The state, the crisis of state institutions and refugee migration in the Horn of Africa: the cases of Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia

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1. THE STATE, REFUGEE MIGRATION AND IR THEORIES

Refugee migration has been part of global (international) politics affecting almost all parts of the world at one time or another. There have been few countries, if any, which have not been involved either as being at the source or at the receiving end, or both, of this human migration. This means that refugee migration has been and will continue to be an international concern. However, refugee studies have not been the focus of international relations (IR) theories as they should be. This may be, perhaps, for two reasons. One of the reasons is our understanding of the discipline, for the term ‘international relations’ has been misleading. Traditionally the discipline has been concerned with relations between the nations of the world, which in effect means relations between nation states and national states. And yet in the contemporary world, this is only one of the discipline’s principal concerns. It is now a broader and more eclectic field of study, which explains why some argue that ‘global politics’ is a more appropriate description of the subject.  

The other reason for the marginalization of refugee studies in the field of international relations is that refugee migration has been taken as a temporary phenomenon which does not need sophisticated theorizing. More recently, however, because of the broader understanding of international relations as global politics, and the ever increasing and permanent nature of refugee migration, more intellectuals are becoming aware of the need for theories in the field of refugee studies. As a result, an increasing number of attempts are being made in developing theories within international relations and other disciplines. In the light of the broader categorization of the field of international relations, it is easier to see that this research project falls within its scope: it is concerned with the (re)constitution of the state as a sovereign territorial entity, the failure/collapse of state institutions and the related refugee migration. Thus, one of the major objectives of this chapter, as the continuation of the recent development, is to give refugee studies its proper place within the discipline and to attempt to explain refugee migration with the help of theories in international relations. In other words, it is to place the theoretical framework of this research within the broader spectrum of international theories. To do so, it is important to identify which theories are more relevant in analyzing the state, its crisis and the resulting refugee migration in Africa. However, before passing onto this task it is important to make a number of points regarding theories in general.

First, it is crucial to recognize that people understand and interpret the world within a particular culture and linguistic frameworks. These are the lenses through which we see the world. One of the primary purposes for studying theory, therefore, is to enable us to examine our own lenses and discover how controlled or distorted our world view is (Burchill, 1996: 14). In the light of this, the second objective of this chapter is to show that many international relations theories are based on the cultural and linguistic frameworks of the powerful North or the 'developed world'. In other words, as Booth (1995: 333-334) cleverly points out, it is to highlight how ‘international political theory has largely been Western ideology and the West did not want a different theoretical future because it was dominating the practical present. No space was allowed for ideas about transcendence and emancipation. Ideas such as dependency and world-systems theory were shunned as un-American academic activities'. This is not to say that the story we hear from the dominant perspectives did not contain reality. It is to say that the story we did not hear also contains elements of reality. But for those seeking truth, the silence of the powerless has more to say than have the selfish words of the powerful (Ibid.). It is also important to point out that there is a strong and urgent need to give the  

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1 See Burchill, 1996: 9 for the different categories of the discipline’s recent preoccupation.
necessary attention to the silenced and powerless South and to the alternative explanations within the discipline if it is to genuinely deal with global politics.

Second, most IR theorists believe that studying the Western experience alone is sufficient to establish general laws of individual, group, or state behaviour irrespective of the point in time or the geographical location. Thus, few look to the Third World to seek evidence for their arguments (Neuma, 1998: 2). This Eurocentric character makes most of international relations (IR) theories less relevant to the non-western world. In other words, as Ayoob (1998: 33) points out, ‘…major theories of IR on offer today fail to pass the basic test of adequacy primarily because they do not concern themselves with the behavior of the large majority of members of the international system’ and, therefore fail to provide adequate explanation for the causes of most manifestations of conflict and disorder in the system’ (see also Holsti, 1998: 103-132). In this regard the third objective of this chapter is to at least indicate the importance of considering the Third World in the development and elaboration of IR theories.

Third, most dominant international theories have been preoccupied with so many abstract ideas (such as power politics, international order, state, international society) to the extent of marginalizing (ignoring) the emancipation of human kind as their focus. More recently, however, attempts have been made by critical theorists to make emancipation their point of departure in their theoretical endeavour. As a follow up to this attempt, the other objective of this chapter it is to try to make a small contribution by making the focus of international relations the betterment of humankind and its emancipation. Refugees (which are the focus of this research) need emancipation more than anybody else.

Finally, it may be necessary to make it clear from the outset that the theoretical orientation of this research is more of critical theory and constructivist approach. The Marxist and post-modern approaches might also be useful. However, it will be important to look into the basic assumptions of the different approaches, especially liberalism, realism and rationalism in brief so that it will be clear why these approaches are not as relevant as Marxism and post-modernism, and most importantly as critical theory for this particular research. Then Marxism, critical theory and post-modernism will be discussed.

1.1 LIBERALISM

To start with some of the major assumptions: first, liberals assume that there is a self-evident value system, committed to international harmony and cooperation, which has universal validity. Second, they seek the expansion of liberalism (both in economic and political terms) as a universal value. Third, they ignore the fact that industrial powers have achieved economic success with a wider role of the state.

In this respect, liberalism has been preoccupied, among other things, with two apparent global developments: (1) The pacification of foreign relations among liberal states (Doyle, 1986: 1155). The basic assumption here is that liberal states do exercise peaceful constraint and a separate peace exits among them (Ibid.: 1155-1156). This separate peace provides a solid foundation for the establishment of organizations like the North Atlantic Organization. It was believed that the same foundation offers the promise of a continuing peace among liberal states,

- The great majority of members of the post-1945 international system are non-western states both in number of unit states and their population.
and as the number of liberal states increases, it announces the possibility of global peace (Ibid.).

(2) International 'prudence'. The point here is that peaceful restraint only seems to work in liberals' relations with other liberals. Liberal states have fought numerous wars with non-liberal states. Many of these wars have been defensive and thus prudent by necessity (Ibid.). Authoritarian rulers, on the contrary, stimulate and respond to an international political environment in which conflict of prestige, interest, and pure fear of what other states might do all lead states toward war. War and conquest have thus characterized the careers of many authoritarian rulers (Ibid.: 1157). The very fundamental assumption, therefore, has been that militaristic and undemocratic governments created wars for their own vested interests: to raise taxes, expand their bureaucratic apparatus and thus increase their control over their citizens (Burchill, 1996: 30). Based on this assumption liberals concluded that 'the prospects for the elimination of war lay with a preference for democracy over aristocracy, free trade over autarky, collective security over the balance of power system' (Ibid.). This entails breaking the power of the ruling elites and curbing their propensity for violence by means of the democratic process and institutions. In addition, free trade and commerce will overcome the artificial barriers between individuals and unite them everywhere into one community.

Thus, according to liberalism, the best prospect for bringing an end to war between states lies with the spread of liberal-democratic governments and constitutionalism across the globe. However, the perception within the periphery that this constitutes little more than the domination of one culture by another has been and will be the greatest barrier to the expansion of the liberal’s zone of peace from the core to the other parts of the world (Ibid.: 35). The more recent attempt to impose liberalism and market economy on the non-western world, the resistance against this pressure, and the resulting chaos are typical evidences of the expansion of liberalism and the struggle against it, unsuccessful at least for now.

Moreover, though the apparent absence of war between liberal states for some time may have been significant, aggression by liberal states has also characterized a large number of wars. For instance, both Britain and France fought expansionist colonial wars throughout the nineteenth century. The United States fought a similar war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848, waged a war of annihilation against the American Indians, and intervened militarily against sovereign states many times before and after the World War II. Liberal states invade weak non-liberal states and display a striking distrust in dealing with powerful non-liberal states (Doyle, 1986: 1157).

Another assumption of liberalism is that the spirit of war and commerce were mutually incompatible. 'Conflicts were caused by states erecting barriers which distorted and concealed the natural harmony of interests commonly shared by individuals across the world' (Burchill, 1996: 35). They assume that trade and cooperation among states rather than military competition and territorial control are beneficial. In the contemporary international system it is the trading state rather that the military state that is becoming dominant. Therefore, liberals suggest that free movement of commodities, capital and labour is the solution to the problem (Ibid.: 35-37). This typical liberal discourse, which reflects the interests of the West, is meant to open the rest of the world for exploitation.

