



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**ETHIOPIA'S LANDLOCKEDNESS IN THE POST-1991 PERIOD AND  
IMPLICATIONS FOR ITS RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES**

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**DECEMBER, 2019**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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A thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University College of Social Sciences Department of Political Science and International Relations (PSIR) in partial fulfillment of the requirement for MA in International Relations and Diplomacy.

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
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**Declaration of originality**

I hereby confirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to Addis Ababa or any other Universities and has not been published to the best of my knowledge. All sources used for this thesis are duly acknowledged and I am aware that this work may be subject to plagiarism test.

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## ABSTRACT

This study deals with landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period and its economic, security, and political implications for the relations of the country with its neighbors. In addition, it deals with the potential threats resulting from the implications and the possible solutions thereof.

Most of the global trade is undertaken through the sea since sea transportation is the cheapest means to export and import goods. Ethiopia is a landlocked country that uses ports of the neighboring coastal states to get access to the sea and undertake its import and export trade. The country lost its sea outlet in the post-1991 years. As a result, it is incurring significant costs for covering port fees and other related costs. Since the cost is not easily affordable, it is negatively impacting Ethiopia's economy. As there are developed countries that are landlocked, Ethiopia should learn their experiences and overcome the negative impacts of landlockedness. Moreover, Ethiopia's landlockedness has implications on its security and political affairs. The security and political aspects are discussed in view of security of East Africa, the interest of neighboring countries, and the presence of foreign powers in East Africa.

With a view to explore the economic, security, and political implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness vis-à-vis its relations with neighboring countries, this study employed qualitative method of research. Besides, case study is used as a research design to be employed in the process of the study. In this regard, books, journals, internet materials, and media outlets are used to review the economic, security, and political implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness in view of its relations with neighboring countries.

Moreover, in order to obtain first hand, detailed and updated data as to the three implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness, key informant interview with selected individuals, experts, and officials is employed in this study.

## **ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS**

AU – African Union

EASF – East African Standby Force

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EPLF – Eritrean People’s Liberation Forces

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERC – Ethiopian Railway Corporation

ESLSE – Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

ICT – Information Communication Technology

IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development

SADC – Southern Africa Development Community

TPLF – Tigray People’s Liberation Front

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

US – United States of America

USD – United States Dollar

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1. Background of the study**

The issue of sea outlet has been one of the main concerns in the long history of Ethiopia as one crucial aspect of the country's foreign policy except at the time of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that advocated the secession of Eritrea and contributed to the landlockedness of Ethiopia. The issue of sea outlet was one of the main sources of bloody wars against foreign powers such as Ottoman Turks, Egypt, and Italy as a result of which many Ethiopians sacrificed their lives (Yacob, 2003 E.C.).

When leaders of the country strengthen their power, their ability to secure the coastal areas increases and vice versa. According to Yacob (2003 E.C.), the post-1991 period is a time when Ethiopia lost its access to the sea not because of lack of legitimacy rather due to the manifest failure of the EPRDF leaders. The EPRDF unilaterally handed over the country's Ports to the newly created State of Eritrea, as a result of which Ethiopia became landlocked since the 1993 Eritrea's secession (Yacob, 2003 E.C.; Gebrerufael, 2016).

Currently, Ethiopia is spending a huge amount of money for Port use and due to its landlockedness the country's economic growth is impeded significantly (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). As a result, Ethiopia is attempting to minimize the impact of landlockedness. To this effect, it has already begun series of discussions with Djibouti, Sudan, Somaliland, Kenya, and even with Eritrea, a country which had no-war and no-peace relationship with Ethiopia for the last two decades (Carmody, 2018). At present, the diplomatic relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia is improving and Ethiopia has already started using the Port of Masawa in Eritrea. Moreover, discussions are underway between the two countries on the conditions as to how Ethiopia can make use of the Port of Assab by paying affordable fees (Maasho, 2018; Olewe, 2018). Peoples of both countries are hoping that the relations between the two countries will significantly improve in the near future and the security of the two countries will also improve accordingly (Maasho, 2018; Olewe, 2018).

This study deals with landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period and its economic, security, and political implications for the relationship of the country with its

neighbors and the potential solutions that the country may apply to handle the challenges resulting thereof.

## **1.2. Organization of the paper**

This study deals with Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period and its economic, security, and political implications for its relations with neighboring countries. The study comprises of five chapters. The first chapter consists of introduction part which includes; problem statement which briefly discusses the economic, security, and political situations of Ethiopia's landlockedness in view of its relations with neighboring countries, objective of the study consisting of general and specific objectives, research question that poses and answers two questions, research method that employs qualitative method and that applies case study model. Significance of the study, and scope of the study are also incorporated in chapter one. The second chapter includes literature review that discusses; landlockedness and its implications at international, regional, and national context. The chapter also compares the implications of landlockedness at international and regional level with that of Ethiopia's context. The same chapter incorporates theoretical aspect which reviews theories that are relevant to landlockedness and its implications, and the theory that fits to this study. The third chapter contains information obtained from key informant interview and the findings thereof. The fourth chapter deals with analyses of findings and the last chapter incorporates conclusion and recommendations.

## **1.3. Problem Statement**

*"Port is a commodity and we can purchase it where it is affordable"*. This was the opinion of the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, when he was asked about the impact of Ethiopia's landlockedness (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). However, Ethiopia's landlockedness costs the country a lot and using foreign ports to get access to the sea was not a simple task as the then Prime Minister mentioned but rather the situation has significant economic, security, and political implications for the country. The fact that Ethiopia's landlockedness has economic, security, and political implications is clear. Even if Ethiopia is currently able to undertake its import and export trade via

Djibouti, Port Sudan, and Port of Mombasa as an option, they are too expensive that the country has been spending a significant amount of money for Port fees. For instance, the cost incurred by Ethiopia for Port fees covers about one-fourth of the country's annual budget of 2015 (Getachew, 2015) and the country can hardly afford to sustainably maintain this situation. High cost of Port fees has also an impact on the lives of Ethiopians. In other words, if the country managed to use its own Port/s, the Port fees could have been used to build hospitals, roads, and other infrastructures (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.).

Landlockedness also affected the political influence of the country because at the time when Ethiopia had its own Ports, there was no need to use other Ports and the country was more independent in its actions (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). However, due to its landlockedness Ethiopia is forced to use Ports of neighboring countries for its import and export trade by fulfilling almost all the conditions that the coastal countries need to be met. Hence, any measure or decision made by Ethiopia should not offend the coastal countries for they may use their leverage against it. No matter how necessary a measure to be taken or a decision to be made is important to Ethiopia, the country will be obliged to refrain from offending them (Rossiter, 2016). This condition obviously compromises the interest of the country. Despite the other obstacles in using Ports of neighboring countries, Port fees have been increasing significantly and Ethiopia had no option but to accept it since the country has weak bargaining power resulting from its landlockedness (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). This situation jeopardized Ethiopia's political leverage and kept the country under the influence of its neighboring coastal states.

Ethiopia's landlockedness also affects its security. In addition to its landlockedness, crisis in neighboring countries is also impacting the country's security. Stability of a region directly correlates with security of countries in the region. In other words, if a region is an unstable, security of countries in the region will be impacted and vice versa. Moreover, if a country is unstable, its neighbors will be impacted as conflicts by their nature spill over to neighboring areas (Mahdi, 2016). Accordingly, as Eastern Africa in general and the Horn of Africa in particular is an unstable region, the situation is affecting security of

countries in the region. For Ethiopia is a country in the Horn of Africa, its security is affected by the region's instability (Mahdi, 2016). Moreover, the security of landlocked countries depends on the strengths or weaknesses of their neighbors. This means that landlocked countries located in an unstable region with poor and unstable neighbors are insecure while landlocked countries that have stable and strong neighborhoods are more secured.

A typical example of the region's and neighboring countries' security threat is the case of Somalia. The crisis related to Somalia traces its origin back to the time of the European powers' colonization in East Africa (Mesfin, 1977). During the colonial period and before World War II, Somalia was divided into Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland. After the end of World War II, the British controlled the area and in 1946 they introduced the dream of creating Greater Somalia though unsuccessful. However, after Somalia is recognized as an independent country in 1960, its leaders began to act to realize the ambitious dream of creating Greater Somalia (Mesfin, 1977). As the boundary marked by colonial powers was disputable, leaders of Somalia claimed land from its neighbors such as, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. As Somalia claimed Ogaden region of Ethiopia and waged war against Ethiopia (one of its biggest mistakes), the outcome of the war was devastating for Somalia (Mesfin, 1977). The outcome of the war made Somalia to be in its current form and status, which is a divided and weak unstable country (Mesfin, 1977). For the dream of creating Greater Somalia has both political and religious aims behind it, the problem could not be solved by political solution and the crisis of Somalia still continues disturbing not only its peace and security but also the whole East Africa and the horn of Africa in particular (Mesfin, 1977). Consequently, countries in an unstable region should take all the situations surrounding them into account when developing their foreign policy (Mahdi, 2016). According to the 2014 United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (Mahdi, 2016), instabilities emanating from neighboring countries are termed as 'external shocks' that render landlocked countries vulnerable as conflicts may easily spill over to their territories. In addition to the region's instability, Ethiopia's landlockedness is also affecting its security as it lost control over the coastal areas on which it had control previously.

This study deals with the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness particularly in the post-1991 period, the related problems and the potential solutions thereof.

#### **1.4. Objective of the study**

1. The general objective of this study is to explore the implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period for the relations of the country with neighboring countries.
2. The specific objective of this study is to examine the economic, security, and political implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period.

#### **1.5. Research Question**

The following research questions are posed and addressed:

1. What are the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period for its relations with neighboring countries?
2. What are the consequences resulting from the landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period on its economic, security, and political situation?

#### **1.6. Research methodology and study methods**

Research methodology is a way to systematically answer the research question and solve the research problem. In a nut-shell, it may be defined as a science of studying how research is conducted (Kothari, 2004). Methodology refers to the various steps in studying a research problem along with the rationale for doing so (Kothari, 2004). It also refers to the sources of data and the instruments of data collection used (Mohajan, 2018). Hence, research methods are about the techniques used in undertaking a study (Mohajan, 2018). In other words, research methods are the mechanisms by which the researcher applies a selected methodological approach (Kothari, 2004).

Pursuant to the above definitions, there are two types of research methods namely, quantitative and qualitative methods (Walliman, 2011). Quantitative method emphasizes

use of quantified data on the basis of which all arguments and analyses are made. Quantitative method employs objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through questionnaires and surveys (Walliman, 2011). On the other hand, qualitative research method, unlike the quantitative method, uses qualitative data such as, interviews, documents and observations so as to understand and explain a phenomenon (Mason, 2002). The qualitative method is used to conduct an intensive investigation of a phenomenon so as to deeply understand the case at hand (Mohajan, 2018). As it is a flexible research approach, qualitative method helps to explore a phenomenon from various perspectives (Klotz and Prakash, 2008).

Taking in to account the nature of the research methods defined above, this study employs a qualitative research approach with case study model that involves a descriptive and explanatory analysis. Qualitative method is preferable because qualitative research method, unlike the quantitative method, uses qualitative data such as, interviews, documents and observations so as to understand and explain a phenomenon (Mason, 2002). The qualitative method is used to conduct an intensive investigation of a phenomenon so as to deeply understand the case at hand (Mohajan, 2018). As it is a flexible research approach, qualitative method helps to explore a phenomenon from various perspectives (Klotz and Prakash, 2008). Landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period and its implications for the relations of the country with its neighbors is barely studied as a result of which there is knowledge gap necessitating the application of thorough study method. With a view to get relevant and updated information, qualitative sampling technique is used. Moreover, quantitative data that support the arguments and analyses made on the basis of qualitative method are used.

#### **a. Method of data collection**

With a view to support the case study, secondary sources of data such as books, journals, articles, internet materials, and media outlets are used. Besides, in order to obtain expert opinion as to the implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period as regards its relations with neighboring countries, key informant interviews is conducted with experts and officials from the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise

(ESLSE), Ethiopian Railway Corporation (ERC), Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (FDRE) Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, and the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In addition, interviews are conducted with a political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University, and a political-economy analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio station in Ethiopia.

## **b. Research design**

With a view to conduct detail study about the issue of landlockedness and its implications, a case study research design is employed. Case study involves an in-depth examination of a single individual or single institution/ organization. It also examines literatures and other sources related to the issue; in this case literatures and other sources related to Ethiopia's landlockedness and its economic, security, and political implications in view of its relations with neighboring countries is explored and reviewed. As the goal of this study is to get detail description of landlockedness, the principal benefit of case-study in this case is that it can broaden our knowledge about landlockedness from international and national perspectives (Klotz and Prakash, 2008). Case study often includes in-depth interviews with participants and since this study uses key informant interview, it is necessary method of research design (Klotz and Prakash, 2008). Case study provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details, which are often overlooked by other similar studies about the issue. For this research design involves a deep understanding through multiple types of data sources, it is advantageous to apply it for the issue at hand.

### **1.7. Significance of the study**

Though different scholars studied the economic, security, and political implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period for the relations of the country with its neighbors, most of them did not comprehensively deal with all the three implications as a result of which the issue is not well-addressed. Moreover, most of the studies do not address the three implications in comparison with Ethiopia's relations with its neighbors. Besides, in recent years, the advent of foreign powers such as China, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia in the East Africa region is a phenomenon that

needs attention of the countries in the region in general and Ethiopia in particular. Hence, this phenomenon needs to be studied to analyze the implications for the future.

Therefore, this study is hoped to make contributions by conducting a comprehensive and an in-depth study on the economic, security, and political implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period vis-à-vis the country's relations with neighboring countries. Moreover, the presence of foreign powers in the East Africa in recent years and the implications thereof is studied in view of the phenomenon of Ethiopia's landlockedness.

#### **1.8. Scope of the study**

The scope of this study is limited to the implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period for the relations of the country with its neighbors and the impact of the phenomenon on its economic, security, and political situation.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature review and theoretical framework**

#### **2.1. Literature review**

In this chapter, landlockedness and its implications is discussed in a more detailed manner. To this end, literature sources were reviewed with a view to exploring the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness for its international and regional relations.

