



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

MA PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

**ETHIO-ERITREA RAPPROCHEMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HORN
OF AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY**

**BY
BELAY REGASA BEKELE**

**OCTOBER, 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF THE
ADDISABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMT
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (MA) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND DEPLOMACY**

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**OCTOBER, 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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Declaration!

Hereby, I declare that this Thesis: Ethiopia-Eritrea Rapprochement and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa's Peace and Security is my original work and never been presented in any other institution or university. I also declare that any information used in the study has been properly acknowledged and stated in the completed references.

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I want to thank the omnipotent Waqa! Next, my gratitude goes to my advisor, Merera Gudina (Prof.), whose life career attracted me to the department during my early age when I do not know about politics but resistance, for his invaluable academic advises, comments, support and guidance throughout writing the thesis. My profound gratefulness also goes to my family without whom my educational career cannot be realized. I would also like to thank my lovely wife, Lense Kebede, for her unreserved support and eager to see the accomplishment of the study. Above all, Ebisa, Berhanu, Dima Noggo (PhD), Beyene, Mihiret and Getaneh please take my heartfelt gratitude for your kindness that I cannot mention here all. People like Terefe, Zelalem, Debela and others whom I didn't mention deserve special thanks for their encouragement and whole hearted support.

Last but not least, my thank goes to the individuals and government officials who were willingly provided me with valuable information during data collection.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
ADMF	Amhara Democratic Movement Force
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
AU	African Union
DDR	Disarming, Demobilization and Reintegration
EDF	Eritrean Democratic Front
EEBC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPPF	Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FCA	Friendship and Cooperation Agreement
FP	Foreign Policy
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HoA	Horn of Africa
ICG	International Crisis Group
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority Development
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
ML	Moselem League
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
OPDO	Oromo People Democratic Organization
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
TLF	Tigray Liberation Front
TPDM	Tigray People's Democratic Movement
TPLF	Tigray Peoples Liberation Front
TSZ	Temporary Security Zone
UAE	United Arab Emiratis
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WWII	Second World War

Abstract

Even though the Algiers Agreement dully signed by the belligerent states ended the violent conflict that broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea from 1998-2000, but it could not restore diplomatic relations between the two states. The conflict and the subsequent deadlock that sustained for two decades not only affected the political, economic, social and security of the countries, but exacerbated instabilities of the already conflict-ridden Horn of Africa. The two decades impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea came to an end in 2018 following the change of leadership in Ethiopia. Thus, this study aimed to explore the positive implications of the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement that achieved as a result of political reform in Ethiopia in stabilizing the Horn of African region. In doing so, the study employed a qualitative research design. In the processes of explaining the positive implications of the rapprochement for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa, data from both primary and secondary are employed and analyzed thematically. The primary data were collected through purposive key informant in-depth interviews from the governmental and non-governmental officials, political experts and practioners, and senior researchers who have insights and conducted researches on the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the rest of the Horn. Accordingly, in sum, 7 key informants are interviewed from the Embassy of the State of Eritrea based in Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, political party leaders, research institutions and, Institute of the Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies. According to the finding of the study, the political reform, the change of leadership in particular in Ethiopia led to the end of the two decades hostility between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement, given the prevalence of plethora of actors that contribute for the instabilities in the region, has massive peace and security implications for the states by vividly contributing to the stability of the entire Horn. Furthermore, the rapprochement replaced ethos of militarism and proxy war with diplomatic proficiency, which reduced border skirmishes and mutual destabilization that have been raging in the region. The restoration of relations between the two states has also led to the restoration of relations in the region, such as between Eritrea and Djibouti and Eritrea and Somalia. Overall, if it could be institutionalized, overcome internal and external constraints and embraced by all the concerned bodies, the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement plays a great role to stabilize the war thorn region.

Key Words; Ethiopia, Eritrea, Horn of Africa, Rapprochement, Reform, Peace, Security.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Following the end of World War II, high-prevalence of armed-conflicts have been experienced. To be precise, intra-state conflicts have been more common than inter-state conflicts (Sarkees, *et al.*2003). As noted by Singer (1996: 35), “since at least 1945, civil or internal conflicts have been more common than international or inter-state conflicts”. Particularly, wars of overhauled inter-state territorial disputes were uncommon in the second half of the 20thc, i.e., and territorial disputes are not the main sources of inter-state conflicts (Heldt, 1999).

In Africa, endorsing the colonial boundaries, *uti possidetis*, principle by the OAU (now AU) in 1964 in its border resolution relatively spared the continent from inter-state border wars (Dias, 2011). Even though several territorial disputes were fought between African states, based on the number of death tolls, only two wars can qualify inter-state wars in Africa; the 1977-78 between Ethiopia and Somalia, and the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea conflict (Dias, 2008). These wars made the Horn of Africa a theatre of inter-state wars. In fact, the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea conflict differs from inter-state conflicts fought in Africa in many ways (Leenco, 2003).

Eritrea is the first territory in Africa to achieve independence after the end the Cold-War, followed by South Sudan, in Africa. The people of Eritrea fought for thirty years with successive Ethiopian governments to achieve independence (Bahru, 2002). Finally, Eritrea’s breakaway from Ethiopia took place following the collapse of the central government in 1991, and the subsequent referendum in 1993, supervised by the UN. The end of the civil war and Eritrean independence marked the beginning of relative peace in the region, even though short-lived. The other peculiar feature of Eritrea’s secession was that it was facilitated by “the mother country-Ethiopia” (Leenco, 2003 and Kidist, 2011). The Ethiopian government leadership claimed that facilitating the smooth conclusion of the breakup by the mother state would help to strengthen the post-independence relationship and create better interdependence (Abbink, 1998). As such, the group which then dominated the Ethiopian regime supported the Eritrea’s breakaway based on its own calculated advantages (Leenco, 2003). Consequently, causes of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict puzzled both proximate and distant observers.

Following the breakup of Eritrea from Ethiopia many hoped that the relationships between the two countries would lead to durable peace considering the cordial relationships between the leaders of both regimes who were previously comrades in arms. However, the smooth relationship between the two states could not last long. Only after five years of *de jure* independence, suddenly, the conflict broke out between the two states dominated by the former insurgent groups-EPLF and TPLF (Ruth, 2000 and Trivelli, 1998).

The close relationship between the Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders who jointly fought against the central government deceived and confused both the two countries' public and the international community (Abbink, 1998) when the war broke out. At the time, the issue of border was presented by both the conflicting parties at war as a fundamental cause of the war. Nevertheless, the dispute between the two states was never territorial. Branding the border as the real cause of the conflict would only added misunderstanding about the conflict and complicates the solution (Medhane, 1999).

The two countries fought a devastating war for two years which consumed tens of thousands of human lives and destroyed huge material resources from the world's poorest countries. The international community hurried to stop the war at its early stage though it failed to achieve because it looked merely at the surface value of the conflict and tried to apply the conventional international relations practices used in inter-state relations (Dima, 2013 and Abbink, 1998). Though the Algiers Agreement ceased the violent conflict by 2000, bringing normalization of relations between the two states proved difficult. The militarism ethos and inflexible position between the leadership of the former insurgent groups (EPLF and TPLF) not only exacerbated the conflict but also complicated the peace processes (Leenco, 2003).

Both states suffered from the conflict and the subsequent two decades stalemate in terms of political, economic, social, diplomacy and security (Dias, 2008: 50). In addition, the deadlock between the two states also destabilized the war thorn and volatile Horn of Africa (Berouk, 2011). The policies of mutual destabilization and proxy wars pursued by the regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara poisoned the stability of the region (Berouk, 2011 and Lyons, 2009). Abbink (1998: 551) explicitly states that, "it is more than ironic in this conflict that the policies of these new leaders seem to carry the same potential for violence and destabilization as that of old leaders".

The political impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea continued until the change of leadership in Ethiopia. The spontaneous but sweeping and sustained popular protests of 2015-2018 in Ethiopia forced ruling coalition to the change of leadership which impacted both internal and external policies of the country. Internally, to widen political space in the country and political liberalization at large, the new leadership took several political and economic reforms (Michael, 2018).

In addition to the promising accomplishment at home, the new leadership ended the two decades impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which can be taken as its primary foreign policy achievement. In Ethiopia, the political reform triggered by the popular protests forced the government to realign its foreign policy particularly towards the neighboring countries (Khan, 2018), which as Ratner (2009) argues “political liberalization led countries realign their foreign policy preferences”.

Hence, the study aims to assess the contribution of the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement to alleviate instabilities and improve inter-state relation in the Horn of Africa. The study also sheds light on the positive implications of the rapprochement for the peace and security in the region.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The Horn of Africa is one of the most turbulent parts of the world. Several intractable intra-state and inter-state conflicts were exhibited in the region, with few parallels in any other part of the continent (Berouk, 2010 and de Waal and Ibreck, 2016). The intra-state and inter-state wars are highly interlinked and feed into each other, which worsened the political, socio-economic and security conditions of the region (Kidist, 2011). Even though several wars were fought in the Horn, none has destabilized the region as the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea conflict.

The conflicting parties internationalized and complicated the conflict intentionally branding border as the real cause of the war. External observers have also been portraying the cause of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict as a boundary or territorial dispute (Lyons, 2006). This hindered the several attempts made by the international community to end the deadlock and restore relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Lack of understanding the issue not only led to the failure to identify the basic causes of the conflict, but also hindered the achievement of restoration of relations between the two states (Leenco, 2003, Abbink, 1998 and Dima, 2013).

Various writers suggested that Ethio-Eritrea conflict needs the change of dynamism within and between the two states. As Dima (2013: 1) stated, the Ethio-Eritrea conflict can only be resolved “by looking beyond border disputes to political reform, dialogue and national reconciliation within and between both states”. Lyons (2009) also speculated the divergent extreme possibilities of the conflict as, “prospects for both the escalation and resolution of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict are linked to domestic political processes, regional and international dynamics”. In the HoA, the interactions of these dynamics greatly determine intra-state and inter-state relations and political processes.

Moreover, the literature written on the Ethio-Eritrea conflict emphasizes the causes, the aborted peace processes, the role of the external actors to end the deadlock and the destabilizing effect of the conflict. Since events are still unfolding, it is probably too early to make a definitive assessment. The significance of the political reform in either both or one of the states to unpack the hostility between the two states and the contribution of the end of the deadlock to alleviate instabilities in the region were not adequately explored. Hence, the study aims to explain the significance of the political reform, dialogue and reconciliation within and between both states and the contribution of the restoration of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea to alleviate instabilities in the Horn of Africa.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to describe the significance of the political reform in Ethiopia to achieve the rapprochement and its contribution for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To illustrate the main causes of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict.
2. To scrutinize the significance of political liberalization in Ethiopia to end the stalemate with Eritrea.
3. To investigate factors that have triggered Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement.
4. To identify the positive implications of the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa and its contribution to alleviate instability in the region.

1.4. Research Questions

1.4.1. General Research Question

What is the significance of the political reform in Ethiopia to achieve the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and its contribution for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa?

1.4.2. Specific Research Questions

The study will answer the following specific research questions:

1. What are the main causes of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict?
2. How the political liberalization in Ethiopia contributed to end the stalemate with Eritrea?
3. What is/are the driving factors that brought about the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement?
4. How does the restoration of relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea contribute for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa and alleviate instability in the region?

1.5. Core Argument of the Study

The standoff between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been one of the factors that contributed to the instabilities in the Horn of Africa for two decades. Therefore, this study argues that the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement has positive implications for the stability in the region.

1.6. Research Methodology and Methods of Data Collection

The study employed qualitative approach to describe the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement because qualitative approach helps to analyze human behavior. States are led by human beings and through the agency of human behavior, states get into conflict. The attitudes, opinion and behavior of those individual/s or leaders who lead states have their own roles in shaping inter-state relations. Particularly during the inter-state conflicts, the behavior of the leaders matters most. Thus, qualitative approach is appropriate to analyze the Ethio-Eritrea relations.

Operationally, the study employed both primary and secondary sources of data to achieve the intended objectives. The primary data was collected through key informant in-depth interviews. This research employed purposive or convenience non-probability sampling technique. In Non-probability sampling, the sample size might be smaller but in terms of content-wise, the data that is collected are more detail and rich (Sharma, 2017). Therefore, due to the pandemic Covid-19,

the researcher conducted interviews with 7 purposely selected key informants from the Embassy of Eritrea based in Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, political party leaders, research institutions and, Institute of the Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies. The informants are government officials, political experts and practitioners and senior researchers who have insights and produced literatures and follow the developments between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the rest of the Horn. The informants are selected due to their expertise on the issue at hand and resourceful information they had.

Document review or analysis also used in this study to supplement the data collected from primary sources because document analysis is qualitative research methods which enable the researcher to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge and go back and strengthen the data collected from primary sources (Bowen, 2009). So the researcher analyzed various reports, and other written documents (Scholarly books, articles, researches magazines, newspapers) which are done by various bodies on the on the contemporary Ethiopian politics, the horn of African geopolitics and the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement.

The research used a qualitative way of data analysis. The researcher transcribed the data collected through various methods and organized the data by classifying in different contexts. The researcher assured validity and trustworthiness of the by triangulation (cross-checking, comparing and contrasting) of data's obtained from multiple sources. Inductive generalization is used. The researcher tried to come up with generalizations about the specific area from the data inferred from the samples which are selected based on the necessary knowledge and experiences they have got.

Finally, as Creswell (2003) noted that research ethics is one of the very important parts in establishing trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Accordingly, the researcher strived to embrace and respect all necessary research ethics such as confidentiality, impartiality and/or personal judgment which guarantee the credibility and reliability of any study. In addition, the researcher maintained pure academic work that is free from any research bias or misconduct.

1.7. Significance of the Study

Firstly, even though some external observers presented the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea as the issue of border (Lyons, 2006), many writers who have better understanding of the pre-and-

post victory relationships between TPLF and EPLF leaders, the two dominant political elites in both countries, argued that the cause of the conflict was never territorial (Diam, 2013, Leenco, 2003 and Madhane, 1999). Thus, this study strives to shed light on how the political reform, particularly the change of leadership in Ethiopia led to the end of the two decades stalemate between the two countries. Secondly, it discusses how the interactions between internal and external factors have led Ethiopia to realign its foreign policy towards the neighboring countries particularly, Eritrea. Thirdly, the study also strives to show the positive implications of the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement for the Horn of Africa's peace and security and its role in improving stability in the region. Lastly, the study can serve as a reference that can pave the way for further research on the subject area.

1.8. Scope of the Study

The relationships between Ethiopia and Eritrean have been centuries old and swinging between war and peace, and dominated by the elites of the dominant groups-TPLF and EPLF-in the two countries respectively. It was the relationship between the leaders that served as the main factor for the conflict between the two countries. Due to the complex and dynamic nature of the relationships between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as, time and resource constraints the study is limited to the recent Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and its contribution to alleviate instabilities in the Horn of Africa.

1.9. Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced time and resource constraints in conducting this study. Moreover, since both the reform and the rapprochement are still underway, the researcher faced scarcity of published reference materials and documents of agreements. Furthermore, the researcher encountered challenges to find key informants while collecting data through an in-depth interview. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent stay home directives by government presented another difficulty to reach out to some key informants. Lack of interests by some individuals and officials to give information was also another challenge the researcher faced. Nevertheless, the researcher strived, making maximum effort to overcome all the challenges by repeatedly calling and finding alternative key informants to produce a research that can add value to the study area. Given all the limitations, the researcher has tried to produce genuine and original research result.

1.10. Organization of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter gives highlights of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the methodology of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review, conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study. Chapter three focuses on the nature of peace and security dynamics of the Horn of Africa. The consequences of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict on the Horn of Africa's peace and security is also examined in the same chapter. Chapter four looks in detail at the causes, nature and consequences of the political reforms going in Ethiopia, and its implication on the realignment of Ethiopia's foreign policy. The fifth chapter discusses the rapprochement and its positive implications for the peace and security of the Horn Africa region. And, finally, in chapter six, conclusions are drawn to summarize the study.

Chapter Two

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

There are various forms of conflicts. Inter-personal, inter-group and intra-group, intra-state and inter-state conflicts are to least few of them. Scholars give different meaning, concepts and theoretical perspectives to all these forms of conflicts which have also different causes. There are also different approaches through which scholars of conflict conceptualize and analyze the causes and nature of conflicts. Hence, in this chapter the study sheds light on the definitions and concepts of conflict, conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the causes of conflict giving due emphasize to the inter-state conflict. The chapter also relates the concepts and perspectives to the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. In addition, concepts such as conflict resolution, conflict transformation and rapprochement and drawbacks of the conflict resolution mechanism employed to resolve the conflict will also be highlighted.

2.2. Meaning and Conceptualization of Conflict

Conflict is a natural phenomenon and part of human life that was started when human beings started to interact, and continues in the future without an end (Ohana, 2012 and Kazansky, 2015). Differences of opinion, attitudes and interests are inevitable so that conflict between individuals, organizations and nations is ineradicable. Thus, the survival of human beings on the planet centres on how human beings, groups and nations manage multifaceted types of conflicts that occurs in the continuous interactions (Jeong, 2008).

Depending on the context within which conflict occurs, various scholars define conflict differently. Among others Wallensteen (2015: 16) defines conflict as “a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources”. This definition consists of essential elements such as ‘actors’, ‘strive’ and ‘scarce resources’. According to the definition, for a conflict to occur not only the existence of actors (parties) but also their history, the way they understand and expect their role and the resources they command as well as they strive to command that matters. ‘Strive’ means when the actors doing something which includes war, to acquire the scarce resource. For Wallensteen

‘available set of scarce resources’ not only limited to economic matter. It covers all kinds of positions that are of interest to the parties. It can include territory, political power and acceptance of responsibility for destructive actions, psychological needs like retribution and other intangible values.

For Omisore (2014), “conflict is a process in which one party suggests that its interests are being opposed by another party”. According this definition, conflict is a result of clashes of interests in attaining once goals. Here, someone is held responsible for blocking the other parties from attaining its goals or expectations. Likewise, Wall (1985) understands conflict as “... a process in which two or more parties attempt to frustrate the attainment of the other’s goals. The factors underlying conflict are differences in goals and differences in perceptions”. When the attainment of goals by one party frustrates the other party, the party that assumes attaining its goals is constrained (perceive constrained)by the other party’s actions inevitably moves to conflict. In general, scholars and theorists working on the conflict all agree that categorizing conflicts into their exact type needs defining and conceptualizing of conflicts in an appropriate way (Aremu, 2010 and Ohana, 2012).

2.2.1. The Causes and Theories of Inter-State Conflict

There are various issues and causes over which states get into conflict. To obtain clear understanding about the causes of the conflict in general and the inter-state conflicts in particular, it needs to be analyzed in a proper manner and context. Making their focus on inter-state conflicts, Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000: 3) summarized the issues over which conflict between the states arise as: “territory (border), secession, decolonization, autonomy, system (ideology), national power, regional predominance, international power, resources and other”. However, the importance of some of these causes as a factor of inter-state conflict has been diminishing over time. Today decolonization and ideology cannot be explained as a cause of inter-state war as during the time of decolonization and the Cold War (Kocs, 1995). Likewise, Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000) claim that inter-state conflicts overt territories have become significantly less frequent. This shows that conflict issues over which states get in to conflict changes over time.

