

POLC42

Topics in Comparative Politics

African Politics

Week 5: African states and Africa's states-system

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africanews. EN **CULTURE**

NEWS BUSINESS SPORT CULTURE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY NO COMMENT PROGRAMMES AFCON 2019

1 hour ago
CAF annuls tainted Champions League final

Mali celebrates 2019 Eid after moon sighting, rest of Muslim world waits



<https://www.africanews.com/2019/06/03/mali-celebrates-2019-eid-after-moon-sighting-rest-of-muslim-world-waits//>

Drug trade in Africa

- West Africa:

- Cocaine from Latin America to Europe

- Ellis, Stephen. 2009. "West Africa's International Drug Trade." *African Affairs* 108 (431): 171–96.

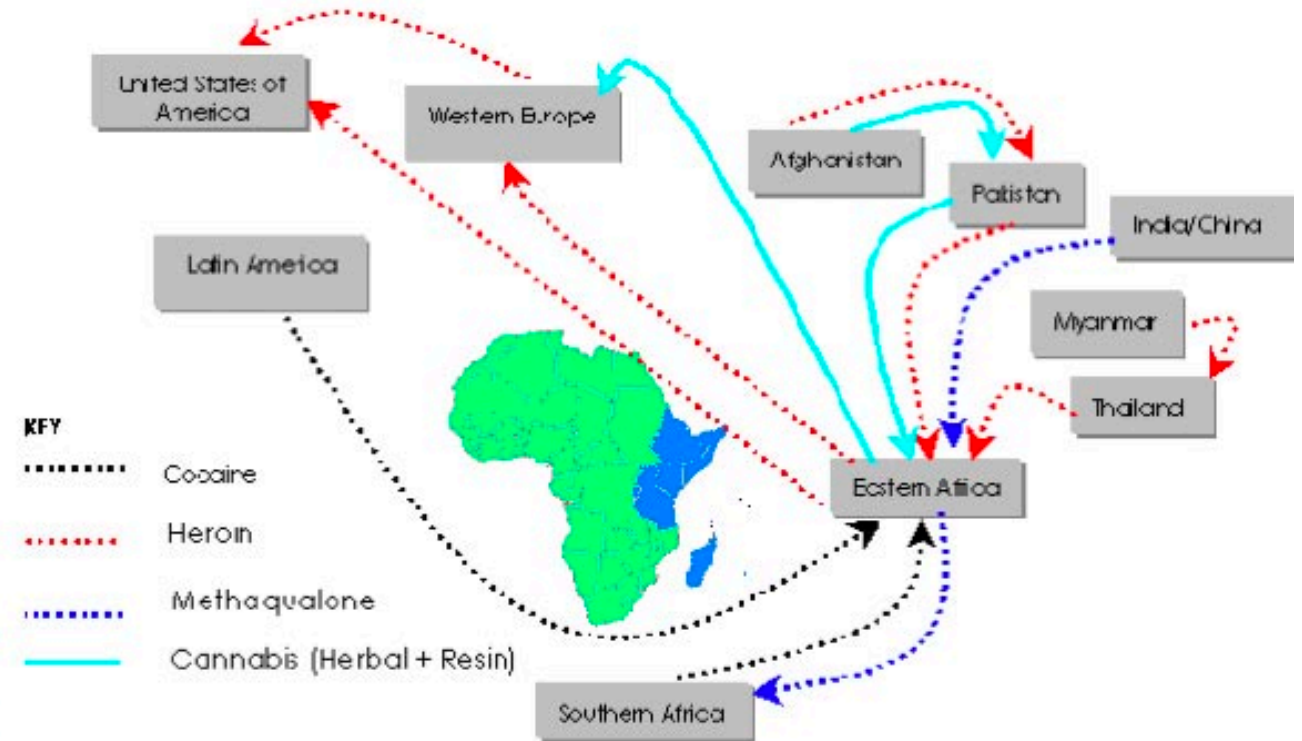
- Guinea-Bissau as a 'narco-state':

- Shaw, Mark. 2015. "Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998 – 2014: The Evolution of an Elite Protection Network." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 53 (3): 339–64.

