, leading to the closure of the Saudi-affiliated al-Haramain organisation (Shinn 2005: 110). Al-Haramain had been banned from Kenya already in 1998, and saw its Somali office being closed in 2003. The situation for Islamic NGOs in Ethiopia is moreover complicated by the position of the EIASC and its links to the ruling party. Its hegemonic position has made them in control of the "Islamic" social-services and has encumbered the establishment of other NGOs.

Far more attention has been paid to the role of Islamic NGOs in Somalia, particularly in relation to the rise of Islamist insurgency. The number of such organisations increased rapidly from the early 1990s, mostly engaged in providing humanitarian support for the war-ridden population in Somalia. Some were linked to Islamist groups outside Somalia, funnelling funds to insurgents within Somalia. The vast majority, however, has been devoid of a political agenda. According to Le Sage and Ken Menkhaus (2004), the aims and agendas of the Islamic NGOs in Somalia have derived from two schools of thought. The first has the vision of creating a future Islamic social order intended to replace the destructive forces of clanism and warlordism, while the second school is more radical, with an anti-Western agenda and aimed at establishing an Islamic state. It is interesting to note that the latter category is said to have "enjoyed much greater levels of success and support" (2004: 2), something which contradicts claims that such a radical program resonates poorly among the Somali Muslims.

Le Sage and Menkhaus' study contains much-needed data and important analyses on role of Islamic NGOs in Somalia up until 2004.[78] However, as no research has been carried out subsequent to this, we are left with very little knowledge on the role of Islamic NGOs during

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[76] This is often related to corruption, by which individuals are enriching themselves through external funding, to avoid taxation, as well as a fear of being connected to foreign organisations viewed negatively by the West.

[77] The main local Islamic organisations were the Da'wa & Knowledge Association and the Ethiopian Youth Association, both established in 1992. The former is financially linked to individual Saudi beneficiaries, whereas the latter was connected to the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY) based in Riyadh (Østebø 2008b).

[78] Islamic charities in Somalia in 2004 included the Africa Muslim Agency (Kuwait), the UAE Red Crescent Society (UAE), the World Association of Muslim Youth (Saudi Arabia), the al-Islah Charity and the International Islamic Relief Organisation (Saudi Arabia).

the latest years with increased religious violence. What is clear is that many suffered a temporal setback in the wake of 9/11, when local Islamic NGOs, as well as *hawala* (remittance) companies came under close scrutiny – accused of channelling funds for terror activities. One of these was the al-Barakaat, which in 2001 was accused by the US of being linked to al-Qaida, and consequently had all its assets frozen (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 25).[79]

Without ignoring Islamic NGOs' involvement in the Islamist movement and their political agenda, most Islamic NGOs are devoted to humanitarian aid, focusing on primary healthcare activities, care for orphans and education. There are those which have been active in supporting the construction of mosques, distributing religious tracts and in religious training, and have in this manner served as platforms for proselytising activities (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 23). However, it is to be noticed that inputs in the educational sector are not necessarily equal to an intensive indoctrination in Islamic sciences. Both in Ethiopia and in Somalia, Islamic studies have been integrated into a curriculum which includes a range of secular subjects (Le Sage and Menkhaus 2004: 26; Østebø 2008a: 280). Furthermore, the bulk of Islamic NGOs are simultaneously receiving support from both Islamic and Western donors; from the UNDP, UNESCO and USAID. A case in point is the Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency (EMDA), the largest local Islamic NGO in Ethiopia, which receives funds from Action Aid, Pathfinder and USAID (Profile of Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency 2007: 14).

Attempting to construe the role and activities of Islamic NGOs in the Horn, it would be important to apply a differentiated approach; paying attention to the plethora of organisations, recognising the differences in ideologies, and to move beyond an understanding which uncritically targets Islamic NGOs as a monolithic anti-Western phenomenon. Too often, measures against Islamic NGOs have deprived people of important aid and exacerbated negative feelings towards the West.[80]

5.2.2 The al-Qaida network

Reports on the presence of al-Qaida in the Horn of Africa are highly contradictory. Some sources claim that it was involved in the region throughout the 1990s, and that its activities have increased dramatically in recent years. Others have argued that al-Qaida has remained a marginal force in the Horn, and that its radicalism resonates poorly within the region. Whereas the fragile and corrupt nature of African regimes, porous borders, the lack of surveillance and internal fighting have been forwarded as factors conducive for al-Qaida operations in Eastern Africa, these factor could, on the other hand, work in the opposite direction.