As Cobden (1984: 49) correctly writes even though “no single explanation for conflict between states, any more than for conflict between any other social groups”, there are different ways of

analyzing diverse causes of inter-state conflicts. Among others, the level-of-analysis and framework propounded by Waltz is found appropriate to critically examine the complex causes of inter-state conflicts. Waltz divides his level of analysis into three to situate the causes of the war between states. These are: the individual level, the state level and the international or system level of analysis (Waltz, 2001 and Levy, 2007).

The individual level of analysis primarily deals with human nature as a cause of war. For him human nature is inclined to aggression. Waltz (2001:9) writes as “war begins in the minds and emotions of men, as all acts do”. The approach asserts that conflict is caused by selfishness and misguided emotion of human beings (*Ibid.*). Other causes of conflict emanate from this and interpreted in light of this cause. According to Wright (1964) wars are not the clashes of armies, laws, or even cultures. It is a clash between masses of individuals each of whom possesses a distinct personality and whose behavior is affected by the command of the superior officer, laws and symbols. Here, individuals’ personality, attitude and behavior are shaped by hereditary and experience which play greater role in conflict. According to this thinking, the leaders’ personal character, social background, belief system and psychological makeup can be responsible for the cause of the war. State leaders inherit their aggressive behavior and war prone impulses to the state. Hence, the individual level of analysis implies that states behavior depends and varies based on the behavior and personalities of the leaders. States presided by leaders with unaggressive behavior may not lead to war and vice-versa (Levy, 2007).

Contrary to this, the nation-state level of analysis makes its emphasis on the configuration of the political system, policy making process, the role of public opinion, interest groups, ethnicity and nationalism, political culture and ideology as a cause of conflict between states. For instance, Anastasiou (2009: 34) observed that “nationalism is a sinister cause of inter-state conflicts because in nationalism the nation is viewed as the supreme agency of meaning, identity and with a justification to use force”. Particularly, newly created states are sensitive to the issues of nationalism which collide them with neighboring states. For example, after independence Eritrea quarreled with neighboring states like Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen and Ethiopia to sever ethnic ties and mold strong Eritrean nationalism (Berhane, 2006). The state level of analysis focuses on the wider context of the political environment and the strength of the various groups within the state than individual leader.

The international system level focuses on the factors external to the state. According to the proponents of the system level of analysis, war is caused by factors such as the structure of the international system, number of major powers in the system, international norms influencing their behavior, patterns of international trade and military alliance and other variables that comprise beyond the states authority (Waltz, 2001). G. Lowes Dickinson, quoted in Waltz, does not want to make guilty any single state for the formation of war. For him, “no single state could be held guilty... only by understanding the international system, or lack of system, by which the leaders of states were often forced to act with slight regard for conventional morality, could one understand and justly assess the processes by which the war was produced” (Waltz, 2001:10).

On the other hand, it is also important to look at Johan Galtung’s (1989: 3) triangular conflict model in which he broadly conceptualized conflict and its causes which consists of three interrelated dimensions called “the A_B_C Peace (or Conflict) Triangle”. To study the complex nature of conflict he developed this influential model which helps to understand and analyze conflicts in a wider social context. In the model “A” stands for the Attitudinal dimensions of the conflict, “B” stands for Behavioral aspects of the conflict and “C” refers to the Contradiction or incompatibility among the adversaries. Look at

In conflict *‘attitude’* refers to the temperament one have towards one’s adversary. This dimension consists of both cognitive and emotive elements. The cognitive element refers to the mental image one holds about the enemy while the emotive element relates to the affect or emotions, the feelings one has towards an adversary (Galtung, 1989). The *‘B’ behavioral* element refers to the gestures one hold towards one’s adversary which signifies cooperation or coercion depending on the degree of polarization. If the degree of divergence is high one may compelled to engage violent conflict behavior. If such behavior involves coordinated use of violent force in combination with other instruments of conflict, it becomes war (Levy, 2007). Lastly, *‘C’* refers to *‘contradiction’* or conflict arisen as a result of actual or perceived incompatibility of goals’ between the parties to the conflict. For Galtung (1989) these three dimensions create an interrelated conflict system, when taken together, within which one dimension reinforces the other. Attitude affects behavior, behavior influences conflict and in turn, the experiences of conflict influences attitude. This makes conflict complex and dynamic social phenomenon. In conflict one party reacts to the actions of another party that leads to

another action which hamper diagnosing the more responsible one from the parties to the conflict. Hence, in order to transform conflict situation to stability all the three dimensions must be addressed (Levy, 2007).

However, what needs to be noted, here, is that no single approach or theory neatly explains causes of a given inter-state conflict. This is not only the inter-state system within which states operate is complex but both state's domestic and external factors, and leaders' behavior and attitude influence state interactions with one another. Hence, theorists use a combination of approaches or theories to analyze multifaceted causal variables of conflict be it individual, state and system level. On the other hand, there are situations when even a combination of approaches or theories does not fully explain inter-state war. For example, inter-party rivalries may lead to inter-state conflict which does not fit to these levels of analysis. This is the shortcoming of the theories of inter-state conflict (Levy, 2007). In general, Kazansky (2015) explains the non-existence of a single factor for the outbreak of war between states.

The Ethio-Eritrea conflict can be analyzed in terms of individual level of analysis and partly state level of analysis developed by Waltz (2001) and also triangular conflict model propounded by Galtung (1989). In the Ethio-Eritrea conflict even though emphasis is given to the state level of analysis, the individual and sub-state (inter-party) level of analysis had greater contribution in causing the conflict. In some conflicts the individual leaders' behavior, attitude, experience and psychology affect the conflict than the state and systemic level factors. The attitudes and behavior of leaders may also exacerbate the stalemate even if the violent conflict ceases. In the Ethio-Eritrea conflict the attitudes the leaders (particularly, the leaders of EPLF and the TPLF) had been harboring against each other reinforced their zero-sum behavior and reincarnated their divergent and conflictual experiences that exacerbated the conflict. The seniority and military superiority attitude the EPLF leaders had been nurturing led them to take actions that violated the agreements signed during the interwar period between the two governments. Against this, the reactions taken by the EPRDF/TPLF took the parties to the ferocious conflict.

2.2.2. Parties to the Conflict

The other crucial concern in the analysis of any conflict is discovering the identity of the conflict parties. Conflict parties refer to those actors which initiate a conflict, pursue it and decide its outcome or which have some objectives/goals to achieve from the conflict. Conflict parties can

be individuals, groups, organizations, states and others. When the goal the conflict parties seek to achieve overlaps it creates incompatibility and leads the parties to conflict (Bercovitch, at el, 2009).

According to Ohana (2012), understanding the identity of the conflict parties is crucial not only to prevent conflict before it happens but also to manage and resolve it. In conflict, identifying the real nature of the conflict parties helps to distinguish the real causes of the conflict. They might do this because they think they will gain some strategic advantage”. In addition, understanding the complexity helps to seek and design appropriate intervention mechanisms. Failure to identify the real conflict parties and causes in the Ethio-Eritrea conflict led the international community to pursue inappropriate conflict resolution mechanisms which exacerbated the stalemate than resolving it (Dima, 2013). Leenco prefers to call the conflict as ‘inter-party conflict’ than inter-state one. It was this fact that complicated the conflict than its causes (Addis Standard, June 21, 2018).

2.2.3. Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation

Most of the time, conflict resolution and conflict transformation are used interchangeably both in common usage and in the academic literatures. However, as the fields of conflict studies become developed, academicians and practitioners started to give different meanings and connote different outcomes. For example, for Kriesberg quoted in Botes (2003: 3-4), the two terms are distinct as, ‘... conflict resolution means solving the problems that led to the conflict and transformation means changing the relationships between the parties to the conflict...’. Hence, the distinction between the two terms particularly signifies that the end of the violent conflict does not mean that ending the problems. Conflict may not end with conflict resolution rather with the transformation of the behavior of the parties to the conflict.

2.2.3.1. Conflict Resolution

Following the end of the Cold War, more than ever before, several conflict resolution agreements have been accorded to resolve conflicts and transform relations between groups, people and nations. While some of these peace agreements have successfully resolved disagreements, many others left only as paper value. In many regions of the world those conflicts which have not been resolved brought about terrifying suffer on human beings. Moreover, as Jeong (2008:4) pointed

out “the methods of intervention in any type of violence have to be associated with understanding the nature, causes, and dynamics of the conflict”. Unless conflict resolution is followed by conflict transformation conflict may not be ended.

Wallensteen (2015:8) conceptualized conflict resolution as “a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other”. Conflict resolution takes place to solve or transform conflicts occurred at different levels ranging from inter-personal to inter-state conflicts. Relations between conflicting parties must be transformed from destructive to constructive relations. When writes about the objectives of the conflict resolution, Thomas Waldman (2009:6) argues as: “... it seeks to resolve the incompatibilities of interests and behaviors that constitute the conflict by recognizing and addressing the underlying issues, finding a mutually acceptable process and establishing relatively harmonious relationships and outcomes”.

In conflict resolution there are fundamental elements that need greater concern. These elements are identifying the underlying causes, the nature of the actors or parties to the conflict and the approaches and instruments applied to resolve the conflict (Miall, 2007). Identifying these elements helps to apply appropriate conflict resolution mechanism in conflict resolution processes. Wallensteen (2015:3) suggests as, “it is not enough for the outside world to ask for negotiations and contacts between warring parties. But there is also a need to suggest, how agreements can be made a reality”. According to him, conflicts particularly with complex causes cannot be resolved merely by signing agreements and forming commissions. The terms of the agreement must be implementable by the conflicting parties. For example, even though the Algiers Agreement ceased the violent conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the stalemate continued for more than two decades. The conflict was largely provoked by the turbulent relations between the leaders of both regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara (EPLF and TPLF) whose experience and historical relationship prefer militarism ethos than negotiation and compromise to solve differences.

Moreover, for Wallensteen (2015), seven conditions pave the way for the states to dissolve or transcend their incompatibilities. These are: 1) shifting priorities 2) value division 3) the

principle of horse trading, 4) shared or common rule 5) neutralization 6) resort and 7) let the issue unresolved for sometimes (waiting for maturation of the conflict). Shifting priorities refers to when the parties to the conflict, without altering the fundamental stands on the conflict, change the order of importance of issues. Value sharing refers to dividing, for instance, territory if the cause of the conflict is border issue. The principle of horse-trading is applying give and take mechanism to resolve differences. States also agree to commonly rule (shared rule) the territories or resources over which they conflicted. Neutralization is when the parties to the conflict transfer a mandate administration of the territory to another third party. Resort refers to when the parties to the conflict alter procedure of conflict resolution. Let the issue unresolved for sometimes means keeping the conflict up to maturation (Wallensteen, 2015).

Conflict resolution should not be considered as a process that is bounded to the end of the violent conflict rather followed with conflict transformation which represents not only removing the sources and causes of the conflict, but also necessitates a psychic transformation in the attitudes and relationship between the parties. For instance, Burton quoted in Botes (2003: 2) argues as, “by the resolution of conflict, we mean the transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of the problems which led to the conflictual behavior in the first place”. In general, the recent Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement was achieved as a result of the above conditions or other.

2.2.3.2. Conflict Transformation

For Botes (2003:5) conflict transformation is “a conceptual departure in theory and practice from conflict resolution”. The former is the processes of transforming the hostile condition between the conflict parties in to peace. It represents the overall peacemaking and peace building scheme. According to Galtung (1995) conflict transformation has more to offer than conflict resolution. For him, as social interactions continue, contradictions never removed; but the attitudes and behavior that cause contradictions needs to be transformed.

Conflict transformation also represents a context when the parties to the conflict recognize mutual respect and reciprocal understanding in respect of the interests in conflict that will lead both parties toward sustainable and acceptable solution (Berndt, 2000). For some analysts conflict transformation is a term that signifies a step beyond conflict resolution, but which

represents its deepest level. It is a comprehensive term referring to actions and processes which seek to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. This could be realized only when parties to the conflict develop the capacity to transform or transcend their incompatibilities (Berndt, 2000). In conflict transformation there is basic question often asked as, 'what is transformed?' For Mitchell (2005:2), "the *conflict itself* and some aspect of *the socio-political system* in which the conflict occurs are transformed". As time goes the conditions, attitudes and behavior of the parties to the conflict change. In addition, according to Vayrynen (1991) *actor transformation* (refers to the internal changes in major parties to the conflict), *issue transformation* (altering what the conflict is about), *rule transformation* and *structural transformation* are aspects transformed in conflict transformation. Hence, changes in the behavior of parties to the conflict, the nature of the conflict and the socio-political system matters are what matters in conflict transformation.

In the Ethio-Eritrea conflict even though the Algiers Agreement has ceased the two years bloody war, the peace process was failed to restore relations between the two countries. The peace endeavors initiated by different actors could not transform the conflict in to an overall peacemaking and peace building venture. The process failed to transform the behavior and attitudes of the major parties to the conflict, the nature of the conflict and the socio-political system in which the conflict was spurred. This condition continued the stalemate between the countries unabated for about two decades. However, the change of major conflicting parties to the conflict (the change of leadership) and the socio-political system particularly in Ethiopia led to the transformation of the conflict (though undergoing) between the two states. The recent Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement can serve as a springboard in the transformation of the conflict between the two states. Yet, the rapprochement is not an end by itself unless followed by peace building endeavors.

2.2.4. Rapprochement and Peace Building

In inter-state conflict transformation, peace building relates to regional integration, joint economic development, reconciliation and cultural exchanges, simplification of visa regimes (Moravcsik, 1997). In addition, peace building involves a wide range of stake holders such as

national, international and regional actors, and community and grassroots social organizations. The peace building process particularly emphasizes on the empowerment of the local community which was lacking in the Ethio-Eritrea conflict resolution processes (Waldman, 2009). It is a long term process through which sources and causes of conflict are removed.

Moreover, here are different factors that hinder post-conflict peace building endeavors. The poor conflict resolution mechanism and institutional capacity of the international system, regional challenges, domestic political nature and commitment of the conflicting parties are factors that hinder peace building initiatives (Tschirgi, 2004). In inter-state conflict transformation rapprochement or restoration of relations between the conflicting parties is a pre-condition in the peace building processes.

2.2.4.1. Concept and Drivers of Rapprochement

Literatures that conceptualize rapprochement are scanty. Even though several policy and academic papers are produced by different scholars, none of them specifically or/and in a comprehensive way try to assess the concept of rapprochement from epistemological and ontological roots. Meanwhile, very recently there is the proliferation of literature's that discuss about rapprochement, among this China-American rapprochement, China-Taiwan rapprochement, the China-Russia rapprochement, and the very recent Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement comes at the forefront. Hence, on the subsequent sections of this study, the researcher tries to assess the rapprochement and the related concepts. Hence, what do mean by rapprochement?

Epistemologically, the word rapprochement derived from the French word named *rapproche* meaning to bring together. According to 1828 Merriam Webster definition, *rapprochement* means the establishment of or state of having cordial relations. However, what matters most is the literally meaning of the concept. Literally, the rapprochement used to imply establishing of cordial relations, as between two countries. This means the state of reconciliation between two countries. The concept now days become the most popular concept in international relations and politics to signifies reconciliation, softening of hostilities, and reunion. All these require commitment from the body politics. Rapprochement is all about the restoration of relations or the process of political rapprochement between the two former foes or, falling out, quarrel,

antagonism, schism, dissension, exacerbation, resumption of hostilities. Rapprochement also necessitates leaders' willingness and engagement to remove the sources and causes of disagreement (Kupchan, 2011). On the other hand, rapprochement needs internal socio-political dynamism and transformation of the behavior and attitudes parties to the conflict. Hence, below, the researcher discusses about domestic and external drivers and dynamics of rapprochement.

In international relations, domestic and foreign policies of states highly influence each other. The interactions between domestic and foreign policies are highly pervasive during political transitions. For instance, states at war may transcend their point of divergence mainly due to internal or external factors or combination of both. Internally, political developments like national economic improvement or decline, leadership change, popular unrests usually cause foreign policy shifts. Among others, during political transitions (mild or serious) there is a high stake for political actors. At this time, all stake holders compete to secure the opportunity of writing the rules of the game to be played out in the future. Here, it is important to note that, in countries with fragile democracies like countries of the HoA, domestic political actors and external interventions aggravate the competition that affects both domestic and foreign policies. To overcome the competition and write the new rules of the game, the dominant actor uses all possible resources among which foreign policy is fundamental (Steves, 2010). Engaging in war or normalization of relation with other states are the probable scenarios currently. For instance, competition between different political forces in Ethiopia influenced the country's foreign policy and led to the Ethio-Eritrean new rapprochement. Hence, the recent domestic political developments in Ethiopia have quickly paved the way to end the stalemate with Eritrea. To make it clearer, the new leadership, which emerged from the politically marginalized group, the OPDO, immediately initiated peace process with Eritrea.

In addition to the competition between domestic political actors, external, i.e., regional and extra-regional factors influence states' foreign policy. Externally, changes in the external environment, changes in the global economic conditions, the relations between the superpowers and the emergence of new powers in the region can also impact foreign policy shifts. Mostly, the interactions of internal and external factors prompt states to reconsider their FP priority (Wallensteen, 2015). The advent of competing and emerging superpowers in the geostrategic Horn of Africa have got security, economic and political implications for Ethiopia and Eritrea,

and most importantly, it made Ethiopia “encircled State by self-interested” foreign powers. Moreover, the commencement of too many military bases and the volatile nature of the region make the security issues a FP priority. On the other hand, Djibouti’s becoming a garrison bases for the dominant and emerging military powers, the major Ethiopian import and export outlets, enforced the latter to reconsider its FP towards the neighboring countries, especially Eritrea (Zelalem and Gashaw, 2016). The impacts of both domestic and external factors exacerbate on landlocked countries like Ethiopia.

Likewise, when new leaders assume power; he/she may aspire to develop new ideas and strategic priorities. Most of the time, change of leadership takes place as a result of domestic and external factors through different ways such as election, revolution, popular uprising, coup d’état, political reform or external intervention. As Goldman (1988) pointed out, external environment and domestic political changes produce new leaders with new ideas. Usually this paves the way for foreign policy shift. One way of demonstrating foreign policy realignment is rapprochement. States realign their foreign policy to adapt to changes and overcome constraints in the international and domestic environments (Skidmore, 1994).

Regarding foreign policy shift, as Volgy and Schwertz (1994:24) and Huxsoll (2003: 16) note: “even mild changes and shifts can produce profound effects”, not only within a single state or in between two states but in the wider region or international system. For Hermann (1990) foreign policy realignment involves a wide variety of changes which ranges from minor shifts or redirection or readjustment to profound reorientations.

On the other hand, foreign policy shift is not merely confined to regime change. The regime, which has formulated the existing foreign policy may readjust its policy orientation. As Hermann (1990:4) has observed the relationship between regime change and foreign policy realignment, “... there may be a tendency to conclude that regime change is virtually the only way to achieve profound shifts in a nation's foreign policy. Reflection, however, will reveal cases in which the same government that initiated a course in foreign policy recognizes that significant changes must be undertaken”. There have been also several examples of foreign policy shift even without change of leadership. Anwar Saddat’s surprising rapprochement after engaging in war with

Israel and the decision by President Lyndon Johnson to negotiate to withdraw from the Vietnam War are good examples (*Ibid*).