Among other things, one can safely conclude that, first, liberals have been wrong to assume that there was a self-evident value system, committed to international harmony and cooperation,

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3 These suspicions are well-founded given that peripheral states have traditionally been the victims of western intervention.
which had universal validity. Second, by seeking the expansion (or one can say domination) of liberalism (both in economic and political terms) they contributed to the maintenance of the status quo and denied the possibility of systemic change. Third, by ignoring the fact that industrial powers have achieved economic success with a wider role of the state and by violating the principles of the market, which they try to impose on the developing world, they seek to weaken the role of the state to clear the way for the creation of a global market society in which the North will maintain its dominance. As Noam Chomsky, in his lecture at the University of Cape Town in 1997, points out:

Free market theory comes in two varieties: the official doctrine, and what we might call 'really existing free market doctrine': market discipline is good for you, but I need the protection of the nanny state. The official doctrine is imposed on the defenseless, but it is 'really existing doctrine' that has been adopted by the powerful since the days when Britain emerged as Europe's most advanced fiscal-military state...

The gap between rich and poor countries from 1960 is substantially attributed to protectionist measures of the rich. ... the industrial countries, by violating the principles of free trade, are costing the developing countries an estimated $50 billion a year - nearly equal to the total flow of foreign assistance - much of it publicly-subsidized export promotion.

They also ignore the fact that unregulated free trade policies exacerbate the gap between the rich and the poor within and between states. Moreover, liberals do not take into account the fact that by prescribing only one path, liberalism, to economic development they contribute to the destruction of community life in the developing world. Finally, liberals failed to ask how the state, liberal or otherwise and the states-system have been constituted and reconstituted. They rather took them as they are given for granted.

1.2 REALISM AND NEO-REALISM

It is important to note that the following fundamental assumptions formed the basis of the realist approach: (1) The reification of the state. What this entails is that the modern nation-state was seen as the most desirable form of political organization: conceptions of national sovereignty were regarded as the natural political conditions of humankind. (2) The international system was considered anarchic, that is, without an overarching authority to regulate the behavior of nation-states. (3) States are the primary actors in international relations because they retain a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence (Burchill, 1996: 80).

Realism (as an academic tradition), which is regarded as the most influential theoretical tradition in international relations, started mainly by criticizing liberal internationalism. For instance, according to Carr (1946: 10) realism '... is a necessary corrective to the exuberance of utopianism' which had ignored the central element of power in its consideration of international politics. For realists, thus, 'until the unequal distribution of power in the international system became the central focus of a dispassionate analysis of the international system, the root causes of conflict and war would not be properly understood' (Burchill, 1996: 68-69).

Carr (1946, 63-64) not only criticized liberalism but also identified three foundation-stones of realist philosophy: (1) history is the sequence of cause and effect, whose course can be analyzed and understood by intellectual effort, but not directed by imagination; (2) theory does not create

* Taken from www.zmag.org/chomsky/articles/9709-davie-1.htm
practice, but practice creates theory; and (3) politics are not a function of ethics but ethics of politics. Morality is the product of power. Another more interesting point, which is strongly criticized, is his understanding of the relations between power and politics. For Carr (Ibid.: 102), ‘politics,...', are in one sense always power politics. ... While politics can not be satisfactorily defined exclusively in terms of power it is safe to say that power is always an essential element of politics'. He further argues:

Failure to recognize that power is the essential element of politics has hitherto vitiated all attempts to establish international forms of government, and confused nearly every attempt to discuss the subject. Power is an indispensable instrument of government. To internationalize government in any real sense means to internationalize power; and international government is, in effect, government by that state which supplies the power necessary for the purpose of governing' (Ibid.: 106-107).

The new international order can be built only on a unit of power sufficiently coherent and sufficiently strong to maintain its ascendancy without being itself compelled to take sides in the rivalries of lesser units (Ibid.; 235).

It is mainly because of this last point that critiques, like Cox (1986: 211-239), rightly criticized realism for reducing international relations to great power management.

Another important work in the realist tradition has been Hans Morgenthau's book Politics among Nations. Morgenthau's attempt was mainly to create a science of international politics based on the positivist methodology of the natural sciences to the study of international relations (See Morgenthau, 1976: 3 for his definition of theory). In his conception of world politics Morgenthau considers two different assumptions on the nature of man, society, and politics. The first, which he believes resembles the liberal-utopian, is the assumption that 'a rational and moral political order derived from universally valid abstract principles, can be achieved here and now'. The second, which he identified as realism, assumes that 'the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature. To improve the world one must work with those forces, not against them' (Ibid.). Based on this contrast, Morgenthau (1976: 4-15) lists six principles of political realism which summarize his theoretical approach to the study of international relations.6

A number of important points have been raised by critiques of Morgenthau's approach. Among other things, he is criticized for ignoring economic considerations in the formulation of foreign policy and says very little about the nature of capitalism and its effect on the international order. His assumption of the nation-state as a unitary actor and the neglecting of 'other international actors, such as non-governmental authorities and international markets' have also been questioned (See Burchill, 1996: 77-78 for the details).

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5 One crucial criticism here is that Morgenthau by arguing that 'one must work with those forces, not against them' ignored the possibility of change and transformation.

6 These principles are: (1) Politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws which have their roots in human nature. (2) The key to understanding international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. (3) The forms and nature of state power will vary in time, place and context but the concept of interest remains consistent. (4) Universal moral principles do not guide state behavior, though state behavior will certainly have moral and ethical implications. (5) There is no universally agreed set of moral principles. When states proclaim universal principles they are merely projecting their particular national and cultural codes onto the world as a whole. (6) The political sphere is autonomous from every other sphere of human concern, whether they are legal, moral or economic. (Ibid.: 8-11).
From the discussion above one can conclude that realists accept the present structure and operation of international relations and focus on the reproduction of the states-system. By so doing realists contributed to the perpetuation of the international system by providing it with an intellectual defence and obstructed paths to alternative historical development. Realism failed to recognize its contribution to the maintenance of the existing states-system in which social and economic inequality within and between societies has been obvious (Ibid.: 80). With these general critiques I shall pass onto neo-realism.

In a nutshell, neo-realism is partly a response to the challenges posed by interdependency theory and partly a corrective to traditional realism’s neglect of economic forces. Among others, Kenneth Waltz’s neo-realism (sometimes known as structural realism) is the best evidence for this challenge both as a critique of traditional realism and a substantial intellectual extension of a theoretical tradition which was in danger of being outflanked by rapid changes in the contours of global politics. Neo-realist, according to Ashley (1986: 262):

... set out to develop and to corroborate historically scientific theories that would portray or assume a fixed structure of international anarchy; trim away the balance-of-power concept’s scientifically inescrutable ideological connotations; reduce balance of power’s scientific status to that of a systemic property or situational logic undertaken by rational, calculating, self-interested states; and most importantly, disclose the power-political struggle for hegemony behind the economic dynamic that liberal and radical analysts had too falsely treated in isolation from interstate politics. ... they set out to construct theories that would lay bare the structural relations – the causal connections between means and ends – that gave form to the dynamic rise and decline and in the light of which a hegemon might orient its efforts both to secure its hegemony and to preserve cooperative economic and ecological regimes.

Thus, neo-realists assume that ‘political-economic order follows from the concentration of political-economic power’... Power begets order. Order requires power’ (Ibid.). By such assumption the neo-realists tried to save ‘the realist emphasis on the role of the state power’ (Ibid.).

With these general assumptions, let us briefly look into Waltz’s theoretical endeavour. The fundamental question in Waltz’s theoretical endeavour is: why do states exhibit similar foreign policy behaviour despite their different political systems and contrasting ideologies? (See Waltz, 1979, chapter 5). Waltz focusing his explanation on systemic constraints rather than their internal composition argues that states in the international system are made functionally similar by the constraints of structure. The anarchic realm imposes a discipline on states. They are all required to pursue security before they can perform any other functions. This means states are functionally similar and they differ vastly in their capabilities. In his words, ‘states vary widely in size, wealth, power, and form. And yet variations in these and in other respects are variations among alike units....States are like in the tasks that they face, though not in their abilities to perform them. The differences are of capability, not of function’ (Ibid.: 96)7.