There are no reports of al-Qaida activities in Ethiopia or any connections to Ethiopian Islamists. EIJM, on the other hand, is said to have received support (training and arms) from the Osama bin Laden network, headquartered in Sudan in the first half of the 1990s (Connell 2005: 77). Again, the scenario in Somalia is different. It is well-documented that al-Qaida representatives made repeated trips from Sudan to Somalia in the early 1990s, that Somali Islamists were linked to the attacks of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam and to the attacks on the Paradise Hotel and on an Israeli charter flight in Mombasa in 2002 (Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa 2007: 5). This was also the part of the reason which led the USA to name AIAI as a group linked to international terrorism (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 10). In the aftermath of 9/11, USA believed that AIAI together with al-Qaida

[79] See Menkhaus (2004: 67) for a critical discussion of the US policy on this matter.
[80] A relevant example is the measures against al-Haramain in Somalia which meant that eight orphanages were closed and 3 500 children were left without any support (Le Sage and Menkhaus 2004: 32).

still had operational capacity and assumed that the organisation ran training camps within Somalia. This turned out to not be the case, and it is clear that the Americans had exaggerated the AIAI's potential (Le Sage 2004: 26f.).

Al-Qaida's focus on the Horn was exacerbated by the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006, and in January 2007, Ayman al-Zawahiri called upon Muslims to participate in the *jihad* against the Ethiopian forces, which he referred to as the "slaves of America" (Rabasa 2009: 4). This focus continued as al-Shabaab grew in strength, seen by the arrival of foreign jihadists and by a rhetoric highlighting the relations between the two movements.[81] Statements pledging mutual cooperation were made in the media, posted on the internet where a number of videos showed contacts between senior members of al-Shabaab and *al-Qaida.* Of particular significance were the statements made by Mukhtar Ali Robow, a.k.a. Abu Mansour in May 2008, saying that al-Shabaab was part of the global *jihad* movement and that it was led by al-Qaida.[82] This was later confirmed in a statement from al-Shabaab issued in February 2010 (Somali Islamists al-Shabab "Join al-Qaeda Fight" 2010).

While there is little reason to doubt the ideological affinity and linkages between al-Shabaab and al-Qaida in Somalia, the way it is actually played out on the ground is yet another question. As noted by Menkhaus, "[t]hat shabaab has links to al Qa'ida is not the question. What is more difficult to assess is the extent and significance of those links" (2009: 6). It would be beyond the scope of this study to fully address this issue; yet three pertinent aspects deserve attention. The first relates to the degree the al-Qaida-al-Shabaab connections are sanctioned by Somali Islamists in general. According to Marchal, there are clear limitations to the support of al-Qaida in Somalia. As many of the members of al-Shabaab are focused on domestic affairs, they would not have much interest in participating in a global *jihad.* It is moreover clear that while some parts of the al-Shabaab leadership may have had contacts with al-Qaida, others leaders remained unaware of this, and have remained largely aloof to such connections (Marchal 2009: 283f.). Secondly, while the "failed state" scenario has been repeated *ad nauseam* as conducive for al-Qaida operations in Somalia (Counter-terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds? 2005: 6), the fact is, however, that in the 1990s the al-Qaida operatives were experiencing the same problems as other foreigners; extortion, betrayal, clanism, insecurity and logistical constraints (Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa 2007: 14f.). The precarious situation forced them to leave Somalia, instead focusing on Kenya. The third aspect concerns the way establishing connections to al-Qaida becomes a rhetorical response to the "war on terror" narrative – meant for an outside audience. Al-Qaida represents in this context a franchise, and by framing the struggle as part of a global *jihad*, the connection becomes a symbolic response to the "war on terror" storyline. In turn, this leads to a stronger demarcation and reinforcement of boundaries between the Islamists and the West and Western-aligned forces, and cements the polarised situation.

It can thus be argued that al-Qaida has had, and will have difficulties in establishing a foothold in the Horn. Even if Islamist groups may have included *jihad* in their name or claim to be part of a wider global struggle, it remains clear that their agenda is local. This has also been noted by Connell who argued that Islamists in the Horn "seek affiliation or assistance from such [al-Qaida] networks to further local agendas" (2005: 66f.).

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[81] The actual number of foreign jihadists, and their impacts, are highly debated. A recent report claims that the importance of such elements are clearly overstated (Report on the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008) 2010: 15).

[82] For more details, see (Jihadi Website Interviews New Leader of Somalia's Shabaab al-Mujahideen 2008).