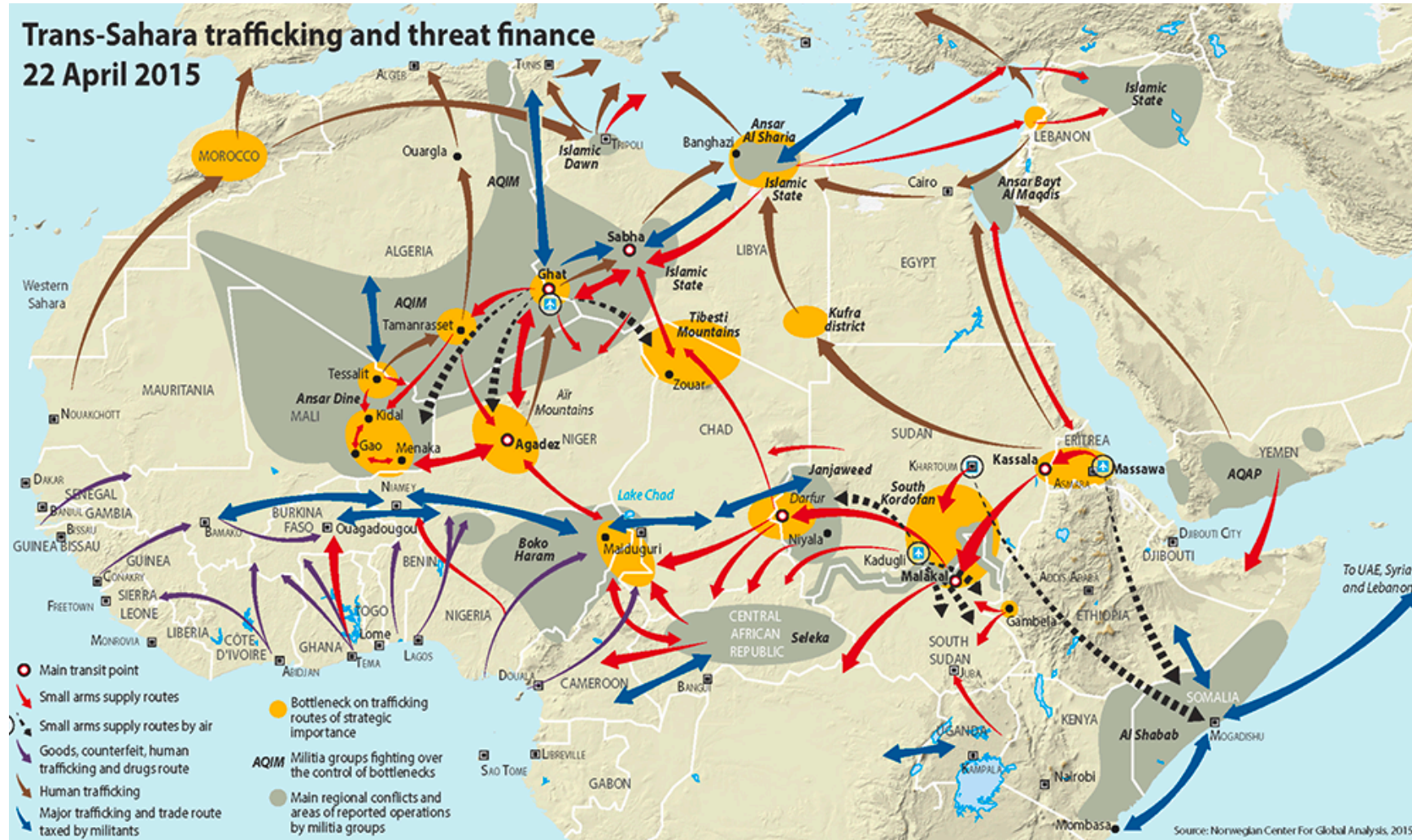
- Eastern and Southern Africa:

- Heroin from South and South-East Asia

- Haysom, Simone, Peter Gastrow, and Mark Shaw. 2018. "The Heroin Coast: A Political Economy along the Eastern African Seaboard."