##### **2.1.1. Landlockedness under the international context**

Landlockedness is a situation which makes a country entirely enclosed by land without coastlines. In principle, landlockedness has inevitable implications for countries. One of these is economic implication (Chung, 2014). In other words, landlockedness affects the economic growth and development of countries. According to a research conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), landlockedness is a major impediment for economic growth and development of landlocked countries (cited in Ebssa, 2012). As compared to the coastal countries, landlocked countries have weaker economic growth and development. Even though a landlocked and a coastal country could enjoy similarity in political stability, the average economic growth and development of the landlocked country is reduced while coastal countries experience better economic growth and development (Nikwigize et al., 2014). Moreover, landlocked countries whose economy depends on sea trade incur more cost in import and export trade than coastal countries (Getachew, 2015). Getachew (2015) listed landlocked countries that exist in different parts of the world in table 1 below:

**Table 1. List of landlocked countries**

<b>Africa</b>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>South America</b>
Botswana	Afghanistan	Andorra	Paraguay
Burkina Faso	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Bolivia
Burundi	Bhutan	Austria	
The Central Africa Republic	Kazakhstan	Belarus	
Chad	Kyrgyzstan	Czech Republic	
Ethiopia	Lao	Vatican City	
Lesotho	Mongolia	Hungary	
Malawi	Nepal	Liechtenstein	
Mali	Tajikistan	Luxemburg	
Niger	Turkmenistan	Moldova	
Rwanda	Uzbekistan	San Marino	
South Sudan	West Bank	Serbia	
Swaziland		Slovakia	
Uganda		Switzerland	
Zambia		Macedonia	
Zimbabwe			

Source: Getachew, 2015.

The list clearly shows that most of the landlocked states around the world are developing and underdeveloped countries (Erbar, 2014; Nations Online, 2018).

Landlockedness mostly affects developing countries. The challenges of those countries, among others, include: lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from major world markets, and weak economy. These challenges place developing countries in a disadvantaged position as compared to the growth and development of coastal countries (Nikwigize et al., 2014). Table 2 below shows the global list of landlocked countries in the developing world.

**Table 2. Global List of Landlocked Developing Countries**

Afghanistan	Kazakhstan	Paraguay
Armenia	Kyrgyzstan	Rwanda
Azerbaijan	Lao	South Sudan
Bhutan	Lesotho	Swaziland
Bolivia	Macedonia	Tajikistan
Botswana	Malawi	Turkmenistan
Burkina Faso	Mali	Uganda
Burundi	Moldova	Uzbekistan
Central Africa Rep.	Mongolia	Zambia
Chad	Nepal	Zimbabwe
Ethiopia	Niger	

Source: Nations Online, 2018.

Due to their geographic position, landlocked developing countries depend on the cooperation of their coastal neighbors as a result of which they incur significant transport costs and longer time to send and receive goods from overseas markets (Chung, 2014). In addition, landlocked countries depend on the political and economic stability, social and political changes, environmental disasters, and the infrastructure and the institutional quality of coastal countries as these could impede the activities of the landlocked countries (Nikwigize et al., 2014). These external factors plus the internal factors in the landlocked countries such as underdeveloped markets, inefficient institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and weak policies worsen the challenge of landlocked countries. Moreover, landlocked countries have to deal with inadequate transit facilities, cumbersome customs and border procedures, as well as other contingencies they face in the coastal country (Chung, 2014). Thus, the full participation of landlocked developing countries in international trade is hindered by both internal and external factors (Nikwigize et al., 2014).

### **2.1.2. Landlockedness under East African context**

Among landlocked countries globally, only a few are developed. About one out of five countries in the world are landlocked. 20 of 54 low-income economies in Africa are landlocked and the majority among these are located in Eastern Africa (Getachew, 2015). This implies that landlockedness considerably contributes to less development of developing countries (Getachew, 2015). Due to their landlockedness, developing countries in East Africa including Ethiopia lost the benefit that could be obtained from the international and regional maritime trade. In addition, they are subjected to high port fee imposed by the coastal countries and transport costs incurred in the process. Consequently, they face increased import prices and reduced export revenues (Getachew, 2015; Nikwigize et al., 2014).

### **2.1.3. Impacts of Ethiopia's Landlockedness**

Ethiopia is one of the landlocked countries in the world as a result of which it is obliged to incur significant costs in the last three decades, which hindered the country's effort in development (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Landlockedness not only made the country incur high costs but also has implications for the country's relations with its neighbors (Ebssa, 2012). As this study specifically focuses on Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period and its implications in view of its relations with neighboring countries, this is explored in a more detailed manner than the international and regional contexts. To this end, different literature sources were reviewed and the economic, security, and political implications of landlockedness of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period are examined in view of the country's relations with neighboring countries. These are presented in the following sub-sections:

#### **A. Economic implications**

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries not only in Africa but also in the whole world (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Despite fast economic growth registered in the past two decades in Ethiopia, the per capita income of Ethiopians is one of the lowest in Africa and this signifies that economic growth did not succeed in bringing about robust economic development (Getachew, 2015). Moreover, the country has the

lowest per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as compared to its neighbors such as Somalia and Eritrea (Getachew, 2015). Though Ethiopia is the second populous country in Africa, it is one of the smallest economies in the continent (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Its small economy placed millions of Ethiopians under the poverty line (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). It is also stated that Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country not only in Africa but also in the world (Ebssa, 2012; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). In addition, it has already become difficult for most Ethiopians to satisfy their basic human needs such as food, clothing, and shelter (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). The cumulative effects of these problems made the country one of the least developed countries. Many scholars (Ebssa, 2012) agree that one of the main reasons for Ethiopia's current poverty status is the country's landlockedness that specifically took shape in the post-1991 period.

Due to its landlockedness, Ethiopia pays more than 2 million United States Dollars (USD) per day to Djibouti as port fee, which approximately amounts to 730 million USD annually (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Others (Getachew, 2015) show that Ethiopia pays more than 850 million USD annually for port fee to Djibouti. This is a figure before the 2008 increase in port fees, which indicates that port fee will subsequently increase exponentially. In 2015, the figure reached 2 billion USD per year (Neamin, 2018). This staggering figure is about 21% of Ethiopia's annual budget for fiscal year 2015 (Getachew, 2015). On average Ethiopia paid 1.5 billion USD per year for port services since 2000 and this amounts to 27 billion USD in the past eighteen years (Getachew, 2015). It is estimated that the aforementioned sum can build about Six Renaissance dams given that total cost of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is about 5 Billion USD (Wossenu and Shimelis, 2019).

Though landlockedness is affecting Ethiopia's economic performance, leaders of the country seem to be less concerned with the issue. The former leader of the country, Meles Zenawi, disregarded the detrimental impact of landlockedness on Ethiopia and argued that (cited in Yacob, 2003 E.C.):

*Now we do not use ports of Masawa and Assab. We lost nothing by not using the two ports. Ethiopia scored the fastest growth and development in its history. So, landlockedness does not result in poverty and we can use ports of neighboring countries. Therefore, there is no reason to regret the landlockedness of Ethiopia. Landlockedness is not and cannot be detrimental to us. Ethiopia was poor when we have ports. Now we do not have ports but we are bringing about development. So, a port is not necessary for development.*

There is also another instance signifying that Ethiopia's leaders in the post-1991 period were not concerned about the country's landlockedness. During the Ethio-Eritrea war from 1998 – 2000 in which Ethiopia won but became a loser by signing the Algiers Agreement. In the negotiation process, negotiators from both parties claimed what they believe their respective countries deserve. However, the negotiators from the Ethiopian side did not raise the issue of sea outlet. They totally neglected the issue of making claim over Assab, which is considered a natural sea outlet of Ethiopia (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). After the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement, the then Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was interviewed about his silence concerning Assab to which he replied (cited in Getachew, 2015):

*Assab is not an issue on which we have to battle. There are various alternative ports we may use and we are already making use of them. We have not lost anything. So, that is why we did not raise the issue during the present negotiation.*

If Ethiopia had managed to secure its right over Assab, the huge port fee wouldn't have entailed high costs and the money spent for covering port fee could have been used to build port facilities and other necessary infrastructures in the country. Moreover, transport cost could have decreased considerably as Assab is very close to Ethiopia (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Currently, Ethiopia preferred to use the port of Djibouti to other ports because Djibouti is relatively closer than others. If Assab

belonged to Ethiopia, it would have been the closest of all ports. The distances of ports which Ethiopia makes use of are presented below.

**Table 3. Distances in km between Addis Ababa and Ports used by Ethiopia**

From	To	km
Addis Ababa	Mombasa	1804
Addis Ababa	Port Sudan	1696
Addis Ababa	Mogadishu	1520
Addis Ababa	Berbera	943
Addis Ababa	Djibouti	910
Addis Ababa	Assab	624

Sources: Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.

The list indicates that Ethiopia has been using Djibouti as its major sea outlet because it is the closest next to Assab. Map 1 below shows the distance of the two closest ports, Djibouti and Assab, from Ethiopia's border.



Source: Yahoo, 2011.

As Ethiopia was not able to use Assab since 1998, it had no option but to use the closest Port of Djibouti, which is 375 km away from its border (Distancefromto.net, 2019). Currently, diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea have improved and there is a chance for Ethiopia to use Assab, which is only 60 kilometers away from its border. The distance between Assab and Ethiopia is the closest of all ports to the sea (Michaelson, 1991; Vick, 1998; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Because of its landlockedness and the high costs incurred as port fee, Ethiopia's economic growth and development are highly affected. Consequently, people of Ethiopia suffer from shortage of necessary goods since they lost the capacity to access the required goods and services (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). This clearly implies that had Ethiopia had its own port/s, it would have been possible for the country to import goods with affordable prices and overcome the shortages resulting thereof.

Prior to 1991, Ethiopia legitimately had its own ports, Assab and Masawa. However, this came to an end with the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1993 and the two ports entirely became parts of Eritrea (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). The EPRDF could not manage to uphold the interest of Ethiopia in the secession process and intentionally left the country landlocked (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Ethiopia invested 25,450,000.00 ETB (twenty-five million and four hundred fifty thousand Ethiopian Birr) to develop the port of Assab from January 1957 to November 1961 during the reign of Emperor Haileselassie I (Beyene, 2011 E.C.). The country also invested millions of dollars to build road infrastructure that connects Assab to Ethiopia. Moreover, other necessary infrastructures like water supply lines to the town were also built by Ethiopia (Beyene, 2011 E.C.). So, taking in to account the huge capital Ethiopia invested in Assab, the negotiation process should have been conducted in a way that protects the interest of the country. Ethiopia had the leverage to negotiate on the terms and conditions that enable it to at least use the port freely to undertake its import and export trade but unfortunately that chance was lost (Yacob, 2003 E.C.).

Even after the secession of Eritrea, Ethiopia continued to use the Ports of Masawa and Assab. However, Ethiopia entirely lost its access to Eritrean ports following the conflict and bloody war between the two countries between 1998 and 2000 (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Due to this, Ethiopia was forced to look for other ports to undertake its import and export trade and had no option other than mainly depending on the port of Djibouti to other neighboring countries' ports (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). After Ethiopia started to use other ports as an option, port fee and other related problems increased and the country began to incur billions of dollars per year as port fee only (Getachew, 2015). In this regard, the port fee paid to Djibouti has been more than Ethiopia's economy can bear. Even if Ethiopia has the option to use other ports in Kenya, Sudan, and Somalia, the problem still persists as more than 90% of Ethiopia's import and export trade is carried out via Djibouti for its relative proximity (Emnet, 2013). This high cost of transit significantly affected the country's competitiveness in the international market because its local import and export merchandize are less competitive due to high shipping costs (Emnet, 2013).

## **B. Security implications**

Eastern Africa in general and the Horn of Africa, in particular are among the most volatile conflict regions in the globe (Meala, 2011). One of the major reasons for the region's instability is the complicated instability in Somalia (Mesfin, 1977). The crisis is aggravated by foreign powers interference particularly countries that had colonial administration in Somalia and the neighboring countries (Mesfin, 1977). Conflict remains a typical feature of the Horn of Africa particularly in the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (Meala, 2011). The reasons for this are attributed to the following core factors (Ayoob, 1978; Mesfin, 1977):

1. The interaction of different cultures in the area. In other words, people with different cultures reside in the region and these cultures contradict each other resulting in conflicts. However, this argument is challenged because there are regions in different parts of the world where people with different cultures lived together peacefully for many years.
2. Countries in the Horn of Africa are not formed voluntarily or through the organic process of state creation. Rather they are formed by colonial powers that controlled the region. In other words, boundaries of countries in the region are demarcated by the colonial powers disregarding the interests and the culture of the people residing in the area which subsequently resulted in recurrent conflict in the region. Given the current situation in Eastern Africa, this problem is presumed to continue in the future unless countries in the region make efforts to address outstanding problems.
3. Though countries in the region are officially liberated from colonization, external powers still interfere in the internal affairs of countries of the region and create a hostile environment that leads them to conflicts. This situation prevailing in the Horn of Africa is a typical example of the complications that occurred in the process of nation building in Africa in the post-colonial period.

According to Kessels (2016), conflict in East Africa is also attributed to two factors. The first relates to *'push factors'* such as underdevelopment, lack of access to education, unemployment, and grievances while the second is *'pull factors'* such as availability of financial and political benefits. Though not unanimously agreed by scholars in the field, the push factors are considered as conditions for unfolding of conflict than the pull factors. Presently, security of the Eastern Africa region is getting worse as the situation is becoming more and more complicated due to political instability propelled by terrorist movements in the area (Mokaddem, 2018). Foreign powers in the region such as US, China, France, Egypt, Turkey, UAE, and Saudi Arabia are also playing catalytic roles to the increasing tension in the area in pursuit of their own political, economic, security, religious, and other agendas. This

implies that the conflicting interests of foreign powers in the region together with the unstable nature prevailing in the Horn of Africa are worsening the tension (Mesfin, 1977). Moreover, as the area is located near to the strategic location of the Red Sea, which covers more than 10% of the world's maritime trade and located at the junction of three Continents namely Asia, Europe, and Africa (www.portdejibouti.com, 2015), these powers need to control the region to sustain their respective interests (Muhabie, 2015). In other words, if they control the area, they can have the leverage to manipulate the economic, military, and other activities in the area.