5.2.3 The Yemeni Factor

In the book *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa,* Robert I. Rotberg (ed.) (2005) persuasively claims that Yemen is naturally integrated to the Horn of Africa through a long history of interconnectivity. Trading across the Red Sea has existed for centuries and migrations have gone in both directions. Connections between Yemen and the Horn have in the last decades also taken the form of illegal arms trade, human trafficking and piracy. Although the Yemeni government has tried to control smuggling of arms, internal conflicts have added to the amount of available weaponry, of which a significant part is diverted to regional markets, particularly to Somalia (Atarodi 2010: 18).[83] Piracy has so far been a Somali enterprise, yet the fragile situation in Yemen enhances the risk of the impoverished and unemployed along the Yemeni littoral to take up the trade.

Whereas the literature on Islam in the Horn of Africa generally acknowledges the historical links to Yemen, Rotberg is one of the few who has argued for continued relevance of this connection, with particular reference to the expansion of Islamism on both sides of the Red Sea. Last and present years' developments have certainly confirmed the validity of Rotberg's point of view.

Yemen has because of its strategic location, been seen to be a buffer zone between the Horn and the wider Middle Eastern area and labelled by the US as a "front-line state" in the war on terror. Islamism in Yemen is represented by different actors, of which the jihadi movement affiliated to al-Qaida has gained momentum in the last years.[84] Emerging with renewed organisational strength and military capacity from 2006, the Saudi and Yemeni branches of al-Qaida merged in January 2009 and formed the al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).[85] The Christmas Day Northwest Airline bombing attempt, and the fact that the accused perpetrator spent time in Yemen prior to the incident, has spurred renewed interest on Islamism in Yemen, and raised questions of possible links to Islamists groups in Somalia. This has been accentuated by the increase of statements from both Somali and Yemeni Islamist groups, issuing promises of mutual support.[86] It is too soon to evaluate the implications of the alleged cooperation between AQAP and Somali Islamists. While it at the present seems that most of the alleged connections have been on a rhetorical level, this could only be ascertained by more in-depth investigations.

Another issue which deserves more attention is the relations between Ethiopian and Yemeni Islamists, seen through the influx made by the latter upon the Madkhaliyya group in Addis Ababa. Available information suggests that the groups involved belong to the category of Reformist Islamism, yet a further development of Ethiopian-Yemeni Islamist connections could move in a different direction. The growing strength of the AQAP and the influence it may have on the Yemeni Islamist movement in general could have possible implications for Ethiopian Islamists.

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[83] There are reports that the network of Yemeni arms-traders exclusively was shipping guns to the IUC when the movement gained control over Mogadishu in 2006 (Rabasa 2009: 21).

[84] The most dominant Islamist movements have been the Salafis and al-Islah, the latter ideologically affiliated to the Egyptian Brotherhood. See Bonnefoy (2009b) for an overview of different Islamist groups in Yemen; for info on the Salafi movement, see Bonnefoy (2009a); for the al-Islah, see Hansen & Mesøy (2009: 25f.).

[85] For an overview of AQAP's trajectory, see Johnson (2010).

[86] Recent reports carried the story of 12 al-Qaida fighters arriving in Somalia from Yemen (Al Qaeda Members Land in Somalia from Yemen 2010).

5.2.4 Muslim Diaspora Communities

The Somali diaspora is one of the largest in the world, with around nine millions Somalis living outside of the Somalia state borders. The majority is found within the Horn and in East Africa, while there are also large diaspora communities in Europe and North America. These communities have in various ways been involved in developments in Somalia, and remittances from Somalis in the diaspora remain important sources of income for those at home. They have also been targeted by Islamist groups, such as by the AIAI which during the 1990s was active in fielding representatives in the UK, Sweden and Canada (Somalia's Islamists 2005: 7). While it has been assumed that the Somali diaspora has remained critical to the increased Islamisation of Somali politics, the positive attitudes towards the UIC and the continued support for groups like al-Shabaab have complicated this picture. News about Somali youth in the West travelling to Somalia and enlisting to the al-Shabaab has come as a surprise to many (Marchal 2009: 394; Menkhaus 2009).

It is obvious that an important factor was the Ethiopian intervention in 2006, producing a distinct nationalist fervour among Somali youth. It is nevertheless clear that religion in recent years have been playing a more central role, pointing to the already discussed merger between Somali nationalism and Islamism. Whereas the "older" generations of Somalis in the diaspora organised along clan-lines, the younger generation, which often is born and raised outside Somalia, have found Islam to be a more relevant organising principle; both as reference of identification in a Western country and because of gradually weaker attachment to their "home-country" (Fangen 2008: 97f.). However, it should also be emphasised that their view of Islam is not necessarily congruent to that of al-Shabaab, which many view as a movement defending Somali from outside interference.