Smuggling in Africa



<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-illicit-superhighway-transnational-organized-crime-in-africa/>

R.I.P. Binyavanga Wainaina

- 'How to Write about Africa':
 - “[T]reat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don’t get bogged down with precise descriptions.”
 - <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>



<https://africanarguments.org/2019/05/29/insiders-insight-binyavanga-wainaina-gone-too-soon/>

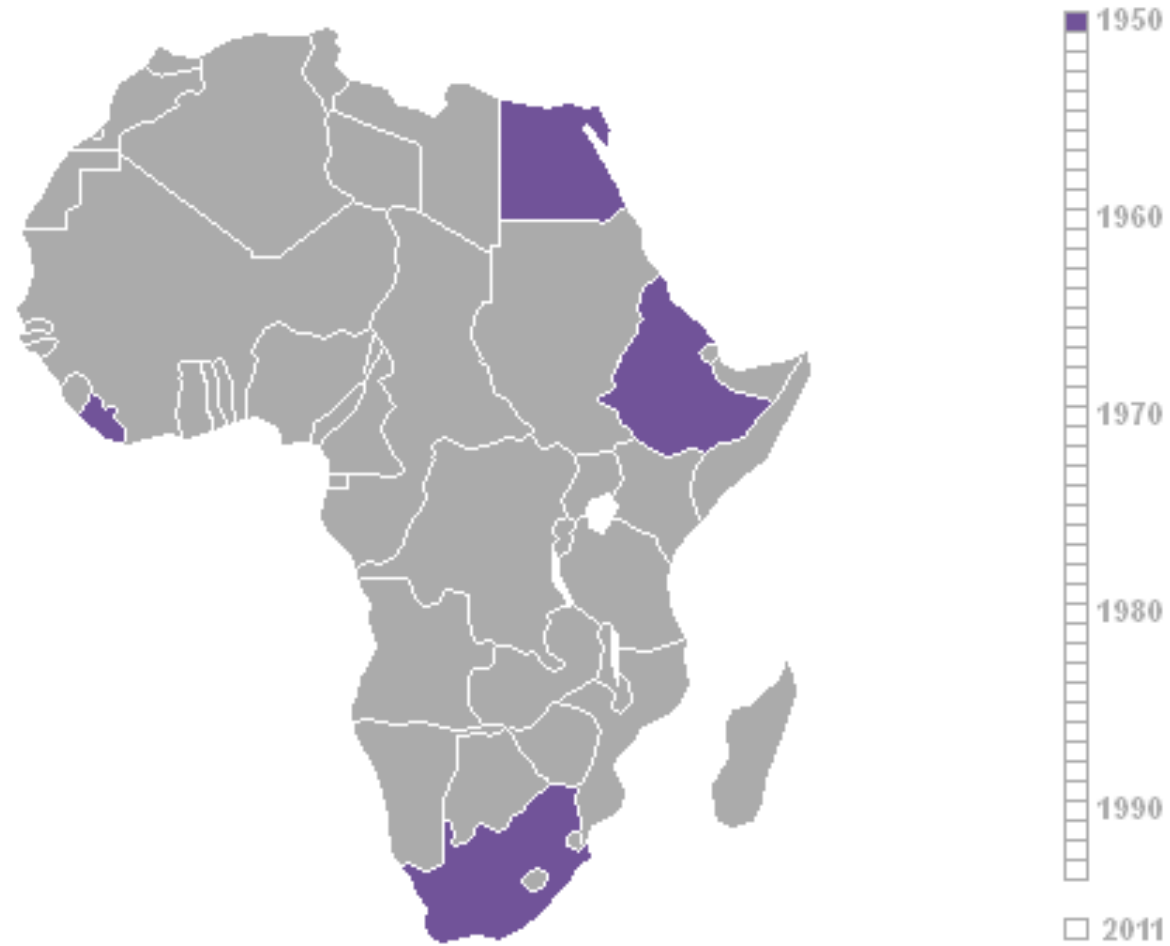
Recap

- Effects of colonization
- Late colonial period
- Causes of decolonization

Plan for today

- Decolonization
- Formation and nature of Africa's postcolonial states
- Formation and nature of Africa's postcolonial states-system
- Term test review

Dynamics of decolonization



Formation of postcolonial states-system in Africa

- Pan-African movement
- All-African Peoples' Conference, Accra, 1958
- Organization of African Unity, 1963
- Attempted international federations:
 - Mali Federation
 - East African Federation
 - Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union
 - Senegambia



Kwame Nkrumah

Formation of independent African states

- Momentous decisions to retain:
 - The nation-state as the exclusive unit of organization
 - Colonial-era boundaries (with some exceptions)



What explains the acceptance of the nation-state and colonial-era boundaries?