A number of critical points should be raised with regard to Waltz’s unit-structure relationship, for it is relevant in understanding structural changes. First, Waltz’s conception of unit-structure

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7 It is worthwhile to consider how Waltz understands system, structure, and the relations between unit and structure. For Waltz (1979: 79-80), ‘a system is composed of structure and interacting units. The structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think of the system as a whole.... Structure is defined by the arrangement of its parts...and by the principle of that arrangement’. He further argues, that ‘the concept of structure is based on the fact that units differently juxtaposed and combined behave differently and in interacting produce different outcomes’ (Ibid.: 81).
relationship leaves little or no room for systemic change induced by the units themselves (Linklater, 1995: 252). In other words, states are virtually powerless to alter the system in which they find themselves trapped (Ibid.) or the system cannot be fundamentally altered by the states which comprise it. Second, the pacification of a core of liberal-democracies and the increasing number of states choosing liberal democratic orders pose a challenge for neo-realism’s contention that the unit can do little to alter the structure of the system (Doyle, 1986). However, one can also argue that the newly joining states are forced by the dominant liberal internationalism. Third, Waltz neutralizes or reifies the international system. According to Ashley (1984: 228), ‘what emerges from neo-realism is a positivist structuralism that treats the given order as the natural order, limits rather than expands political discourse, negates or trivializes the significance of variety across time and space, subordinates all practices to an interest in control’. In general, neo-realism fails to note that the meaning and importance of sovereignty are socially constituted and changes over time (Linklater, 1995: 254). Understanding its purpose, therefore, Cox (1986: 208) places neo-realism in the category of ‘problem-solving theory’ which takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and political relations and institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action. He further argues that neo-realism reduces international relations to great power management by legitimating a political order which favours the powerful and is hostile to change (Ibid., 211-239). It is this nature of realism and its neo-realist version that makes it irrelevant with regard to Africa which is a disadvantaged (victimized) continent in the international system that realism is trying to legitimate.

Two other assumptions of realism and neo-realism have also been criticized as they are irrelevant for the study of the Third World. First, neo-realism is wrong to assume that ‘like units’ populate the international system. Most Third World states fail in a multiplicity of ways to meet the criteria for being Westphalia states on the European/Western model (Buzan, 1998: 214). Similarly Escude (1998: 66) also argues that states are not ‘like units’ and there are different types of states: (a) great powers; and (b) weak states, which are divided into those that tend to abide by a citizen-centric rationality and those that clearly abandon citizen-centric rationality. In turn, these different types of states are functionally differentiated according to whether they rule, obey, or rebel (Ibid.). Second, neo-realism’s assumption of a sharp differentiation between the political world inside the state (hierarchy, that is, a central governing authority), and the political universe between states (anarchy, that is, no central governing authority) is also wrong (Buzan, 1998: 215). Two points are important here. One is that many Third World states are weakly developed to qualify for hierarchy, and that de facto much of their domestic politics has anarchic qualities. The other is that there are significant elements of hierarchy in relations between the more developed core and the less developed periphery (Ibid.).

1.3 RATIONALISM

The third theoretical perspective, which is worth examining, is rationalism, especially the works of influential thinkers such as Wight, Bull, Watson and Vincent. Rationalism focuses neither on the system of states nor upon the community of humankind but upon what it regards as the basic reality which realism and idealism ignore, this being the phenomenon of international order (Linklater, 1996: 94). In other words, explaining the level of order that exists between political entities which refuse to submit to a higher political authority is the key to the rationalist project (Ibid.; 96). In this respect, rationalists tried to explain how the international system and international society came into being with some sort of order. According to Wight (1977: 33), ‘...a states-system will not come into being without a degree of cultural unity among the
members’. Bull (1977), though he has a similar position, argues that international society can exist without there being a culture common to all members. For Vincent (cited in Linklater, 1996: 97), ‘the basic theme which ensures the working of the international society is functional rather than cultural… in configuration. The pragmatic need to co-exist is sufficient to produce … a diplomatic culture … which preserves order between political associations with diverse cultures and ideology’. The questions that should be raised here are how the international system of international society has been established (voluntarily or under coercion as happened during colonialism). Who identifies the common interests and values? Who makes the rules and how?

There are two main points worth noting on the question of how order and change are conceptualized by members of the rationalist school. First, as Adam Watson (1987: 151) argues, ‘... the regulatory rules and institutions of a system usually, and perhaps inexorably, develop to the point where the members become conscious of common values and the system becomes an international society’. For Watson, ‘in the past common values and ethical norms, unlike regulatory mechanisms, developed and became codified only within a common cultural framework, even though they too might then spread beyond it...’ (Ibid.). Second, rationalism strongly insists that international order should not be taken for granted. It is a precarious achievement which can be destroyed by the emergence of aggressive powers but rationalism raises the question of how far a secure international order can be transformed further to satisfy demands for morality and justice (Linklater, 1996: 95). Thus, Wight (1977: 192) notes, ‘... the fundamental political task at all times (is) to provide order, or security, from which law, justice and prosperity may afterwards develop. The state provided security for five centuries: it can no longer. The task is primarily military, secondly governmental, and thirdly economic’. But according to Wight, historical development produced these conditions in reverse order. Political development limped behind economic, and military behind political (Ibid.).

Like liberalism and realism rationalism has its basic shortcomings which I can not discuss here for lack of space (for some of the critiques see Linklater, 1996: 114). However, it is important to point out that, among other things, rationalism would have been relevant for the study of the Third World, if it had been engaged with modern social and political theory and especially with critical theory in its understanding of international order and how it came about, and in its effort to identify processes of change immanent within existing orders (Ibid.).

Before passing onto the discussion on the remaining theories of international relations, it is important to make a number of general points regarding the three theories discussed above: (1) The general aim of Liberalism, realism and rationalism is to make the existing relations, institutions and order work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble. They don’t question the pattern of relations and institutions. As a result, they usually fail to show an alternative to the existing structure of the state and the international system other than reproducing what is prevailing. (2) They take the state and the international system as given and permanent. They ignore the fact that both the state and the international system are socially constituted and reconstituted. In other words, their concern (especially neo-realist) with continuity and a logic of reproduction, made them neglect the existence of a logic of change. They neutralize and reify the international system by treating structures, which have specific and transitory history as if they were permanent. (3) They reflect the interests of the powerful and the dominant forces and ignore the weak and the disadvantaged. Because of their sole focus on the powerful, especially the superpowers and the West, and their obsession with balance of power, objective law, hierarchy and anarchy, international order, war, etc., they ignored or failed to give due attention to the Third World. (4) They are extremely abstract to the point that they omitted to understand/explain what is going on in every day life, especially in the South. (5) Most importantly, they do not focus on the betterment of humankind, its emancipation and freedom.
It is crucial to further elaborate, as is indicated at the beginning of this chapter and in point 3 and 4 above, why the relevance of these theories for the study of the Third World in general and Africa in particular is questionable. Their basic assumptions, among others, of an anarchical international system, the unitary nature of the international system, state as ‘like units’, sovereignty, war and peace, etc. are all based on the experience of the Western world. Let us very briefly look into some of these assumptions. The assumption of an anarchical international system is difficult to apply in the situation of most of the Third World countries. Contrary to what neo-realisists wanted us to believe, "the interstate system is not characterized by ‘anarchy’, but by an incipient and imperfect ‘hierarchy’ in which we find states that command, states that obey, and states, without the power to command, that refuse to obey" (Escude, 1998: 61). In the Third World where internal war, conflict and disorder dominate the political scene the principle of anarchy and its resulting security dilemma might be more applicable to the internal realm of weak and collapsing states than the international relations among the industrial countries (Holsti, 1998: 124).

The conception of statehood, which is generally identified with Western democratic, constitutional political institutions, an effective government, inviolate geographical boundaries, and a monopoly over the use of force within those boundaries, does not fit easily into most Third World countries (Neuman, 1998: 6). The arbitrary nature of the boundaries drawn by colonial powers are not often acceptable by the various groups (ethnic, regional, religious, etc.). Ruling central governments are frequently perceived as threats to be challenged. Governments usually fail to control large areas within their territorial jurisdiction for extended periods of time. Laws and regulations cannot be enforced with confidence and are not always complied with (Ibid.). Thus, in many states in the Third World elements of anarchy dominate the political landscape to such an extent that little semblance of political order is visible within their juridical boundaries (Ayoob, 1998: 37).

The other concept closely associated with statehood, sovereignty, is equally troublesome. Sovereignty of the state in the Third World is challenged both by external intervention and internal struggle. Therefore, sovereignty, for Neuman (1998: 10), is a relative variable 'that applies in some cases and not in others, or it exists in varying degree in different countries during different time periods in diverse parts of the world'.