As Ethiopia is located near to the strategic Red Sea area, the country is vulnerable to conflicts in the region and is being affected by the conflicts thereon (Mokaddem, 2018). Currently, some of the foreign countries in the region are threatening Ethiopia's security by establishing military bases in Eritrea, Djibouti, Somaliland, and other neighboring countries (Zoubir, 2016). Most recently in 2016, the Eritrean government leased out Assab to the UAE and its allies. As a result, UAE already established a military base in Assab (Gebrerufael, 2016). Besides, the country is manifesting its ambitions to stay in the area by strengthening its military base in Assab. UAE also is engaged in military operations in the region and is conducting military operations in Yemen from Assab. UAE not only uses Assab for advancing its own military objectives but also allowed Egypt to use all the military infrastructures for its military operations in the area (Stratfor, 2016). The threat against Ethiopia in this scenario is that the presence of Egypt in the area means that any activity of Ethiopia specifically any project that is expedited on the Blue Nile River (also termed as Abbay by Ethiopians) can be controlled easily by Egypt. In case of conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt arises because of the river or any other cause, Ethiopia can be targeted by Egypt as the latter is close enough to Ethiopia's frontiers (Stratfor, 2016). In other words, it will be easier for Egypt to attack Ethiopia and destroy any project on the Blue Nile River.

As Ethiopia experienced numerous threats in the span for the last hundreds of years, the region's security has always been its major concern. The reasons are attributable to external factors such as crisis in East Africa in particular and the whole Africa in general. Besides, crisis in the international system also affected the security of Ethiopia (Amare, 1989). This is particularly true during the military regime in Ethiopia (Amare, 1989). Though the recent foreign policy of Ethiopia that has inward to outward looking contributed for the peace and security of the horn of Africa (Berouk, 2012), security problem of East Africa still persists. As a result, Ethiopia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, is planning to re-establish a naval force on a location that is not yet identified and decided (Maasho, 2018; Zelalem, 2016). Foreign powers' presence in East Africa threatens the national security of Ethiopia because it influences its military and economic activities in a number of ways (Olewe, 2018). For instance, as Ethiopia is a landlocked country using Djibouti as its main route to access the sea, the foreign powers in Djibouti may affect the security of the country by controlling the area and the activities thereon. The advent of these foreign powers in Djibouti may also diminish the power of Djibouti to determine its fate in the future (Olewe, 2018). This means that if Djibouti's fate is to be determined by the foreign powers, it is a threat to Ethiopia. In other words, if Djibouti is under the influence of foreign powers, Ethiopia's interest will also be compromised. In case Ethiopia's interest contradicts with their multidimensional interests such as economic, political, religious, and others, they may use this as leverage to influence Ethiopia (Olewe, 2018). So, Ethiopia should act wisely to establish viable and smooth diplomatic relations with Djibouti and the foreign powers in the region.

After the beginning of the Ethio-Eritrea war in 1998, Djibouti's influence on Ethiopia increased as the war forced the latter to resort to mainly using the Port of Djibouti. The Ethio-Eritrean war brought about an economic windfall for Djibouti as Ethiopia is obliged to undertake more than 90% of its import-export maritime trade via Djibouti (Styan, 2013). As the trade relation between Ethiopia and Djibouti lends leverage to Djibouti, the country may influence Ethiopia by increasing port fee

any time. This obviously affects Ethiopia's economy (Getachew, 2015). In addition, if Ethiopia is forbidden by Djibouti not to use its port for few weeks or even days, Ethiopia's economic activities will be jeopardized and irreparable damage will occur (Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, 2018). As the distance of other ports is not close enough to fill the gap, the damage for Ethiopia will be considerable. Moreover, Djibouti may threaten the security of Ethiopia by allowing Ethiopia's adversaries to enter and act on its soil. For instance, if Djibouti allows a terrorist group like Alshabab to move freely on its territory, the group can attack Ethiopia easily and can pose imminent danger to the security of the country (Styan, 2013).

### **C. Political implications**

Throughout most of the 20th century, especially following its anti-colonial struggle and afterwards, Ethiopia has been enjoying significant political leverage in Africa in general and Eastern Africa in particular (Canon and Rossiter, 2017). This influence was the product of a combination of factors such as its historical significance (Ethiopia is the first African country that ensured its independence against colonial ambitions), population (second largest in Africa), area (one of the largest countries in the Horn), and natural resources endowment (water, strategic location etc.). However, following the 1993 secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, Ethiopia lost its strategic importance since it lost access to the sea. Besides, its landlockedness made Ethiopia less independent in its actions (Canon and Rossiter, 2017). This dependency hampered Ethiopia's aspiration to emerge as a regional power in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, landlockedness has been a major political liability for the country as it weakened its influence not only in Africa but also globally (Getachew, 2015; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Given its resource endowments and combination of other factors, Ethiopia has the potential to be regarded as a regional power in East Africa provided that a combination of the following factors is put to use (Geeska Africa Online, 2014).

1. With a population of more than a hundred million, it is demographically larger than the combination of any of two or three of its neighbors. Secondly, it has also the Horn of Africa's largest and arguably best-equipped military. According to the global firepower index, Ethiopia has the third most powerful army in Africa and the first in East Africa.
2. Ethiopia's untapped natural resources of water and other potentials may also be used as leverage to exert influence in the region.

Generally, the distribution of power capabilities within East Africa and particularly in the Horn of Africa largely favors Ethiopia. All these enable Ethiopia to exert unrivaled political influence in the region that is currently affected by its landlockedness resulting in dependence on the ports of its neighbors (Canon and Rossiter, 2017). Despite the above drawbacks, Ethiopia has a clear ambition to lead the region and has strong motivation to be at the front seat of regional politics (Canon and Rossiter, 2017).

## **2.2. Emperor Haile Selassie's contribution for Ethiopia's sea outlet before 1991 and secession of Eritrea**

In this section, Emperor Haile Selassie I's contribution for securing Ethiopia's sea outlet before 1991 period and the Emperor's role for the secession of Eritrea is briefly discussed. Even though Ethiopian rulers before him fought against foreign powers such as the Ottoman Turks and Egyptians to secure the coastal areas of Ethiopia and sustain the country's access to the sea (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.; Tekletsadik, 2000 E.C;), Haile Selassie's role in this regard is paramount because firstly, it is the most recent one before the country became landlocked in 1991 and secondly, the Emperor secured Ethiopia's sea outlet through diplomacy. In doing so, the Emperor peacefully made the dreams of his predecessors come true (Bahru, 2002). Hence, his success in diplomacy can be cited as a good example for the current and future leaders of Ethiopia not to give up on the diplomatic means to restore Ethiopia's sea outlet.

### **2.2.1. Background**

Access to sea outlet has been a major factor in lending strength to a given country since it has positive impacts on economic, security, political, and other interests (Getachew, 2015). Let alone in the contemporary world where sea trade increased significantly due to globalization, sea outlet was main source of wealth and power even during ancient times (Tekletsadik, 2000 E.C.). In the context of Ethiopia, the country was strong at different times and one of these times was during the Axumite Kingdom when Ethiopia was quite strong since its rulers governed areas beyond its frontiers and across the red sea. For instance, King Kaleb had strong and well-organized naval force capable of undertaking military operations abroad and control of some areas across the Red Sea like Yemen (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.). His military force was strong because in addition to internal sources of revenue, he managed to obtain external revenues from sea trade and from other states for using the sea under his control (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.).

Ethiopia has passed through diverse episodes of ups and downs for thousands of years. When the military strength of Ethiopian Kings increased, they governed neighboring areas and those across the Red Sea but when their military strength weakened, they limited their presence to Ethiopia's borders (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.). One of the major factors for either strength or weakness was mostly related to coastal or landlocked status (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). Ethiopia's history shows that the country was strong when it was a coastal state while the country became weak when it was landlocked since this had significant impact on economic and military strength (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). The Axumite Kingdom, one of the strong and civilized ancient Kingdoms in Ethiopia and the world, collapsed when it lost control over the Red Sea coastal areas since the sea was main source of revenue for the Kingdom (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.). At this time, sea trade helped the then Ethiopian leaders to improve their civilization and enhance their economic and military strengths (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.; Yacob, 2003 E.C.).

Ethiopia's Monarchical system traces its origin back to more than three thousand years starting from Menilik I who was considered the first King of Solomonic Dynasty (Tekletsadik, 1951 E.C.). This system was not interrupted even during the colonial period when Ethiopia was encircled by European colonial powers such as Britain, France, and Italy and continued until the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I who was the last King of the dynasty (Beken, 2007). Haile Selassie came to power not accidentally but rather had ample experiences before assuming supreme power. He was a regent under the Empress Zewditu by the name Ras Teferi Mekonnen as the monarch had only symbolic role. His regency gave him the chance to get supporters both from inside and outside of Ethiopia. This also gave him the exposure to know how to create viable relations with foreign countries and create good impression in the eyes of foreign powers such as the United States of America and the Europeans. The situation also helped him to get experiences on how to manage the country's affairs (Bahru, 2002). The regency helped him to pave the way for climbing the throne in 1930 following the death of Empress Zewditu (Bahru, 2002; Tekletsadik, 2000 E.C.).

### **2.2.2. Developments Prior to World War II**

Emperor Haile Selassie, after securing the Crown, was highly engaged in modernizing Ethiopia. Subsequently, he succeeded in introducing various reforms and brought about tangible changes in the country (Bahru, 2002). In particular, his reign between 1941 and 1974 represents the summation of modern Ethiopian history (Bahru, 2002) when he actively continued the modernization process started by his predecessors in modern Ethiopia starting from the reign of Emperor Tewodros II (Bahru, 2002). He realized Emperor Tewodros's efforts aimed at establishing a unified country with a strong military power and a central government. Moreover, the perennial quest for a sea outlet that the country endeavored to achieve was finally achieved with the federation and then union of Eritrea with Ethiopia (Bahru, 2002; Milen, 2014). In the process of modernizing the country, the Emperor worked hard to promote modern education coverage. Consequently, he managed to establish schools starting from elementary to University level. The present Addis Ababa University, the then Haile Selassie I University, is his legacy (Bahru, 2002). The Emperor also succeeded in building modern military, naval, and Police forces.

Moreover, he was well known for his diplomacy with the Western powers especially with the US, which he judiciously used to secure Ethiopia's right to get access to sea outlet (Bahru, 2002; Milen, 2014).

### **2.2.3. Post-World War II State of Affairs**

After the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, Emperor Haile Selassie left the country to present his appeal to the League of Nations though his complaint was not successful forcing him to stay as exile in Britain until 1941 (Bahru, 2002; Tekletsadik, 2000 E.C.). Ultimately, the British Forces with Ethiopian patriots waged war against the Fascist Italian occupation forces. As a result, Italy was forced to withdraw not only from Ethiopia but also from Eritrea (Milen, 2014). After assisting the liberation of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the British forces occupied the latter as part of their own colonial territory in East Africa following which they began to interfere in the internal affairs of Ethiopia and influenced the Emperor's administration (Tekletsadik, 2000 E.C.; Zewde, 2008 E.C.). Despite the aforementioned, the Emperor was actively engaged in strengthening the country's diplomatic relations with the Western powers especially with the US with a view to liberating Ethiopia from British influence and get support for the claim that Ethiopia had over Eritrea (Milen, 2014; Zewde, 2008 E.C.). In this bid, the Emperor managed to get significant support from the US and European powers and achieved the following (Bahru, 2002):

1. Ethiopia became a member of the League of Nations, the only African member of the League at the time, and in doing so, he apparently secured the country's sovereignty.
2. The intention of Italy and France to divide Ethiopia after the death of Menilik was thwarted by signing an agreement with them.
3. Trade relations with the Western powers were enhanced and economic and military aid was secured.

#### **2.2.4. Federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia**

As Emperor Haile Selassie managed to establish viable diplomatic relations with the West, his quest for Ethiopia's sea outlet was supported by them and the process of federating Eritrea with Ethiopia was ultimately approved by the United Nations (UN) by resolution 390 A (V) in federating Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952 (Edwin, 2010; Yohannis, 2011 E.C.). According to the terms of the UN Resolution, the federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia lasted for ten years (Yohannis, 2011 E.C.). The terms of the resolution also stated that the Federal government led by the Emperor had the authority to undertake foreign relations, organize and control the national defense forces, control matters of currency and finance, foreign trade, and control development and use of ports (Edwin, 2010; United Nations, 1996). Due to the federation, Ethiopia managed to have sea outlet through two ports, Masawa and Assab. Consequently, the Emperor's administration invested a capital of 25,450,000 ETB (twenty-five million and four hundred fifty thousand Ethiopian Birr) to develop the modern port of Assab, which was closest to the central regions of Ethiopia (Beyene, 2011 E.C.). Developing the port of Assab took some years from January 1957 to November 1961 and served as the country's main sea outlet (Beyene, 2011 E.C.). Later on, Assab was reorganized in 1970 by proclamation No. 139/1977 during the military regime so as to make it more efficient and developed (Yohannis, 2011 E.C.).

After the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, opposition of sections of Eritreans against the Emperor's administration began because there was a feeling on the Eritreans side that Ethiopia's economy improved at the expense of Eritrea as they believed this negatively impacted on Eritrea's development (Yohannis, 2011 E.C.). Besides, they reflected a feeling that the Emperor's administration denied them of the relative democracy and liberty they enjoyed in terms of freedom of expression and press, which they thought was better while the federation was introduced. Moreover, Eritreans complained that the federation of the two countries did not reflect the interest and will of Eritrean people (Edwin, 2010). Though the opposition of Eritreans against the Emperor's administration continued, it was suppressed and finally federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, which lasted from 1952 to 1962, was dissolved and Eritrea officially became part of Ethiopia's

sovereign territory in November 1962. The unification process was formal in the sense that the Eritrean Assembly, a legislative body created by the federal act in 1952, voted for complete unity with Ethiopia (Bahru, 2002; Mesfin, 1990).