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- The nation-state as a powerful template:
 - Association with modernity
 - International legitimacy and organization membership
- Elite interests:
 - Sylvanus Olympio: “Political unification is only desired by those political leaders who believe they could come out on top in such unions.”
 - Olympio, Sylvanus. 1961. “Reflections on Togolese and African Problems,” in *Africa Speaks*, ed. James Duffy and Robert A. Manners. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand: p. 75.
- Non-territoriality of precolonial states (Herbst)
- Existence of administrative structures
- India’s partition



Sylvanus Olympio

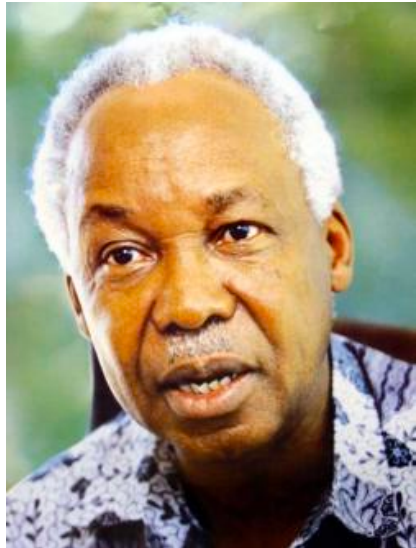
What explains the persistence of Africa's postcolonial states-system?

What explains the persistence of Africa's postcolonial states-system?

- Path dependence
- The nation-state as a powerful template
- Pan-Africanism
- Limited incentives to seek change given the weakness and vulnerability of African states and their elites
- International reluctance to intervene

Formation of independent African states

- Models of state-making in early post-colonial Africa:
 - African socialism: Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Ahmed Sékou Touré in Guinea, Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso
 - 'Conservatism': Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda, Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire



Julius Nyerere



Thomas Sankara



Hastings Banda



Jomo Kenyatta

Formation of independent African states: legacies of colonialism

- Economies and infrastructure geared towards extraction and export of raw materials / cash crops
- Low levels of development and public goods provision
- Extractive institutions
- Recent creation of states + lack of internal cohesion
- Weak state-society relations and limited state accountability / legitimacy
- Nature of African elites

Formation of independent African states: legacies of colonialism

- Mamdani:
 - Continuation of decentralized despotism after independence →
 - Ethnicization: rural and urban popular resistance to decentralized despotism inevitably took an ethnic form as 'tribal' political organization →
 - Government response to resistance: either continuation of decentralized despotism or attempt to reform it through centralization, resulting in centralized despotism →
 - Varieties of authoritarianism →
- Continuation of patterns of colonial rule, but limited external enforcement

Consequences of decolonization-era decisions

- Structure of Africa's states-system
- Nature of the African state
- Neopatrimonialism and extraversion
- Prominence of ethnic politics
- Incidence of coups and conflict
- Limited economic development
- Persistence of authoritarianism

Kahoot!

States and statehood

- Ian Brownlee's definition of state:
 - A legal person, recognized by international law, with the following attributes: (a) a defined territory, (b) a permanent population, (c) an effective government, and (d) independence, or the right "to enter into relations with other states."
- Two aspects of statehood according to Jackson and Rosberg:
 - Empirical:
 - Permanent population
 - Effective government
 - Juridical:
 - Territory
 - Independence

Which aspect of statehood is dominant in Africa?

How has the postcolonial states-system shaped African states?