With regard to war and peace, contemporary realism starts with the assumption that the real problem of international relations is war between great powers. The peripheries are simply unimportant, indeed invisible. Neo-liberal theories similarly seek to explain primarily the nature of relations between modern industrial countries of the North. As Holsti (1998: 105) put it, 'despite ignoring international politics outside the European/cold war context, most international theorists have presented their descriptive and explanatory structures as universal'. However, if one looks into the pattern of war since 1945 in the peripheries one sees that they have been fundamentally different from the pattern of war in Europe between 1648 and 1945. The incidence of interstate war in the Third World has been substantially lower than the incidence of war in Europe (Ibid.). Wars in the Third World have been predominantly within states, not between states. Similar differences exist with regard to arms races, and arming governments in the Third World which has not been directed at external forces but at internal forces. Thus, the problem of interstate war is not the crucial problem facing most Third World countries. This means that international relations theory as it has been developed, mainly
focusing on interstate war, over the past 250 years will be of limited relevance in helping to explain the crucial issues facing contemporary Third World states (Ibid.: 107). For these and other related reasons the three theoretical traditions seem to be less relevant, in analyzing the political development in general and the state, its crisis and refugee migration in Africa in particular. With these general remarks I now turn to the more relevant theories of international relations.

1.4 MARXISM

One of the fundamental contributions of Marxism is historical materialism. Halliday identifies four general themes of historical materialism which can be seen as defining and constituting the intellectual position advanced by Marx and Engels: (1) Determination by socio-economic factors. This means that 'the modern inter-state system emerged in the context of the spread of capitalism across the globe, and the subjugation of pre-capitalist societies. This socio-economic system underpinned both the character of individual states and their relations with each other: no analysis of international relations is possible without reference to capitalism, the social formations it generated and the world system they comprise' (Halliday, 1994: 61). (2) Historical determination. History influenced present behaviour, therefore the events or character of any society could only be seen in their historical context. (3) The centrality of classes as actors in political life. If within a particular state classes act to subject and control those less powerful than themselves, they act internationally to ally with groups similar to themselves when this is beneficial, and to compete with them by peaceful or military means, when rivalry is preferred. (4) Conflict and revolution. Conflict is a historical and social concept, pertaining to relations between different classes and social groups, and generated by differences in socio-economic positions. Conflict is not only inevitable, given inequalities in wealth and economic position, but also a major dynamic factor in the politics of the international system as well as in that of individual societies. The culmination of such conflicts can take place in one of two ways, or in a combination of the two: war and revolution (Ibid.: 59-66). 'If this tenet of historical materialism is extended to the international', Halliday (Ibid.) argues, 'then it suggests that the central concern of International Relations becomes not security, and the actions of the nation-states directed to defending and enhancing it, but rather conflict, and the ways in which this is generated, conducted, and resolved'.

Marxism’s impact, moreover, is clearly evident in the effort to construct a political economy of international relation which analyses the interplay between states and markets, the states-system and the capitalist world economy, the spheres of power and production. Thus, it is imperative to reconsider Marxism, to appreciate its considerable strengths and learn from its undoubted weaknesses. To begin with, the emphasis upon the revolutionary impact of capitalist globalization upon human society is one of Marx and Engels’ main contributions to the history of international thought. As Linklater (1996: 123) points out, their ‘inside-out analysis for their explanation of the unprecedented integration of the species in the age of capitalism’ is crucial in analysing the capitalist world order. The essence of capitalism is, for Marx, ‘to strive to tear down every barrier to intercourse, to conquer the whole earth for its market and to annihilate the tyranny of distance by reducing to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to another’ (Ibid.). With regard to the crisis of Africa and the resulting refugee migration, this is one fundamental issue (the incorporation of the continent into the capitalist world system and its disadvantaged position) that should be taken into account. It is the distortion of the gradual development of Africa, which resulted from the late incorporation of the continent into the capitalist world system, that is one of the major causes of the crisis.
Furthermore, Marxism’s analysis of globalization and fragmentation as two sides of the coin of capitalist development and its emphasis on the deep tensions between the agents of universalization and particularistic loyalties are equally important. Equally important is the recognition of uneven development of world capitalism in which the metropolitan core exploited the periphery (Ibid.: 127-128). This is a very fundamental point which will be used in the coming chapters in analyzing the impact of the uneven development of capitalism and the incorporation of Africa into the world capitalist economic system on the political and economic development of the continent. It is also important to understand the anti-colonial struggle and its results.

Far more relevant for this research are the more recent theories of imperialism often described as neo-Marxist which are not only based on but transcend Marxism. For instance, Gunther Frank asserts that the alliance between the dominant class interests in the core and the periphery obstructed the economic development of peripheral regions. In his words, ‘once a country or a people is converted into the satellite of an external capitalist metropolis, the exploitative metropolis-satellite structure quickly comes to organize and dominate the domestic economic, political and social life of that people’ (Frank, 1967: 10), which results in its underdevelopment. Thus, Frank (Ibid.: xi) argues, national capitalism and national bourgeoisie do not and cannot offer any way out of underdevelopment. He further points out that ‘no country which had been firmly tied to the metropolis as a satellite through the incorporation into the world capitalist system has achieved the rank of an economically developed country, except by finally abandoning the capitalist system’ (Ibid.: 11). Only the act of national secession from the world capitalist economy would give peripheral societies the capacity to industrialize autonomously. Wallerstein (1979, see for instance p. 18-22) also stresses that capitalism could not bring about the industrialization of the world as a whole, it rather creates core, semi-periphery and periphery. Thus, world system perspective emphasizes the role of peripheral and semi-peripheral states and movements in challenging the political principles of the capitalist world economy and the cultural hegemony of the west (Ibid., 280-281 and 292-293). Both Frank’s dependency theory and Wallerstein’s world system theory stress the contradiction of the uneven development of capitalism that results in international, regional and national polarization.

Marxism also contributed to the development of the notion of global hegemony in the neo-Gramscian school of international political economy (see Gill, 1993). Cox’s recent work can once again be a good illustration. Moreover, the neo-Gramscian perspective, by seeking to identify counter-hegemonic forces (nationalist movements, socialist groups and cultural movements) within the global order, challenges the neo-realist claim that explaining the reproduction of international anarchy is the primary task of international relations (Ibid.: 133-134). Cox’s writings therefore link international political economy with critical social theory. ‘Political economy’, Cox (1995: 32) argues, ‘... is concerned with the historically constituted frameworks or structures within which political and economic activity takes place. It stands back from the apparent fixity of the present to ask how the existing structures came into being and how they may be changing, or they may...

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Footnote: Cox (1993: 264) distinguishes two meanings of hegemony: (1) ‘dominance of one state over others, the ability of the dominant state to determine the conditions in which interstate relations are conducted and to determine the outcomes in these relations’. (2) ‘the dominant state and the dominant social forces sustain their position through adherence to universalized principles which are accepted or acquiesced in by a sufficient proportion of subordinate states and social forces’. This implies intellectual and moral leadership. Global hegemony operates through alliances between elites in core and industrializing societies and through the mechanisms of control afforded by global economic and political institutions (Linklater, 1996: 133). Such understanding is crucial in explaining the role of the African elite in serving the interests of the various forms of international capital.
be induced to change. In this sense, political economy is critical theory.’ In this respect, Cox (1986: 207) argues that knowledge is always for someone and for some purpose: it is never value free. Based on this assumption Cox identifies two forms of knowledge: problem solving and critical theory (Ibid.: 208).\(^9\)

Furthermore, the contribution of Marxism is also evident in its critique of liberal economics. For Marx, the ‘liberal conviction that private property is a feature of all social orders gave the class-based inequalities of the capitalist order the illusionary authority of natural law. The liberal idea of private property did not mirror an unchanging reality but helped to reproduce an order which was biased towards particular class interests. Therefore, the contention that certain modes of inquiry are not an innocent interpretation of an immutable reality but possess the ideological function of underpinning mutable and unjust social order is essential to many contemporary debates in international relations’ Linklater (1996: 134). This critique has exposed the problem-solving character and ideological functions of liberal economics, and replaced its weary emphasis on the supposedly immutable character of international relations with a critical inquiry into the prospect for new principles and forms of social and political organization (Ibid.).

What is the relevance of Marxism for refugee studies? In simple terms, the Marxist approach is useful both directly and indirectly. Directly, its focus on the expansion of capitalism and its exposure of its evil nature, its analysis of globalization and fragmentation as two sides of the same coin of capitalist development and the resulting global inequality, its concern for the human race in general and its emancipation, and its emphasis on the inevitable transformation of the existing system provide a useful insight for analysing refugeeism and its possible causes. Indirectly, as is indicated above, Marxism has contributed to the critique on realism and helped the development of dependency, world system, critical and postmodern theories in international relations (the last two will be discussed below). Furthermore, Marxism has also contributed to the articulation of the Gramscian and Neo-Gramscian school of international political economy. These different and refined versions of Marxism, which are not only based on but transcend Marxism, are crucial for understanding the complex problems of the Third World in general and Africa in particular and the resulting refugee migration. They are also useful in the search for a possible solution.