Experiences also show that profound foreign policy shifts usually follow the change of leadership within the existing regimes. Many dramatic shifts on foreign policy orientations have been happened when a new leadership comes to power with different perceptions, agendas and priorities different from the prevailing doctrines. Such situations come about particularly following the beginning or end of war, beginning or end of domestic discontents, improvement or deterioration of economic condition and change of strategic alliances. For example, when Michael Gorbachev and his associates came to power in the former USSR, without the change of regime, momentous foreign policy changes occurred. Beyond Russia the change brought about profound FP readjustments and reorientation in the international system as well as between allies of the Western and the Eastern blocks (*Ibid*). Thus, individual political leader, as he can have special place in foreign policy decision-making processes, he can play a crucial role in redefining in his country's foreign policy.

Here, it is imperative to point out two interrelated questions. First, what are the conditions enabling the leaders to shift foreign policy, especially during the period of political liberalization? Political leaders must have support from certain constituencies, especially during the period of political liberalization. This enables them to change the *status quo* (Huxsoll, 2003). For instance, parliamentary majority support provides a leader incentive and opportunity to shift foreign policy. Securing the alignment and change of dominant constituency or strong segment of the population can help the ruler to push a policy shift. For instance, on his selection as a party leader, Abiy Ahmed secured a majority vote from the two largest constituencies, the ex-OPDO and ANDM. This gave him a leverage to speed up the domestic political reforms and foreign policy change. Moreover, leaders can also show determination to impose their vision by making a foreign policy shift. To do so, according to Hermann (1990:11), "the leader requires having the conviction, power and energy necessary to compel the change". Abiy's conviction and vision (Medemer/regional synergy) regarding Ethiopia's foreign policy reconsideration materialized when he embarked on extensive diplomatic negotiations between neighboring states in the Horn by shuttling from one to the other.

Likewise, new leadership realigns foreign policy because foreign policy realignment is an important strategy for government to consolidate its domestic political power (Knof, 1998). Discussing the link between domestic and foreign policies, Hagan (1993: 4) argues that “one goal for political leaders is clearly to retain power and, if possible, enhance the support needed for keeping their position”. During the period of political liberalization, a leader can utilize foreign policy shift to strengthen his political bases, enhance legitimacy and ensure the security of his regime (Hermann, 1990). In the same way, Knof (1998) and Doeser (2011) also reinforced the utilization of FP by leaders to strengthen their domestic political power in the face of domestic political turmoil. Leaders also use political strategies especially during political liberalization to divert domestic political and economic challenges. In such contexts, new leader pursues new economic and trade policies aggressively (Clark, 2001 and Huxsoll, 2003). The influence of competition between domestic elites during the time of political liberalization also shapes the FP decision making. As states are sensitive to security issues, it is also another concern of foreign policy shift. In the words of Holsti (1982: ix), “states restructure their foreign policy as a response to a threat not always limited to military one”.

When a new leadership assumes power, it is inevitable that his/her foreign policy direction attracts the attention of external actors. A neighboring state, most importantly, which have a border dispute with the country undergoing transition can be very much concerned in the position of the new leadership on the issue of the dispute than the issue of promoting democracy (Dossi, 2015). For instance, Eritrea changed its FP towards Ethiopia when Prime Minister came to power than when his predecessor came to power. The policy direction of the new leadership determines the state’s future relationships with other near and far states. Depending upon the FP direction of the new leadership, the disputant states adjust their FP towards the state in transition. For example, the FP direction of the new leadership may result to rapprochement through transcending or dissolving incompatibility. The rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea realized as a result of the new leadership’s foreign policy realignment towards Eritrea and the Horn in general.

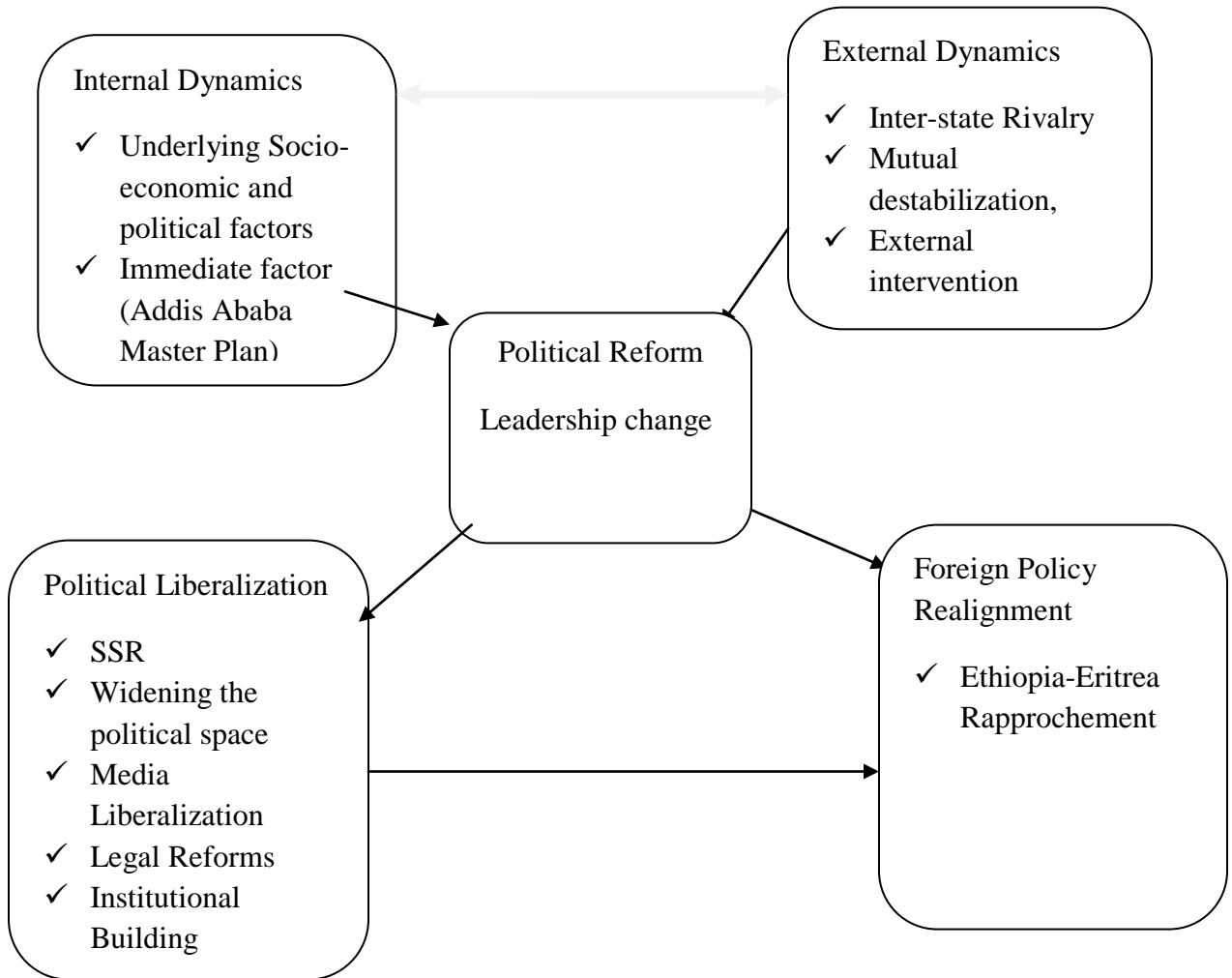
In relation to Ethiopia, the need for breaking siege mentality, reducing the impact of being landlockedness and the increasingly changing regional and global conditions account for the current FP shift. Even though Ethiopia’s FP objectives changed from territorial integrity and

sovereignty to viable economic development and democratization, domestic, regional and global factors remained to influence the country's foreign policy orientation (Dima, 2009). Internally, lack of democratic governance has returned the state back to the securitization of its foreign policy. As a result of domestic political problems, foreign policy formulation under the EPRDF regime emphasized on regime security than creating interdependent relations with neighboring state.

Externally, the fast changing regional and global situations, the geo-political challenges it faces due to its proximity to the Red Sea, Gulf of Eden and the crisis in Yemen and competition among the Gulf States to influence politics in the Horn of Africa forced Ethiopia to reconsider its foreign policy particularly towards the neighboring countries and the Gulf States. Being the most populous landlocked country, Ethiopia depends on the neighboring countries ports for all its exporting and importing goods. Its growing economy also necessitates normalization of its relations with neighboring states. Security issue is another rationale for Ethiopia to strengthen its relations with the other Horn states as the region makes one dynamic security complex zone. Unless addressed in a meaningful way, domestic problems feed the external challenges. The Ethiopian Renaissance Dam under construction on Nile River attracts the attention of many countries that enforces Ethiopia reconsider its foreign policy particularly with neighboring countries. Thus, the leadership change and the political liberalization it brought about to the fore in Ethiopia that resulted from the massive popular protests, which changed the 'no war, no peace' situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In Ethiopia, the failure to establish inclusive political system fomented conflicts and political instabilities which becomes a factor for political liberalization that resulted in the contemporary foreign policy shift. In general, the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement is realized as a result of both domestic and external factors that enforced both states realign their foreign policy.

Figure 2.2.4. The Impacts of Domestic Political Liberalization on Foreign Policy Realignment



Chapter Three

3. The Ethio–Eritrea Conflict and Its Implications for the Peace and Security Dynamics of the Region

3.1. Introduction

Complex factors led to the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea conflict. The two year violent conflict and the subsequent two decades stalemate affected political, economic and social situation of both countries and exacerbated instabilities in the entire Horn of Africa. Hence, this chapter discusses in detail the complex causes of the Ethio-Eritrean conflict and its implication on the peace and security dynamics of the Horn of African region. The chapter also highlights the drawbacks of the conflict resolution mechanism applied by the international community to resolve the conflict.

3.2. Background of the Ethio-Eritrea War

The 30-years Eritrean War for independence was concluded when Eritrea gained *de facto* independence in 1991 (when the EPLF-now the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice, PFDJ-took over Asmara) and *de jure* independence from Ethiopia in 1993. Following the harmonious Eritrean divorce from Ethiopia, many hoped that the end of the 30 years' war would improve relations between the two countries that ensue new era of cooperation and regional integration in the region. However, the hope wiped out as a result of the subsequent border disputes that has caused continuing tension between the two nations and destabilized the entire region.

This has resulted to the Ethio-Eritrea war which is one of post-colonial Africa's bloodiest and most protracted conflicts that took place between the two neighborly and poorest countries. On 12 May 1998, the already boiling tension erupted into full-scale inter-state war at the tiny border town of Badme with complete unexpectedness to the external world and to the public of both countries. At the time, the conflict was framed and described by the world's media as "two bald men fighting over a comb"; two ignorant governments engaging in brutal and bloody war for pieces of insignificant land that had neither oil nor diamond (Reid, 2003 and Muller, 2006).

In the same token, the conflict is unique in terms of the complexity of its causes, ferociousness and intractability, and unparalleled mass deportation it marked and its destabilizing effect (Dima, 2013 and Dias, 2011). Bereket (2006: 29) described the conflict comprehensively as, "...,

nowhere in Africa has there been a war fought on such scale and with such huge casualties over a border dispute. And no conflict has so puzzled observers, African and non-African, as this war did. Diplomats from Africa, America and Europe, in various combinations struggled mightily to stop the war and reach an amicable settlement”.

In 2018 the “no war, no peace” situation that lasted for two decades between the two states ended unexpectedly following the political liberalization in Ethiopia. No one external or internal has expected that, the era of mutual destabilization that has been destabilizing both states and the region, would end in such a swift manner.

In general, the reason for the sudden flare up of the conflict and the unexpected rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea cannot be reduced to a single basket factor. The post 1991 Ethiopia and Eritrea relations were presided by antecedent lingering events. It was the cumulative effects of the experiences of Italian colonial rule, the fraught Eritrean federation with Ethiopia and its abrogation, the 30-year war for independence and the flawed post-independence relations served as a background for the Ethio-Eritrea war.

3.2.1. The Underlying Causes of the War

3.2.1.1. The Discordant Relations between EPLF and TPLF during the Armed Struggle

Ideological orientation, organizational approach and behavior, and cultural background of the leaders are among the indicative characters that resemble and differentiate political organizations. Hence, the central point of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea could be understood by looking at the background of the two-armed fronts within the context of the above characters.

As discussed above, the parties that dominated the regimes in both countries and led the two countries to war, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, TPLF, now subsumed into the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, and the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, EPLF, now renamed People’s Front for Democracy and Justice, PFDJ, comrades-in-arms in the armed struggle against the Derg regime. The parties also descended from the ethnic groups that have similar linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics (Tronvoll, 2009). Basically, two important but mutually exclusive factors complicated the relations between TPLF and Eritrean

fronts. First, fighting against strong common enemy- the Derg, obliged the fronts to cooperate. Second, the fronts aspired to have overridden position within their own sphere of influence and in the region while concluding the struggle (Aregawi, 2009). Thus, the feature of their future goals and relations were concealed within such a tactical and opportunistic alliance.

The relations between TPLF and EPLF during the armed struggle have been full of tense and swinging between love and hate. Their entire relations were dominated by opportunism, secrecy and temporary tactical alliance. Even though the relations between the two parties started with formation of the TPLF in 1975, the tense interactions continued, even after the fronts became government in both countries (Reid, 2003 and Trivelli, 1998). Alemseged (1999: 5) mentions the swinging relations between the TPLF and Eritrean fronts as: “started with love, turned to hate and, by independence, reverted back to love again only for hatred to become consummate after May 1998”. Berhane (2006) reinforced this idea as ‘after seized power both EPLF and TPLF continued to behave as a liberation front rather than a government’. The Marxist-Leninist dictum, in which the leaders of the both parties were grown up, where compromise is seen as a loss of victory, and lack of internal democratic culture aggravated the flawed relations between the parties (Dima, 2013; Bahru, 2006 and Berhane, 2006) and led them to unnecessary war.

Reid (2003) expressed the linkage between the post-independence situation and the previous inharmonious relationships as “old problems in new conflicts”. The tumultuous relations continued without grappling with problems that caused the discordant pre-liberation relations (Redie, 2009). For Aregawi (2009), from the very beginning, the relations between the two parties were not based on principles. Only the existence of common enemy compelled them to work together. Once the enemy had gone, the disruption of the relation was expected.

During the armed struggle, the points of disagreements were on the question of nationality and how it would ultimately be settled, ideological, military strategy, and on the nature of future relationship between independent Eritrea and TPLF dominating Ethiopia. The TPLF’s confusing position on the issues of nationality and EPLF’s stubborn and clear stand on the Eritrean independence clashed; creating a rupture between the two liberation movements.

The relation suspended in 1983 was restored only in 1988 when the demise of the Derg regime became evident. Putting aside their differences, both fronts convinced themselves to coordinate their forces to speed up the demise of the Derg. Still the relationship was based on short term tactical calculation and achieving their respective objectives (Medhane, 1999; Young, 1997 and Reid, 2003). On its part, the EPLF needed restoration of the alliance to secure an internationally accepted Eritrean independence through a referendum which is impossible without recognition by the mother country-Ethiopia (Trivelli, 1998). As stated by Dima (2013: 19), "...the EPLF wanted the TPLF to be strong enough to be able to control the Ethiopian state and endorse Eritrean independence", but weak enough to require continued Eritrean support for its survival. On the other hand, the TPLF's demand for the revival of the alliance exceeded the demise of the Derg regime. In the post-victory, it wanted to transform its military victory to political victory/dominance. As its political legitimacy was shaky, the EPRDF/TPLF needed the alliance of the EPLF to consolidate its power over Ethiopia (Dima, 2013 and Redie, 2009).

In 1991, even though the guerrilla organizations (EPLF and EPRDF/TPLF) assumed state power in Eritrea and Ethiopia respectively, the parties had not attempted to resolve their past differences and institutionalize future relations (Negash and Tronvoll, 2000). The two provisional governments signed various agreements of friendship and cooperation, but the interactions could not transform into the form of inter-state relations. This situation derailed the expectation that the close relation between the two fronts would take both the two states and the region on a new course (Dima, 2013 and Lyons, 2009). Hence, in the post-Derg regime, the Ethio-Eritrea relations had to be analyzed in the context of the relationships between EPLF and TPLF, with the EPLF exercising a political monopoly in Eritrea and the TPLF being the dominant political force within the EPRDF regime (Clapham, 2017 and Negash and Tronvoll, 2000).

3.2.1.2. National Unity

The long thought Eritrean independence was achieved at the expense of huge human life and material destructions. But once independence was achieved, building prosperous, peaceful and democratic state was what the Eritreans had been told and expecting. Realizing the first vision, EPLF strongly envisaged itself as a body destined to create a politically unified, economically self-reliant and militarily superior state in the Horn of Africa and also viable actor on the

international arena (Berhane, 2006 and Leenco, 2003). However, this could be achieved in a completely different way from the way the first vision was achieved. In the war for independence, strict military disciplines and determination held the people together. Realizing the second vision, however, requires democratic exercise and economic benefits that tie the diverse groups together. As Berhane (2006) notes achieving the second vision, i.e., national unity (the first, being independence), requires transforming and creating a new, prosperous and strong state of Eritrea.

Towards this end, without transforming its rules of the jungle, EPLF put achieving national unity on top of its agenda. This impacted the regime's internal and external relationships. To create prosperous and strong Eritrea, EPLF subject the people to adhered strict rules and show commitment they have been exhibiting during the struggle. On the other hand, it necessitated all ethnic groups in Eritrea to develop and exhibit a sense of Eritreanness at the cost of their own identity. This is not a simple task for EPLF as there is no ethnic group in Eritrea that has no kinfolks in the neighboring states. Particularly, the adoption of ethnic federalism by EPRDF in Ethiopia threatened EPLF due its spillover effect. Hence, to reinforce a distinct and unified Eritrean nation, the EPLF must sever Eritrean ethnic ties with their kinfolks in the neighboring states (Kidist, 2011 and Berhane, 2006). In his article 'A War for National Unity', Berhane (2006: 34) states that "since there is no ethnic group that is unique to Eritrea, ... the motivation for engaging in *measured* war against its neighbors aimed at curving out a singular Eritrean identity and a mental map, away from the common ethnic and cultural ties" in the neighboring countries. Therefore, the armed clashes and wars that Eritrea conducted with Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen and Ethiopia were meant to enhance a unified Eritrean identity as a prerequisite to establish a new state (*Ibid.*). However, none of the wars escalated to serious violence and as devastating as the war fought with Ethiopia (Dias, 2011). In addition to the manifold and historical relations the two people have experienced, the long term but turbulent relations between EPLF and TPLF influenced the post-liberation relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Trivelli, 1998 and Leenco, 2006).

3.2.1.3. Rivalry over the Political Future and Economic Resources

The Horn of Africa is characterized by various actors' zero-sum game competitions. In the region the center of the ongoing conflict is wealthy, respect and glory in which instruments of

mobilization are ethnicity, nationalism, resources, religion and border. It is natural that any political organization competes for power which enables it to command over human, material and technological resources. Controlling over larger resources and become dominant or prestigious actor at the national, regional and international level was the center of conflict between EPLF and TPLF (Leenco, 2003). The parties voraciously engaged in building their respective regions at the expense of the rest of Ethiopia (Dima, 2013). Dima (2013: 10) stressed that “competition over and access to resources and economic issues are clearly at the core of the dispute”.