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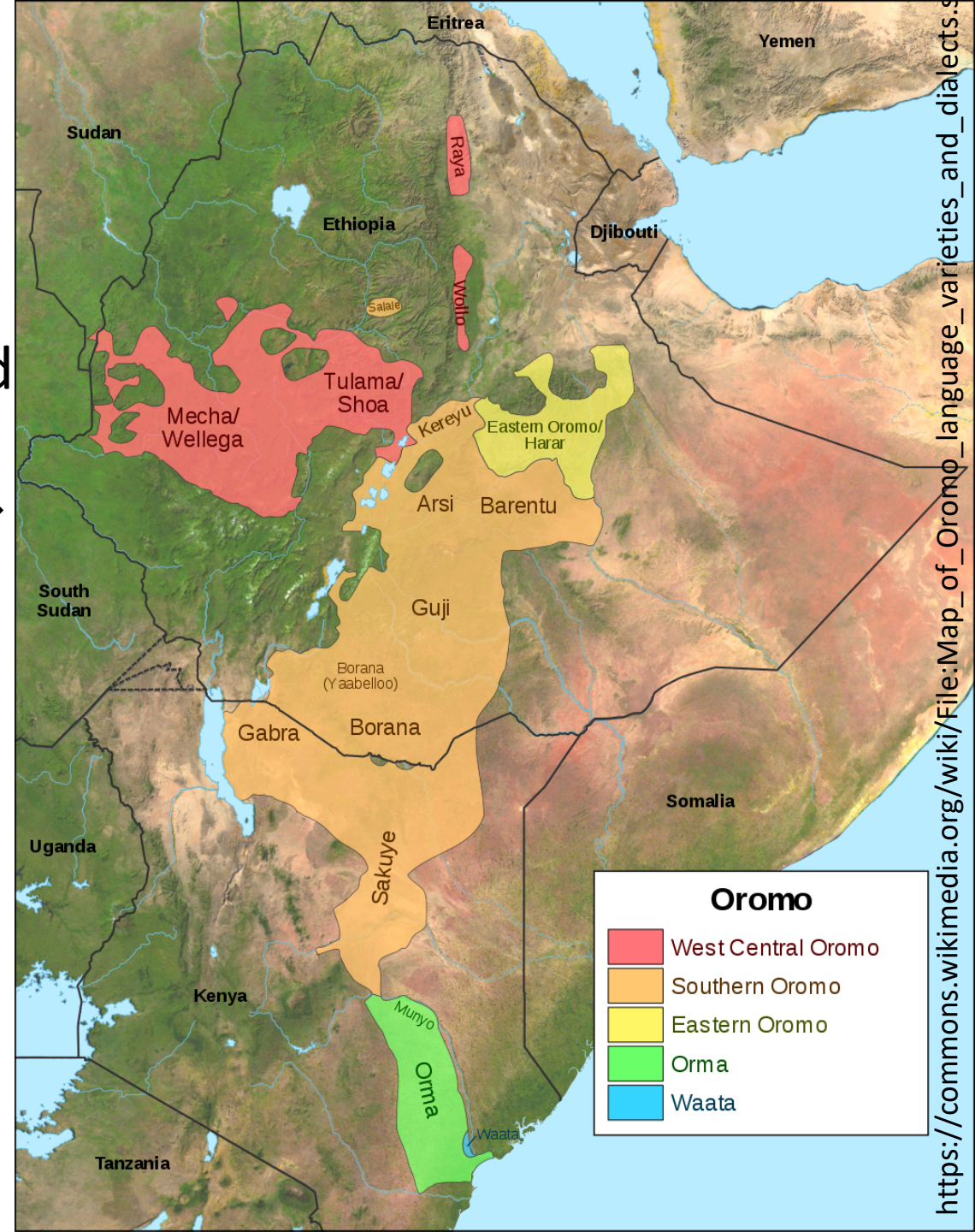
- Juridical statehood → state weakness
- Illegality of self-determination
- Paucity of interstate military conflict
- Relatively weak militaries (→ prevalence of intrastate conflict?)

But is African states' empirical statehood really weak?

- Theories of African state:
 - Bula Matari
 - Decentralized despotism
 - Projection of state power