1.5 CRITICAL THEORY

In order to comprehend the basic assumption of critical theory and its relevance to this research it is crucial to start with the question what is critical theory?\(^{10}\) ‘... Critical theory is a concern to comprehend the central features of contemporary society by understanding its historical and social development, and tracing contradictions in the present which may open up the possibility of transcending contemporary society and its ... forms of domination (Devetak, 1996: 146). In this respect, critical theory questions taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs, and challenges many conventional practices, ideas and ideals (Gibson, 1986: 2). Critical theory is not simply explanatory, but is committed towards a more just and rational society (Ibid.). Thus, in asserting that individuals and groups should be in control of their own lives, it has as its goal that people should be able to determine their destinies.

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\(^9\) The distinction between problem-solving and critical theories will be discussed later.

\(^{10}\) On the historical origin, development and shift of emphasis of critical theory, see Morrow, 1994 and Stirk, 2000.
In this respect, critical theory claims to provide enlightenment concerning the actual conditions of social life by focusing on the true interests of individuals and groups. 'Interest' here refers to the needs and concerns of particular groups, especially to the advantages (disadvantages) they possess, in the sense of 'self-interest' or 'vested interests' (Gibson, 1986: 5). Privileged groups always have an interest in maintaining the status quo to protect their advantages. On the contrary, disadvantaged groups have an interest in change in order to remove the disabilities their detrimental position involves. Thus, focusing on interest means that critical theory sees conflict and tension rather than harmonic consensus as a central feature of social life. According to Gibson (Ibid.), therefore, 'identification of conflicting interests is more truly revealing than other approaches. It yields valid representation of reality and probes more powerfully into the nature and causes of our social world. In its search for the interest served by knowledge or social practices, critical theory claims to lay bare the springs of human action as it exposes the roots of injustice and inequality'. Most importantly, critical theory attempts to reveal those factors, which prevent groups and individuals from taking control of, or even influencing, those decisions that crucially affect their lives. In the exploration of the nature and limits of power, authority and freedom, critical theory claims to afford insight into how a greater degree of autonomy could be available. It does not only provide deeper awareness of a person's true interest; more than that; it can set people free. Unlike scientific theory, it claims to provide guidance as to what to do. It can also be used to change the world to liberate it from inequalities and unfair restrictions' (Ibid.: 6). This characteristic marks out critical theory's true distinctiveness: its claim to be emancipatory.

To further understand the major assumptions of critical theory and its relevance to refugee studies it will be useful to highlight the basic epistemological differences between critical theory, on the one hand, and positivism, traditional conception of theory and problem solving theory, on the other hand. Critical theory holds that to use the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences in the study of society is to hamper the pursuit of truth. It rejects the notion of givenness in social life. Nothing significant in human society is 'given' or 'natural'. Critical theory argues that in human affairs all 'facts' are socially constructed, humanly determined and interpreted, and hence subject to change through human means (Ibid.: 4). It also asserts that no social fact is value free, language is always loaded, and objectivity depends on where you happen to be standing or, rather, placed in the social world (Ibid.).

Traditional conceptions of theory claim that subject and object must be strictly separated in order to theorize properly. It assumes that there is an external world out there to study, and that an inquiring subject can study this world in a balanced and objective manner by withdrawing from the world it investigates, and leaving behind any ideological beliefs, values or opinions which would invalidate the inquiry (Devetak, 1996: 147). On the contrary, critical conceptions of theory, 'recognizing that theories are always embedded in social and political life, ... such conceptions of theory recognize the unavoidability of taking their orientation from the social matrix in which they are situated, their guiding interest is one of emancipation from rather than legitimization and consolidation of, existing society' (Ibid.).

Different purposes for social and political inquiry is the basis of the distinction between problem solving theory and critical theory made by Robert Cox in his assessment of the impact of recent developments in social theory for the study of International Relations. According to Cox (1986: 207), 'theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. ... There is .... no such thing as theory in itself, divorced from a standpoint in time and space. When any theory so represents itself, it is the more important to examine it as ideology, and to lay bare its concealed perspective'. Similarly Hoffman (1987: 237) also points out that theory never exists in a vacuum.
It is inevitably the product of a certain historical period and circumstances, a reflection of a particular social and political order. In this respect, Hoffman distinguishes between theoretical perspectives on the basis of the purpose of theory. Theory can either be a guide to solving problems within the terms of a particular perspective (problem solving theory), or it can reflect on the process of theorizing itself, which raises the possibility of choosing a different perspective (critical theory) in which case the problematic becomes one of creating an alternative world order (Ibid.). An alternative order which can help the realization of the emancipation of human beings from their sufferings.

Problem-solving theory does not question the present order, critical theory, on the other hand, stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about. Unlike problem-solving theory, it does not take institutions and social and power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing. Critical theory is directed to the social and political complex as a whole rather than to the separate parts. Thus, it is a theory of history concerned not just with the past but with the continuing process of historical change (Cox, 1986: 208-209). Furthermore, ‘critical theory allows a normative choice in favor of a social and political order different from the prevailing order, but limits the range of choice to alternative orders which are feasible transformations of the existing order. A principal objective of critical theory, therefore, is to clarify this range of possible alternatives. ... In this way critical theory provides a guide to strategic action for bringing about an alternative order, whereas problem-solving theory is a guide to tactical actions which, intended or unintended, sustain the existing order’ (Ibid.: 210). Though it refuses to take the prevailing order as it finds it, critical theory does not simply ignore it. It accepts that humans do not make history under conditions of their own choosing, and so a detailed examination of present conditions must necessarily be undertaken. Nevertheless, the order, which has been given to us, is by no means neutral, necessary or historically invariable. Critical theory views the prevailing order of social and political relations as a historical production which must not only be explained but also transformed.

Another important point worth considering is critical theory’s focus on the social totality and its emphasis on a holistic methodology. ‘This methodology comprises a moment of abstraction, where a specific structure or object is temporarily lifted from its context in order to be studied in isolation, and a moment of reconstruction, where that which is abstracted is re-inserted into the whole. Only when the whole had been understood ... would the analysis be complete’ (Devetak, 1996: 156). This reconstructive movement which leads towards the construction of a large picture of the whole distinguishes critical from traditional theories (Ibid.: 156).11

Finally, critical theory’s focus on the full range of modernity’s global power relations to provide both a historical and structural explanation of power relations which frame the prevailing world order is crucial in understanding how global stratification and inequality came about and then persisted. In this respect, Cox’s (1989) historical structure approach can be one good example. In contrast to the individualist approach of realism Cox’s (Ibid.: 37) approach ‘focuses on the structure that constitutes the framework or parameters for action and that shapes the characters of the individual actors.... It tries to explain why both are as they are. Actors are conditioned by the resources, norms, expectations, and institutions of societies in which they grew up. They are limited by the socio-economic and military pressure of their environment. They are products of history’. Cox also views the state and its functions, roles, and responsibilities as socially and historically determined. Thus, whereas the state is taken for granted by realists, critical theory seeks to provide a social history

11 This also applies to Marxism.
of the state (Devetak, 1996: 159). Furthermore, Cox (1986: 37) argues that a comprehensive understanding of the present order and its structural characteristics must account for the interaction between social forces, state, and world orders. Within Cox’s (Ibid.: 225) approach, ‘the world can be represented as a pattern of interacting social forces in which states play an intermediate though autonomous role between the global structure of social forces and local configuration of social forces within particular countries’. This is an important approach which will help to explain how the ‘modern state’ in Africa is shaped by its domestic and international environment. It is also crucial in understanding how the territorial sovereign state came into being and how it is currently in crisis.