The Eritreans perceive that their contribution in overthrowing the Derg regime was greater than the TPLF. However, the gains yielded from the collapse of the central authority in Ethiopia in 1991 resulted in contrary to the Eritreans’ perception. The TPLF (the younger organization) commanded over established state with large resources. The EPLF (senior party) was left with tiny and a new state which pose challenge to create ‘Singaporean’ model state. Clapham (2007: 68) also notes that “the discrepancy between the EPLF’s sense of being the ‘senior partner’ in the liberation struggle against the Derg regime, and the evidently less powerful position of an independent Eritrea, compared with Ethiopia, in terms alike of population, economy and diplomatic standing, compounded the problems”. This created envy and reinvigorated rivalry between the two fronts (*Ibid.*). As Steves (2010) argues the Eritrean leaders aimed to undermine the dominance of the Tigrayans both in Ethiopia and the region by escalating the war. He notes that ‘it (the war) would result in the removal of Meles from power, which would in turn undermine the Tigray an industrialization programme, making Eritrean exports more competitive in the region’ (Steven, 2010:127). Both parties intended to make the other subordinate for one’s own long-term strategic objectives (Leenco, 2003). This requires establishing weak ruling party in the other states. Likewise, Getachew (2006: 68) writes as “the Ethio-Eritrea war was an outcome of the greed of the leaders of the EPLF and TPLF in controlling the political future and economic resources of Ethiopia”, and had nothing to do with the people in Eritrea and the rest of Ethiopia. The rivalry was to control over the political and economic resources of the rest of Ethiopia and become strong actor in the Horn and international arena.

3.2.1.4. Opposing Economic Expectations and Interests

The other important component that inflamed the Ethio-Eritrea conflict was the divergent economic visions and interests the EPLF and the TPLF have been harboring. Even though it was embedded in their long-term visions, the antagonistic economic visions and competition surfaced at the early stage of the post-independence relations (Dima, 2010 and Leenco, 2003).

For the EPLF, the bitter and longer struggle the Eritreans conducted not only enabled them to realize intact and unconditional independence but also ousted the despotic regime in Ethiopia. However, the independence would become complete only if it served as a landmark to create a united, peaceful and prosperous Eritrea (Medhane, 1999 and Leenco, 2003). As stipulated in the EPLF's National Charter (1994: 3), "unless peace, justice and prosperity prevail in Eritrea, the independence we won with heavy sacrifices will be meaningless". Hence, once independence achieved, the Eritrean leaders aspired to build a 'Singaporean' model state in the Horn of Africa (Berhane, 2006). Then, they convinced themselves that this aspiration could not be achieved without fast pace economic growth which requires economic resources and strong state.

In the realization of their vision, the Eritreans considered their industrial advantage over Ethiopia and the latter must serve as a source of raw material and marketplace for the former's industrial products. As Young (1996: 21) notes "the EPLF's economic policy aimed for Eritrea to serve as the industrial center to an Ethiopian hinterland that would provide raw materials and serve as a market for its finished goods". The Eritreans also perceived that their lions share in the overthrow of the despotic regime in Ethiopia would give them privilege to use economic resources of Ethiopia.

However, the same vision held by the TPLF countered the EPLF's aspiration. The TPLF wanted to establish similar relations between Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia. Dominating the Ethiopian ruling regime, the TPLF wanted to create a country within a country (Young, 2000). Within a short period of time Tigray region's economy started to change dramatically. Tigray region's industrial upsurge, construction of infrastructures and mega projects within a short period of time upset the Eritreans (*Ibid.*). Observing these parallel economic visions, Leenco (2006: 75) writes as, "it is the economic roles assumed by Eritrea and Tigray in relation to the rest of Ethiopia that

became the underlying cause of the tension” between EPLF and TPLF, and by extension between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Similarly, Healey and Plaut (2007: 2) note as “serious economic rivalry developed, particularly between party elites in Eritrea and the adjoining Ethiopian region of Tigray”. Dima (2013: 8) also reinforced the positions of the above writers when he concludes as, “..., it is the similar economic strategies that the two parties have crafted for Eritrea and Tigray that was a contributing factor to much of the friction between them”.

In 1991, both parties transformed themselves into government in the two countries and signed an agreement that guide their relationships up to the conduct of the internationally monitored Eritrean referendum in 1993. The agreement includes common currency usage, port service, free trade and Eritrean citizens residing in Ethiopia. However, between 1991 and 1993, the relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea was continued as the relations between the EPLF and the TPLF as during the armed struggle (Trivelli, 1998).

Following the Eritrea’s referendum in 1993, series of agreements were accorded between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Particularly, the cooperation and friendship agreement signed in July, 1993 between the two states was taken as a manifestation of the beginning of new course of relationship (Michael, 2015 and Redie, 2009). In the agreements, the free flow of goods and services, capital and people, Ethiopia’s use of Eritrean ports for free except port and oil refinery services, common currency usage were preserved (Trivelli, 1998). However, Eritrea misused the free flow of goods and common currency usage in the economic relationships between 1991 and 1998.

As a result, the seven years economic relations between the two states glaringly favored Eritrea than Ethiopia. The Eritrean exports reach the Ethiopian market estimated to 60-80%. The port and oil refinery service charges Eritrea gained from Ethiopia amount to 22.6% of the Eritrean public revenues. In addition, using the free flow of goods and services outlined in the harmonization agreement, the Eritreans have been re-exporting products they imported from third countries to Ethiopia and import Ethiopian exportable products with local currency and re-export to the international markets (Abebe and Melakou, 2007). For instance, Eritrean Red Sea Corporation had been buying coffee from Southern and South-Western Ethiopia and was selling

on the international market giving its own brand without producing an ounce of it (Clapham, 2017). This led to trade imbalance between the two states and exposed the Ethiopian government for criticism by the Ethiopians for its failure to protect Ethiopian interests (Kidist, 2011 and Medhane, 1999). As they want to establish similar relations with the rest of Ethiopia, the leaders of TPLF were not comfortable with the activities of the Eritrean governments and businessmen (Michael, 2015).

The measures taken both by Eritrean and Ethiopian governments in 1997 deteriorated the already fraught relations between the two states. The Eritrean government's introduction its own currency, the Nakfa, in 1997 and Ethiopian government's adjustment of Eritrean favored economic policy surfaced the worsening and increasingly divergent economic interests between the two regimes (Michael, 2015 and Negash and Tronvoll, 2000). The measures taken by the two states also broken up the friendship and cooperation agreement signed in 1993.

Finally, the sign of disagreement and simmering rifts first started to reveal when the Eritreans demanded for the increment of the return for the oil refinery from 30% to 40%. At this time, Ethiopia had to rethink over the diversification of its import routes to Djibouti and Mombasa ports to reduce over dependence over the Eritrean ports (Michael, 2015). The measure affected the Eritrean economy. This complicated the relations and all of the sudden slipped them into an all-out war (Leenco, 2003 and Dima, 2013). Generally, the leaders of Eritrea raised the border issue untimely due to three reasons: First, the Eritreans were concealed by the perception of their military superiority during the armed struggle which shadowed them understanding the realities on the ground (Tekeste and Tronvoll, 2000). Second, as the Eritrean economy was dependent on Ethiopian resources, the EPLF leaders assumed to reverse the Ethiopia's new trade policy, by putting pressure on the EPRDF/TPLF regime (Abbink, 1998). Thirdly, the Eritreans perceived that as a result of its internal division, Ethiopia would not afford to go to war with Eritrea (Michael, 2015 and Leenco, 2003).

3.3. The Escalation of the War

As discussed above, the stubborn position and the relations preoccupied with short-term alliance between EPLF and EPRDF/TPLF parties escalated the war. The fire exchange suddenly started

between the Eritrean military and Tigray region's local security forces on 6 May 1998 near to the town of Badme, escalated to an all-out war within a short period of time (Murphy, 2016). Eritrean military forces occupied Badme, an adjacent border town and until then administered by Ethiopia (Redie, 2009). In return, the Ethiopian government proclaimed the Eritrean government's action as an act of aggression and breach of Ethiopian sovereign territory through its parliament and the Council of Minister on 13 May 1998. The declaration required unconditional withdrawal of the Eritrean forces to the pre-6 May position only which could render for negotiation (Michael, 2015). Otherwise, Ethiopia cautioned to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, Eritrea refused unconditional withdrawal and Ethiopia also equally sticks to recovering the occupied territory. This uncompromising position of the leaders of both countries not only swiftly escalated the war to ferocious violence but also made de-escalation difficult (Muller, 2006). Eritrea claimed colonial border while Ethiopia claimed long-term administration which became the irreconcilable point of the conflicting parties (Kidist, 2011). The conflict claimed an estimated number of human lives ranging from 70,000 up to 100,000 from both sides and caused huge material destructions (Michael, 2015).

Even though mediation initiatives embarked on at the early age of the war, it failed to bear positive result. The mediation framework proposal kicked off by the Rwanda and the USA was failed due to Eritrea's rejection of the proposal assuming its initial military advantage. For Eritrea accepting the withdrawal or retreat to the pre-6 May 1998 position amount to admitting Ethiopia's aggression accusation (Murphy, 2016 and Redie, 2009). In contrary, Ethiopia accepted the mediation proposal and achieved diplomatic win.

Eritrea accepted the mediation framework proposed by the Organization of African Union (now African Union (AU) only when Ethiopia launched its major offensive in May 2000. This round of Ethiopia's offensive launch completely shifted the balance of power in favor of Ethiopia. Ethiopian army broke not only Eritrean defenses and dislodged it from the disputed territory but also penetrated deep into the Eritrean undisputed territory (Murphy, 2016). Then, the two states signed a cease fire agreement on June 18, 2000 (*Ibid.*). It was at this time that Eritrea formally aired its voices to the UN Security Council for agreement and this paved the way for the 2000 Algiers peace agreement which ceased the violent conflict (Lyons, 2009).

Three bodies were established by the Algiers Agreement for its implementation, namely: (a) a body which investigates and examines the origins of the conflict, (b) a boundary commission (the EEBC-the Eritrea Ethiopia Border Commission) mandated to delimit and demarcate the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea based on the colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and pertinent international laws, and (c) a claims commission to arbitrate loss, damage or injury by one party against the other (Muller, 2016 and Lyons, 2009). The EEBC ruling awarded Badme, the symbolic town and the flashpoint of the conflict, to Eritrea based on the pertinent colonial treaty. While Ethiopia accepted the verdict in principle but insisting bilateral dialogue to resolve the disputed area, Eritrea insisted in the implementation of the binding Agreement (Healy and Plaut, 2007). Hence, the implementation of the Algiers Agreement was stalled, and the overall framework failed. This was resulted from the fact that both parties highly associated their political destiny to the town of Badme (Dima, 2013).

3.4. Why the Peace Endeavors Failed?

Despite the Algiers Agreement ended the two years violent conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the two countries leaders' inflexible stance hindered the implementing of the binding agreement (Healy and Plaut, 2007). The disagreement on the agreement itself accounts to various reasons as, the first is the lingering precarious and suspicious relationships the protagonists had been harboring (Redie, 2019). The relationship between the conflicting parties was complex, dictated by mutual suspicion and zero-sum political thinking than what external observers can see it. The leaders of the conflicting parties were grown up in the political culture that compromise has no place and seen as complete loss. Due to this, the parties failed to implement the agreement they dully signed (Bahru, 2006). In addition, their entrenched suspicion towards the international community and international organizations was also another factor for the failure of the agreement (Dima, 2013).

Second, failure of the international community to understand the complex causes of the war prohibited it from imposing impartial solutions on both sides (Redie, 2009). This led the international community to suggest wrong prescription to the undiagnosed causes of the conflict which complicated the conflict than resolving it. Due to lack of understanding of the nature of

the conflict or negligently, the international community applied conventional inter-state conflict resolution (Muller, 2006). The conflict resolution initiatives have not considered the lingering inharmonious relations between the protagonists. Dima (2013: 17) stipulates that “the international community treated relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea purely as one between two sovereign states, and therefore the solutions it tried to push were based on the assumption that the conflict between the two states is one involving boundary (territory), and once that was demarcated, the problem would be resolved”. However, the conflict was far more than mere demarcating the disputed border.

Thirdly, politicization of conflict resolution is the main problem of peace building in the Horn of Africa. The international community failed to impartially influence the conflicting parties to comply with the agreement they signed (Kassahun, 2013). Instead of enforcing Ethiopia to implement the EEBC ruling, the international community particularly, the US and the UN favored it (Leenco, 2003). Redie (2009) argues as “an unbalanced treatment of the two states was one of the main reasons why the international community was unable to stop the war and to implement the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission verdict”. Particularly, the US preoccupied with the Global war on terrorism and favored Ethiopia (Healy and Plaut, 2007).

Fourth, the symbolic attachment the two states given to the Badme reinforced the uncompromising stance by the protagonists. Both states hardly fought and shed blood over the Badme. Even though Ethiopia was awarded major parts of other contested areas, it challenged the demarcation according to the EEBC ruling due to the fear of the domestic opposition that conceding Badme amount to ignoring the lives of the thousands sacrificed to regain it. From the Eritrean side too, conceding Badme is highly unlikely due to two reasons: First, their troops shed blood in order to gain Badme. Second, the neutral Border Commission awarded the area to Eritrea (Leenco, 2006). Hence, Badme becomes the highly emblematic spot for both countries national prestige and challenged the consequent peace process.

Finally, the post war stalemate seems to be related with internal political problems the two regimes encountered after the war. Particularly, the undemocratic nature of both regimes enforced the leaders to push to the ‘no war no peace’ situation. Even if Ethiopia unconditionally

accepted the decision of the EEBC, “Eritrea would need resources to create viable employment to effectively demobilize at least 150, 000 troops for those who have been providing free national service” (Berhane, 2006: 38). The leaders of EPRDF/TPLF also panicked about the Ethiopian peoples who do not want to hear about Badme’s going to Eritrea. Berhane (2006) argues that both leaders preferred to the continuation of the status quo of “no war, no peace”. The stalemate ‘through low intensity proxy war seems to suit both leaders equally’ (Ibid.). Political reform within either the two or both states may end the deadlock.

3.5 The Implications of Ethio-Eritrea Conflict on the Peace and Security Dynamics of the Horn of Africa Region

As discussed above, due to the political, economic, social and geographical interconnection of the states in the Horn of Africa, conflicts of various forms intermeshed into each other. As a result, intra-state and inter-state conflicts immediately take regional and international dimensions. For instance, the Ethio-Eritrea conflict spilled over into the unrelated conflict in Somalia (Abbink, 2003).

Even though it was not the first conflict appeared in the Horn, the region has not seen as devastating and destabilizing as the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. The conflict wracked the peace and security of the entire region for more than two decades due to its high spillover effect into various intra-state and inter-state conflicts (Dima, 2013; Kidane, 2011 and Clapham, 2007). According to Temesgen (2012:1) the Ethio-Eritrea conflict “was one of the most dangerous wars in the Horn of Africa with high spillover effect to neighboring countries”. Particularly, the spillover of the conflict into unrelated intra-state conflicts, i.e., in Somalia, revitalized disastrous proxy war and mutual destabilization of the Cold War which ravaged the entire region’s stability (Abbink, 2003). As a result, the unprecedented political, economic, social and security mess, and huge humanitarian crisis and material destruction caused by the conflict were not limited to Ethiopia and Eritrea rather wracked the entire region (Mosley, 2014 and Rohera, 2011). Clapham (2009: 67) well described the destabilizing effect of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict in the Horn as “it is not the only current regional conflict, nor would its resolution necessarily lead to the settlement of other disputes...But, it is certainly the main conflict between states in the region; it lies at the heart of the region in geopolitical terms; and it has a poisoning effect on other conflicts”.

As furthered by Clapham, taking the central position of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the Greater Horn of Africa concludes that achieving stability in the region is difficult without unlocking the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. Especially, following the outbreak of conflict between the two countries, the wider Horn's peace and security cannot be analyzed without the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The two countries' involvement in various intra-state and inter-state conflicts including in the neighboring countries undermined stability and peaceful relations in the region. For instance, the Security Council in its 2011 report indicates that, breaching the Security Council resolution number 1907, Eritrea's involvement in conflicts in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Uganda in terms of providing intelligence, training, financial and logistical support to armed opposition groups challenged stability in the region (UNSC, 2010).

To undermine each other's interests, both countries waged proxy wars against each other including in the neighboring countries (Mosley, 2014). According to Mosley (2014: 3), 'the two governments have actively continued to destabilize each other by fostering the other's opposition, including armed movements, and seeking to counter each other's influence in the region'. Accordingly, Eritrea supported Ethiopia's opposition groups like Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and G-7 while Ethiopia has also supported opposition groups against the regime in Asmara such as the Eritrean Revolutionary Democratic Front (ERDF), the Afar Red Sea Democratic Front (ARDF), the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) (Healy and Plaut, 2007 and Abbink, 2003).

On the other hand, the two countries took the conflict away from the disputed border and pursued ferocious proxy war particularly in Somalia. The intervention by Ethiopia and Eritrea complicated conflict in Somalia (Menkhaus, 2007). Thus, to undermine Ethiopia, the Eritrean government supported various warlord militias and jihadist armed groups (al-Qaeda affiliated groups such as al-Ittihad, al-Shabaab (a more radicalized remnants of UIC) and Transitional National Government (TNG) based in Mogadishu (Abbink, 2003). The Eritrean government provided political, financial, training and logistical supports to these armed groups (UNSC, 2011 and Mekhaus, 2007). All of these groups were created following the collapse of central government in Somalia in the early 1991 and most of them posed a security threat on Ethiopia due to their Islamic rhetoric and aspiration of uniting all Somali inhabited areas. With the tacit

support from the US, Ethiopia intervened into Somalia and enthroned the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2006. Even though the TFG left ineffective, Ethiopia could contain Eritrea and banish the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) from Mogadishu. Ethiopia also used the threat to suppress domestic dissidents (Menkhaus, 2007 and Abbink, 2003).

Many argues that due to their domestic political problems, both countries needed the continuation of the 'no war, no peace' situation (Menkhaus, 2007). As it was furthered by Menkhaus (2007:42), Ethiopia's military offensive against the UIC and its subsequent occupation of the capital Mogadishu forms part of a broader pattern in the Horn of Africa of inter-state rivalries, proxy wars, and destabilization campaigns waged by neighboring states against one another. This has been a long-running problem in the region and is a major source of the Horn's many protracted civil wars. The fact that the UIC was given considerable support by Ethiopia's rival Eritrea, which hoped to keep Ethiopia tied down by prolonged conflict in Somalia, was very much a part of this dynamic, as was the UIC's efforts to incite to uprising inside Ethiopia. Healy and Plaut (2007:11) describe the local, regional and international implications of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict as "the 1998 conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has therefore had lasting implications, which have been both domestic and regional". Hence, Temesgen (2012: 15) concludes, "peace and stability in the Horn became dependent on the resolution of the Ethiopian and Eritrean conflict and achievement of sustainable peace".