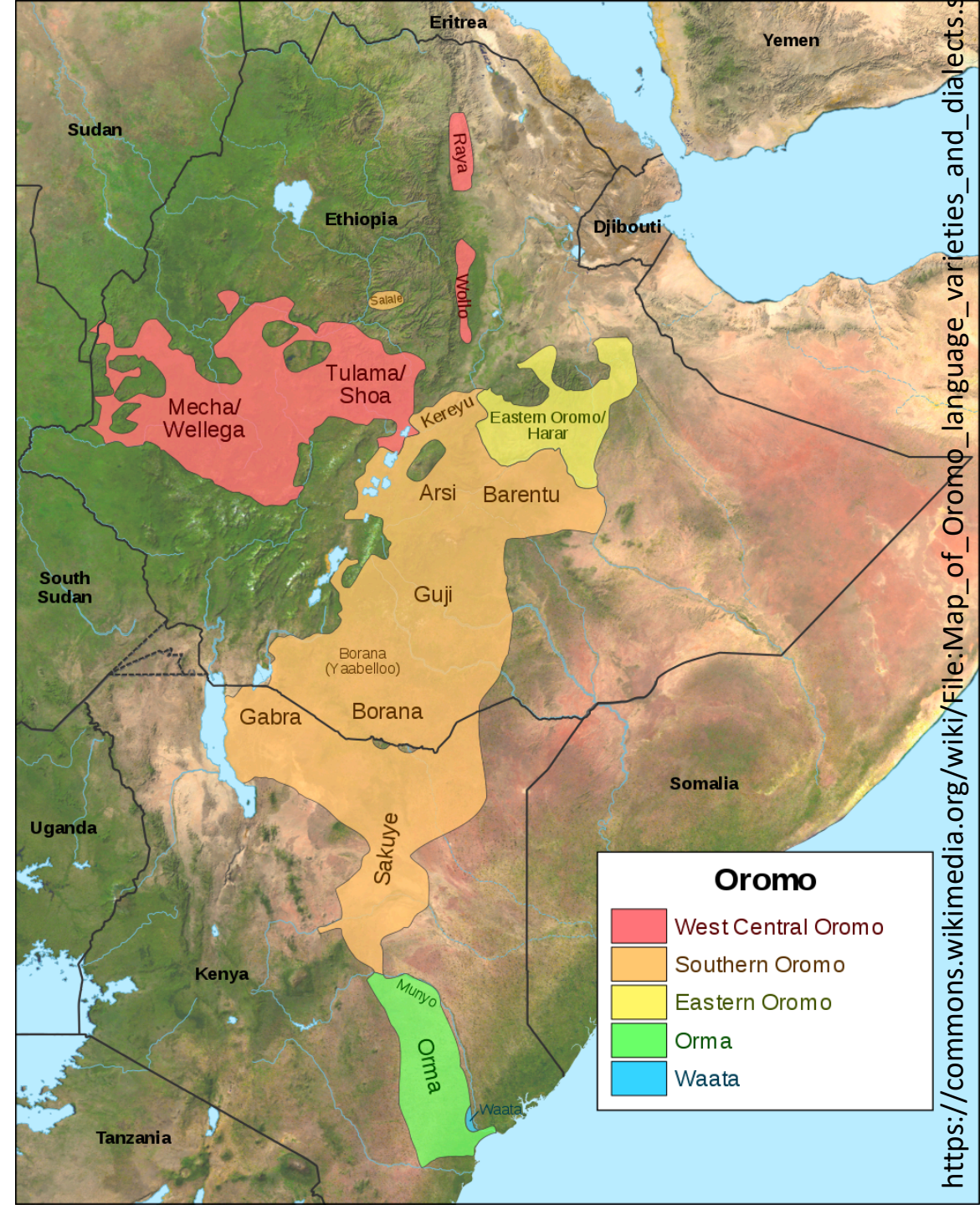
Empirical statehood in postcolonial Africa

- Transformation of the consensus-based political system of the Orma:
 - Economic diversification and inequality → need for property rights enforcement +
 - Erosion of social institutions → erosion of the basis of elders' political power +
 - Collective action problems (private vs. communal benefits of well sales, population growth and free-riding) →
- State incorporation