Though the Emperor contributed for the federation and then unification of Eritrea and Ethiopia, there are also arguments which state that the Emperor's act also contributed for the secession of Eritrea (Mesfin, 1990; Spencer, 1984). It is argued that the Emperor should not have ignored the opposition of Eritreans during the time of the federation and then during the unification process of the two countries but rather should have facilitated discussions to resolve their complaint about the federation and union of the two countries. Suppressing their complaint was a grave mistake that created insurgent groups in Eritrea (Zewde, 2008 E.C.). In other words, absence of discussion with Eritreans led to the establishment of insurgent groups in Eritrea like the EPLF then finally the secession of Eritrea (Zewde, 2008 E.C.). Besides, there was no any attempt to negotiate with the insurgent groups once they began to engage in armed struggle. Even if an attempt was made to conduct peace negotiation during the military regime, but it was too late that the attempt was unsuccessful and finally the secession of Eritrea became inevitable resulting in the current situation of Ethiopia in relation to its landlockedness (Yohannis, 2011 E.C.; Zewde, 2008 E.C.).

Following unity, Eritrea continued to be part of Ethiopia until its official separation in 1993 (Yohannis, 2011 E.C.). Before 1991, while the military regime was in power, the Northern parts of Ethiopia, mainly Eritrea and Tigray regions, were conflict zones as there was war between the government and two main insurgent groups, namely the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The EPLF was fighting to dismember Eritrea while the TPLF was fighting to secure the secession of Tigray region from Ethiopia (Bahru, 2002; Mesfin, 1990). As can be inferred from Map 2 below, both Masawa and Assab were parts of Eritrea until 1987.

## Map 2 Map of Ethiopia during the reign of Haile Selassie I



Source: (Google Map, 2009).

When the war between the regime against EPLF and TPLF escalated and the secession of Eritrea seemed inevitable, the Ethiopian government proclaimed the 1987 constitution of Ethiopia. As per the provisions of the constitution, a new map that introduced new autonomous administrations (as indicated in Map 3 below) was developed. According to the new map, one of the autonomous regions or administrations was the Assab autonomous region that was placed out of Eritrea (Yacob, 2003 E.C.; Yohannis, 2011 E.C.). This act is still considered as one of the wise decisions made by the government. In doing so, the regime attempted to make Ethiopia a coastal state in case the secession of Eritrea is imminent (Yacob, 2003 E.C.).

**Map 3 Map of Ethiopia under military rule depicting autonomous Regions (1987-1991)**

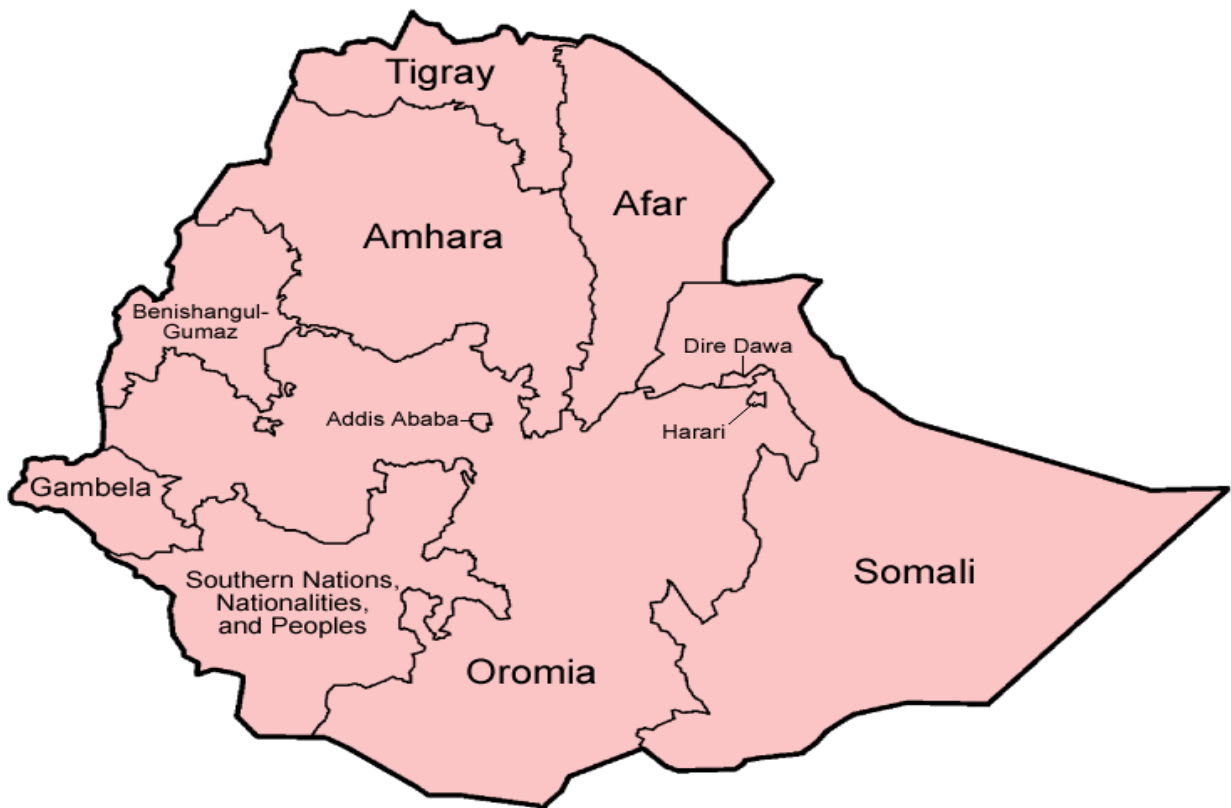


Source: (Google Map, 2009).

After the EPRDF assumed power in 1991, representatives of Eritrea and Ethiopia held a meeting in Addis Ababa from July 1-5, 1991 during which Ethiopia's representatives agreed that Eritrea can conduct a referendum to decide its future status in view of its relations with Ethiopia (Yacob, 2003 E.C.). The question presented to the Eritrean side regarding the referendum was disputable as some say that the question was to choose either "slavery" or "freedom" while others say that the question was to choose either "independence" or "union" (Refworld, 2001). The referendum was held from April 23-25, 1993 in the presence of observers from the UN, the Organization for African Unity (currently the African Union), and the League of Arab Nations (Mesfin, 1990; Yacob,

2003 E.C). The result of the referendum showed that 99.8 % of Eritreans voted for secession or independence following which Eritrea officially seceded from Ethiopia on May 24, 1993. Consequently, Ethiopia lost the ports of Masawa and Assab since the EPDRF-led government did not endeavor towards making Assab part of Ethiopia. According to an interview conducted with Abebe Teklehaimanot on May 06/ 2019, EPRDF held a position that the map developed by the military regime was not acceptable as it was prepared at the time when the government was at the verge of its downfall. The same informant explained that for the EPRDF, the acceptable map of Eritrea was the one that was developed during the time of the Italian occupation that made Masawa and Assab parts of Eritrea. According to the same informant, the EPRDF leaders believed that Eritrea was colony of Ethiopia. As a result, Ethiopia's need for the right to get access to sea outlet was not properly discussed but rather ignored. Map 4 below shows the current landlocked Ethiopia with its 9 ethnic regions following the secession of Eritrea.

**Map 4 Map of Ethiopia during the EPRDF**



Source: (Google Map, 2013)

### **2.3. Theoretical framework**

In the contemporary world, there are clear development differences between and among countries due to various factors. One of these relates to being either landlocked or coastal. Due to this difference, some countries such as US, Canada, and Western European countries are more developed with high per capita GDP while others in Africa and Asia are either developing or least developed (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). The difference between these can be analyzed theoretically. In this section, three theories are discussed to explain the reasons for the differences in development levels (Chung, 2014). There are three popular theories through which the development differences between and among countries in the world are explained. These are: geography theory, institutional theory, and growth theory (Chung, 2014). This study reviews the substance of each of the theories and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses in order to figure out which theory best explains Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period and the implications thereof (Chung, 2014).

#### **2.3.1. Geography theory**

Geography theory explains the differences in growth and development between and among countries based on geographical location. In other words, locations of countries can have enormous effects on their economic growth and development. The implication of differences in location can be seen in view of coastal and non-coastal (landlocked) countries (Chung, 2014). Obviously, the coastal countries have better access to the sea than the landlocked ones. The closer distance to the sea means that the costs of using sea transport are relatively lower than that of the landlocked countries. This means, high transport costs have negative impact and bring about huge development differences between and among countries as the landlocked countries incur more costs than the coastal ones.

Though landlockedness affects the economy of countries in various ways, the impact resulting thereof significantly increases in the case of landlocked developing countries (Ariekot, 2016; Chung, 2014). For instance, remoteness from the sea routes or limited access to the sea is one of the challenges landlocked developing countries face to undertake maritime trade. Moreover, the delay and compliance with problematic import procedures of the coastal countries increase trade costs for landlocked countries. This implies that due to their landlockedness, the overall trade flow into them significantly decreases resulting in weak economic growth and development. Moreover, remoteness from the sea also increases the cost of export trade by consuming time to transport locally produced goods to ports (Ariekot, 2016). In addition to remoteness from the sea, the poor domestic and transit infrastructure of landlocked countries and poor transport coordination system increase the time needed to transport goods from place to place and to the sea thereby increasing insurance cost of import and export goods (Ariekot, 2016).

Besides, limited availability of trade corridors is another challenge that impedes the economic growth and development of landlocked countries (Arvis et al., 2007). This means that if a country has various options to access the sea, it will be possible to choose the closest and the cheapest corridor. However, if the options are limited, the landlocked country will be obliged to use them no matter how far they are, how long do they take and how costly they are. In addition, the uncertainty of the time taken to reach to ports of transit states occurs due to border delays and poor port system of the coastal states and this failure results in difficulty to assess the cost of transportation (Ariekot, 2016; Arvis et al., 2007). This signifies that landlockedness considerably impedes the development of countries in a number of ways while coastal countries have geographical comparative advantages to support their international and regional trade. Therefore, coastal countries can achieve greater economic growth and development than landlocked countries.

### **2.3.2. Institution theory**

This theory refers to a country's structures or institutions that impact on its development (Chung, 2014). As institutions are the outcomes of a political process, their function depends on the nature of political organs and the distribution of political power in a given country (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). Institution theory also refers to a country's political power, which controls and makes decisions on issues that are vital to the development of a country (Chung, 2014). In other words, one of the main differences in development between and among countries is differences in the quality of institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). This implies that countries with weak or corrupt institutions become poorer. In countries where institutions are corrupted, only the property rights of the political elites are protected and the majority of the people are neglected as a result of which their individual life cannot be changed for good. Under such a system, only the investment of the elites may register growth figure in the economy but it does not essentially add values to the country's sustainable development. On the other hand, countries with strong institutions have a well-organized economic structure and have better opportunities for economic growth and development than countries with weak institutions. Moreover, in countries with well-organized institutions, resources are distributed fairly among the people and so does the outcomes of development (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008).

Institution theory is classified into three; economic, political, and cultural (Chung, 2014). Economic institutions play a crucial role in determining the economic incentives and related economic activities and outcomes in a country (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Chung, 2014). For instance, securing property right of citizens is one of the best means to ensure the efficient use and distribution of resources. The efficient allocation of resources enables a country to achieve high economic outcomes and lead to rapid economic growth and development. Due to their impact, economic institutions most importantly help to regulate the distribution of political power and the resource allocation in a country provided that economic institutions

work independently and free from undue political intervention (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Chung, 2014).

As far as political institutions are concerned, they refer to the form of government, democracy versus dictatorship and other aspects of administration. Political institutions, as the term implies, are directly correlated to political power (Toye, 2008). Political power would directly affect the growth and development trajectories of an economy because the group with greater political power can choose the set of economic institutions for themselves no matter whether they achieve greater economic growth and development or not. In other words, the economic policy of a country is developed by people who assume political power. This scenario is more practical in countries where democratic institutions are at their infancy and there prevails unrestricted political power (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Chung, 2014). In the cultural institutional aspect, religions and beliefs are considered to be the factors that determine the growth and development of an economy. For example, some religions and beliefs may encourage people to work and save more, which ultimately enable a country to achieve higher economic growth and development (Chung, 2014).

Institution theory also states that institutions play a crucial role to predict future developments in a given country because the strength/s of the institutions, especially economic and political ones, help to make future development plans tangible (Chung, 2014). In other words, countries with well-organized economic institutions can set economic plans that can bring about economic growth and development in a country. By the same token, countries with good political institutions can make economic policies that are capable of bringing the required economic growth and development. In general, countries with strong institutions usually have better chance of economic development than countries with weak institutions. In the present world, countries with good institutions such as the US, Canada, and Western European countries are developed countries. These countries have developed a secured property and other rights that are vital to pave the way for economic growth

and development. So, the long-term growth and development in those countries are foreseeable unlike the situation in the developing countries (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). Moreover, institution theory states that institutions can help a country to overcome the weaknesses of geography theory in the sense that countries that are geographically disadvantaged may offset the gap by developing strong institutions and infrastructure that enhance maritime trade and significantly reduce cost of sea transport. In addition, these countries can manage to fill the gap by establishing a strong and stable political system that effectively administers economic activity properly and secure fair distribution of resources among people (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Chung, 2014).

### **2.3.3. Growth theory**

This is a theory that deals with factors that play vital roles in the development of countries. Growth theory is divided into two models; exogenous and endogenous (Chung, 2014). As regards the exogenous model, economic growth and development depend on factors that are outside of a given country (Chung, 2014; Engle et al., 1983). This means that the factors are independent of other variables in the system such as labor, changes in technology, availability of raw materials used in the production process, and the supply of and demand for goods produced (Jager, 2004). Hence, economic growth occurring within an economy is influenced by what takes place outside the economy as opposed to the internal or endogenous growth model. An economy can grow indefinitely using already available items in the system such as existing technology, rate of technological advancement, and the saving rate and investment in education and so on (Chung, 2014; Engle et al., 1983). As a general principle, given the fixed nature of labor and technology, economic growth can cease at some point as ongoing production reaches a state of equilibrium due to rise in internal demand. Once equilibrium is attained, exogenous factors come in to play so as to bring about economic growth or otherwise (Jager, 2004).