To sum up, the distinctive contribution of critical theory, as Devetak (1996: 173) puts it, relates to three broad areas: ‘(1) the historical-sociological analysis of the structure of modern world politics; (2) the philosophical critique of particularism and exclusion; and (3) the philosophical inquiry into the conditions under which emancipation in world politics is possible’. The common theme to all three areas is the sovereign state. The sovereign state as a central actor on the world stage is the foremost example of a particularistic or exclusionary political institution; and, as a result, it is a formidable obstacle to emancipation (Ibid.). Critical international theory’s aim of developing an alternative theory and practice of international relations thus centers on the possibility of overcoming the sovereign state and inaugurating post-sovereign world politics. Linklater (1996b: 279-280) also notes two crucial achievements of critical theory: first, the assumption that knowledge does not arise from the subject’s neutral engagement with an objective reality but reflects pre-existing social purposes and interests. Second, critical theory opposes the claims that existing structures are immutable. The central objection of these claims is that the notions of immutability supports structured inequalities of power and wealth which are in principle alterable. Thus, critical theory investigates the prospects for new forms of community in which individuals and groups can achieve higher levels of freedom.

In the light of the insights acquired from critical theory, though the detail will be the focus of the following chapters, it is important to make the point that refugee migration is a direct result of the structure of the prevailing international system and the social construction and reconstruction of the sovereign state. Thus, we have critical theory’s concern and emphasis on: (1) the conception of enlightenment and emancipation of humankind; (2) questioning things which are taken as given by the realist: the international system, sovereign state, interdependence, international order etc.; (3) the conception of the prevailing system and structure as it is not neutral, necessarily invariable but a historical production which must not be only explained but transformed; and (4) explaining the sovereign state as a particularistic and exclusionary political institution and as a result, a formidable obstacle to emancipation; all are crucial for understanding the territorial sovereign state, its crisis and refugee migration in Africa.

1.6 POST-MODERNISM

Some of the fundamental assumptions of postmodernism, as Vasquez (1995: 218-223) points out, can be summarized as: (1) The arbitrary nature of modernity. Postmodernism not only denies progress, but rejects the notions that modernity is the end of history, the perfection of humanity. For post-modernists, there is no optimal way of doing things, and there is no one truth but many truths. (2) The realization that what exists in the world is choice posing as truth. Nothing is necessary. The arrangements that do exist were created by human beings either consciously or otherwise. Such constructions were in fact choices that were made. They were choices in the sense that other arrangements could have been selected by struggle within history. Rather than
seeing things as arbitrary choices born out of power and interests, the victors have justified their choices in terms of divine law, natural law or scientific analysis. (3) **Reality is a social construct.** If what exists is arbitrary and the product of human choice, it follows that what exists must have been socially constructed by people. Reality is created and constructed by beliefs and behaviours. Structures do in fact shape beliefs and behaviours, but these structures are the result of human action. (4) **Language and conceptual frameworks are prone to self-fulfilling prophecies.** Whenever ideas spread and people believe and act on them, and certain rules and norms are obeyed, institutionalized and enforced through a variety of social control mechanisms, reality comes into existence or is constructed. Thus, postmodernism, for Vasquez (Ibid.: 222), directs us towards researching how language, conceptual frameworks and paradigms shape the world.

In the light of these major assumptions, one of the fundamental contributions of postmodernism is its conception of power-knowledge relations and the development of the notion of genealogy. Though it will not be possible to have a detailed discussion here it is crucial to point out that: "...power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1977: 27-28). 12 Ashley (1989) 13 and Bartelson (1995) 14 have also attempted to show the different dimension of power-knowledge relations.

More interesting and relevant to this research is the notion of genealogy, 15 especially the two dimensions of the purpose of genealogy: first, the transformation of the question "what is...? into "how is...?". This means that to determine the forces that give shape to an event or a thing is more important than to attempt to identify its hidden, fixed essence. Second, Post-modernism problematizes the prevailing identity formation which appears normal or natural and refuses to use history for the purpose of confirming present identities, preferring to use it instead to disturb identities that have become dogmatized, conventionalized or normalized (Devetak, 1996: 186, See also Smith, 1995: 5-6). This a very important approach which can help to explain and understand how the boundaries of African countries have been demarcated, how the idea of the 'modern state' has been imported into Africa, and how the different concepts of a 'refugee' and the legal instruments regarding the status of refugees have been developed and applied.

### 1.6.1 Postmodernism and the State

Another fundamental contribution of postmodernism, which is crucial in understanding the state and its crisis, is its conception of the state. Unlike other traditions in international relations, postmodernism reconceptualizes the state, sovereignty and violence based on insights gained

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12 See also Foucault, 1977: 23; especially on his conception of the 'rule of immanence' see Foucault, 1978: 98.
13 See Ashley 1989: 303 on the knowledge of the state and knowledge of man.
14 See Bartelson 1995: 2 and 83-84 on the historical relationship between sovereignty and truth.
15 Genealogy is mainly a historical thought which exposes and registers the significance of power knowledge relations (Devetak, 1996: 184-185). From the genealogical point of view there is no one single, grand history, but many interwoven histories varied in their rhythms, tempo, and power knowledge effects. A genealogical approach is anti-essentialist. It affirms the idea that all knowledge is situated in a particular time and place and issues from a particular perspective. The subject of knowledge is situated in and conditioned by, a political and historical context. As a consequence of the heterogeneity of possible contexts and positions, there can be no single, archimedean perspective which trumps all others. There is no 'truth', only competing perspectives and regimes of truth (Ibid.).
from genealogy and deconstruction. In order to understand how postmodernism addresses the question how the sovereign state is (re) constituted as the normal mode of subjectivism in international relations, let us consider violence, boundaries, identity and statecraft. These are the key factors which make possible the sovereign state.

**Violence.** There is a paradox within the relationship between politics and violence: violence is 'the thing which the modern state is designed to protect citizens against, but also that which makes possible the modern state as a shelter from violence' (Devetak, 1996: 193). Moreover, as Klein (1994: 38) put it, 'states rely upon violence to constitute themselves as states and to impose differentiation between the internal and external'. In other words, strategic violence is an ongoing process of defining state boundaries, excluding that which differs from its domain, and punishing those who would challenge it. Thus, a critical account of violence requires analysis of its constitutive role in the making of states (Ibid.). It is, therefore, important to recognize that violence supplies a necessary condition, and there would be no modern state without supplement of violence (Devetak, 1996: 195). In this respect, postmodernism exposes the constitutive role of violence in modern politics. This implies that violence is not merely something to which a fully formed state resorts for power political reasons. Rather it is inaugural as well as augmentative (Ibid.). Such an understanding is crucial in explaining the violent nature of politics in Africa which is trying and/or forced to copy the Western style of modern state which is constituted through violence.

**Boundaries.** To inquire into the states (re) constitution is partly to inquire into the ways in which global political space is partitioned. Thus, postmodernism is concerned with how boundaries are (re)constituted and how bounded communities are socially created, and what the role of the state and violence have been in this process. Moreover, postmodernism asks how a certain configuration of space and power is instituted. And with what consequence? Most importantly it raises the question how a particular mode of subjectivity is instituted and copied throughout the world. The basic implication of these questions is that the prevailing mode of subjectivity (the sovereign state) is neither natural nor necessary. There is no necessary reason why global political space has to be divided as it is and with the same bearing. Of crucial importance in this division of political space is the inscription of boundaries. Making boundaries is not an innocent and/or pre-political act. Rather, it is a political act with profound political implications as it is fundamental to the production and delimitation of political space (Devetak, 1996: 196). In other words, there is no political space in advance of boundary inscription and boundaries divide an interior sovereign space from an exterior anarchical space, which means that neither sovereignty nor anarchy would be possible without the inscription of a boundary to divide political space.

**Identity.** The formulation of identity and difference are fundamental to the constitution of the state. As Dalby (1990; 19) put it, 'the formulation of fundamental categories of identity and difference structures political life according to difference defined as principally in the categories of space and time'. The questions that should be raised in this regard are how have practices and representations of domestication and exclusion imposed political identity? And how has the concept of territorially defined self been constructed in opposition to threatening others? The attempt to answer these questions is crucial with regard to Africa where the constitution of political identity is fragmented and where national and sub-national identities are in competition.