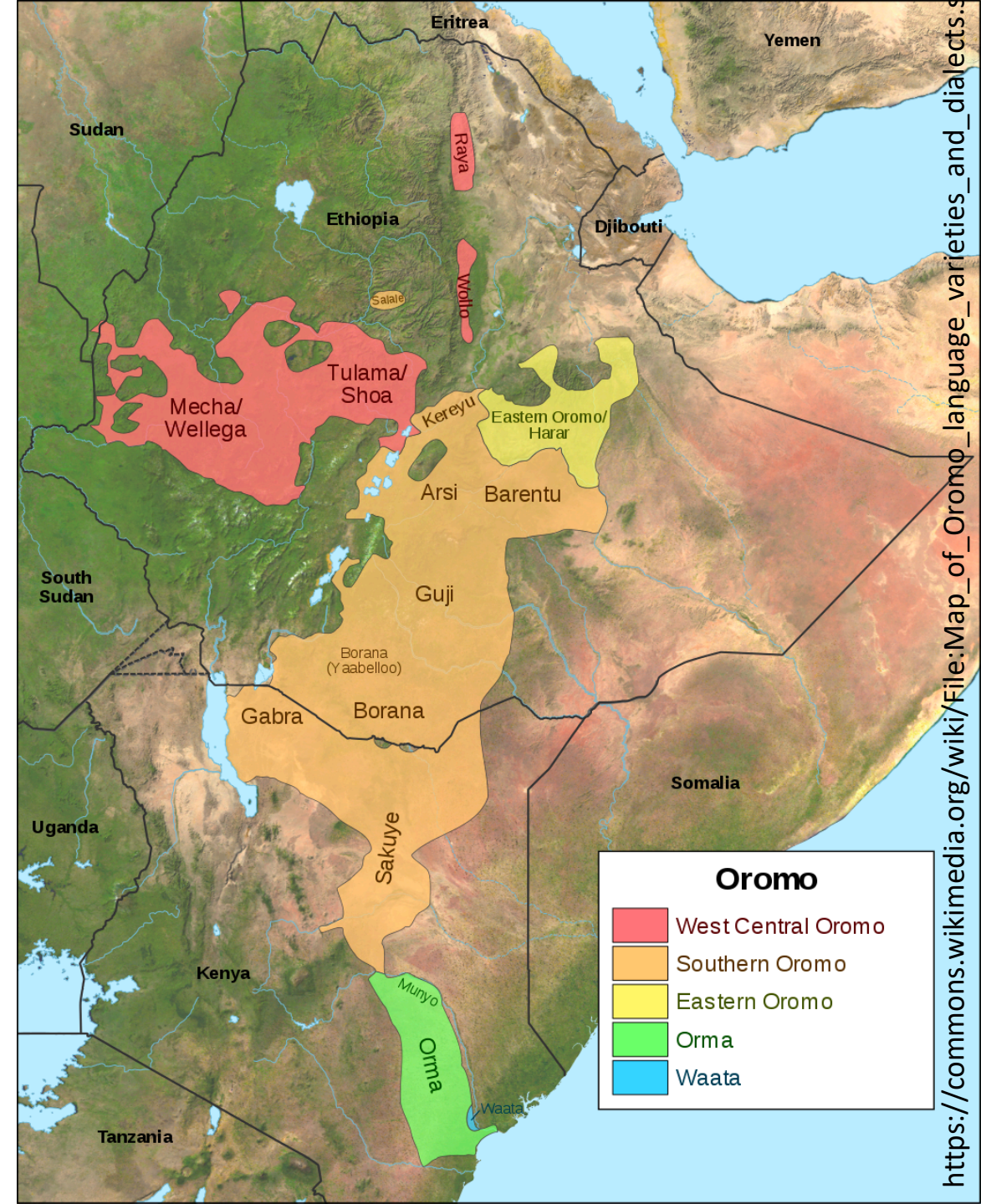
Empirical statehood in postcolonial Africa

- Timing of state incorporation
- Drivers of state incorporation



Empirical statehood in postcolonial Africa

- Benefits of incorporation:
 - Economic alternatives to pastoralism
 - Education and healthcare provision
 - Infrastructure and market access
 - Security
 - Famine relief



Empirical statehood in postcolonial Africa

- Actions of the state vs. actions of society
- Joel Migdal: *Strong Societies and Weak States* →
- Centrality of state-society relations, societal demands (neopatrimonialism) and collective identities in shaping African politics, inc. political instability and violence, political economy of development, and regime changes

JOEL S. MIGDAL

STRONG SOCIETIES AND WEAK STATES

State-Society Relations and State
Capabilities in the Third World

How have African states changed over time?