Chapter Four

4. Political Liberalization and Foreign Policy Realignment in Ethiopia

Even though several political changes occurred in Ethiopia, none of them opened up the political platform. The political change happened in Ethiopia following the spontaneous mass protests since the 2015 resulted to political liberalization that impacted both the domestic and external policies of the country. Thus, this chapter discusses the context of political liberalization in Ethiopia. Accordingly, it emphasizes the major socio-economic and political factors, and the consequences of the political reforms going in Ethiopia, and its potentiality to bring about Ethiopia's foreign policy realignment particularly in the consolidation of peace and security in the Horn.

4.1. The Causes of Political Liberalization in Ethiopia

4.1.1. Fundamental Factors

In Ethiopia, with certain changes, the repressive nature and deficient legitimacy of the state on the one hand and popular resistances against the regimes on the other had continued including in the post-1991 period. The major goal of the struggles that shaped the Ethiopian political trajectories in the second half of the 20th century was meant to create pluralist and democratic state that could accommodate the diverse and divergent interests. To put differently, the struggles were aimed against the project to create a 'monolithic' and centralized state during the last days of the 19th century. However, other than realizing regime change, they could not fundamentally transform the state-society relations (Asefa, 2010). Consequently, the popular protests, which mainly directed against the political and economic injustices of the EPRDF's 27-year rule have pushed the country into yet another round of transformation. In other words, the grievances of the people due to the incomplete state building strategies of Ethiopia's successive repressive regimes have led to nation-wide protests with far reaching consequences. "The continuation of the protests beyond the suspension of the Master Plan, the immediate cause of the protests erupted in Oromia in 2015, revealed the failure of the Ethiopian regime to address the grievances of the country's different ethnic groups" (ACLEDA, 2018:1). Peace, stability, mutual development and national consensus can only be achieved with the triumph of democratic governance in which the freedom as well as the welfare of the people is guaranteed.

Obviously, popular resistances in Ethiopia brought about regime changes. However, the regime changes could not resolve the existing injustice – to open the way for creation of a multinational democratized state. In fact, Ethiopian leaders have not only failed to transform state-society relations internally, but the unhealthy relations with the neighboring countries have also continued to be complicated. However, the recent all-encompassing and spontaneous popular protests engulfed the country were different from the past practices in that they have ushered in wider domestic and foreign policy ramifications without regime change. Internally, the protests forced the EPRDF regime to make political reforms in which leadership change has become a landmark outcome. The new leadership has promised political liberalizations internally and has taken some practical measures to that end. Externally, the regime has also decided to implement the Algiers Agreement unconditionally, which has been frozen for two decades. This has led to the new phase in the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement in June 2018. Since the aim of the study is to examine how political liberalization in Ethiopia impacted the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and its implications for the stability of the Horn of Africa. In this chapter, efforts are made to identify the triggering factors of the deadly mass protests which have become a cause for the current domestic political liberalization and the country's consequent foreign policy shift in the HoA.

4.1.1.1. Political Factors

Democratic advancement and rapid economic development were what the EPRDF government pledged to deliver, when it came to power in 1991 (ACLED, 2018). It was thought that achieving these objectives guarantees national security and survival of the regime. Towards this end, the new government promised to take several measures in terms of political and economic aspects. The reform measure started with reorganizing the state structure and liberalization of economic policies. However, as many have argued, the reform measures were intended to grip on and consolidate its power internally rather than resolving enduring economic and political questions of the people. Externally, the regime aimed to cope with the changing international environment and fulfill the interests of the external powers especially US and its allies who backed it in its ascendance to power (Aregawi, 2001 and Tefera, 2019). In fact, as a result of its lions share in overthrowing the *Derg* regime, the TPLF championed in directing the Transitional period's political landscape. As Lyons (1996:121) succinctly puts “the TPLF/EPRDF led throughout the

transition period and capitalized on its commanding position to consolidate its power. The party dominated the political landscape by virtue of its military power”.

The new regime introduced a federal system of governance based on ethno-linguistic lines by the Transitional Charter in 1991. The adoption of the federal system of governance along the ethno-linguistic lines intended to answer the decades old questions of ethnic inequality, popular participation and democracy. The federal system was established by the 1995 Constitution in which ‘the nations, nationalities and peoples’ of the country guaranteed the right to self-administration up to secession (Aregawi, 2001). The rationale for decentralization of political, administrative and economic power was ensuring popular participation and democratization as well to mitigate ethnic tensions and conflicts. It was also thought to foster self-governance, popular sovereignty and responsive government (Meheret, 2002).

However, the TPLF/EPRDF took power with the liberation struggle mentality without putting behind Marxist-Leninist values such as Vanguard party and democratic centralism (Aregawi, 2001). This crippled democratic advancement and the effectiveness of multiparty system at the early stage of EPRDF’s rule. The TPLF formed an umbrella organization-EPRDF-only to appear as multinational party and exercise ethnic based politics throughout the country. It was political calculation aimed to control the country. Using this umbrella organization, the TPLF controlled the July 1991 National Conference convened in Addis Ababa. On the conference, TPLF/EPRDF invited political organizations that fit to its orientation and excluded those which were not in line with its political program. This revealed the future Ethiopian political trajectory (Siraw, 2015 and Gudeta, 2013). Later, the Transitional Charter was transplanted into the 1995 constitution. For Aalen (2002) a predesigned political orientation was imposed on the Ethiopian people. Taking military triumph as a solution brushed the opportunity of resolving the country’s century old problems and deciding the future Ethiopian political trajectories. As Gudeta (2013:255) argues “the political system of Ethiopia is not as such a product of political bargaining, genuine competition and a national consensus of an inclusive approach to governance”.

The ways the decentralization processes applied in Ethiopia neither underpinned national unity nor reinforced regional autonomy. The process rather intensified ethnic rivalries exploited by elites (Clapham, 2017). The TPLF/EPRDF regime ended in creating centralized party rule which

Merera (2007:85) describes as ‘decentralization within centralization’. For Siraw (2015:1) also “the administration is federal only in a structural sense, top-down policy directions control lower level activities and challenge regional autonomy”. The fair power sharing was void and key political, military, security, administrative and financial positions were overwhelmed by a single ethnic group (Lefort, 2010 and Aalen, 2002).

From the very beginning, political organizations and other civil society associations that were considered challenging to TPLF/EPRDF such as OLF and other Pan-Ethiopian parties were excluded (Clapham, 2017). Regional handpicked representatives- called PDOs (OPDO, ANDM and SEPDM), considered as ‘puppets’ of TPLF than representatives of their respective ethnic groups, served as instruments of domination and control (Merera, 2003 and Vestal, 1999). The founder of the TPLF, Aregawi (2001: 8) has argued that “the strength and participation of the EPDM and OPDO- organizations that helped the TPLF form the EPRDF – was only nominal’. For instance, for Merera (2007:94) “the OPDO could not move beyond the structural limits and opportunities given to it by its creators, and hence has become an instrument of indirect rule, a classic case of controlling the fate and resources of other peoples’ or it is possible to say that they were powerless political actors’.

In the early 1990’s, the TPLF/EPRDF regime also seemed to open up the political space for freedom of expression as a result of which newspapers and magazine publications mushroomed across the country. However, the EPRDF spared no time to silence any form of critical voice. Against the principles stipulated in the Transitional Charter and later in the 1995 Constitution, the government narrowed down the freedom of expression using direct and indirect measures. Consequently, independent media outlets were forced to work under strict surveillance and censorship with a series of jams; association, demonstration and other kinds of free expression were systematically restricted throughout the EPRDF’s rule. Journalists, editors, publishers were continuously intimidated, imprisoned and expelled under the guise of national security. Even though rhetorically, the government supported freedom of press, in practice it was adamant to allow freedom of expression (Lefort, 2009).

Even though elections have been carried out periodically since 1992, no free and fair election was conducted. The ruling party has been competing for election with itself. The systematic

expulsion of OLF on the eve of the 1992 election revealed the regime's lack of commitment for democratic advancement at its early rule. Rather than entertaining alternative voices the government has outrageously detained and intimidated members and leaders of political parties, unions and various associations only because they were at odds with the ideology of the EPRDF (Aregawi, 2001: 6-7). In all rounds, the EPRDF secured an absolute majority in regional and national elections.

The 2005 election was a landmark in the election history of Ethiopia where government opened political space to certain extent and opposition political parties performed better. During the 2005 election, political parties challenged the ruling party and won several seats in the federal parliament and regional councils. Based on the elections processes and the general political trajectories headed by the EPRDF, Kassahun (2003: 130) concluded that "the political system has changed little, with the exception of cosmetic changes in terms of procedures and mechanisms, and actual political activity". Lyons (2019: 9) also notes as, "elections following rebel victory in Ethiopia ... had little to do with determining who would rule but played key functions in power consolidation and the creation a strong, authoritarian EPRDF party". Under the EPRDF's entire rule Political Parties endured harsh imprisonment, harassment and torture without the due process of law. The government acts both as a referee and a player resulted in opponents' withdrawal and governments' landslide wins (Gudeta, 2013).

After the war with Eritrea, the EPRDF reinforced its authoritarian character. To earn a name, 'Ethiopian nationalist', the regime repressed all dissidents in the name of national security, which helped the regime to establish a 'dominant party' rule. Particularly, the situation gave the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi an opportunity to systematically consolidate and concentrate domestic and foreign policy decision making powers into his hands (Kidist, 2011). Aalen and Tronvoll (2009) have argued that Ethiopia has definitely fallen back into the camp of authoritarian regimes. Contrary to its 1991 promises, the EPRDF government increased its omnipresence and interventions in all walks of the life of the people (Merera, 2011). For instance, the controlling system of the regime stretched up to a household level through a method called 1 to 5 (One-to-Five). At the local level, the government has been exchanging vote with the means of productions and social services the lack of which threatened the life of the local people (Lefort, 2010 and Pausewang, 2002). As Lefort (2010:3) argues "this is because all public

services, from education to fertilizer, from health care to loans, depend on the good will of local officials of the Party-State, up to and including access to the peasant farmer's only means of production – land". In this way no departure was made from the previous regimes. As a result of the government's continued political and economic exclusion, in the words of Merera (2007:100) "the popular struggles for real autonomy, self-rule and democracy occurred across Oromia".

Here, it is also important to note that, EPRDF's growing authoritarianism affected the country's external relations particularly with the neighboring states. In this regard, as (Dima, 2009) has observed, rather than addressing internal problems, successive Ethiopian regimes accuse external entities. For instance, the 'no war, no peace' situation with Eritrea partly sustained for two decades due to the increasing authoritarianism of the regime (Berhane, 2006).

4.1.1.2. Economic Factors

When it came to power in 1991, the other promise of the EPRDF was to achieve rapid economic development by introducing a free market economy. Towards this end, the new government took measures to liberalize its economic policies by privatizing certain business enterprises that were previously owned by the state under the command economic system. However, even though the new regime abolished the command economic system and heralded its adoption of the free market economy, it could not drop its fidelity to the Marxist-Leninist values (Aaron, 2017). It retained several enterprises such as telecommunications, electricity, airlines, banking and insurance sectors, and also the most important of all resources, land. Moreover, in the privatization schemes, the EPRDF favored endowments affiliated to its member parties (like, Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT)), Tiret, Tumsa and Wando, which belong to TPLF, ANDM, OPDO and SEPDM (ex-EPRDF member parties) respectively as well as multinational companies connected to it (like, MIDROC technology group). Such measures indicate the EPRDF's thinking of business in politics or monopolizing the political economy (Berhanu, 2011 and Vestal, 1999). Lefort (2015:360) writes as "after the command economy of the *Derg*, a kind of party-state led economy was put in place".

The regime's portrayal of adopting political and economic liberalization was a tactical shift for consolidation of power. The end of the Cold War and triumph of the capitalist block led by US enforced the regime to adjust its position to secure support from US, the then unipolar

superpower and the West, to consolidate its power. In this regard, Tefera (2019: 463) has noted as, “the circumstances surrounding the ‘shifts’ in ideologies by the TPLF show that ideologies were used to consolidate power within the party and later impose domination at the state level”. The party/state controlled both political and economic aspects. Moreover, the EPRDF’s economic policy revolves around party prioritization and top-down policy approach. This ill-defined economic policy approach followed by the EPRDF not only installed unjust economic development, but also exclusionary (Henok, 2015). EPRDF’s economic policies were politically driven than to ensure inclusive economic development, which bring change in the life of people and transform the state. It inherently attached the state to external debt and has not freed the people from the need of aid. For instance, in 2011 more than seven million Ethiopians included in the Safety Net Programme received \$300m in cash that year (Tewodaj, 2011).

In fact, under the EPRDF rule, infrastructural and physical developments were achieved though variations exist across the regional states. In terms of physical and infrastructural developments such as health, education, roads and electricity, and reducing child mortality and gender parity in primary education and increasing primary school enrolment, no African country becomes comparable with Ethiopia (Aaron, 2017 and Lefort, 2015). However, many ask questions regarding the quality of these physical developments and their comprehensiveness. Furthermore, the government claim of double-digit economic growth for 15 consecutive years could not ensure human development in a meaningful manner. It served the regime to gamble with the ‘double digit’ economic growth by posturing as if it lifted the country out of poverty (Lefort, 2009). As Aaron (2017: 4) argues, “if economic growth and development are to be advanced effectively, physical infrastructure is a key, but most important are “soft” infrastructures such as the legal system and property rights, rules, and regulations in the financial system which must be fleshed out and codified”. The regime’s party prioritization, making Business Company’s satellite of the ruling party, corruption and excessive bureaucracy hindered economic and political reform (Lefort, 2015).

Conspicuously, the most serious discrepancy is the unequal balance of power between member parties of the EPRDF that led to the glaring disparity in terms of national resources allocation among the regional states. For instance, according to the Central Statistical Data between 1993/94-1999/2000, the Oromia region, which constitute 34% of the country’s population and

the largest contributor of the national earnings benefited from the country's national resources proportionally less than the Tigray region (which constitute only 6% of the country's population (Merera, 2011). Even though the EPRDF/TPLF has been trading with the name of supporting the less developed and more marginalized regions such as Somali, Afar, Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz, these regions in combination have received fewer national resources than Tigray (*Ibid.*). In real terms, these regions were less developed and more marginalized than the Tigray region. Hence, this regional disparity in terms of economic resources distribution raised the grievances of the people and mobilized for protests against the TPLF dominated EPRDF regime - claiming economic justice and entitlement. Aaron (2017: 4) states that "the perceptions of horizontal inequality among groups (based on ethnicity, religion, and gender) across economic, social, and political dimensions, resulting in unequal access to resources and hence an unequal success in terms of income and wealth". This led to spontaneous popular protests across the country.

4.1.2. The Immediate Cause of the Protests: *The Addis Ababa Master Plan*

The failure to establish inclusive political and economic system that can accommodate divergent interests and reconcile antagonistic competition fomented conflict and instability in Ethiopia. Political instability, economic distortion and external vulnerability also continued under the EPRDF rule. This endured contested state legitimacy. Political exclusion, economic marginalization and social injustice left the people without any choice but continue various forms of resistances. Hence, the Addis Ababa Master Plan that caused the popular protests roughly started in 2014 in Oromia was only immediate factors. Particularly, the Oromo people and the EPRDF regime started to depart early in the 1990's when the OLF was expelled from the Transitional Charter.

Even though Ethiopia lived with popular revolt for decades, the popular protests it experienced since 2015 were unprecedented. These spontaneous popular mobilizations have forced the government to declare a State of Emergency twice (Awol, 2017). The center of these unprecedented waves of protests was the Oromia region-the largest region in terms of both demography and geography. The fundamental cause of the protests was the Addis Ababa Master Plan, which was planned to expand the capital city into the Oromia region without legal framework.

The publication of the Master Plan, which would be implemented within 100kms radius into the territories of the Oromia region, was carried out without public consultation (Pinaud and Raleigh, 2017). If it could be implemented, it could have evicted thousands of Oromo farmers from their ancestral land. The Oromo people contend that Addis Ababa expanded at the expense of the surrounding Oromo farmers on its outskirts- the eviction which not only attributed to loss of land but identity. The Master Plan also infringed the constitutional autonomy of the Oromia regional state.

In the entire EPRDF rule and particularly since 2005 the government's policy of attracting larger investment led to widespread evictions of the people from their land with very little or no compensation. Giving large tracts of lands to domestic and foreign investors had been widely practiced in Oromia, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Amhara and SNNP regions. According to Lefort (2015: 375), "since 2008 3.5 million hectares have already been allocated, most of it to foreign investors, with some of them acquiring up to 500,000 hectares at a time". Dessalegn (2011) calls this massive land transfer: 'land grab or the great lands give away'. Combined with decades of political and economic marginalization, the Master Plan, which was aimed to address the growing land shortage in the capital city, infuriated the Oromo people (Assafa, 2016). The ever growing political and economic marginalization of majority of the people, centralized policy formulation, economic inequalities, the widening gap between rich and poor and rising unemployment and underemployment, and the rampant corruption under the TPLF/EPRDF regime obliged the people to find lasting solution by their own (Pinaud and Raleigh, 2017). This was revealed when the protests continued even though the government scraped the Master Plan. Rather than addressing the problems, the government's response was to crackdown the protesters forcefully and make them responsible for their actions by labelling them as anti-peace, anti-development, missionaries of external enemies like Egypt, Eritrea and insurgent groups like OLF, G7 and etc. (Lyons, 2019).

The protests, led by the Oromo youth group called 'Qeerroo' (unmarried young male in the Afan Oromo language), were ignited in November, 2015 in Ginci- some 60kms west of the capital. It rapidly spread and engulfed the entire Oromia region. By 2016, it also spread to the Amhara region where the Amhara people showed their solidarity with the Oromo protestors (Lefort, 2018). Other regions also joined the protests as a result of the accumulated grievances against the

EPRDF regime. Pinaud and Raleigh (2017) have pinpointed that, “the continuation of the protests revealed widespread suspicion of the regime and enduring grievances among different ethnic groups, particularly in the way federalism is being implemented, and in the way power is shared’. Consequently, ‘protests by young Oromos’, fed up with a government dominated by smaller, but more powerful ethnic groups, nearly brought the government to its knees’ (Sengupta, 2018).

Basically, the mounting Oromo nationalism twisted the EPRDF regime dominated by the TPLF both from outside and within the regime. The regime was discriminatory even within itself. The discriminatory nature of the party was structural and created with the formation of the coalition itself. The structural arrangement of the coalition does not treat all member parties fairly and equally¹. This paved the way for the creation of the soft-liners within the regime, called Team Lemma, a group that aspired for political reform in Ethiopia. Embracing the pro-reform wing of the popular protests, the soft-liners struggling within the regime has had upper hand (Sengupta, (2018). Thus, combined with the massive popular protests, the internal struggle changed the balance of power between member parties of the EPRDF. TPLF lost its dominance as the mounting protests embraced soft-liners from within the ruling coalition (Lefort, 2018). Particularly, the alliance between the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) reduced the dominant position of the TPLF. This was materialized when new leadership selected outside of the control of the TPLF.