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16 Deconstruction is a general mode of radically unsettling what are taken to be stable concepts and conceptual oppositions. Its main purpose is to demonstrate the effects and costs produced by the settled oppositions, to disclose the practical relationship between opposed forms, and to attempt a displacement of them (Devetak, 1996: 188-189)
In traditional approaches, boundaries and identity of the sovereign state are taken to be pre-established and settled. In contrast, postmodernism focuses on the discourses and practices which substitute threat with difference in the constitution of identity. As Dalby (1990: 29) explains, ‘geopolitical discourse constructs the world in terms of self and others, in terms of cartographically specifiable sections of political space, and in terms of military threats’. In other words, the geopolitical creation of external others is integral to the constitution of a political identity (self) which is to be made secure. In addition, the constitution of a coherent, singular political identity often demands the silencing of internal dissent. There can be no internal others that endanger a certain conception of the self, and must be necessarily expelled, disciplined, or contained. Identity, thus, is an effect forged, on the one hand, by disciplinary practices which attempt to normalize a population, giving it a sense of unity, and on the other, by exclusionary practices which attempt to secure the domestic identity through a process of spatial differentiation, and various diplomatic, military, and defence practices (Devetak, 1996: 198). It is also important to recognize that:

Political identity need not be constituted against, and at the expense of, others, but the prevailing discourses and practices of security and foreign policy tend to reproduce this reasoning. Moreover, this relation to other must be recognized as a morally and politically loaded relation. The effect is to allocate the other to an inferior moral space, and to arrogate the self to a superior one. By coding the spatial exclusion in moral terms it became easier to legitimate certain politico-military practices and interventions which advance national security interests at the same time as they reconstitute political identities ... to the extent that the other is regarded as something not occupying the same moral space as the self, conduct toward the other becomes more exploitative. This is especially so in international relations where political identity is frequently defined in terms of territorial exclusion. (Ibid.: 198-199)

The morally and politically loaded nature of the relations of self to others, especially to allocate the other an inferior moral space and to arrogate the self to a superior one is essential in understanding the relations between Europe and Africa before and during colonialism. It is important in grasping the fundamental assumptions behind the so-called ‘civilizing mission’ of Europeans with regard to the ‘backward, uncivilized’ Africans. It is also useful in explaining the intervention of superpowers in Africa during the cold war in order to prevent strategically important countries from falling under the sphere of influence of the other which is taken to be a danger for the self, be it the West or the East. The current pressure on Africa towards liberalism and market economy by the West can also be explained in the same way.

Statecraft. Statecraft is not primarily about relations between different state units, but about the construction and reconstruction of the units themselves (Doty, 1996: 141). Thus, Postmodernism is interested in how the prevailing modes of subjectivity neutralize or conceal their arbitrariness by projecting an image of normalcy, naturalness, or necessity. For example, Ashley (1989b: 268-269) has explored how hegemony normalizes the dominant mode of sovereign subjectivity.¹¹ ‘Hegemony refers to the projection and circulation of an ‘exemplary’ model,

¹¹ By hegemony Ashley does not mean ‘an overarching ideology or cultural matrix that encloses political imagination’ nor ‘a central agency possessing both the capacities and the will to impose global purpose through its deliberate policies’ (Ashley, 1989: 268-269). Hegemony is, for Ashley (Ibid.), ‘an ensemble of normalized knowledgeable practices, identified with a particular state and domestic society..., that is regarded as a practical paradigm of sovereign political subjectivity and conduct’.
which functions as a regulative idea' (Devetak, 1996: 199). One important point that should be well noted is the primary function of the 'exemplary model'. Its primary function is to:

....negate alternative conceptions of subjectivity or to devalue them as underdeveloped, inadequate or incomplete. Anomalies are contrasted with the 'proper', 'normal' or 'exemplary' model. For instance, 'quasi-states' or 'failed states' represent empirical cases of states which deviate from the model by failing to display the recognizable signs of sovereign statehood. In this failure they help to reinforce the hegemonic mode of subjectivity as a norm, and to reconfirm the sovereignty/anarchy opposition which underwrites it. In order for the model to have any power at all though, it must be replicable; it must be seen as a universally effective mode of subjectivity which can be invoked and instituted at any site. The pressures applied on states to conform to normalized modes of subjectivity are complex and various, and emanate both internally and externally. Some pressures are quite explicit, such as military intervention, others less so, such as conditions attached to foreign aid, diplomatic recognition, and general process of socialization. The point is that modes of subjectivity do not naturally become dominant, they achieve dominance in space and time through power and imposition. (Devetak, 1996: 199-200)

It seems clear that this has been exactly how the Western idea of the modern state as an 'exemplary model' has been imported into many parts of the non-western world, especially into Africa. As we can learn from the history of the past one hundred or so years, the western countries used their power directly through colonialism and later indirectly through neocolonialism to export their style of territorial (sovereign) state as a universally effective system into Africa. To do this and by doing this they devalued and negated the indigenous system as underdeveloped and backward. This is partially the root cause of the African crisis. Thus, when the failure/collapse of the state in Africa is discussed in this research it should be noted that it is the western idea of the state as an 'exemplary model' that failed/collapsed. It is this imposition of the western model that suppressed the development of an alternative conception (for instance, what the different communities in Africa had for many centuries) of the state in Africa and resulted in complete chaos.

One basic question that should be raised here is how the state has been made to appear as if it had an essence. In short, 'the state is made to appear as if it had an essence by performative enactment of various domestic and foreign policies, or what might more simply be called 'statecraft" (Ibid.

Statecraft is a practice of differentiation which relentlessly attempts to separate, enframe or totalize a political space. It is a practice operating at the border, and making those borders produce the effect of the state as bounded and complete. Statecraft embodies the interminable attempt to constitute or frame the state's identity against difference, its inside against outside, its sovereignty against anarchy. Statecraft, in short, names the various practices and activities which produce the effect of a complete state by inscribing boundaries which constitute an inside and outside (Devetak, 1995: 31).

However, the state is never settled, sealed or completed. It is, therefore, crucial to understand that the state as an historical emergent and always contested product of multiple practices is an ongoing political accomplishment. States are never finished entities, they are necessarily always in a process of becoming (Ibid. 32). This is true with regard to Africa more than anywhere else, where the state is contested and the making of the state is dominated by the western conception. Such an understanding is crucial for explaining the complex situation in the continent.
1.6.2 State Sovereignty as Social Construct

One other point that should be considered here is how state sovereignty is socially constituted. The modern principle of state sovereignty has emerged historically as the legal expression of the character and legitimacy of the state. Most fundamentally, it expresses the claim by the state to exercise legitimate power within strictly delimited territorial boundaries. This claim now seems both natural and elegant, although it continues to generate familiar and seemingly intractable problems (Walker, 1991: 449).

According to Biersteker and Weber (1996: 3), 'the ideal of state sovereignty is the product of the actions of powerful agents and the resistances to those actions located at the margins of power'. In this case, the state is considered 'as an identity or agent, and sovereignty, as an institution or discourse, as mutually constitutive and constantly undergoing change and transformation. States can be defined in terms of their claims to sovereignty, while sovereignty can be defined in terms of interaction and practices of the states' (Ibid.: 11). Therefore, neither the state nor sovereignty should be taken as given or fixed and sovereignty should be taken as an historically contingent social category rather than an inherent quality of stateness (Ibid.: 12). Moreover, the components of state sovereignty (territory, population and authority) are intimately tied up with the construction, reconstruction, and negotiation of boundaries, territorial boundaries being the most tangible.

Sovereignty has two dimensions: internal and external. Internally, sovereignty is defined as a centering of power/authority within a given territory. Externally, relations between states are understood as the negation of the community presumed to be possible within the sovereign state. These two readings of state sovereignty seem to express the decisive demarcation between inside and outside, self and other, identity and difference, community and anarchy that is constitutive of our modern understanding of political space. They affirm a clear sense of here and there (Walker, 1991: 456). This is an important conceptualization of sovereignty which is crucial in understanding how our conception of a refugee has been shaped and how the destiny of refugees has been left in the hands of the sovereign state.

Jackson's distinction between positive and negative sovereignty is also an important point to be considered in understanding the state sovereignty in Africa. 'Positive sovereignty presupposes capabilities, which enable governments to be their own masters: it is a substantive rather than a formal condition. A positively sovereign government is one which not only enjoys the rights of non-intervention and other international immunities but also possesses the wherewithal to provide political goods for its citizens. It is also a government that can, among other things, reciprocate in international commerce and finance' (Jackson, 1990: 29). Positive sovereignty refers to the capacity to declare, implement, and enforce public policy both domestically and internationally. On the contrary, negative sovereignty refers to the 'freedom from outside interference: a formal-legal condition. Non-intervention and sovereignty in this meaning are basically two sides of the same coin' (Ibid.: 27). Negative sovereignty primarily involves decolonization: it is the distinctive liberty acquired by former colonies as a consequence of the international enfranchisement moment. Thus, negative sovereignty is the legal foundation upon which a society of independent and formally equal states fundamentally rests (Ibid.).