When one compares growth theory with institutional and the geographic theories, the latter two successfully work in the system of a country rather than growth theory in achieving development of a country. However, if we compare their role for the economic growth and development of a given country, institutional theory is more applicable because unless there is appropriate institutional set up in a given country, the outcome of the geography and growth theories will be negatively impacted (Chung, 2014). This means, the importance of geographical factors to determine growth is lower than institutional factors under the current global situation (Jager, 2004) as there are countries with better geographical position but are poor due to their weak institutional standing as in the case of Somalia and Eritrea. There are countries that are geographically disadvantaged (landlocked) but are developed due to their strong and organized institutional set up such as are Switzerland, Luxembourg, Andorra, and Liechtenstein (Getachew, 2015; Sheger FM Radio 102.1, 2018; Yacob, 2003 E.C.). This is because the geographical conditions of countries mainly determine the early stage of economic development. After industrialization and technological improvement are attained, the significance of geographical factors has decreased. For example, landlocked countries can use air transport to handle the negative effects of lack of or limited access to the sea. In certain aspects, changing conditions could amplify the positive economic effects of institutional factors (Chung, 2014). Therefore, it is possible to argue that the significance of institutional theory is greater than geography theory in the context of the current global economic realities.

On the other hand, when we compare geography and the growth theories, access to the sea is the main source of growth for a county. However, as stipulated in growth theory, the sources of growth include factors like innovation, capital accumulation, and technological advancement. Exogenous and endogenous variables are both covered in growth theory (Chung, 2014). As per the current globalization trend, the importance of technology towards growth is on the rise. Technology improvement might reduce the negative impacts on growth resulting from geographical disadvantages. For example, the use of air transport has significantly reduced the

geographical advantage of access to the sea because sea transport is not the only effective way for promoting international trade (Chung, 2014). Therefore, growth theory is more applicable or avails more options for growth than geography theory. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the variables is uncertain in the case of the growth theory because they could be easily altered by some external forces such as government intervention and changes in the business cycle (Chung, 2014; Jager, 2004). Thus, long-term growth predictions require adjustments when there are some external changes. When comparing growth theory with geography and institutional theories, the former faces more constraints in making growth analysis (Chung, 2014). This implies that the three theories have their merits and shortcomings. Thus, a country should utilize each of them as to be found necessary and appropriate.

According to the analyses resulting from review of the literature and theoretical frameworks, Ethiopia is a landlocked country with a weak economy and most of its institutions at their infant stage. In light of this, the thesis employs the concepts and analyses incorporated in the geography, institution and growth theories. In the case of geographic theory, as Ethiopia's geographic location placed the country at a disadvantaged position from accessing benefits from international and regional markets, the concepts in the geography theory are applicable to analyze the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period. In other words, geography theory helps to see the various ways which Ethiopia need to pursue in order to reduce the negative effects emanating from its landlockedness. In addition, as institutions play vital roles to overcome the negative impacts of landlockedness on the country, it is appropriate to apply the concepts included in the institution theory for it gives us a hint as to the kind and nature of the institutions that Ethiopia needs to offset the impacts resulting from its landlockedness. Institution theory's analyses help to understand how to create strong institutions and the mechanisms and apply them so as to bring about development. Moreover, as the elements incorporated in growth theory such as endogenous and exogenous growth models are necessary to overcome the gap created by the country's landlockedness, it is necessary to apply the concepts and analyses enshrined in growth theory. Factors, both inside and

outside of the economy, which affect Ethiopia's economy either positively or negatively, are thus crucial to overcome the impact of landlockedness. These are dealt with per the concepts of the growth theory.

## Chapter III

### Implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness

#### 3.1. Background

Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period traces its origin back to the time when the insurgent Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fought against the military regime. The group upheld a strong position that Eritrea was a colony of Ethiopia rather than part of Ethiopia's sovereign territory and that it shall liberate itself from Ethiopia's colonization<sup>1</sup>. As a result, TPLF provided full support for the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces in their struggle for independent statehood. In addition, it was the group's position that Eritrea shall include a region incorporating Assab, which was an autonomous administration when the referendum was undertaken, thereby leaving Ethiopia landlocked<sup>2</sup>.

Soon after the TPLF assumed power under the name of Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in which the TPLF was the dominant group, the EPRDF facilitated the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia by recognizing that both Masawa and Assab fall under the jurisdiction of Eritrea without any proper deliberation with the Ethiopian people<sup>3</sup>. The secession process of Eritrea is criticized because the issue presented to Eritreans was not characterized by freedom of choice in unrestricted manner<sup>4</sup>. Major General Abebe stated<sup>5</sup> that he was one of the TPLF members who held a

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<sup>1</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>2</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ እትም፣ ኦዲስ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>4</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>5</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

position against Ethiopia's right to sea outlet but now regrets about the position he took at the time. He explained that the mistake in relation to Ethiopia's access to sea outlet was not intentional rather due to ignorance of facts and lack of sufficient knowledge about the advantage and disadvantages of the outcome resulting thereof. However, he claims that Ethiopia still has a chance to claim the right to the sea as per the principles of international law.

Ethiopia's landlockedness in view of the three implications for Ethiopia is presented as follows:

### **3.2. Economic implications**

Currently Ethiopia spends more than 3 billion USD per annum for port fees and most of this is paid to Djibouti<sup>6</sup>. The fee for using Djibouti's port is determined by the country and it is not negotiable as Ethiopia has less bargaining power due to its landlockedness with no better option. This means that Djibouti sets the port fee and Ethiopia should either take or leave it without any chance for bargaining no matter how expensive the fee is<sup>7</sup>. The same scenario exists in the case of Ethiopian Railway Corporation (ERC) as the price to be paid for using the ports of Djibouti is determined by the country<sup>8</sup>. The other instance that costs Ethiopia a lot is the situation that after goods arrive at Djibouti's port, it is usually difficult to move these to Ethiopia on time due to foreign currency shortage and other problems like insufficient transportation system. It was learnt that when goods are stored at the port for more than ten days, it is mandatory to pay significant amount of

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<sup>6</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>7</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia and Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>8</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

money for storage (demurrage cost). As a result, Ethiopia is currently incurring huge cost for storage<sup>9</sup>.

The same story is repeated in the case of Ethiopian Railway Corporation's demurrage costs<sup>10</sup>. However, this has decreased recently as a result of negotiations between Ethiopia and Djibouti. Djibouti opened its door for negotiation (which never happened before) because the diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea has improved and Djibouti is worry of the possibility of losing the income obtained from Ethiopia. In other words, if Djibouti continues to impose expensive tariffs on Ethiopia, the latter may sometimes in the future terminate its contract with Djibouti and totally resort to using Eritrean ports that are hoped to be less costly and more affordable<sup>11</sup>. According to another informant from the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, more than 90% of Djibouti's income from its ports is generated from Ethiopia<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, the phenomena that diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea has improved and series of negotiations to enhance trade relations between the two countries have already begun is obviously bad news for Djibouti because the conflict between the two countries has brought economic windfall for it<sup>13</sup>. Currently, Ethiopia and Eritrea are negotiating on how Ethiopia may make use of Eritrean ports and presently Ethiopia has already started to use the port of Masawa<sup>14</sup>.The above facts signify that it is advantageous for Ethiopia to use diversified

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<sup>9</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>10</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>11</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>12</sup>. Personal interview with Misrak Tadesse, *Head* of Containers Handling Division at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

<sup>13</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of legal service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>14</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

port services and sea corridors so as to increase its bargaining capacity to negotiate on more affordable port fees.

The other constraint that challenges efforts in transporting goods to Ethiopia is that the road from the Port of Djibouti to Ethiopia's border, which is more than 100 km long, is below standard and causes damage to lorries that load and move goods to Ethiopia<sup>15</sup>. According to both informants, Ethiopian authorities communicated with their Djiboutian counterparts about this situation but there is no proper response from Djibouti so far and the road is not yet fixed. Due to road quality problem, the capacity of Lorries to move goods decreased. For instance, a lorry that could have transported goods three or four times within a certain period of time can do only half or less than capacity<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, as the time taken to import goods increases, the price of goods also increases as the delay increases costs of the importers. As a result, Ethiopians will ultimately be forced to buy goods with expensive price<sup>17</sup>. Currently, Ethiopia pays 3,000 (three thousand) USD per cargo and this price is double as compared to the costs of costal countries that pay 1,000 (one thousand) USD per cargo. This signifies that Ethiopian development will always progress at a slower pace as compared to coastal countries provided that other conditions in Ethiopia and coastal countries remain similar<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Mesafint Ashenafi, head of legal service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>16</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>17</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>18</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Though it is stated above that Ethiopia is incurring significant amount of money due to its landlockedness, the country can attain its development goals despite its landlockedness. Landlockedness does not mean that a country cannot bring about development since there are countries that are landlocked but are among the developed nations in the world<sup>19</sup>. For instance, European countries such as Switzerland, Luxembourg, Andorra, and Lichtenstein are landlocked developed countries. The main reasons for this, among others, include existence of well-developed infrastructure that connects them with their neighboring coastal states. In other words, these countries are connected with their coastal neighbors through well-organized air transport, modern railways and land transport. Moreover, they use Information Communication Technology (ICT) effectively and efficiently to facilitate their import-export trade and other activities. In addition, they use air transport service optimally to undertake foreign trade especially when they export finished and value-added products<sup>20</sup>. In the case of Ethiopia, the country mostly exports raw materials, which require maritime transport rather than other means of transport. These developed landlocked European countries also use modern rail transport, which is more effective than using trucks. This implies that using sea trade is not the only way of undertaking their foreign trade, which helped them to bring about development despite their landlockedness. Shewaferahu Shitahun argues<sup>21</sup> that economy and politics have direct relation with the development of a given country as economic policy is a decision made by political authorities of a country. In other words, if a country is politically unstable its economic growth and development can be significantly affected. Unless there is stable political system in a country, there would be no smooth economic activities and so does development. Hence, a country like Ethiopia should first and foremost deal with its internal political concerns.

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<sup>19</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>20</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>21</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Currently, Ethiopia faces political instability that emanated from the ethnic federalism the country adopted in the 1995 constitution. The number of internally displaced people in the country put Ethiopia in the front line of countries with numerous internally displaced people. The figure for internally displaced people in Ethiopia was about 2.9 million in 2018, which by far exceeds those in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria<sup>22</sup>. This is a huge figure for a country like Ethiopia, which claims that it is undertaking a reform to build a stable and democratic system. Minority ethnic groups that live outside of their ethnic region in the country are under threat. The government of Ethiopia has not still managed to control the attacks and internal displacements, which still persist unabated. If the government cannot control the situation in good time, it will have a devastating impact than the country's landlockedness. In other words, it is a threat for the very existence of Ethiopia as it may result in civil war<sup>23</sup>.

The internal crisis in Ethiopia has also implication for the country's development. As the federal and regional governments are supporting internally displaced people, they are under pressure of budget deficit. If the country had been stable, the money and other resources spent to support internally displaced people could have been used for other development purposes. Moreover, had it not been for the situation, displaced people who live in temporary shelters are farmers, traders and others who can work and contribute to the country's economic growth and development<sup>24</sup>. This signifies that political stability and economic development are directly related. Hence, Ethiopia should first manage its internal crisis so that plans to overcome the adverse impact of landlockedness can be averted.

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<sup>22</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>23</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PHD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>24</sup> . Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Dr. Asnake Kefale<sup>25</sup> similarly argues that the other factor that may help Ethiopia to realize its development goals despite its landlockedness is that East African countries should embark on regional economic integration so as to strengthen their economic performance. Economic integration enables them to avoid trade tariffs and barriers as a result of which they can import and distribute goods at affordable prices. Besides<sup>26</sup>, bilateral relations between countries are also important so long as they do not contradict with regional economic integration agreements. This means that Ethiopia may use regional economic integration and bilateral agreements to enable itself to use ports of neighboring countries with affordable port fees.

The other opportunity that Ethiopia may make use of include<sup>27</sup>: its status as the seat of the African Union (AU) and other international organizations like the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Ethiopia should use this for attaining economic and political benefits. As institutions like the AU and UNECA generate significant amount of foreign currency for Ethiopia, they have a vital role for the development of the country. For instance, the AU pays thousands of dollars a month per individual as a rental for staff residences. Moreover, the restaurants, hotels and conference venues in Addis Ababa also attract inflow of foreign currency for providing services. Besides, there are thousands and thousands of flight bookings a day to Addis Ababa from different countries, often first or business class, that generate foreign currency for Ethiopia and helped the Ethiopian Airlines to be the largest carrier in Africa. In a nut-shell, the AU is a cash cow for Ethiopia and the country continues to benefit from it so long as it manages how to use this opportunity properly. However, it is necessary that Ethiopia should maintain its peace and security and continue qualifying as the seat of the AU and other international organizations. For instance, conferences and

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<sup>25</sup>. Personal interview with Asnake Kefale, political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, May 29, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>26</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>27</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

various events cannot be organized in Ethiopia if there is no stability in the country. To this effect, Ethiopia should build institutions that can keep and sustain peace and security. Moreover, institutions that are already established should be strengthened and capacitated to be able to discharge their responsibilities<sup>28</sup>.

According to Shewaferahu Shitahun<sup>29</sup>, Ethiopia should also establish viable relations with Eritrea as the latter has ports that are more close to Ethiopia than any other ports in East Africa. If the relation of the two countries improves, they would conclude an agreement that enables Ethiopia to use Eritrean ports either freely or with affordable rates. To this end, the current relations between the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea should be extended to peoples of the two countries. Sport races that have already started between the two are signs of a good beginning and public diplomacy that has already commenced, which should be further strengthened so as to enhance amicable relations of the two people that have close ties. Eritrea and Ethiopia may also agree to enable people of the two countries to move freely without visa requirement and other stringent criteria across their borders. This enhances chances for embarking on trade relations between people of the two countries. The countries should also conclude free trade agreement and establish free trade zones. In addition, Ethiopia may provide shipping services for Eritrea's import-export trade so that they obtain mutual benefit. Shewaferahu also stated<sup>30</sup> that buying shares in the ports of its neighboring coastal states may also increase Ethiopia's benefit from international trade transactions. A promising move is taken in this regard as Ethiopia bought shares in the Somaliland's port of Berbera, which is hoped to extend to other coastal countries.