The ascendance to power of Abiy Ahmed as a new prime minister of Ethiopia has positively impacted on the political landscape of the country by leading towards political liberalization. Particularly, the reform measures taken by the new leadership during the initial period of the reform have been new in the Modern Ethiopian politics². It attracted people both from inside and outside of the country. Particularly, no one expected that such leadership would emerge from the regime that ruled the country with authoritarian hands for more than a quarter of a century. Being elected as the chairman of the party on 27 March and Prime Minister on 2 April 2018, Abiy Ahmed took tremendous political reform measures which include releasing of political prisoners

¹. Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the politics of the Horn of Africa on 07 April, 2020.

². Ibid

including the high profile opposition party leaders and individuals charged with terrorism, inviting exiled political parties and individuals from abroad, lifting state of emergency, opening up and widening the space for freedom of press and abolition of repressive laws, and also promised to liberalize the economy, etc. (Sengupta, 2018).

In addition, institutional reforms especially security and justice sectors, and building and strengthening democratic institutions were given greater emphasizes. Institutions such as National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and Federal Court are now run by individuals who were previously critical of the ruling party.

Moreover, on his World Economic Forum speech, the Prime Minister pointed out that the road map of the political liberalization targeted to achieve democratic governance, economic development and peace are on track (World Economic Forum Davos, 2019). Furthermore, rounds of discussions organized by the Prime Minister Office were also aimed at widening the political space, initiate economic ideas and institution building through deliberations in which various stakeholders widely participated. The Prime Minister also promised repeatedly that his government has got a determination to conduct a fair and free election which will be taken as a landmark in the democratic advancement of this country (CGTN, 2018).

In addition to the promising accomplishment at home, externally, the two-decades long impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been ended, which can be taken as a primary foreign policy focus of the new leadership. Needless to add, the political liberalization triggered by the popular protests forced the government to realign its foreign policy, which as Ratner (2009) argues: “political liberalization led countries realign their foreign policy preferences”. In this regard, it is important to note that, Ethiopia’s Foreign Policy is used to be controlled by the dominant group in the EPRDF regime and the policy regarding the relationship with Eritrea was the TPLF’s sole business. At present, the shift in the balance of power among the member parties of the ruling coalition resulted in the side-lining of the dominant actor, TPLF, in the FP formulation and implementation. This ended the standoff between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which for long seemed to be impossible (Al Jazeera, 2018).

4.2. The Political Liberalization and Foreign Policy Realignment in Ethiopia

Although the sweeping and spontaneous mass protests that engulfed Ethiopia have had an overriding effect, the intra-party competition between the members of the coalition ruling party played a tremendous role in setting a stage for the political liberalization in Ethiopia and in the region. And as part of a response to the mounting pressure from the people for more political space and economic justice and to relax intra-party tensions, the EPRDF changed its leadership approach in which the old guards were made to take a back seat. The new leadership has taken remarkable reform measures which were not limited to domestic political liberalization, but also has indeed brought about fundamental changes to the region.

Given the political and economic crisis simmering in Ethiopia, for the EPRDF, introducing domestic political reform and foreign policy adjustment was a must to save the country from the verge of disintegration. And as the ruling party's authoritarianism has become severe, its legitimacy was increasingly deteriorated. In fact, for more than two decades, it was improbable if not impossible, to expect reform from the EPRDF as the very foundation of the party was appeared to be not likely open for internal reform, which reinvigorated the ethnocentric authoritarian system of governance and forced the ruling party to introduce any reform³.

Particularly, the dissatisfaction and frustration of the people regarding the TPLF domination led to the flare up of the massive popular protest and resistance that trembled the state from its foundation. The TPLF's overrepresentation in the political, economic, administrative and military structures of the country angered the non-Tigrayan ethnic groups. Especially, the Oromo and Amhara people, the two largest ethnic groups in the country, increasingly felt that they were marginalized from the political and economic aspects (Lefort, 2010). Consequently, as the popular protests have become heightened in both regions, the dominant position of the TPLF within the EPRDF started to wane.

The popular protests, which erupted in 2015, shifted the balance of power between member parties of the EPRDF as well as between the strong center (dominated by the TPLF) and weak regional constituents (Lyons, 2019). The Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization (OPDO) made a leadership change to face challenges coming from the TPLF and as a response to

³ . Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the politics of the Horn of Africa, on 07 April, 2020.

demands from the people. The soft liners emerged from the marginalized OPDO and ANDM by skillfully embracing the cause of the people that garnered them support of the people to face the TPLF domination- architect of the EPRDF. As Wrong (2018:50) states “skillfully exploiting tensions within the TPLF, Abiy Ahmed and his supporters persuaded the Amhara and the Oromo wings of the ruling EPRDF to make common cause, effectively staging a perfectly legal ‘soft coup’ against Tigrayan dominance”. To put it differently, the disruption of balance of power within the EPRDF led to the emergence of a new leadership, Abiy Ahmed, outside of the dominant TPLF party.

The situation influenced both domestic and foreign policies of the state (Belete, 2018). And, as Belete (2018: 36) inferred the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and the new political dynamics in the wider Horn has driven by the political development in Ethiopia, the change of leadership in particular.

4.3. Challenges of the Political Liberalization in Ethiopia

Though the political reforms in Ethiopia caused remarkable reform measures, it has not gone unchallenged rather faced with several constraints. The constraints challenged the prospects of the political liberalization. Over expectation of the public, intra-party conflict, ethnic tensions, and lack of strong and legitimate institutions are among the major constraints that challenged the political reforms initiated by the new leadership.

Firstly, the tremendous political reforms initially took by the new leadership has raised public expectations and new demands. Following the ascendance of Abiy Ahmed to power Ethiopia experienced a series of reform measures unfamiliar in the political history of the country. However, the change could not meet the over expectations and demands of the public⁴. In addition, for Dima, the political liberalization process could not maintain its initial pace and momentum. The hope that the new political environment has expected to address the enduring political problems started to wane. According to him, “serious questions are being raised if indeed Ethiopia is really breaking away from the past and charting a new and better future”. He

⁴. Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 7 April 2020

also has reservations whether institutional, economic and other key reforms are being addressed sufficiently. There are also critiques which point out the continued personalization of politics”⁵.

Secondly, the opening and widening of the political landscape has heightened ethnic tensions and rivalries among different groups. The ethnic tensions also manifested in different parts of the country even apart from the dominant ethnic groups (Oromo, Amhara and Tigray). For example, the ethnic groups residing in the southern part of the country claimed for greater regional autonomy. Evictions of thousands of people and inter-group conflicts were exacerbated. Moreover, the newly emerged ultra-nationalism in Amhara region and antagonistic elite competition in Oromia region has caused eminent security threats and human right violations that extended beyond the two regions. Particularly in the Oromia region, the clash between the armed opposition political groups literally named *OLF Shene* and the government security forces due to the futile DDR Processes threatened peace and stability especially in western and southern parts of the region⁶.

Thirdly, the intra-party conflict among the former EPRDF coalitions has its own implications in destabilizing the country by generating crises in the country. The political reforms ushered in the country enforced the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) to loss its influence it has been exercising for the last 27 years. As a result, the party retreated as a spoiler of the political change by accusing the reform threatening federalism and the constitution. Moreover, the dissolution of the EPRDF party and the establishment of Prosperity Party highly affected the influence of TPLF on the country’s politics. Due to this, TPLF is blamed for generating crisis in different parts of the county by the reformers⁷.

Generally, together with the lack of strong, legitimate and independent institutions the aforementioned factors challenged the effectiveness of the political reforms. And this has its own implications on the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement.

⁵ . *Ibid.*

⁶ . Interview with Getaneh Wudeneh, peace and security expert, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 December 2019.

⁷ . *Ibid*

Chapter Five

5. Ethio-Eritrea Rapprochement and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa's Peace and Security

5.1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa has been ravaged by various types of intra-state and inter-state conflicts for decades. This made mutual destabilization, subversion and proxy war the dominant feature of the region, which has jeopardized peace and stability of the region, where the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrea war was the most devastating one. In the past twenty years both Ethiopia and Eritrea used all means of subversion to weaken and undermine the interests of one another. Especially, the proxy war including the use of the neighboring countries against each has been widely used until the present rapprochement. This highly destabilized the region, which has hampered regional cooperation.

However, after the new Ethiopian PM, Abiy Ahmed, has assumed power in Ethiopia, things have started to change rapidly in the region which both the peoples of the two countries and the international community never expected. The major reforms in Ethiopia not only ended the stalemate between the two countries but it also restored diplomatic relations in the region, including between Eritrea and Somalia, and Eritrea and Djibouti. Consequently, the new peace talks pursued by Ethiopia and Eritrea have widened opportunities for strengthening formative regional cooperation and integration schemes in terms of peace and security. Hence, in this section the new rapprochement, the drivers of the rapprochement, the positive implications of the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa and its constraints are explored in detail.

5.2. Genesis of the Rapprochement

5.2.1. The Impacts of the 'No War, No Peace' Situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea

In the last twenty years Ethiopia and Eritrea have engaged in mutual destabilization and subversion policies to weaken each other. Thus, the 'no war, no peace' situation between them impacted their political, economic, social and peace as well as security even though it has been harsher on Eritrea. To be sure, the impact has been on the entire region at different levels.

During the ‘no war, no peace’ situation, the EPRDF regime dominated by the TPLF made its main foreign policy objective to weaken and isolate Eritrea. The regime worked to destabilize Eritrea internally by hosting and organizing Eritrean opposition forces against the regime in Asmara and diplomatically to isolate the state from the international arena. According to Dima, “the EPRDF regime made its sole foreign policy objective of weakening and isolating Eritrea”⁸. Likewise, Ethiopia has been pushing the UN not to lift the sanction that was imposed on Eritrea by characterizing it as a pariah state in the Horn of Africa⁹. For example, one member of the Ethiopian Parliament witnessed how Ethiopia has been working to isolate Eritrea from the international community and to provoke the Eritrean people against the Isaias regime said:

In Ethiopian Parliamentary Diplomacy, the approach of exposing Eritreans faults was considered as one mission. This approach was used by Ethiopia as to expose Eritrean wrong doings up on regional and international stages. For instance, on African Caribbean Pacific and European Union (ACPEU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly was the major international stage through which Ethiopia was exposing Eritrea’s deed against its neighbors like sudden invasion on Djibouti in 2008 and helping Al-Shabaab in the region (Terefe, 2019: 53).

Likewise, the regime in Asmara has used its maximum effort to destabilize and weaken Ethiopia. The Isaias regime has been arming and supporting internal and external forces such as OLF, ONLF, G7 and the Somali Islamist groups and other anti-Ethiopian forces against the regime in Addis Ababa (Kassahun, 2013 and Healy, 2009). In addition to supporting internal and external forces against Ethiopian government, the Eritrean government has also been working to expose Ethiopia’s non-compliance to its international obligations. Hence, the policy of mutual destabilization caused endless security threats, humanitarian crisis, death toll and economic erosion that scarred both states and the region as well. Concerning the multidimensional effects of the deadlock between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Hallelujah argues that “the war and the subsequent stalemate affected their economies, their peace and security, their development endeavors, their political advancement and foreign policy”¹⁰. Moreover, the proxy war both parties have been

⁸ . Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 07 April, 2020.

⁹ . Interview with Mr Getachew Nigatu, MoFA/ Director General, FR-SIRC on 05 April 2020

¹⁰ . Interview with Mr Hallelujah Lule, Researcher at Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies, on 09 April, 2020.

engaging in Somalia complicated the peace and security situation and hampered cooperation and regional integration.

After almost two decades of hostility both states realized that harboring the hostility has had the effect of further worsening state-society relations in both countries. As a result, both nations are forced to end the stalemate. According to one informant, “there was an increasing realization from both sides that the stalemate had to be ended”¹¹. Consequently, the leaders of both countries decided to end the ‘no war, no peace’ situation. Especially, the new leadership, assumed power in Ethiopia initiated a peace process with Eritrea as soon as it came to power. This does not mean that there are no external actors, who contributed to speed up the process of the rapprochement.

5.2.2. The New Developments Regarding the 2000 Algiers Agreement since Abiy Assumed Power

The Algiers Agreement ended the ferocious war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but it could not curtail the hostility between the protagonists. Rather than normalizing their relations, the two states resorted to proxy war against each other (Lyons, 2009). Both countries, particularly Ethiopia, failed to comply with the international agreement they dully signed. Ethiopia suggested dialogue as a precondition to implement the EEBC rulings. Eritrea on its part insisted on the unconditional implementation of the rulings to enter dialogue with Ethiopia. This set in motion a kind of Cold War diplomatic relations between the two nations. The distorted lingering historical relations between EPLF and TPLF (dominant political actors in both states) and their inflexible stance contributed to the standoff (Healy and Plaut, 2007 and Bereketeab, 2010). For Dima “the genesis of the conflict is internal to relations between the leadership of the two rebel movements that divided up Ethiopia among themselves when the Dergue regime collapsed in 1991”¹². However, the complex relationship between the two liberation movements has made the inter-party conflict to appear an inter-state conflict to the international community. The stalemate further worsened the volatile and undeveloped political environs of the Horn of Africa.

Somewhat surprisingly, following the change of leadership in the EPRDF regime, the political impasse and enmity between Ethiopia and Eritrea suddenly came to an end. In this regard,

¹¹ . *Ibid.*

¹² . Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 07 April, 2020

according to in-house information, the shift of balance of power from TPLF to OPDO led to the realization of the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In Dima's opinion, "it is the shift in the leadership of the EPRDF from the hitherto dominant TPLF, the architects of the conflict with Eritrea, to the OPDO that is responsible for bringing about the thaw in relations between the two states"¹³. This clearly indicates the fact that the political enmity between the EPLF and TPLF than the border caused the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. When the TPLF, which was dominant in the Ethiopian FP making, was sidelined by the reformist group, the rapprochement with Eritrea has been realized. Similarly, Hallelujah believes that "the change in the political arrangement in Ethiopia played significant role in the rapprochement with Eritrea. It was since the TPLF's role in Ethiopia's FP and security policy was reduced or the change of political hierarchy within the EPRDF that facilitated the peace process". It can be inferred from this that: first, border was not the cause of the war and the subsequent stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea; second, political rigidity, militarism and authoritarianism ethos embedded within both parties political culture; third, the dominant position of the two parties in the FP of their states as well as the two states security policy have frozen the stalemate. However, following the leadership change in Ethiopia, Ethiopia announced unconditional implementation of the 2000 Algiers Agreement. The decision was a step forward which replaced militarism ethos with diplomacy that immediately ended the 'no war no peace' situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The new rapprochement also impacted inter-state relations in the region.

5.3. Driving Factors for the Rapprochement

Basically, the restoration of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea did not come out of the blue. There are various driving factors that enforced both states to normalize their relations. In this regard, as Wallenstein (2015) has observed, internal and external factors are responsible for states to dissolve their incompatibilities among which shift of priority, change of leadership, economic crisis and external interventions are essential. According to Zartman (2001) for conflict to be resolved it must reach a maturation stage. At such a stage the perception of the parties to the conflict is crucial. The parties in conflict must understand the consequences of the conflict. As such both Ethiopia and Eritrea have desperately wanted to come out of the endless crisis. According to one key informant:

¹³ . *ibid.*

Both states fought a very bitter war for two years and lived 18 years in stalemate. The war and the subsequent stalemate affected their economies, politics, peace and security, development endeavors and foreign policy in the two countries. No one is emerging a victor out of the crisis. Therefore, there was an increasing understanding from both sides that the ‘no war, no peace’ situation had to end¹⁴.

It is possible to infer from this fact that, there are important factors that contributed to the rapprochement of the two countries. On top of that the increasing structural challenges and frustration of the people of the two countries regarding the crisis also forced the leadership to end the stalemate.

5.3.1. Domestic Factors for the Rapprochement

Even though there are subjective and objective conditions from both sides that enforced the two states in the realization of the rapprochement, political developments in Ethiopia had an overriding effect (Redie, 2019). From the Ethiopian side, the massive popular protests challenged the TPLF’s domination and brought about a leadership change within the EPRDF regime (Lyons, 2019). Similarly, Michael (2018: 420) argues as, “the selection of PM Abiy represented a dramatic solution to the domestic turmoil: an Oromo with reformist credentials, his emergence signaled the waning influence of the TPLF within the EPRDF coalition, and constituted the most fundamental reordering of political power within the Ethiopian body politic since TPLF guerillas swept into Addis Ababa in May 1991”. As some argues the shift of power balance within the EPRDF also brought about a shift of power from the north to the south of the Ethiopia (Abdeta, 2019).

In addition to the domestic remarkable reform measures, the new leadership redirected the foreign policy of the country, mainly towards the neighboring countries. In terms of foreign policy shift, according to one key informant before the political liberalization in Ethiopia, the EPRDF had different foreign policies for each country in the Horn in which neighboring countries were classified into different categories. This was not diplomatically wise because it did not help to maintain the interests of Ethiopia in the divided region¹⁵. Even though it narrates ‘in-side-out’ principles, practically the regime has been accusing external actors for internal

¹⁴. Interview with Mr Hallelujah Lule, Researcher at Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies, on 09 April, 2020.

¹⁵. Interview with Mr Getachew Nigatu, MoFA/ Director General, FR-SIRC on 05 February 2019/Office

problems. Particularly, the 2002 Ethiopian FP document classifies Eritrea as enemy of Ethiopia. But now the FP directions set similar criteria for neighboring countries, including Eritrea. Hence, the decision to normalize relations with Eritrea was also part of the foreign policy realignment by Ethiopia.

The political liberalization in Ethiopia has to overcome internal challenges and external pressures. Ending the two decades deadlock was among the policy measure the new leadership has taken to reduce the simmering pressures. On the interrelation between political liberalization in Ethiopia and the rapprochement with Eritrea Hallelujah states that:

The two are connected in one way but not connected in another way. Partly, the rapprochement with Eritrea is part of the political transition in Ethiopia but the issue of human rights and democratic principles are not a pre-requisite for the relationship with Eritrea, because political liberalization is not happening in Eritrea. We can say rapprochement not based on democratization, but rapprochement based on peace, economic and social cooperation and cooperation on regional peace and security¹⁶.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's growing economy needs not only alternative ports but also proximate ports. Eritrean ports, particularly the Assab port is the nearest and safest port to Ethiopia. Given Ethiopia being a landlocked country, high dependence on Djibouti port is not economically meaningful.

From the Eritrean side, the Isaias regime and the Eritrean people welcomed the normalization of the relations with Ethiopia. In fact, Isaias interpreted TPLF's loss of dominant position in Ethiopia as his political correctness in his relationship with TPLF. Before the change of leadership in Ethiopia both regimes have left no stone unturned to remove one another from power and destabilize one another's state. On the other hand, Isaias got a chance to negotiate with a body that reconciled itself with the reality of Eritrean independence. The Eritrean people also applauded the rapprochement and the official visit by the Ethiopian Prime Minister to Asmara. In this regard, as Ambassador Araya Desta, head of the permanent mission of the State of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA, pointed out:

¹⁶. Interview with Mr Hallelujah Lule, Researcher at Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies, on 09 April, 2020

the government of Eritrea has been waiting for the overthrow of the dominance of the TPLF from the Ethiopian power politics and FP. The conflict by itself was caused on the issues that could be resolved peacefully through negotiation between the two governments. There is no conflict between the people of the two countries. This was realized by looking at the feeling of the people of the two countries during the reciprocal visits of the two countries' leaders¹⁷.