In contrast to diaspora communities which usually organise themselves alongside nationality, Eritrean and Ethiopian Muslims in the West have formed explicit *Muslim* organisations. Eritrean Muslim diaspora organisations include The Eritrean Canadian Islamic Association (ECIA), the Eritrean Muslim Council (EMC) in North America and the Eritrean Muslim Community Association (EMCA) in the UK. Learning from their websites, these organisations seems to be apolitical and devoted to the situation of living as Muslims in the Western world.[87] The two main Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organisations are the already mentioned US-based Badr International Ethiopian Muslim Federation and the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe.

While the Somali diaspora's involvement in "home-affairs" resembles what Terence Lyons (2007) has called conflict-generating diasporas, seen as reinforcing and exacerbating conflicts at home, recent developments in Ethiopia reflect a completely different situation. There, Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organisations have been seeking to assuage tensions in Ethiopia, and has, as demonstrated in Dereje Feyissa's (2010) recent study, been actively involved in peace-building efforts. Concerned with the historical marginality of Ethiopian Muslims and aimed at improving the social and economical situation of Ethiopian Muslims, both the Badr International Ethiopian Muslim Federation and the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe have tried to engage the government and the civil-society in Ethiopia in dialogues for the realisation of inter-religious cooperation, democracy and development in the country. During their visit to Ethiopia in 2007, they presented a "manifesto" – a sixteen pages document seeking to renegotiate the marginal position for the Muslims, calling for a more inclusive understanding of "Ethiopianess" and for an inclusive process of democratisation (Dereje

[87] For more information on these organisations, consult their websites: ECIA: www.eciatoronto.com/index.html; EMC: www.erimc.org; EMCA: www.emca.org.uk/

Feyissa 2010: 14).[88] The delegation held meetings with government officials, including the prime minister and with a cross-section of the Muslim community. Included on their agenda was also the call to secure the autonomy of the EIASC, to allow the establishment of other Islamic NGOs, to maintain secularism as enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution and to forge stronger links with the Muslim world (Dereje Feyissa 2010: 20f.). The delegation also visited conflicts areas such as Jimma and Tigray and attempted to engage Christian leaders in inter-faith dialogue.

An interesting aspect of the Muslim diaspora organisations, which Dereje Feyissa has dubbed the Ethiopian Muslims Rights Movement, is that their rhetoric is framed within a globally recognised human rights language. This arguably reflect their democratic experiences from their host countries and the concern for Muslims at home who are working for increased religious parity and inclusivity.[89] While a human rights language would go well with the international audience, and to some degree with the Ethiopian authorities, it is far more uncertain how it will be received by the heterogeneous Muslim constituency in Ethiopia. One may ask how their somewhat elitist background, urban orientation and the rhetoric itself will resonate within the rural Muslim communities; the Sufi-oriented, the Salafis and the Tabligh. For some, the very makeup of the diaspora Muslims could be a factor creating distance. For others, the human rights rhetoric could be seen as incompatible with Islam and draw opposition from literalist Islamist circles.

5.3 AREAS IN NEED OF FURTHER RESEARCH:

- The role of refugees in the expansion of Islamism across the Horn
- The impact of traders and trading network in facilitating interconnectivity for Islamist groups across the Horn
- The operations of foreign Islamic NGOs, the issue of outside funding and implications for Islamism in the region
- The alleged links between al-Qaida and Islamists in Somalia; the presence of foreign jihadists, the existence of a shared agenda and the possible implications for the Islamist insurgency
- The potential role of Yemeni Islamists, in particular the AQAP, in the region
- The role of Muslim diaspora communities upon religious discourses in the Horn; participation in the Islamist insurgency in Somalia, contribution to defusing tensions in Ethiopia

[88] In addition, the two organisations have hosted online discussions, organised conferences and written petitions against what they perceive as violations against Muslim rights (Dereje Feyissa 2010: 19).
[89] These Muslims at home are mainly those active in the already mentioned Intellectualist movement.

6 CONCLUSION & PROSPECTS

Islamism constitutes a strong and growing force in the Horn of Africa. A plethora of Islamist groups are present in the different parts of the region, with disparate aims and agendas and with different strategies for obtaining their objectivities. Islamism is moreover unequally represented in the Horn. Some groups exert significant political influence, either as integrated in governing structures, or as strong oppositional forces; others are weak and rather marginal. Some groups have substantial military capacity and determined to reach their targets through the barrel of the gun, while others opt to advance their objectives through peaceful means. The study has paid much attention to Islamism in relation to political power; an aspect which reveals a great variety of different ideas within the Islamist movement. Where some groups have an explicit strategy for the realisation of the Islamic state, there are those which are less concerned about this, and instead focused on social and religious reforms within the boundaries of a secular state. The issue of religious reforms has had, as amply demonstrated, clear impacts on intra- and inter-religious relations, on the position and perception of Islam in the wider society, and could, at the next junction, have political implications.