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<sup>28</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>29</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>30</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

### 3.3. Security implications

As far as security implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness are concerned, Colonel Yenus Mulu stated<sup>31</sup> that Ethiopia's current landlockedness is affecting its security as its neighbors like the Republic of Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, and Sudan are either weak or under internal political crisis that rendered them incapable in controlling their borders from illegal activities. As a result, Ethiopia is currently under imminent threat of terrorism and illegal arms trafficking spilling over in to the country. Presently, a typical example is illegal arms trafficking from Sudan to Ethiopia that is threatening the country's security. Though the government of Ethiopia is taking measures to stop this activity, the prevailing situation implies that significant amount of illegal armaments continue circulating in the country. Colonel Yenus further stated<sup>32</sup> that Ethiopia and Sudan signed bilateral agreements to control illegal arms trafficking and any other illicit activities across their borders. However, the government of Sudan is not properly discharging its obligations as a result of which Ethiopia is exposed to threats. He also explained<sup>33</sup> that there are suspicions that border guards of Ethiopia and Sudan are involved in the illegal arms trafficking from Sudan to Ethiopia. As most of the illegal arms are seized far away from Ethiopia's border areas and close enough to central parts of the country, intensive investigations are currently being carried out to deal with the problem.

The above scenario implies that since Ethiopia cannot control the coastal areas from Sudan side, it is exposed to foreign threats, calling for the support and cooperation of Sudan's authorities. The same situation may emanate from Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, Somaliland, and other coastal countries and threaten Ethiopia's security as the country has no control over developments in any of these. As a result, Ethiopia should always be

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<sup>31</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>32</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>33</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

ready to neutralize those threats that may originate from its neighboring coastal countries. As the country is landlocked, it is encircled by threats from its coastal neighboring states and it is time for Ethiopia to deploy its forces to the nearby localities of neighboring coastal areas and at the same time establish its own naval force. Had Ethiopia had sea outlet, it could have minimized the risks that emanate from some coastal states, for instance, if Assab had been part of Ethiopia, the country would obviously minimize security threats that emanate from the Red Sea side<sup>34</sup>. According to Captain Mersha Lemma<sup>35</sup> Ethiopia's landlockedness may threaten its security in other ways like when the country needs to import armaments via the ports of its neighboring coastal countries that are not ready to cooperate. For instance, during the second Italian invasion of the country in 1935, Ethiopia attempted to import armaments via the port of Djibouti to strengthen its military capacity. However, France denied passage as a result of which the country's capacity to fight and win the war was weakened substantially.

Though the bilateral agreements are not implemented, Ethiopia signed these with all its neighbors except Eritrea. For instance, Ethiopia signed bilateral agreement with Djibouti to control illegal migrants coming from Yemen and other Middle East countries like Syria. With a view to controlling the situation and avoid potential threats, Ethiopia deployed troops to localities around the Ethio-Sudan and Ethio-Somaliland boarder areas, which are identified as more vulnerable to external threats<sup>36</sup>. According to the same informant<sup>37</sup>, one of the reasons for the failure of agreements on control of illegal arm flows is lack of cooperation between and among Ethiopia's security forces comprising the army, federal police, and regional authorities. As these do not exchange intelligence

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<sup>34</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>35</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>36</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>37</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

information, such weakness has created a conducive environment for persistence of illegal activities across the borders and within the country. Hence, it is mandatory that Ethiopia should work towards properly organizing its security forces so as to effectively deal with illicit acts in or outside its territory particularly around the neighboring coastal areas. He also stated<sup>38</sup> that since Ethiopia has no control over developments in its neighboring coastal states, its ships are under continuous threat of sea piracy as a result of which the country is obliged to deploy troops on its maritime carriers.

Captain Mersha Lemma and Commander Tesfaye Tadese explained<sup>39</sup> that the above mentioned external threats are not limited to illegal arms trafficking because there are activities by some countries that seek to control and manipulate the Red Sea littoral. According to them<sup>40</sup>, seven countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Sudan, Djibouti, and Eritrea held a meeting to deliberate on the issue of “*protecting the Red Sea*”. The main concern of the meeting was on how to protect and promote their multi-dimensional interests (political, economic, and religious) in the Red Sea littoral by controlling the area. Though Ethiopia is a country with close proximity to the Red Sea, it was not invited to the meeting and even Eritrea was not invited at the beginning. The aforementioned informants believe that there is religious agenda behind the meeting, which is a manifestation of the intention to Islamize countries in the Red Sea area by exerting pressure on those like Ethiopia and Eritrea that have significant number

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<sup>38</sup>. Personal interview with Colonel Yenus Mulu, Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>39</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia’s newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Commander Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia’s newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>40</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia’s newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Commander Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia’s newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

of Christian populations. They<sup>41</sup> also stated that the red sea area is endowed with gold, petroleum and other precious minerals. If they succeed, the Arab countries will obviously have economic interest in the area. According to both informants, it is the right time for Ethiopia to establish a naval force though it may take up to 10 years to realize this objective. The establishment of Ethiopia's naval force takes long because in addition to economic constraints the country is attempting to build the force from a scratch.

In relation to this issue, Shewaferahu Shitahun stated<sup>42</sup> that while studying the impact of Ethiopia's landlockedness he tried to access vital documents and other related materials of the former Ethiopian naval force but found out that plenty of these were intentionally destroyed at the time the EPRDF came to power. Hence, it is difficult to find sufficient information about the former naval force of Ethiopia. The two informants<sup>43</sup> also believe that there are future threats that could originate from Egypt and the Republic of Somalia. They explained that, on one hand, Somalia still has the ambition to build the Greater Somalia whereas on the other hand, Egypt has an everlasting ambition to control the Blue Nile River that originates from Ethiopia. As a result, it is less probable that the two countries will be honest allies of Ethiopia and they may at any time pose threats against

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<sup>41</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Commander Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>42</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>43</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Commander Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

the country. They also suggest that Ethiopia should work on the available options to cooperate with another coastal country in the framework of federation or confederation as these are more advantageous as compared to establishing a naval force by leasing land from its neighbors.

The question here is how can Ethiopia manage the impacts resulting from its landlockedness? Captain Mersha and Commander Tesfaye suggest<sup>44</sup> that Ethiopia should strengthen its economy and military capability so as to increase its influence and bargaining power in its relations with neighboring coastal states. The same view is shared by Shewaferahu Shitahun<sup>45</sup> who is of the opinion that economic development is crucial to avoid undue external influences that pose security threats. He explained that the developed countries exert external influence on countries with poor economic development as they require the fulfillment of some conditions before they provide aid of whatever kind. In other words, countries that provide aid impose conditions on the recipient country even if these run counter to the national interest of that country. According to Shewaferahu<sup>46</sup>, this signifies that if a country is economically strong, it establishes relations based on mutual benefit and protect its own interest. Moreover, strong economy enables a country to build strong military power and defend itself from any external threats as economic development and military power are most of the time directly correlated<sup>47</sup>. Shewaferahu also stated<sup>48</sup> that Ethiopia has one of the strongest

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<sup>44</sup>. Personal interview with Captain Mersha Lemma, former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Commander Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>45</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>46</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>47</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>48</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

military forces in East Africa. Given the volatile nature of the East Africa region, there are conflicts and terrorism acts in the area. Consequently, Ethiopian troops are highly engaged in peace keeping and anti-terrorism operations in the region. This experience has enabled Ethiopia to know more about the situation that threatens the security of the region and that of its own. In addition, these operations enabled Ethiopia to know places in neighboring countries, like Sudan and Somalia, which are strategic and favorable for activities of terrorist and other military groups. In this regard, Ethiopia may avail itself to protect and keep its peace and security against any external threat by closely working with its immediate neighbors and other East African countries aimed at establishing an organization that has a mission to manage security issues in region<sup>49</sup>.

Hence, it will be possible for Ethiopia to keep its security despite its landlockedness. Strengthening multi-purpose organizations like IGAD is also another option to keep and sustain security of East Africa and Ethiopia. According to Shewaferahu and Major General Abebe<sup>50</sup>, a naval force plays vital role to protect ships from piracy in the Red Sea area. To this end, Ethiopia may lease land from coastal states. Moreover, accessing sea route through lease from coastal countries is an option for Ethiopia to protect itself and others from piracy<sup>51</sup>. The maritime school established at Bahir Dar University on Lake Tana around Gorgora will be of paramount importance in establishing Ethiopia's naval force<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>50</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>51</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>52</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

One of the means by which Ethiopia can protect its national security interests and those of others is the East African Standby Force. According to Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin<sup>53</sup>, the East African Standby Force (EASF) formerly known as the East African Brigade is of paramount importance if its capacity to achieve its goals is well grounded. EASF is an intergovernmental regional organization comprising a membership of ten countries (Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda) that work towards promoting peace, security and stability in the region. It is established as a regional mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in the Eastern Africa region with an objective of carrying out functions associated with maintenance of peace, security and stability, as authorized by the EASF Assembly mandated by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union<sup>54</sup>.

Sergeant Tarekegn explained that the EASF faces several limitations that make it incapable to discharge its duties and achieve its objectives. Some of these limitations are<sup>55</sup>:-

1. Member states are expected to provide finance in support of the activities of the force but currently only Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda are contributing their share.
2. Member states are under obligation to contribute well trained and capable soldiers to the force. However, the force has no standby contingent to undertake operations in member states that lack capacity to train and contribute competent personnel.
3. The force lacks experience in military operations as it has not yet deployed troops to any of the member states though it deployed soldiers to Comoros to manage the potential crisis related to electoral controversy in the country.

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<sup>53</sup>. Personal interview with Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin, Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>54</sup>. Personal interview with Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin, Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>55</sup>. Personal interview with Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin, Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

4. The force cannot discharge its duties properly even if member states contribute their shares on time. This is because the amount contributed is not enough if the force deploys troops to manage every crisis in member states.
5. The force receives trainings, armaments, and finance from foreign supporters like the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (US), Norway, France, and Denmark. This implies that there is high probability that the EASF will be under the influence of those countries because if their policies so demand, they will not hesitate to use their leverage to protect their interest than that of EASF member states.

Generally, EASF is not yet in a position to maintain peace and security of its member states. Accordingly, Ethiopia cannot rely on the force to keep its peace and security and this necessitates the need to build its own force to protect itself against any external threat<sup>56</sup>.

### **3.4. Political implications**

One of the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness is political in nature that may be expressed from various points of view. Nega Kasa stated<sup>57</sup> that, presently, port politics or port diplomacy is one major issue in Ethiopia's foreign policy. The issue currently reached its peak as foreign powers like the US, China, Japan, France, and the Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are establishing military bases in the neighboring coastal countries such as Djibouti and Eritrea. The informant believes<sup>58</sup> that the situation does not only concern Ethiopia but rather all East African

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<sup>56</sup>. Personal interview with Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin, Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>57</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>58</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

countries as they may be exposed to undue influence of foreign powers. To this end, East African countries are in the process of concluding bilateral and multilateral agreements to build their capacity to overcome this trend by strengthening their economic performance. This is necessary since economic capacity is the basis for developing military strength and preparedness. They are also under continuous effort to build the capacity of IGAD as it has multi-dimensional purposes such as economic, security, and political. However, IGAD is not yet strong enough as compared to its other counterparts like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This suggests that IGAD member states should work together to strengthen IGAD's capacity so as to achieve stated goals and objectives. Ethiopia can play a major role in the process for it is more vulnerable to potential threats and hence will benefit from a strengthened IGAD. Nega further stated that<sup>59</sup> IGAD is not as strong as its other counterparts because the region is not yet free from conflicts. As a result of this, IGAD's current priority is to build peace in the area. The conflicts and crises unfolding in the region thus weakened the process of economic integration. Cognizant of this, IGAD is playing a vital role to resolve the conflict in South Sudan and the crisis in Somalia, which is compounded by the ongoing smooth diplomatic relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea as one step forward to strengthen IGAD.

Under the prevailing circumstances, Ethiopia resorted to working with the coastal countries with a view to using diversified trade corridors so as to increase its chance of not depending on one or few sea outlets of neighboring coastal countries. Using diversified trade corridors not only decreases Ethiopia's dependence on one or two ports but also increases its bargaining power in its relations with coastal states. In other words, if Ethiopia has the option to use different ports, there would be a potential competition

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<sup>59</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

between and among the coastal states. Consequently, the competition enables Ethiopia to pay affordable price for covering port fee and other related costs<sup>60</sup>.

According to Nega<sup>61</sup>, one means by which Ethiopia promotes its interests is buying shares in the ports of neighboring countries. For instance, Ethiopia has 19% share in the port of Berbera in Somaliland<sup>62</sup>. This share has economic benefit for Ethiopia by increasing the chance for having a say on the issue of port use. Ethiopia is also working on possibilities to buy more shares from neighboring countries like Djibouti<sup>63</sup>. The other option for Ethiopia to overcome the effects of its landlockedness is by creating interdependence with neighboring countries. For instance, Ethiopia uses the port of Djibouti to undertake its import and export trade and Djibouti in turn depends on Ethiopia to get basic goods, electric power and free potable water. Though Ethiopia is a major supplier of power and water to Djibouti, it is more dependent on Djibouti than the latter does on Ethiopia. This is because the money that Djibouti pays to Ethiopia is insignificant as compared to what Ethiopia pays to Djibouti as port fee. Moreover, if the relation between the two deteriorates, Ethiopia will be at a disadvantageous position as most of its import and export business passes through Djibouti<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>61</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>62</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>63</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>64</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Dr. Asnake Kefale stated<sup>65</sup> that Ethiopia may face threat from Djibouti. He further explained that Djibouti is a tiny state, which is dependent on Ethiopia for supply of basic goods, electric power and water and also gets significant amount of revenue from Ethiopia for using its ports as a result of which the relations between the two countries has been good so far. However, currently Djibouti is the hub of military bases of different countries from which it earns significant amount of money. Hence, it may no more depend on income obtained from Ethiopia alone. As Ethiopia mainly depends on Djibouti to undertake more than 90% of its import and export trade, Djibouti may use this as leverage to manipulate the situation to further enhance its interests. For instance, as Djibouti has been dependent on Ethiopia for its survival, it has been respecting the bilateral security agreement signed between them so far. However, if Djibouti's dependence on Ethiopia decreases in the near future, it is possible that it may threaten Ethiopia by violating the terms of the bilateral treaties entered in to.