As the new leadership, who came to power is from the Oromo, the Eritrean people relieved from the threat to their sovereignty. For the Eritrean people dealing with leadership that recognizes the Eritrean independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty is considered as a great victory. Thus, the Eritrean people interpreted the warm welcome made to their president upon his visit to Ethiopia as recognition of the cause they fought for three decades (*Ibid.*).

In addition, the two-year bitter war and the subsequent stalemate between the two countries have highly deteriorated Eritrea's economy. Due to the war, Ethiopia, the sole beneficiaries of the Assab port, shifted its trade route mainly to Port Djibouti and other alternative ports. This cut off income Eritrea could get from the port services. Furthermore, the economic sanction imposed on Eritrea in 2009 also worsened the already fragile Eritrean economy and challenged the Isaias regime. Here, as Ambassador Araya disclosed: "the two-year war and the subsequent stalemate affected Eritrea than the thirty-year liberation war fought against successive Ethiopian regimes". Hence, the internal economic and political deterioration forced the Eritrean government to reconsider the desire to use the opportunity created as a result of a leadership change in Ethiopia and its unconditional acceptance to implement the Border Commission rulings.

Hence, following the signing of the 'declaration of Peace and Friendship', economic interactions such as telecommunications and air flights were started immediately. Moreover, after Eritrea and Somalia agreed to end their 15 years of disagreement, Ethiopia and Somalia have both called for the UN Security Council to lift sanctions imposed on Eritrea in 2009.

¹⁷. Interview with the Ambassador Araya Desta, Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA on 07 February, 2019.

5.3.2. External/Geopolitical Factors

The Horn of Africa is the most divided and insecure part of the world that has been experiencing a complex regional security problem. Needless to add, the persistent intra-state and inter-state conflicts have been aggravated by the external powers interested in the geopolitical landscape of the region. The Horn of Africa's proximity to the overcrowded international trade route, the Red Sea, has also been the spotlight for superpowers and emerging powers rivalry that has been affecting politics in the region. Even though, the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was largely initiated by the leaders of both states, this does not mean that the dynamic situation in the region and outside of the region has not impacted the effectiveness of the peace processes.

External powers having interests in the Red Sea region such as the European Union, US, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been exerting pressure on Ethiopian and Eritrean governments to normalize their relations. Due to its greater impact on the Red Sea international trade route and geopolitical interests, the crisis around the Red Sea region, particularly the war in Yemen has attracted the interests of various powers. As Wrong (2018: 51) notes "the festering quarrel between Eritrea and Ethiopia has threatened the stability of a coastline crammed with state-of-the-art military and telecommunications equipment, as well as highly skilled foreign troops". Here, first, the US and EU are not comfortable with the increasing presence of China and Middle Eastern states in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea coast lines such as Eritrea, Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti(The Africa Report, 2018). To check the activities of the China and Iran in the region, US need to have allies near Djibouti (Mosley, 2018). Eritrea is within the US's spotlight in the region next to Ethiopia. Even though US has been allying with Ethiopia in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, US sought to reconsider its FP towards Eritrea. Thus, peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea is a prerequisite for the U.S. to re-engage with Eritrea (The Wall Street Journal, 2018). Second, US in its fight against terrorism in the HoA need to enhance Ethiopia's military capacity and its presence in Somalia. This requires Ethiopia to reduce its military deployment in the North. Hence, normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea is the way out to reduce military deployment from the North that borders with Eritrea (Africa News, 2019).

Second, the overflow of migration through trans-Mediterranean Sea to the EU member states originate from the Horn of Africa particularly Eritrea. According to sources, in 2015 from more

than one million migrants that entered the EU, Eritrean migrants shared the largest number. This is creating political and economic crisis in the EU. The main pushing factors for the overflow of the migration are intra-state and inter-state conflicts and the search for better life (BBC News, 2016). Hence, to stem the overflow of migration and human smuggling from the origin, the EU resorted to provide economic assistances for the countries in the region to achieve economic developments, enhance peace, ameliorate conflicts and enhance democratic governance. In its approach to Eritrea the EU seemed to put aside human rights issues. Thus, the EU has been pushing both states from behind to end the deadlock. Consequently, the EU spared no time to appreciate the rapprochement initiated by Abiy Ahmed (Michael, 2018). Regarding the peace deal, the EU representative of the Horn of Africa, Alex Rondosac puts as, “a new wind of hope is blowing across Africa and the prospect for real regional economic integrations created so far” (Reuters, 2018).

Thirdly, it is the diplomatic rift between the Gulf States that has contributed to the realization of the rapprochement between the two states. The Yemeni crisis has widened the rupture between the Gulf States by creating a diplomatic rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE on one side and Qatar on the other. Saudi Arabia and UAE have become more assertive since 2017 as they tried to isolate Qatar from the Red Sea region (*Ibid.*). The rivalry between the Gulf States has direct impact on the politics in the Horn of Africa. It divides countries in the region and intensifies competition. To reduce its vulnerability and security threats Ethiopia has sought to balance good commercial and security relations with countries that have investments in the region.

Turkey and Egypt also desired to strongly establish themselves in the Red Sea region. While Turkey has a strong desire to establish itself in Somalia and Sudan, on its part, Egypt is seeking to contain Sudan and Ethiopia, and counterbalance Turkey and Qatar.

UAE’s military and commercial bases development in Somaliland and Eritrea, given the smooth relations between the UAE and Egypt and the footing of Egypt in Eritrea created insecurity for Ethiopia. As the construction of Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is increasing tension between Ethiopia and Egypt, the latter sought to strategically encircle Ethiopia. Thus, to reduce a sense of encirclement by Egypt and balance the influence of other powers in the region, rapprochement with Eritrea is a blessing in disguise for Ethiopia. Abiy Ahmed has successfully exploited the

opportunity facilitated by UAE and Saudi (Mosely, 2018). The Emirates and Saudi crowns also aimed at exploiting the investment opportunities created upon the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Accordingly, all these external factors contributed to the Ethiopia and Eritrea rapprochement.

5.4. The Dynamics of the Rapprochement

Few weeks later, after Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister, resigned to help relax the mounting tensions and ushered in radical political reforms in the country (Burke, 2018), the EPRDF made a leadership change as part of the reform schemes. As a result of this, Abiy Ahmed (PhD) was selected as the chairman of the party on 27 March and as the Prime Minister of the country on 2 April 2018 (Aljazeera, 2018). The election of Abiy Ahmed affected both domestic and foreign policies of Ethiopia, particularly with the neighboring countries. On his inaugural speech, Abiy Ahmed declared the ending of the two decades hostility between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Furthermore, on 5 June 2018, the new Prime Minister of Ethiopia announced his governments' decision to unconditionally accept and completely implement the EEBC's border ruling. In his announcement, he also extended an invitation to the Eritrean government to end the state of 'no war, no peace' and achieve peaceful coexistence. The invitation received positive response from Eritrea, and on 20 June, the Eritrean president announced that his government would dispatch a delegation to Ethiopia. From June 26-28, 2018 Eritrea's delegation, led by its minister of foreign affairs, came to Addis Ababa for discussion to stabilize their relationship for the common good of the two countries (Redie, 2019).

Consequently, the reciprocal visits of the leaders to one another's country followed. First, PM Abiy Ahmed visited Eritrea on 8 July 2018 where he was welcomed by crowds of people in the streets of Asmara. During Abiy's visit to Eritrea the two governments signed a 'Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship' on 9 July which formally heralded the end of the state of war between the two states and Ethiopia's commitment to implement the border decision (Agreement on Peace and Friendship 2018). By their declaration the two leaders also agreed to cooperate on political, economic, social, cultural and security issues and the opening of embassies in the respective capitals, restart trade, communication and transport links and jointly work towards peace and security in the region (Redie, 2019). Few days later, Isaias Afewerki, the president of

the state of Eritrea, made a visit to Ethiopia from 14-16 July 2018. On his visit to Ethiopia, President Isaias warmly welcomed by the Ethiopian people. During his visit to Ethiopia, Eritrean Embassy was reopened in Addis Ababa (Hirt and Mohammad, 2018). Furthermore, air flights and telecommunication links started between Ethiopia and Eritrea followed by the reopening of borders along Bure and Zalambessa on 11 September by pushing their troops back from the borders.

A series of events and euphoria that followed the rapprochement seemed to erase the memory of two-year devastating war and the subsequent two decades of fierce hostility. It was a breakthrough in the post-war Ethio-Eritrea relations (Wrong, 2018). As Wrong (2018) argues, the rapprochement set a new horizon of peace and hope in both countries and the entire region. The international community also praised the two leaders even though all have reservation due to the unforeseen nature of the Horn's political dynamics. In this connection, Wrong has observed that:

Abiy's unconditional acceptance of an international commission's ruling on Eritrea and Ethiopia's contested border, the issue that triggered the 1998-2000 war, is only one of a raft of reforms he has announced since taking power. But it has sent an electric jolt through the Horn, opening a path to a reconfiguration of relationships between governments, political parties armed militias (Wrong, 2020: 49).

Thus, the political reform in Ethiopia not only resulted in the prospect of peace between the two rivals but also changed the gloomy political environment and ushered in a new horizon of hope in the region. As Mosley (2020: 49) notes "Ethiopia's transition has affected its relations in the Horn of Africa and the broader Red Sea region". Hence, the rapprochement initiated by Ethiopia not only unlocked the two decades stalemate with Eritrea but also restored diplomatic relations in the HoA¹⁸. The restoration of diplomatic relations between Eritrea and Somalia as well as between Eritrea and Djibouti were the result of Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement. The tripartite agreement signed between the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia on September 2018, in Asmara was the outcome of the rapprochement. The leaders have agreed to work on regional peace and strengthen economic cooperation in the region. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-

¹⁸ . Interview with Mr. Getachew Nigatu, MoFA/ Director General, FR-SIRC on 05 February 2019/office

General appreciated the new wind blown over the HoA that resulted from the end of the two decades deadlock between Ethiopia and Eritrea as a meaningful lesson (Redie, 2019).

5.5. The Implications of the New Ethio-Eritrea Rapprochement for Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa

Extricating the sub-region from the present quagmire of crises requires what De Waal (2007:1) writes, “credible democratization in the states of the region, a durable resolution of internal conflicts, a stable sub-regional inter-state order, autonomous and capable multilateral institutions”. In the Horn of Africa conflicts are not only endemic but also interlinked. This has created regional security complex; where the primary security concerns of states in the region are so closely interlinked that the national security objectives of each cannot realistically be considered in isolation from one another. Conflicts within each state or between states in the region directly or indirectly affect other states. However, there is no conflict as devastating and destabilizing as the Ethio-Eritrea conflict in the region. Even though there are multiple actors that cause and exacerbate instabilities in the region, improvements in the Ethio-Eritrea relations have a profound contribution to stabilize the Horn of Africa. The study argues that a host of political reforms especially following the leadership change within the ruling regime in Ethiopia realized diplomatic rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea which in turn contributed to the restoration of diplomatic relations and curbing instabilities in the Horn of Africa. Thus, in this section the positive implications of the rapprochement for the peace and security in the region are discussed.

5.5.1. Replacing Ethos of Militarism with Diplomatic Proficiency

Militarism is the most entrenched political culture in the Horn of Africa. In most countries of the Horn political power used to be seized through a military *coup d'état* and a guerilla movement and maintained through force than persuasion. Militarism and proxy wars were preceded diplomatic proficiency in the inter-state relations too (Healy, 2007). Moreover, the embedded ethos of militarism and authoritarianism within the mentality of the leaders of the two countries led Ethiopia and Eritrea to the bitter conflict. Particularly, those leaders that have dominant positions in the TPLF and PFDJ (ex-EPLF) both in the domestic and foreign policies sustained

their guerilla movement behaviors where military ethos than art of diplomacy, conspiracy than negotiation and short-term objectives than long term cooperation prevailed (Healy, 2009).

Taking Ethiopia's failure to implement the Algiers Agreement as a precondition, the regime in Asmara preferred to use proxy war to force the former implement the Border Commission rulings. Equally, the EPRDF also paid its maximum effort to internally destabilize the Isaias regime and isolate it from the international arena. According to one key informant, 'the EPRDF/TPLF regime made its main foreign policy objective to weaken and isolate Eritrea'¹⁹.

The act of mutual destabilization exacerbated the stalemate and perpetuated the impasse. The deadlock between the two also destabilized the entire Horn and hampered regional cooperation. According to Tekeste and Tronvoll (2000) unless politics of destabilization is curbed, peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in the entire Horn will not prevail. Thus, the two decades stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea accompanied by militarism has impacted politics, social, economy and lives of millions in both countries and stability of the entire region. Kidanu and Endalcachew (2015) correctly puts as prioritization of political and diplomatic proficiency over militarism and authoritarianism is crucial as far as normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea is concerned. In general, the bitter two years conflict and subsequent stalemate intensified militarization in the HoA. In this connection, Kidanu and Endalcachew (2015:7) maintained that, 'unless the culture of militarism is replaced by new political and diplomatic proficiency, peace will not prevail in the region and the stalemate will persist unabated in the years to come'.

Understanding that the ethos of militarism could never give a lasting solution for incompatibilities, the new Ethiopian leadership ended the two decades long hostility between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The people of the two states, the region and the international community have drawn a lesson from the rapprochement that it is only discussion and diplomatic negotiation that can solve disagreements and lead to win-win solutions. The rapprochement not only revealed the potential of diplomatic proficiency to silence the guns and bring the spirits of peace, but also shown the ineffectiveness of militarism to solve problems. Here, it is also important to emphasize that replacing militarization by diplomatic proficiency would help to invest in peace

¹⁹. Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 7 April 2020

and development that can ensure human security than regime security. In one of his public speech, PM Abiy said, “it is not about the governments, it is all about the people of the two countries; our investment on the people will ultimately bring about the peace and prosperity we sought to win” (As. Press, July, 2018). On his part, President Isaias Afeworki said, “hate, discrimination and conspiracy are now over. Our focus from now on should be on developing and growing together.... Now is the time to make up for the lost times” (Africa Renewal, March 2019). This indicates that the commitment of both leaders for diplomatic proficiency than militarism. In addition to mending relations with Eritrea, the new leadership also dealt with rebel groups based in neighbouring countries and facilitated their return home and engage in peaceful politics.

According to one key informant, the first benefit reaped from the restoration relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea is peace and security for both states and the region as both states used to arm, equip and train rebel groups against one another. To put it differently, it would significantly reduce militarism and military spending. Therefore, it is about peace and security not only just for Ethiopia and Eritrea, but also for the entire region as well²⁰. The researcher argues that the restoration of peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea will vastly contribute to the changing of the gloomy inter-state relations and instabilities in the Horn of Africa.

5.5.2. Enhancing Inter-State Relations and Advancing Regional Integration

The deadlock between Ethiopia and Eritrea has mired inter-state cooperation and hampered regional integration in the Horn of Africa. However, the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement has also improved relations between Eritrea and Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, Eritrea and Kenya and peace talks in South Sudan. In its policy to destabilize and pressurize the EPRDF regime, the government of Eritrea quarreled with Djibouti, Somalia and to lesser extent with the Kenyan government. Thus, the rapprochement created opportunities for Eritrea to make peace with Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Kenya²¹. The new Ethiopian leadership shuttled between the capital cities of the neighboring countries to open platform for negotiation and restore diplomatic relations between states in the region. According to Hallelujah, the peace prospect between

²⁰. Interview with Mr Hallelujah Lule, Researcher at Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies, on 09 April, 2020

²¹. Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 7 April 2020

Ethiopia and Eritrea even helps to improve the situation between the Sudan and the South Sudan and in the South Sudan itself²².

By ending the two decades hostility between Eritrea and Ethiopia, PM Abiy Ahmed has activated regional cooperation and integration which helps to collectively come up with regional strategies and regional policies on how to tackle complex security challenges the region faces and extra-regional threats. According to Hallelujah,

The rapprochement is beyond making peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, it provides platform for addressing geo-political challenges because the Red Sea, the Gulf of Eden, the broader Horn of Africa witnessed practice of securitization and militarization in the past decades. The crisis in Yemen and the rift between the Gulf States that spill-over into the Horn of Africa added another problem. Thus, having some kind of unity and cohesion in this part of the continent can really help to find a kind of common position. Restoration of diplomatic relations unites coordinated responses to not only challenges but also opportunities that come from the Red Sea and the Gulf²³.

Similarly, one of the key informants, who responded on the significances of the rapprochement has said by asking questions such as “Why the superpowers and emerging powers are flourishing in the region? ... Why not East Africans do not group themselves like in the case of South and Western Africans?” Answering his own questions, he states:

There is a plan to be grouped for free trade and integrations. When we cooperate, it will be easy to enhance our national interests. Moreover, it becomes very easy for particularly northern parts of Ethiopia to trade with Eritreans through the Eritrean ports. Eritrea has allowed Ethiopia to use the port of Assab freely as before. The case of Djibouti is not about its distance but {also about being} overloaded than Assab and Massawa. The Ethiopian commodities stay on the port for long period of times²⁴.

In the past, as a result of inter-state competition, regional cooperation in the areas of economic, security, development, trade and infrastructure development were recorded lower in the region.

²². See supra note 15.

²³. See supra notes 17

²⁴. Interview with the Ambassador Araya Desta, Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA on 7 February, 2019/office.

Hence, the researcher argues that the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement facilitates inter-state cooperation and regional integration. It also helps to enhance national, sub-regional and regional interests. In addition, its domino effect initiates prospects for regional cooperation and regional integrations in the areas of security, energy, tourism, transports, road and trade. In his interview with the Ethiopian News Agency, Tesemma Ta'a pointed out that "the newly flourishing normalization between the two nations can open up opportunities to undertake economic integration in energy, trade, infrastructure, commercial and tourism (Ethiopian News Agency, 2018). The Ethiopian government has already started physical infrastructural integration with neighboring countries except with Eritrea. For instance, the renovation of Ethio-Djibouti rail link, the construction of roads and highways, export of electric power and the agreements to jointly develop ports with countries such as Sudan, Kenya and Somalia can be mentioned.

After the rapprochement, the resumption of telecom service, airlines flights and reopening of embassies in the respective capital cities facilitated trade, transports, communications interactions and people to people contacts. Increased interactions, people to people contacts and infrastructural linkages spur mutual economic developments and deepen interdependence. Increased economic interdependence integrates states and lays a ground for peace and stable environment. Through integrated development and economic interdependence, states develop trust to each other. If institutionalized and supplemented by people to people interaction, the tripartite agreement signed between the governments of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia in Eritrea, Asmara can serve as integral part for the regional integration. With their agreement the governments agreed to work in collaboration on regional peace and joint economic cooperation. Thus, in addition to the physical interconnection, the rapprochement has a potential of developing trust and confidence by reducing tensions and mistrust between states. The diplomatic initiatives of the new PM of Ethiopia are to pursue the transformation of the dismal political landscape in the HoA.

