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Sommario/riassunto

This comprehensive study of State failure upholds that the collapse of States in sub-Saharan Africa is a self-inflicted problem caused by the abandonment of the principle of effectiveness during decolonization. On the one hand, the abandonment of effectiveness may have facilitated the recognition of the new African States, but on the other it did lead to the creation of States that were essentially powerless: some of which became utter failures. Written in a style both provocative and unorthodox and using convincing arguments, this study casts doubt on some of the most sacred principles of the modern doctrine of international law. It establishes that the declaratory theory of recognition cannot satisfactorily explain the continuing existence of failed States. It also demonstrates that the principled assertion of the right to self-determination as the basis for independence in Africa has turned the notion of sovereignty into a formal-legal figment without substance. This book is a plea for more realism in international law. Pensive pessimists in the tradition of Hobbes will probably love it. Idealists in the tradition of Grotius may hate it, but they will find it very difficult to reject its conclusions.