According to Nega Kasa<sup>66</sup>, Ethiopia supplies water to Djibouti for free and this is not a result of the latter's influence but rather a manifestation of the former in building good will in its relations with Djibouti. He emphasized that increasing interdependence between and among countries plays a vital role to balance the relations of the landlocked and the coastal states. In this vein, Ethiopia is increasing its interdependence with Sudan and Kenya<sup>67</sup> by developing infrastructures that connects them and contributing funds to this effect. Ethiopia is also planning to create bilateral and multilateral economic integration with its neighbors by establishing free trade zones<sup>68</sup>. This move not only has

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<sup>65</sup>. Personal interview with Asnake Kefale, political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, May 29, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>66</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>67</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>68</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

mutual economic but also security-related advantages. This is in the sense that it reduces the probability that member states will not host adversaries inimical to the collective interest as no country can afford the resulting economic crisis. The economic tie shaped in this manner obliges member states to resolve their differences through friendly negotiations and resorting to war will be the last option or may not materialize at all. Economic integration also enables countries to speak on behalf of each because failure and weakness of one member state also impacts on economic activities of others<sup>69</sup>. Though Ethiopia's landlockedness has negative impact on the country in a number of ways, there is no any department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia that studies and analyzes the impact of Ethiopia's landlockedness in view of its relations with neighboring countries. However, Nega believes that Ethiopia is presently revising its foreign policy, which is envisaged to take in to account the current global politics on one hand and the situation in the East Africa region and the Red Sea littoral on the other<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>70</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

## Chapter IV

### Analysis of findings

#### 4.1. General

Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 years is attributable to the leaders<sup>71</sup>. The country lost its sea outlet because its leaders let Ethiopia down<sup>72</sup>. The leaders of the post-1991 period deprived the country of such a vital right that plays major roles to enhance its economic, security, and political interests<sup>73</sup>. At the time when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) let Eritrea to secede from Ethiopia by controlling the Ports of Masawa and Assab, according to Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot's view<sup>74</sup>, EPRDF leaders were unaware of the disadvantages resulting from being coastal or landlocked. The same source explained that such neglect put the country at a disadvantaged position due to lack of sufficient knowledge about the benefits of access to the Sea. However, this is not a sound justification to argue that the EPRDF leaders were not aware of the benefits of having sea outlet and the disadvantages of being landlocked. This is because the then top EPRDF leaders like the late former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had University level educational background<sup>75</sup> and was capable of understanding the advantages of securing access to sea outlet.

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<sup>71</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ እትም፣ ኦዲስ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>72</sup>. ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ እትም፣ ኦዲስ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>73</sup>. Getachew Begashaw, Port of Assab as a Factor for Economic Development and Regional Conflict; Researchgate, accessed on December 6, 2018 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228770950\\_Port\\_of\\_Assab\\_as\\_a\\_Factor\\_for\\_Economic\\_Development\\_and\\_Regional\\_Conflict](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228770950_Port_of_Assab_as_a_Factor_for_Economic_Development_and_Regional_Conflict), 2015; and ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ እትም፣ ኦዲስ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>74</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>75</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

During the time when the TPLF was an insurgent group, Meles Zenawi and other top EPRDF leaders of the TPLF were frequently travelling to US and Europe for political negotiations and other related missions<sup>76</sup>. Due to this exposure, it is possible to reasonably assume or argue that they knew about the development of countries and the reasons behind this one of which is free access to the international market via sea outlets. In addition, the dominant individual in the EPRDF, Meles Zenawi, who had the power to do and decide everything, was well known for his political and economic acumen and analysis<sup>77</sup>. Hence, the leaders were capable of understanding the issues surrounding access to sea outlet. As a result, they had the chance and full authority to negotiate on the issue particularly the case of Assab during the Algiers negotiation process<sup>78</sup>. Besides, the EPRDF did not present the issue of secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia for public discussion. Had the issue been discussed properly with the Ethiopian people, the outcome of the secession process could have probably been quite different<sup>79</sup>. This implies that Ethiopia lost its sea outlets due to grave failure and malevolence of its own leaders of the post-1991 period.

Diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea has already commenced again, which currently appears promising and it is hoped to be more enhanced in the future everything remaining equal and constant. Due to close proximity and other factors like shared cultural and religious values between the two people, Eritrea is strategically more useful to Ethiopia than other neighboring coastal states. Its ports and Assab in particularly is

<sup>76</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Clifford Kraus, Ethiopian rebels storm the capital and seize control (Nazareth.com, accessed on July 5, 2019 from :<https://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/28/world/ethiopian-rebels-storm-the-capital-and-seize-control.html>, 1991.

<sup>77</sup>. Lindsey Jones & Elizabeth Carabine, Exploring Political and Socio-economic diverse of transformational Climate Policy: Early Insights from the design of Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, London: Overseas Development Institute, 2013 and Alex De Waal, the theory and practice of Meles Zenawi; Research Gate, accessed on July 4, 2019, from African Affairs: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275287009\\_The\\_Theory\\_and\\_Practice\\_of\\_Meles\\_Zenawi](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275287009_The_Theory_and_Practice_of_Meles_Zenawi), 2012).

<sup>78</sup>. ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም ፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ አትም፣ ኦዲዥ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>79</sup>. ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር በር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ አትም፣ ኦዲዥ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

closest to Ethiopia than other ports in East Africa. This implies that it is preferable for Ethiopia to use the Port of Assab. Hence, Ethiopia should work to realize the use of Eritrean Ports and strengthen the multilateral diplomatic relations between the two countries. Moreover, the two countries should be able to let their people move freely in both countries without visa and other requirements so as to increase their interaction so that closer relations could be achieved.

Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period is so serious in the sense that the country has been suffering from chronic economic, security, and political deficits. Literatures on the issue and data collected on the extent and severity of the challenges signify that the country cannot easily overcome the problem related to its landlockedness unless the associated constraints are properly addressed. In addition<sup>80</sup>, Ethiopia should establish a stable political system and build institutions that enable the country to judiciously use and manage its resources effectively and efficiently in order to minimize the negative impacts of landlockedness. In other words, using resources and revenues effectively and efficiently enhances the country's economic and other activities.

#### **4.2. Economic implications**

As mentioned in chapter 3, Ethiopia at present pays more than 3 billion USD per year as a port fee most of which is paid to Djibouti<sup>81</sup>. In addition, the demurrage cost (storage cost) of goods at ports is so significant that products imported in to the country became expensive or non-affordable in Ethiopia<sup>82</sup>. The experience of the Ethiopian Railway Corporation that managed to negotiate with Djibouti for decreased demurrage cost implies that Ethiopia could get advantage if it manages to increase the number of trade

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<sup>80</sup>. Personal interview with Major General Abebe Teklehaimanot (retired) and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>81</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>82</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

routes or ports so as to increase the chance of negotiating affordable port fees<sup>83</sup>. To this end, Ethiopia should work with the coastal states to chart means of developing the necessary infrastructure that facilitates enhanced import and export trade. It is thus of paramount importance if the country establishes regional integration with neighboring coastal states by jointly constructing railways and road networks that can facilitate trade activities.

The experiences of landlocked European countries such as Switzerland, Luxembourg, Andorra, and Lichtenstein indicate that Ethiopia should update its own internal road infrastructure and railways to minimize the time taken to import and export goods. Moreover, Ethiopia should build its capacity to export goods on which value is added and easy to transport by air so that it can minimize its dependence on sea trade.

The poor road infrastructure facility linking Ethiopia to Djibouti is increasing the time taken to import goods to the country thereby increasing the price of goods<sup>84</sup>. In addition, cumbersome transit and border procedures are also main sources of delay resulting in increase in cost of import and export goods thereby increasing price of goods on consumers<sup>85</sup>. Moreover, Ethiopian lorry drivers are not allowed to enter Djibouti for transporting goods but rather they stay on Ethio-Djibouti Border when drivers from Djibouti transport goods. This also increases the cost of goods imported to Ethiopia because drivers from Djibouti make them incur extra-costs<sup>86</sup>. In order to avoid these constraints militating against import and export trade, Ethiopian authorities should conduct series of discussions with their Djiboutian counterparts and other neighboring coastal countries.

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<sup>83</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>84</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>85</sup>. Cheuk Chung, Development Economics, *Norwich Economic Papers*, Volume 10, p. 1-14, 2014.

<sup>86</sup>. Personal interview with Mesafint Ashenafi, Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Though Ethiopia earns foreign currency from various export commodities and other sources of revenue, port fees and other costs resulting from its landlockedness consume much of its foreign currency earnings. This situation has been challenging the country for the last three decades. This could persist for unlimited period of time in the future unless the government of Ethiopia finds solutions to overcome or minimize the problem<sup>87</sup>. Due to its landlockedness, Ethiopia's economic development is continuously obstructed. This may be expressed as moving one step forward and then slipping one step backward, which in effect means that the country has and will have stagnant development<sup>88</sup>.

As elucidated in chapter 3, Ethiopia also receives foreign currency resulting from its being the seat of African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). In order to sustain the economic benefit obtained from these, the country should maintain its peace and security so that it could efficiently use its economic benefit resulting thereof. If Ethiopia can manage to effectively utilize this advantage, even its neighboring countries can benefit by providing transit and port services<sup>89</sup>. Hence, Ethiopia necessarily needs robust institutions that can boost its capacity to manage foreign currency obtained from international organizations and other sources so as to offset the negative impacts of its landlockedness.

### 4.3. Security implications

As Ethiopia is located in a geographic locality close to the Red Sea, which is a strategic hub for military and economic activities, the country is vulnerable to various forms of foreign threats emanating from the area. Since the country lost its sea outlets and currently does not have control over any of its neighboring coastal areas and the whole

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<sup>87</sup>. Getachew Begashaw, Port of Assab as a Factor for Economic Development and Regional Conflict, Researchgate, accessed on December 6, 2018 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228770950\\_Port\\_of\\_Assab\\_as\\_a\\_Factor\\_for\\_Economic\\_Developmentand\\_Regional\\_Conflict](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228770950_Port_of_Assab_as_a_Factor_for_Economic_Developmentand_Regional_Conflict), 2015); Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፣ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር ቦር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ አትም፣ ኦዲዮ አበባ፣ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>88</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>89</sup>. Personal interview with Shewaferahu Shitahun, Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

Red Sea littoral, landlockedness always remains to be its serious security concern. Any threat emanating from the Red Sea coast can easily penetrate to Ethiopia's territory and inflict harm<sup>90</sup>. Moreover, Ethiopia cannot depend on foreign powers such as US, China, Japan, Saudi, and UAE against possible dangers from the Red Sea area since these countries are focused on protecting and promoting their own national interest. Besides, prevailing rivalry particularly between the US and its allies like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on one hand and China on the other hand pose a potential threat to stability in the Horn of Africa<sup>91</sup>. As the Red Sea serves as passage for significant amount of oil and other goods to the world market, it is a strategic location over which the US, other Western powers, Arabs and others have interest. The Bab El-Mandeb Strait<sup>92</sup> is the most crucial link between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, which countries in the area need to control so as to manipulate every activity in the area<sup>93</sup>. Map 5 below shows the location of the Bab El-Mandeb indicated in the square mark.

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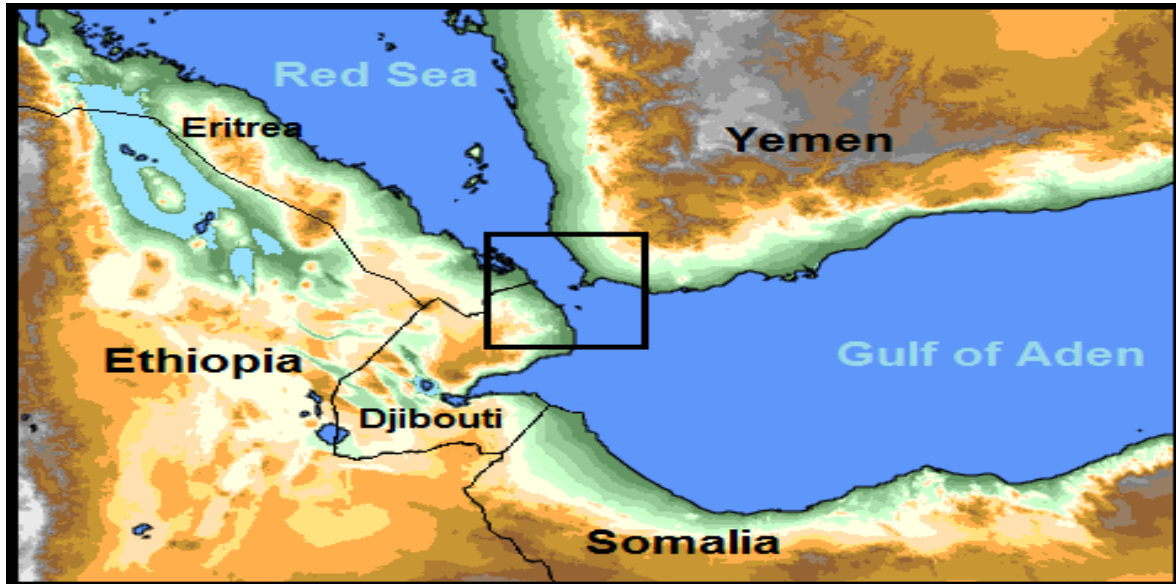
<sup>90</sup>. Personal interview with Tesfaye Tadese, Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established Naval Force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and ያዕቆብ ኃይለማርያም፡ አሰብ የማን ናት? የኢትዮጵያ የባህር ቦር ጥያቄ፣ የመጀመሪያ አትም፡ ኦሲስ አበባ፡ ንግድ ማተሚያ ድርጅት፣ 2003 ዓ.ም.።

<sup>91</sup>. Mehari Taddele, a new cold war in Africa, Aljazeera, accessed on July 06, 2019, from AJ Impact: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/cold-war-africa-190630102044847.html>, 2019.

<sup>92</sup>. The Bab El-Mandeb is a narrow waterway that separates the Arabian Peninsula from the Horn of Africa and links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. At its narrowest point, it is only 29 km wide between Yemen on one side and Djibouti and Eritrea on the other. It is a key strategic channel for commerce and trade, with an estimated 4 percent of global oil supply passing through it. It is such a strategic location to control every activity of the Red Sea area.