Even though a strong regional organization that helps to deepen interdependence is imperative in a conflict-ridden and war thorn region like the Horn of Africa, there is no viable regional entity that can facilitate peace in the region. In the region, inter-state rivalries hindered regional integration. Each country has been a security threat for the other. However, the hostility between

Ethiopia and Eritrea had no comparison in destabilizing the region and hampering regional integration. Thus, creation of a functioning regional forum might be beneficial for promoting regional stability and regional cooperation. One of my key informants pointed out that:

The Horn of Africa's security had been negatively affected by the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. The improvement in relations between the two has reduced tension in the region. There are already improvements in relations between Eritrea and Djibouti as well as Somalia. Each of the states was pursuing opposing policies internally and regionally, especially in Somalia, and the rapprochement should lead to cooperation instead of competition. The rapprochement helps Eritrea to rejoin the regional body, IGAD and fully participates in the AU to play a constructive role in the sub-region and in continental affairs. Overall, the rapprochement has already reduced tension in the region improving relations among the states of the region²⁵.

As Dima has noted even though Eritrea is not yet fully rejoined IGAD, the restoration of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea plays remarkable role to stimulate regional integration and to accentuate the regional body, IGAD. The Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and resumption of diplomatic relations among states in the region helps IGAD to evolve into a better functioning regional forum. For Mosley Eritrea holds a position that IGAD is dominated by Ethiopia, the latter used the organization to isolate Eritrea for years. However, the rapprochement led to the resumption of its rotating presidency which was achieved following the appointment of a new executive secretary, Workineh Gebeyo, a former Foreign Minister of Ethiopia in November 2019 (Mosley, 2020).

Despite the fact that the IGAD was formed with ambitious agendas of ensuring peace and security, accelerated development and regional integration in the sub-region, its effectiveness was impaired due to mistrust, inter-state competition and intra-and inter-state conflicts. According to Mosley (2020: 14) "integration efforts were further constrained by the bloody 1998–2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the resulting fall out: Eritrea suspended its participation in the organization and Ethiopia refused to cede the rotating chairmanship of the bloc between 2010 and 2019, further limiting IGAD's traction". IGAD's failure of curbing conflicts and tackle development challenges in the region highly reduced its credibility, effectiveness and relevance. Hence, the organization's inability to develop pertinent regional

²⁵. Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 7 April 2020

security framework remained the region home to various types of conflicts. Hence, the researcher argues that the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and the restoration of diplomatic relations between Djibouti-Eritrea and Eritrea-Somalia provided the opportunity of accentuation of the IGAD.

Following the rapprochement, the new relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia focused on readmitting Eritrea to IGAD. Eritrea's rejoining of the IGAD will help to neutralize the state that once identified as a regional rogue. This in turn could help to strengthen IGAD and will enhance its effectiveness and relevance. On the other hand, the readmission of Eritrea to IGAD will also help to collectively fight against terrorism and extremist groups in the region. Regarding the significance of the rapprochement as Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General, in his letter to the Security Council, has said: "we are witnessing a historic moment in the Horn of Africa. The rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, begun in July 2018, has created a positive momentum for peace and security in the region and beyond" (UNSC Report, 2019). In general, untangling and unpacking the Ethio-Eritrea dispute is very crucial to ease the strains and tensions in the region, to promote good neighborliness, encourage peace and stability and, above all advance regional integration.

5.5.3. Reduce Tensions around Borders, Mutual Destabilization and Proxy Wars

The end of the violent conflict in 2000 could not reduce militarization and securitization around the shared borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both countries emphasized the building up of huge arms and deployment of military forces and construction of trenches which continued up to 2018. The continued tensions and frequent border skirmishes around the shared borders dislocated thousands of local people from their home. For the last twenty years, the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea was identified as the most militarized and securitized part of the Horn of Africa and a zone where life of the local communities had been miserably threatened (Wuhibegezer, 2013).

The rapprochement was followed by officially reopening of borders and pulling back and withdrawal of military forces by both countries from their shared borders. Particularly, the visit made by the leaders of both countries on the Ethiopian New Year along Zalambasa and Bure

fronts allowed transportation and trade interaction between the two peoples (Reporter, 2018). In his speech made during the visit, PM Abiy pointed out that the defense forces of both countries should not consider one another as enemy. Easing tensions and military skirmishes around the shared borders as well as de-militarizing and de-securitizing the area and diverting budget allocated to maintain a huge defense forces around the border can be shifted to development projects.

The prevalence of various non-state actors in the region created conducive environments for states to engage in the mutual destabilization. The conflict between Ethiopia-Eritrea brought back the “Cold War” type proxy war and mutual destabilization. The two states have been engaging in proxy war using each other’s rebel groups. Somalia served as a battle ground where both regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara made alliance with different Somali factions to weaken and undermine the other interests (Bereketeab, 2013 and Berouk, 2008). The Eritrean government took the war front to Somalia to undermine regimes in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government also left no stone unturned to destabilize Isaias’ regime internally and isolate it internationally (Kassahun, 2013).

The restoration of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea averts the policy of mutual destabilization and subversion the two states have been following against each other. Following the end of the deadlock both governments oriented insurgent groups based in their respective countries to cease political activities against the other government. Upon his coming to power, PM Abiy made a call to all opposition groups that have been struggling against the Ethiopian regime operating from exile to return home and engage in peaceful politics. Following his call, Ethiopian opposition groups operating in Eritrea such as Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Patriotic Ginbot 7, Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) and Amhara Democratic Movement Forces (ADMF) returned to Ethiopia with their military forces (Plaut, 2018). Hence, reducing subversive acts against each other has far reaching consequences for both states and for the entire region. It can facilitate peaceful relations and building confidence in their relations, which in turn enhances stability. Moreover, the ease of mutual destabilization and proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has reduced animosity, encouraged cooperation and began to enhance people to people interactions.

5.5.4. Reduce Human Trafficking and Smuggling

One of the most serious security threats in the Horn of Africa has been human trafficking and smuggling. Using inter-state conflicts and the porous borders between the states various individuals and groups engage in human trafficking and smuggling across the Horn of Africa, North Africa and the Gulf. Intra-state and inter-state conflicts led to loosen border control and intensified arms smuggling which creates conducive environment for non-state actors to proliferate while the proliferation of various non-state actors has been exacerbating human trafficking. During the stalemate, Ethiopia and Eritrea have been using different means, including supporting non-state actors, to undermine each other interest. Thus, normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea could play pivotal role to do away with the human trafficking and smuggling operations across the region (van Reisen, 2018). Peace between states in the region helps to control illegal activities around the common borders. In fact, coordinated efforts by national, regional and international actors are very useful to tackle the problem of human trafficking in the region. In sum, for actors at various levels to do away with human trafficking restoration of diplomatic relations between the states in the region have significant role as human trafficking and arms smuggling is the main source of instability in the region.

5.6. The Constraints of the Ethio-Eritrean Rapprochement

The political reforms in Ethiopia have brought about tremendous changes on the domestic politics and this wind of change has positively impacted inter-state relations in the Horn of Africa too.

However, the peace process of between Ethiopia and Eritrea is criticized in that it lacked comprehensiveness and effectiveness, and institutionalization by policy frameworks. According to one informant, the leaders are repeating the same mistakes happened during the inter-war relations. For this informant “in the absence of any written agreement, the relationship may not be sustainable. I doubt if there was even a discussion about the implementation of the rulings of the commission of the Algiers Agreement”²⁶. It is true that even though the new leadership of Ethiopia endorsed the rulings of the border commission, there is no implementation of the ruling on the ground. Another informant also points out the dissatisfaction of the disgruntled group, the

²⁶.Interview with Dima Noggo (PhD), an expert and practitioner on the Horn of Africa, on 7 April 2020

TPLF, with the rapprochement. In this regard, he argued that “the rapprochement is exclusive and has not included those stakeholders that need to be embraced. It should start from the Tigray region. The rapprochement divides the Horn. It ignored the regional body, the IGAD”²⁷. Likewise, Mr Gebru Asrat, a former president of the Tigrayan regional state and a politburo of TPLF, described the rapprochement as a strategy pursued by the PM Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afewerki to encircle and weaken TPLF²⁸.

Ambassador Araya Desta contends this idea as “since Ethiopia is a sovereign government, the Eritrean government is expected to deal with the federal government not with the constituents”²⁹. According to him, the new relation is not intended to encircle the Tigray region. The rapprochement has significant meaning for the people of the two countries. Opening the border realized the reunification of thousands of families separated by the breakdown in relations, among other things. Border trade, rebuilding the infrastructure between the two states, opening Eritrean ports for Ethiopia’s trade and broader economic cooperation could follow, and this can have positive impact on economic activity, employment and overall economic growth in both states. However, it needs to involve local communities and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, the volatile nature of the Horn of Africa, external involvement, inter-state competition, and the politics of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam have implications on the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and the regional diplomatic relations.

In the region, intra-state conflicts, inter-state rivalries and external actors’ self-interested involvement feed in to each other which exacerbate instability in the region. For instance, the involvement by the USA and the Arab states and other powers divide the countries in the region. In line with this, the Politics of GERD induced USA involvement has its own negative

²⁷. Interview with Abebe Aynete (PhD student, IPSS,AAU), Peace and Security Analyst on the Horn of Africa, on 07 April 2020

²⁸. Interview with Mr. Gebru Asrat, former President of Tigray regional state, on 20 April 2020

²⁹. Interview with the Ambassador Araya Desta, Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the African Union and UNECA on 7 February 2019/office.

implications in promoting African solutions for African problems. This situation negatively impacts the new horizon of peace set by the new Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement³⁰.

The new wave diplomatic relations in the Horn of African countries initiated by the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed emphasized in bilateral relations than multilateral one. Both the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and restoration of peace talks in the region were not facilitated by multilateral institutions and official legal frameworks. Moreover, the lack of involvement of the African union and regional organizations like IGAD in the diplomatic relations has its own implication in promoting regional integration which sustains peace³¹. Eritrea has also not rejoined the regional organization, IGAD.

In addition, the new alignment between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia created another regional fault line in the Horn of Africa. Kenya is not comfortable with Ethiopia's relations with the Somalia's Federal government. One informant points out as "Kenya wants to see divided and weak central government in Somalia"³². The restoration of relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea also concerned Djibouti as it has been the sole Ethiopia's import and export outlets. Djibouti's economy would be highly affected if Ethiopia uses Eritrean ports.

To cop up with the constraints, even though several changes are observed following the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement it is expected to further the countries diplomatic relations and peace building process by addressing the existing lacuna's by political will and commitment over institutional and policy frameworks.

³⁰. Interview with Getaneh Wudeneh, peace and security expert, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 December 2019.

³¹. *ibid.*

³². *ibid.*

Chapter Six

6. Conclusion

An attempt has been made to shed light on the causes of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the subsequent stalemate and its impact on the peace and security in the Horn of Africa. The inter-linkage of the intra-state and inter-state conflicts and their regional dimension is also discussed in some chapters. Accordingly, the impact of the hostility between Ethiopia and Eritrea on peace and security in the Horn of Africa and how the new rapprochement between the two states impacted in stabilizing the conflict-ridden region is also discussed in light of the conceptual and theoretical aspects. Finally, conclusion is made based on the facts and data collected through different mechanisms.

Starting from the late 1950's various forms of conflict have become endemic in the Horn of Africa. As a result of the inter-linkage of the conflicts in the region both intra-state and inter-state conflicts have been feeding each other and kept the region volatile, conflict-ridden, insecure and economically the poorest part of the world. Scholars who have been conducting various researches on the political economy of the region have presented various explanations for the cause of the war. Among others, lack of democratic governance, personalized rule, militarism and authoritarianism ethos, colonial legacy, external intervention, economic underdevelopment, scarcity of resource, climate change and migration in one way or another led to conflicts in the region.

Due to their close inter-linkages, conflicts, which have been occurring within or between states in the Horn of Africa immediately assume sub-regional and regional dimensions that have persistently been destabilizing the region. Here, it is important to note that no conflict has had a destabilizing effect in the region as the Ethio-Eritrean conflict. Many hoped that the end of the 30-year Eritrean war of independence and the peaceful divorce of Eritrea from Ethiopia would change the situation in the region. However, the hope was wiped out before long when the two states get into an all-out war in 1998.

The two countries fought a bitter war from 1998-2000. Both governments engaged in fierce proxy war and followed policies of mutual destabilization to undermine the interests of each

other even after the violent conflict was ended by the 2000 Algiers Agreement. This highly impacted on the political, economic, social, and especially, peace and security of both states and the entire region which also poisoned the inter-state relations.

The cause of the Ethio-Eritrea conflict was complex and deep rooted. It cannot be reduced to a single basket factor, rather the post-1991 Ethiopia and Eritrea relations were presided by antecedent events. Even though the protagonists used the issue of border as a real cause of the conflict to internationalize and complicate the conflict, it was far from being the real cause of the conflict. Above all, the enduring distorted relations between the political elites that dominated the regimes in both countries influenced the conflict. The rigid position, militarism ethos and authoritarianism from both sides preceded the use of force than diplomatic proficiency to deal with the divergences. Moreover, the main actors in the conflict presented the conflict that was exacerbated by the inter-party conflict to the international community as if it was inter-state conflict.

The complicated nature of the conflict also highly impacted the resolution processes. Even though the international community spared no time to intervene, they failed to stop the violent conflict at its early stage due to lack of understanding of the cause of the conflict. The two countries fought a devastating war for two years that consumed thousands of lives and huge material property.

The stalemate between the two states destabilized the entire Horn of Africa. Especially, the 'Cold War' type proxy war employed by the regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara including within the neighboring countries poisoned the peace and security of the region. Both governments have been tirelessly working to remove the other from power giving their deaf ear to the diplomatic negotiation.

Scholars predicated that only domestic political reform in both or either of the states would fix the stalemate. As Zartman (2001) pointed out for a conflict to be resolved it has to reach a ripping stage. Thus, the stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea also necessitated a ripping stage and political reform in either of the states. Hence, the political reform particularly the change of leadership in Ethiopia not only brought about massive ramifications on domestic politics but also ended the two decades stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The reformist leadership

ascended to power in Ethiopia initiated the normalization of relations between the two states. The new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement is beyond restoration of peace between the two states. It also paved the way to restore diplomatic relations in the Horn of Africa. The rapprochement has facilitated peace in Somalia, helped to restore relations between Eritrea and Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti and has encouraged peace between Sudan and South Sudan as well as within South Sudan.

On the other hand, the end of the 'no war, no peace' situation gained both states several benefits as: first, the rapprochement has significantly reduced both countries' military spending, which in turn has helped to reduce border skirmishes. The states obtained an opportunity to resort their military spending on development projects. This ensures peace and security not only between the two states but with other states in the region. Second, it presents potential opportunities for economic cooperation, trade, investment and tourism interactions between the two states. Thirdly, as the two people have long and historical bondage it helps to reintegrate families that separated for two decades.

In addition, and more importantly, the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea would have significant peace and security implications in the entire Horn. As a result of the policies of mutual destabilization the two states pursued for two decades, the entire region also paid a cost. Therefore, mending relations between the two countries has massive peace and stability implications in the region. It has considerable implications in addressing conflicts and ensuring peace in the Horn of Africa.

Second, militarism and authoritarianism ethos were what exacerbated the conflict and the subsequent stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The new rapprochement replaced militarism with discussion, which led to ceasing the state of war and cooperation in the areas of economic, political, social and security.

Third, the political impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea mired inter-state cooperation and hampered regional integration in the Horn of Africa. Hence, the restoration of relations between the two states enhances inter-state relations and advances regional integration in the region. Beyond the belligerent states the rapprochement improved relations between Eritrea and Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, Eritrea and Kenya and has encouraged peace talks between the

Sudanese governments as well as within South Sudan. The restoration of diplomatic relations between states in the region also has helped to collectively design regional strategies and regional policies to tackle complex security challenges the region is facing and extra-regional threats.

Fourthly, the rapprochement has contribution in reducing tensions and skirmishes around borders. Tensions and skirmishes were common practice that threatened the lives of local people around the common border. Therefore, the rapprochement should bring about reduction in military spending, and Ethiopia has already reduced its military deployment along the common border. On the other hand, the two states share common ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical and social background. Until three decades ago, they were one state. Any thaw in relations between the two states was bound to have positive outcomes, especially in terms of reduction of tension on both sides of the border and in the region. Furthermore, opening the border has brought about reunification of thousands of families separated by the breakdown in relations.

Fifth, human trafficking is the most serious problem in the Horn of Africa. Intra-state and inter-state conflicts create conducive environment for cross border human trafficking. Thus, the end of hostility and proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and restoration of diplomatic relations between states in the region could play great role in tackling the problem of human trafficking and arms smuggling.

In general, the Horn of Africa had been negatively affected by the conflict between the two states, and the improvement in relations between the two countries has reduced tension in the region. Ending the two decades political impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea is crucial to ease the strains and tensions, to promote good neighborliness, encourage peace and stability and, above all to advance regional integration and regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa. Needless to add, enhanced inter-state interactions and cooperation helps to build trust between and among states that in turn can improve regional integration.

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Appendixes

Appendix-I: List of Key Informants

S/N	Name	Organization	Position	Date
1	Ambasadar Araya Desta	Eritrean Embassy	Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea to the AU and UNECA	05 February 2019
2	Mr Abebe Aynete (PhD candidate)	EPIID	Peace and Security Analyst on the Horn of Africa	07 April 2020
3	Dima Noggo (PhD)	Oromo Democratic Front (ODF)	Executive Committee member of the Party	07 April, 2020
4	Mr. Hallelujah Lule	Institute of Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies	Researcher	09 April, 2020
5	Mr. Getachew Nigatu	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director General Foreign Relation Strategic Information Resource Centre (FR-SIRC)	05 April 2020
6	Mr. Gebru Asrat	Arena Party	Executive Committee member of the Party	20 April 2020
7	Mr Getaneh Wudeneh	Ambo University	Lecturer and Researcher	15 December 2019

Appendix-II: In-depth Interview Guideline for Key Informants

The purpose of this interview guide is to collect information to conduct research for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy. Thus, this instrument is designed for the purpose of gathering information regarding the Ethio-Eritrea Rapprochement: and Its Implications for the Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa. The information that you provide here is used to identify and analyze facts relating to the recent Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement and its peace and security implications not only for the two countries but also for the Horn of Africa. Therefore, you are kindly requested to provide accurate information as much as possible. I confirm you that all data given by you will be treated confidentially.

1. Could we start our discussion by introducing ourselves? (By telling name, age and current position and work place).

1. Name: -----

2. Age: -----

3. Position and work place: -----

Interview Guide Questions

1. How do you relate the on-going political liberalization in Ethiopia with the new Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement?
2. Is there a connection between leadership change in Ethiopia and the new rapprochement with Eritrea?
3. What have been the impacts of 'no war, no peace' situation on both countries and the region?
4. What factors enforced Ethiopia to accept and implement the Algiers Agreement unconditionally?
5. What is the implication of the domestic political change/leadership change in Ethiopia on its foreign policy towards the neighbouring countries?
6. What Ethiopia and Eritrea will be benefited from the new rapprochement?
7. What are the implications of the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa?
8. Does the rapprochement contribute in the stabilization of the conflict-ridden Horn of Africa?
9. What is the difference between the previous agreement and the new one between Ethiopia and Eritrea?
10. Do you believe the loss of dominant position of the TPLF in the Ethiopian politics contributed in the rapprochement?