Related to this, it is important to point out that in the current international system, attaining sovereignty (especially positive sovereignty) is embedded within a process of social recognition
of territorial states. Such recognition is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for realizing sovereignty. Beyond formal assertion territorial states pursue projects that construct their identities as states as well as their difference with other states. Such projects of expression require wealth. In capitalism, wealth is the product of a global division of labour and, therefore, discussions of sovereignty obligate an understanding of a wealth-producing division of labour (Inayatullah, 1996: 51). This is an important point that should be considered in the discussion of quasi-state and negative sovereignty in Africa. Such a discussion may be helpful in understanding the difficulty of realizing positive sovereignty when the wealth necessary for such expression is beyond the state’s authority.

Why is the understanding of sovereignty as a social construct relevant for refugee studies? This will be discussed in two of the coming chapters. However, it would be appropriate here to point out that it is vital to understand the ambiguity and the controversy surrounding sovereignty, especially in the case of the collapse of the state and the increasing interest in and necessity of humanitarian intervention.

To sum up, postmodern critique of the mainstream IR traditions is an important insight for this project. A number of points can be made here. 

1. Postmodernism rejects the notions that modernity is the end of history and the perfection of humanity. For a post-modernist, there is no optimal way of doing things, and there is no one truth but many truths. For instance, postmodernism denies modern economics’ claim that there is solely one way to solve the problem of food and shelter. Such an understanding of modernity especially by the ‘traditional’ non-European societies, which have been struggling to copy the European project of modernity, is crucial if they are to develop their own alternative way of organizing their communities.

2. Postmodernists believe that the socio-political and economic arrangements that do exist were created by human beings either consciously or otherwise. Such constructions were in fact choices made in the sense that other arrangements could have been selected by struggle within history.

3. They convincingly argue that reality is a social construct. This means that if what exists is arbitrary and the product of human choice, it follows that what exists must have been socially constructed by people. Reality is created and constructed by beliefs and behaviours. Structures do in fact shape beliefs and behaviors, but these structures are the result of human action.

4. Finally, postmodernists’ argument that language and conceptual frameworks are prone to self-fulfilling prophecies is another important insight. It is important because it will help us understand that whenever ideas spread and people believe and act on them, and certain rules and norms are obeyed, institutionalized and enforced through a variety of social control mechanisms, reality is constructed. This will direct us towards researching how language, conceptual frameworks and paradigms shape the world.

Postmodernism provides us with: a contribution in understanding the relation of knowledge and power; the introduction of a genealogical and deconstruction approach; a critical account of how a particular representation (knowledge or perspective) circulates, dominates and takes hold to produce a practical political effect and marginalize others; an emphasis in transforming the question ‘what is...?’ to ‘how is...?’ and the focus to determine the forces that give shape to an event or a thing rather than to attempt to identify its hidden, fixed essence; insight on how the discourses on territorial state and statecraft (inclusion/exclusion and inside/outside) shape our imagination. All are crucial in analyzing the historical development (political, economic and social) and the current situation in Africa and in explaining the refugee crisis in the continent in general and in the Horn of Africa in particular. Most importantly, the
focus of both critical theory and postmodernism on freeing human beings from unnecessary social constraints and the emancipation of the human race is crucial for refugee studies, for it has been and will be the refugees that need freedom, the right to live and emancipation more than anybody else.

In this project the application of this line of research will be vital in explaining how the conception of tribalism, ethnicity, etc. and the language used to describe the African society in terms of ethnicity, tribalism, nationalism and the different identities attached to them contributed to the crisis of the state. It is also important in explaining how the description of Africa as traditional and the idea that it has to abandon its traditional nature and replace it with the better one, which is modern (European), distorted its development from within. It is also useful in explaining how the conception of territoriality and sovereignty of the state, liberal social thought and the cold war ideological struggle shape the international legal instruments regarding the status of refugees and its practicality (implementations). It is also crucial in explaining how the conception of territoriality and sovereignty of the state divided human displacement into internal and external (refugee) and left the internally displaced without international protection, and how the same conception allowed the state to produce increasing number of refugees and prevented the international community doing whatever possible to minimize human suffering.

1.7. Where does this Research stand?

Finally, it seems appropriate to make clear where the general theoretical framework of this research stands within the wider theoretical spectrum of international relations. The best way to do it is by focusing on four fundamental points on which the various theories of international relations differ. (1) The purpose of inquiry. Different traditions have their own underlying reason behind their theoretical undertakings. This can be either to ensure that relations between states are managed as smoothly as possible in an effort to minimize the potential for conflict and war (neo-realism) or to produce optimal economic outcomes for citizens of each country based on efficiencies produced by market application and by exposing and removing the influence of the state from the lives of individuals (neo-liberalism). It can also be to change the international system and seeking new arrangements, which will improve the circumstances of subordinate and marginal groups (critical theory) (See Burchill, 1996: 18-20). In the light of these different purposes of social and political inquiry the purpose of this research will be to make a modest contribution to the transformation of the national-state, which has been based on the principle of exclusion, and that of the international system, which has been serving the strong powers at the expense of the subordinate and marginal groups, which together created refugees in the first place. In other words, this research will question the origin, nature and the usefulness of the 'modern' state imported into Africa. It will also question the international system, in which Africa is completely disadvantaged. Finally, it will question the international legal instruments concerning refugees. By so doing it seeks the possibility of their transformation.

(2) The object or level of analysis and the scope of inquiry. Within the level of analysis the difference centres on the very nature of the subject matter under analysis. In this respect, depending on the level at which the question is addressed, certain actors or agents will be privileged above others, certain actors will be emphasized and de-emphasized. In this project the major actors which will be emphasized are the national-state, the supra- and sub-national communities.

19. The four fundamental points on which theories differ are taken from Burchill, 1996: 16-21.
However, these actors will not be taken as given and completed. Rather they will be analyzed as they are in the process of being constituted and reconstituted.

(3) **Methodology.** Different theorists emphasize different methodology for the study of international relations. For instance, traditionalists emphasize the relative utility of history, law, philosophy and other classical methods of academic inquiry, while behaviourists are in favor of the quantification of variables, formal hypothesis testing and model building, to reveal the ‘realities’ of the international system. More recently, critically-oriented theorists started arguing that the appropriate methodology should be grounded in an emancipator interest in freeing human beings from unnecessary social constraints and not a technical interest in social control (Burchill, 1996: 20). As is indicated above with regard to the second point, critical theory and constructivist approach grounded in an emancipatory interest that will be employed in this research.

(4) **The relations of IR with other areas of intellectual endeavor.** Each academic tradition places greater or lesser emphasis on the importance of disciplinary boundaries. Neo-realists, for instance, see the international system as a ‘domain apart’ that deserves separate treatment. Critical theorists, on the contrary, dispute the discrete nature of the discipline and are interested in the relevance of the recent developments in social theory and historical sociology for the study of international politics. Many post-modernists, although they see this differently from critical theorists,^20^ they regard disciplinary boundaries as exclusionary and part of a structure of intellectual regression (Ibid.: 21). In this research, international relation theory is not taken to be something separate from political theory. Rather, it is political theory seen from a particular angle or through a particular filter (Brown, 1992: 8). As Smith (1995: 9) points out, ‘... political and international theory shares the same concern and imperatives and is part of the same theoretical enterprise, albeit dealing with a different construction of the political world. ... international theory is but one aspect of a much wider range of social, political, ethical and economic theory and that they are aspects of international theory’. For these reasons and because this research deals with the state, supra- and sub-national actors and refugee migration, which cannot be fully explained by international theories alone, much wider theories will be used. Basically, it will be a multidisciplinary research which will take into account findings of sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics to name but a few, in addition to political science in general and international relations in particular.

As is indicated in the beginning of this chapter, identifying relevant theories for the study of the state and refugee migration in the Horn of Africa was the focus of this chapter. This task is more or less completed by identifying Marxism, critical and postmodern theories (especially the critical aspect and constructivist approach of postmodernism) as relatively relevant approaches. However, this does not mean that I agree with all the arguments made by many of the scholars. I have my own reservations about these theories. This will be clear in the coming chapters. With this general remark I now turn to the discussion on the two major issues of this research: The African state and refugee migration. The discussion will be based on the insights acquired from the discussion on the various theoretical approaches, namely Marxism, critical and postmodern theories.

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^20^ Post modernists are highly suspicious of what they call the 'metanarratives' of liberation and progress. Unlike anarchists, who believe the liberation promise of enlightenment is still to be consummated, and critical theorists, who wish to recast the enlightenment project, many postmodernists want to abandon it altogether, believing it to be a dehumanizing and ultimately oppressive tradition (Burchill, 1996: 21).