<sup>93</sup>. Bad El-Mandeb, accessed on August 29, 2019 from [https://www.google.com/search?q=Babel+Mendeb&rlz=1C1GCEU\\_enET854ET854&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=MDWrwAnTXjHNFM%253A%252CueJZiwclJ4\\_BwM%252C\\_&vet=1&usq=AI4\\_-kQnpkxaRrbHLZZwJu-KHT7iQ09-ng&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiMouDNyaLkAhVFJ1AKHcqOAswQ9QEwB3oECACQDw#imgrc=jXsIbqL7rpKIfM:&vet=1,%20on%20August%2027,%202019](https://www.google.com/search?q=Babel+Mendeb&rlz=1C1GCEU_enET854ET854&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=MDWrwAnTXjHNFM%253A%252CueJZiwclJ4_BwM%252C_&vet=1&usq=AI4_-kQnpkxaRrbHLZZwJu-KHT7iQ09-ng&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiMouDNyaLkAhVFJ1AKHcqOAswQ9QEwB3oECACQDw#imgrc=jXsIbqL7rpKIfM:&vet=1,%20on%20August%2027,%202019).

## Map5-BabEl-Mandeb



Source: (Google Images, 2015).

The multidimensional competition between US and China in Africa has grown significantly, at present with a potential to usher in a new Cold War in Africa<sup>94</sup> and the red sea area designated as war between the two Elephants<sup>95</sup>. Hence, East African countries like Ethiopia should work together and find a way to overcome the negative influence by the US and China.

Another option<sup>96</sup> for Ethiopia, as indicated in chapter 3, to be in a safer position is to play a vital role to strengthen the capacity of organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Standby Force (EASF). This is because member states agreed that any threat against member states is considered as a direct threat against other member states. In case of the EASF, though the force is not currently operational as expected, member states like Ethiopia that are landlocked and vulnerable to external threats should work hard to build the capacity of the force so as to

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<sup>94</sup>. Mehari Taddele, a new cold war in Africa, Aljazeera, accessed on July 06, 2019 from AJ Impact: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/cold-war-africa-190630102044847.html>, 2019.

<sup>95</sup>. Mehari Taddele, a new cold war in Africa, Aljazeera, accessed on July 06, 2019 from AJ Impact: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/cold-war-africa-190630102044847.html>, 2019.

<sup>96</sup>. Personal interview with Sergeant Tarekegn Ziyin, Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

enable it to effectively engage in operations. Unless Ethiopia strengthens the above mentioned organizations and look for other means, insecurity will continue to threaten the very existence of the country. Hence, leaders of the country should intensively work and exert utmost effort to restore its right to access the sea. Moreover, they should work hard to realize the country's drive towards establishing a naval force that increases its capacity to defend itself against external threats.

#### **4.4. Political implications**

Landlockedness makes a country unable to deal with problems efficiently. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, Ethiopia depends on the cooperation of its neighboring coastal states to undertake its import and export trade. However, Ethiopia's status in this regard prompts coastal countries to impose high tariffs that do not take in to account the country's capacity to meet this in the face of its weak bargaining power to negotiate affordable rate<sup>97</sup>. Moreover, Ethiopia needs to use ports of its neighbors if it is necessary to import armaments, which implies that Ethiopia should carefully handle its relations with neighboring coastal states like Djibouti on which it heavily depends. Even if Djibouti is also benefiting from its bilateral relations with Ethiopia, it also exerts considerable influence on the latter. If, for instance, a dispute arises between Ethiopia and Djibouti, and the latter could prevent the former not to use its ports even for few days, Ethiopia would sustain significant economic, social, and other related damages if such a situation unfolds. So, Ethiopian leaders are obliged to seriously think this before they decide against the interest of Djibouti even if the latter acts against its interests.

As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, Ethiopia is under the influence of its neighboring coastal states due to its landlockedness. In spite of this, the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not yet establish a department that reviews and analyzes the political implications of the country's landlockedness in view of its relations with neighboring

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<sup>97</sup>. Personal interview with Birhane G/Egziabiher Beyene, Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

countries<sup>98</sup>. At present, there are a number of foreign powers that roam around the Red Sea area. As a result, the situation calls for taking the threat seriously and take all necessary measures to handle it. In other words, it is now time for Ethiopia to carefully conduct continuous surveillance of the area so as to immediately respond to any move that threatens its interests. The fact that a department that reviews and analyzes the political implications of the country's landlockedness is absent implies that the problem is not properly appreciated and dealt with by the Ethiopian government.

Nowadays, Djibouti has become a hub of military base for different global powers. Due to this, the country is making significant amount of money from those foreign powers<sup>99</sup>. So far, Djibouti has obtained more than 90% of its foreign income from Ethiopia for using its ports. In addition, Ethiopia provides basic consumer goods and water to Djibouti<sup>100</sup>. However, as Djibouti is currently earning significant amount of income from foreign powers, this probably decreases the country's dependence on Ethiopia to generate most of its income<sup>101</sup>. This changing circumstance is most likely to increase Djibouti's influence over Ethiopia.

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<sup>98</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>99</sup>. Personal interview with Asnake Kefale, political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, May 29, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>100</sup>. Personal interview with Nega Kasa, political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

<sup>101</sup>. Personal interview with Asnake Kefale, political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, May 29, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data from the literature and key informant interviews and analysis of findings, the study has arrived at the following conclusions:

- ❖ Ethiopia went through several challenges in its quest for securing access to sea outlet. Historically, the country fought bloody wars with foreign powers to secure its sea outlet and preserve its independence. Many Ethiopians sacrificed their lives to realize these goals. Present day Ethiopia is a legacy of the previous generations who fought for their country's right of access to the sea. Despite the previous struggles, currently, Ethiopia is landlocked due to the failure of its leaders of the post-1991 period. The issue of sea outlet was neglected in the post-1991 period as a result of which the problem related to landlockedness still remains unaddressed. Hence, the current and future generations of Ethiopia should strive to fix this problem through diplomacy, legal remedy, and any other available solution.
  
- ❖ In the post-1991 period, discussions about Ethiopia's landlockedness have been rare and discouraged because of which many Ethiopians have been unaware of the importance of the issue. Ethiopians should not look at the issue as an attempt to open a Pandora's Box but rather raise and discuss it publicly so that all Ethiopians can understand the negative impacts of landlockedness and the benefits of access to sea outlet and strive to be part of the solution.
  
- ❖ Despite the challenges faced and tough struggles made by their predecessors to secure Ethiopia's sea outlet, leaders of the post-1991 years did not keep the legacy but declined to preserve it with no reservations to protect Ethiopia's interest. Hence, current leaders of the country should not repeat the same error but rather should work hard to enable the country to restore its sea outlet or at least secure unrestricted or affordable access to the sea.

- ❖ In the post-1991 period, Ethiopia lost its chance to claim sea outlet in two major historical incidents. First, during the secession of Eritrea and second, during the Algiers agreement, both of which disregarded Ethiopia's interests in a manner that favored Eritrea. Hence, Ethiopia's leaders should change their attitude and genuinely believe that the country needs to have a sea outlet and act to realize it through all available legal and peaceful means.
  
- ❖ Landlockedness left Ethiopia with no or limited access to the sea. Currently, the country depends on one or two neighboring coastal countries to get access to the sea and undertake its import and export trade. To reduce its reliance on one or two neighboring countries, Ethiopia needs to have diversified port use. In other words, Ethiopia should work to increase the possibility of using different ports as the circumstance demands.
  
- ❖ Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. One of the major reasons that contributed to poverty in the country is its landlockedness. This is still negatively impacting on its development. It will also impact its stability unless the problem is addressed properly.
  
- ❖ Ethiopia is incurring significant costs for port fees and related expenses. The port fee is so significant that it is adversely impacting the country's economy. To overcome this, Ethiopia should develop an economic policy that enhances job creation, entrepreneurship and other activities that can boost its economic performance.
  
- ❖ Ethiopia should make negotiations with its neighboring coastal countries to achieve the use of ports at affordable rate. Besides, Ethiopia should conduct negotiations to own shares in the development and administration of ports so as to enable the country to have a say in the coastal areas and protect its interests. It also needs to engage in bilateral, multilateral, and regional trade agreements that facilitate free or affordable use of ports.

- ❖ As Ethiopia has been experiencing threats due to its landlockedness, the issue of security is critical. Since East Africa is a volatile region, conflict is a common phenomenon exacerbated by the presence of foreign powers. It should be noted that, in order to protect and advance their interests, foreign powers have been creating conflicts in the region. To avert this threat, Ethiopia needs to establish smooth diplomatic relations with the neighboring coastal countries and foreign powers in the area.
  
- ❖ Ethiopia should establish a naval force to protect its security against foreign threats by engaging in surveillance particularly in the Horn of Africa so as to act immediately in case threats happen. Besides, Ethiopia should closely work with its neighbors with a view to strengthening the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Standby Force (EASF) so as to keep the security of member states.
  
- ❖ Despite Ethiopia's potential to emerge as a dominant country in East Africa, its landlockedness in the post-1991 period significantly impeded its capacity resulting dependence on its neighbors to get access to the sea. The coastal states may use Ethiopia's dependence to influence the country using their comparative advantage. Ethiopia's landlockedness also weakened its bargaining power in its relations with its neighboring coastal states as a result of which most of the contracts for port use and related services are adhesive. In other words, the contracts are prepared by the coastal states leaving Ethiopia with no or few options to negotiate on terms and conditions of port use. This signifies that Ethiopia will remain under the influence of its neighboring coastal states and its landlockedness will always be its major political liability unless it is addressed properly.

- ❖ Ethiopia's landlockedness impeded its development. To mitigate the negative impacts of landlockedness and bring about development, the country should establish a stable political system. In the past three decades, the country has been under series of instabilities. Presently, Ethiopia is experiencing one of the worst unrest and internal displacement of people. To stabilize the country, the government should facilitate series of discussions with political parties, civil society, and other concerned stakeholders. The government should also ensure upkeep of the rule of law to secure sustainable peace. Because of political instability, the government is spending significant amount of resources that could have been used for expediting development projects. Hence, to bring about development in the country, Ethiopia should build a stable political system short of which not only the country will remain poor but also may end up as a failed state.
  
- ❖ Landlockedness by itself does not result in poverty since there are landlocked countries with a developed economy. European countries such as Switzerland, Luxemburg, Andorra, and Liechtenstein are landlocked developed countries. Some of the reasons for their development are conditioned by a stable political system, quality infrastructure to undertake sea trade and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to undertake trade and other activities. Moreover, these countries undertook proper allocation of resources for the benefit of their people. Hence, Ethiopia should draw experiences from these to overcome the negative impacts of its landlockedness and bring about development.
  
- ❖ Economic and military powers are the main factors that increase the influence of a country over others. Economic and political dominance may help Ethiopia avert or minimize the negative impacts resulting from its landlockedness. In other words, if Ethiopia strengthens its economy and actively participate in the East African market, it may use such leverage to benefit from the region's economic activities and advance its interests. Similarly, if Ethiopia builds a strong military capacity to engage in the region's peacekeeping and security, it could be influential and successfully reverse any hostile action posed against it.

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## Appendices - 1

### A guide to key informant interview

#### **1. General questions**

- ❖ What are the implications of landlockedness on a given country?
- ❖ What are the implications of Ethiopia's landlockedness for its international relations?
- ❖ What options does Ethiopia have to get free or affordable access to the ports of neighboring countries including Eritrean ports?

#### **2. Questions related to economic implications**

- ❖ How much money does Ethiopia pay for port fees and other related costs currently?
- ❖ What are the costs incurred by the Ethiopian railway services due to Ethiopia's landlockedness?
- ❖ How can Ethiopia manage its economic growth and development despite its landlockedness? Or what are the internal and external economic factors Ethiopia may avail itself of to overcome the impacts of landlockedness?
- ❖ Can Ethiopia take any example from landlocked countries with developed economy so as to handle problems related to its landlockedness?
- ❖ How can Ethiopia create economic integration with its neighboring coastal countries and countries in East Africa region in general so as to overcome the impacts of its landlockedness?

#### **3. Questions related to Security implications**

- ❖ What measures does Ethiopia need to take to overcome the security implications of its landlockedness?
- ❖ What future plans are made by Ethiopian defense force to maintain the country's security against any external threats? Is there any activity being undertaken to re-establish Ethiopia's naval force so as to reduce its vulnerability to any foreign security threat?

- ❖ What are the advantages of establishing bilateral, multilateral and regional trade relations to avoid conflicts and maintain peace and security of Ethiopia and East Africa?
- ❖ What is the role of the East African Standby Force to keep security of the East Africa in general and that of Ethiopia in particular?
- ❖ Does the East African Standby Force have any authority to act against any violent and illegal act of countries or groups in the region? Can it engage in any military confrontation with any country or group to keep security of the area?

#### **4. Questions related to political implications?**

- ❖ What factors related to landlockedness impacted Ethiopia's foreign policy?
- ❖ What is the foreign policy of Ethiopia in its relations with countries on which the country depends to access the sea?
- ❖ What is the impact of Ethiopia's landlockedness in the post-1991 period on its political system?
- ❖ What is the current status of Ethiopia's political leverage in Africa in general and East Africa in particular as compared to the pre-1991 period?
- ❖ How can Ethiopia create political integration with its neighboring coastal countries and countries in East Africa region in general? Can political integrations help Ethiopia to overcome the political impacts of its landlockedness?

## Appendices - 2

### **List of key informants**

1. Interview with retired Major General and PhD Candidate in peace and security studies at Addis Ababa University, May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
2. Interview with Director of Planning and Business Development Directorate at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
3. Interview with Political-Economy Analyst at Sheger FM 102.1 Radio, April 13, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
4. Interview with Head of Legal Service in Ethiopian Railway Corporation, May 17, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
5. Interview with Head of Containers Handling Division at Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise, April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
6. Interview with political-economy lecturer at Addis Ababa University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, May 29, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
7. Interview with Foreign Affairs and Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director General at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
8. Interview with former Captain in the disbanded Ethiopian Naval Force and currently Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force division at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.

9. Interview with Marine Engineer and Consultant at Ethiopia's newly established naval force at FDRE Ministry of Defense, May 27, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
  
10. Interview with Protocol Officer at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF), May 06, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
  
11. Interview with political, security, and conflict resolution officer in the IGAD affairs Unit at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2019, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.