Islamism in the Horn of Africa represents a heterogeneous and dynamic phenomenon. The trajectories of the different actors have revealed ideological developments, strategic reconsiderations and the reproduction of scopes and purposes. This dynamic is played out through constant evolving discourses, with new issues added, new boundaries demarcated and with new actors counterweighing and contesting the others. This is to be seen in relation to the particular topography in which Islamist groups operate; the political terrain, the religious biotope and the ethno-cultural landscape – as well as to how they are affected by other processes and developments. As discussed in the study, many of the Islamists in the Horn have rather parochial objectives often produced by domestic discourses. While this has produced a range of clearly locally oriented actors, they remain, on the other hand, informed by a much wider Islamist ideological discourse and by the developments on the global arena. The complexity of this is, however, that transnational Islamism is becoming increasingly multifaceted and, moreover, that the local appropriation of such currents is likely to produce additional categories. Local tensions have thus to a larger extent become framed with a global one, in which jihadism and the "war on terror" constitute mutually incompatible narratives, yet, at the same time, feeding into each other. Through the process of staging the fronts, these two narratives contain a repertoire for a rhetoric that secures recruitment and produces popular mobilisation, provides the necessary ideological impetuses and legitimises the continued struggle against the other. In sum, this local-global pattern has augmented to the polarised situation.

In spite of the study's broad approach to Islamism as a phenomenon, there are a number of aspects and topics left untouched. These include the situations in Somaliland and Puntland, the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, the Iranian factor and connections to other East African countries., as well as the flow of Islamist ideas and influences from the Horn and westwards across the Maghreb region and southwards along the Swahili coast. It would also have been relevant to extend the discussions to the bases for recruitment to Islamist groups, to the issue of gender as well as to a broader analysis of how ideological debates are played out on the grass-root level. An important reason for this deficit is the lack of available data and qualified studies.

This points to the clear need of more in-depth knowledge of Islamism in the Horn and for increased field-research. Obviously, the possibility of carrying out such research in southern Somalia is highly limited, and is also becoming more difficult in Eritrea as well. Yet, it is

imperative to exhaust the available possibilities in order to secure a deeper understanding of the present situation.

The complex religious landscape in the Horn makes it important to obtain an understanding that is accurate and which pays attention to all the specifics in the region. Too often we apply perspectives generalising utterly compound processes, and in too many cases we are caught off guard as things evolve. A case in point is the "new" connections between Islamists in Yemen and Somalia; a development few saw coming. Accuracy saves us from treating Islamists in binary concepts such as "moderate" and "extremists", and brings in more colours to the picture. Having specific empirical information and thorough analyses to our disposal make us more prepared to relate to Islamist groups and actors in more proper and nuanced manners.

What about the future prospects for Islamism in the Horn of Africa? Clearly, the instability of the region in modern history has since long demonstrated the future's uncertainty. Furthermore, as the religious developments have taken so many quick turns in the last decades, one should be careful in forwarding prophesies. Yet, it is certain that religion will continue as a major force in the years to come, and with possible severe implications. In Somalia we have a situation where Islamist groups are in control over large territories; much in contrast to the fragmented interwar of the warlords. Zealously determined to establish an Islamic political order, these groups represent a strong oppositional force against the incumbent TFG. The Muslim community in Ethiopia seems to be in a process of managing their initial expectations to the post-1991 political climate. Subject to increasing control by the regime, challenged by the Christian communities, the Muslims have reverted to the notion of being victimised, yet are, at the same time, struggling to carve out public space for themselves. In Eritrea, the EPLF has sustained a marginalisation of Muslims in politics and public affairs, a situation that the Eritrean Muslim diaspora is currently challenging. Furthermore, it is certain that the upcoming referendum in Sudan will affect the regime's Islamist policy.

The key to the challenges facing the Horn of Africa lies with the actors in the region. This requires an inclusive and broad process in which all the actors can be heard, and where leeways and arenas are created for the moderation of disparate agendas. However, the international community has also the opportunity to play a constructive role in accompanying such a process. Outside involvement should be based on a thorough understanding of the complexity of the region, and should, arguably, move beyond considerations only paying attention to the Horn's strategic importance in the "war on terror".

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