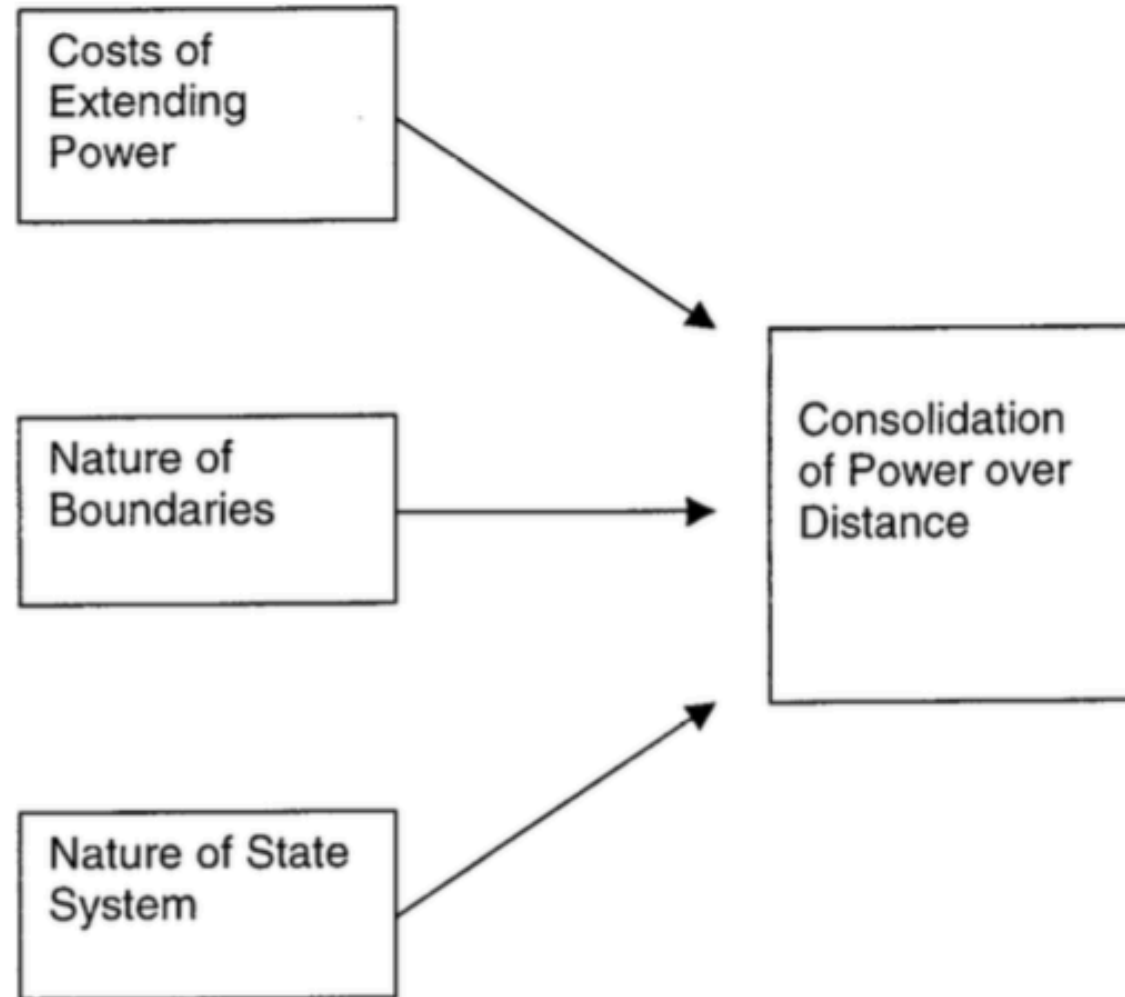


Figure 1.1. Possible Paths to State Consolidation

Competing accounts of African statehood

- Hegemonic vs. non-hegemonic states
- Uniform vs. uneven (bifurcation, continuum) projection of state power
- Juridical vs. empirical statehood
- Emphasis on historical continuity vs. transformative effect of colonization

Competing accounts of African statehood

Chazan 1999:

- Modernization
- Dependency
- Statist
- Interactions
- Geography (“constraints upon choice”)
- History

Institutions and institutionalism(s)

Term test

- Two parts:
 - 5 short question answers
 - Chosen from a list of 10 questions
 - 50%
 - 1 essay
 - Chosen from a list of 2 questions
 - 50%
- Description + analysis

Term test: short questions 1

- Ateker / Borena / Nuer / Orma political system
- Acephalous / monocephalous / polycephalous polity (with examples)
- Gerontocracy
- Vansina's typology of precolonial African states (with examples)
- Nature of political power in precolonial Africa according to Herbst
- Contemporary impacts of precolonial centralization in Africa
- Contemporary impacts of slave trade in Africa
- Colonialism and imperialism

Term test: short questions 2

- Causes of the limited reach of European colonialism in Africa before the Scramble
- Causes of the Scramble for Africa
- Direct and indirect rule in colonial Africa
- Bula Matari
- Second colonial occupation in Africa
- Causes of Africa's decolonization
- Effects of commercialization of agriculture in colonial Africa
- Empirical and juridical statehood

Term test: essay questions

- Why did most precolonial African societies never form states?
- Jeffrey Herbst, Mahmood Mamdani, and Crawford Young each offer different theories of the colonial state in Africa. Which of these theories is in your assessment most compelling and why?
- What effects did colonization have on Africa's subsequent political trajectories?
- What explains the nature of the states-systems in precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial Africa?