

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**



**The Red Sea Security Dynamics and Its Implication on Ethiopia's  
National Security**

**BY**

**Haimanot Tsegaye**

**JUNE, 2024**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**

**The Red Sea Security Dynamics and Its Implication on Ethiopia's  
National Security**

**BY**

**Haimanot Tsegaye**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE  
FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**

**ADVISOR**

**Yohannes Tekalign (Ph.D.)**

**JUNE 2024**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**

**The Red Sea Security Dynamics and Its Implication on Ethiopia's National Security**

**BY**

**Haimanot Tsegaye**

**APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Signature</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
_____	_____	_____
Coordinator of IPSS		
_____	_____	_____
Advisor		
_____	_____	_____
Internal Examiner		
_____	_____	_____
External Examiner		

## **Acknowledgement**

Completing this thesis has been a rewarding journey, and I am grateful to the many people who have supported me along the way.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for His protection and grace.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my thesis advisor, Yohannes Tekalign (PhD). Your guidance, expertise, and insightful feedback have been invaluable throughout this process.

I am also grateful to Gashaw Ayiferam who has extended his relentless support in the process.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family and friends for their unwavering love and support. Your encouragement throughout this journey has kept me motivated.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all my key informants for their invaluable time. Your willingness to share your insights, hospitality, and valuable information are deeply appreciated.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Acronyms and Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. Background of the study .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3. Objective of the study .....	6
1.3.1. General objective.....	6
1.3.2. Specific Objective .....	6
1.4. Research questions.....	7
1.5. Scope of the Study.....	7
1.6. Significance of the Study .....	8
1.7. Organization of the study.....	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERTURE</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1. Conceptual/Theoretical framework .....	10
2.1.3. Theoretical Debate.....	15
2.2. Empirical Literature .....	18
2.2.1. The Red Sea Security Dynamics .....	18
2.2.2. The Red Sea as Security Predicament to the Horn .....	29
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD</b> .....	<b>33</b>
3.1. Introduction.....	33
3.2. Methodology and Research Design.....	33
3.3. Data Collection .....	34

3.4.	Analysis of Data .....	35
3.5.	Ethical Considerations .....	35
	<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>ETHIOPIA’S STRATEGIC INTEREST AND SECURITY MENACE.....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1.	Ethiopia’s Geopolitical Interest and Policy Direction .....	36
4.1.1.	Securitization of access to the sea- Pre-1991 .....	37
4.1.2.	The Desecuritization of access to the Sea – 1991 – 2018.....	41
4.1.3.	Re-Securitization of access to the sea – Post-2018 .....	44
4.2.	National Security Challenges .....	47
4.2.1.	Securitization of the Red Sea.....	48
4.2.2.	Internal Political dynamics .....	51
	<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b>THE RED SEA GEOPOLITICS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHIOPIA’S NATIONAL SCEURITY</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1.	Politico-Military Security .....	53
5.1.1.	Implication to Political Security .....	53
5.1.2.	Military Security.....	56
5.2.	Economic Security .....	58
	<b>CHAPTER SIX .....</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>72</b>
	<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>77</b>

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AU	African Union
E.C	Ethiopian Calendar
EEZ	Exclusive economic zones
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
FANSPS	Foreign affairs and national security policy and strategy
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HoA	Horn of Africa
IFA	Institute of Foreign Affairs
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IUU	illegal, unreported, and unregulated
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport Corridor
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Countries
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Mediterranean Shipping Company
PSC	Peace and Security Council of AU
RSC	Regional Security Complex
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNOHRLLS	UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

# Abstract

*The Red Sea has historically been central to Ethiopia's foreign policy and national security concerns and source of contention. This study examines the contemporary security dynamics of the Red Sea region and their impact on Ethiopia's economic and politico-military security. It aims to have deeper understanding of how the region's evolving security dynamics, along with Ethiopia's evolving approach to securing access to the sea, impact its national security. The study finds out that two major factors impact Ethiopia's security: Securitization of the red sea and Ethiopia's internal political dynamics. The complex security environment, including regional competition and Ethiopia's landlocked status, heightens risks. While access is strategically important, it creates new tensions. This study argues that Ethiopia's existing vulnerabilities and national security threats will be further amplified by the developments in the Red Sea region. In addition, the regional geopolitical dynamics will be affected by Ethiopia's recent assertive measures including implications in shifting alliances and power dynamics in the region. The study is a qualitative research and employs the Copenhagen international security theory to understand the regional dynamics as well as Ethiopia's policy direction. To gain deeper insights, analysis of historical documents and contemporary sources and key informant interviews were conducted with experts, former and current government officials, and military personnel. Non-probability sampling, specifically purposive and snowball sampling methods is used to identify interviewees. Data is analyzed thematically, guided by the research questions and the emerging themes from the collected data. The study recognizes Ethiopia's complex role within the Red Sea and emphasizes the need for strategic navigation in this dynamic environment. It also highlights the importance of internal stability in minimizing vulnerabilities and pursuing national interests. This thesis contributes to the existing scholarship by offering a critical analysis of how the evolving Red Sea geopolitical landscape shapes Ethiopia's national security. It sheds light on the challenges and opportunities Ethiopia faces in securing its interests and maintaining its influence within the region.*

**Keywords:** National Security, Securitization, Red Sea Security dynamics, political security, Economic Security, Military Security

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

The Red Sea is the one of world's oldest and most critical trade routes, hence littoral states, regional actors, and international powers competing to control the passage to secure their interests. It is strategically positioned as a major geopolitical and geo-economic nexus between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean and connecting the Middle East and Africa. The Red Sea serves as a major route for more than 10% of the global trade (Heath,2020). In addition, the region has a high potential of economic growth whose GDP is projected to triple from \$1.8 trillion to \$6.1 trillion by 2050's as trade is projected to increase by fivefold, increasing its geopolitical and geo-economic importance (Ibid). Hence, the region has for a long time been arena of contention by major international and regional state and non-state powers (Maru, 2017).

Due to its strategic and economic significance, the region, throughout history, became the focus of great powers rivalry and consequently potential for crisis. History tells that the regions had been major arena of contention for the great empires of Persians, the Romans, the Portuguese and the Ottomans engaging in armed conflict to control the waterway (Kindie, 1990). The contention over control of the water way and the insecurity in the region continues in recent years, although drivers of insecurity is dynamic ranging from great powers competing to piracy and war.

Ethiopia, as a Red Sea littoral state for the longest part of its history has been active on the Red Sea arena. However, attributed to international, regional and domestic factors, the country has lost and regain access to the Red Sea at different times, until in 1991 when Ethiopia become completely landlocked. The policies towards the Red Sea by regional and extra-regional powers has affected Ethiopia's national security, there by dictating its foreign relation and national security policy (Belachew, 2006 E.C). The Arab states' ambition of making the Red Sea an Arab sea and Ethiopia's stance as a Christian state alienated the country form the Arab/Muslim states that surrounds the country and occupy the majority of the Red Sea shore. As a non-Arab/Muslim states in the region Ethiopia and Israel maintained close working relation to safeguard her interest (Qureshi, 1979). As a result, the Arab states

supported rebel movements in Ethiopia including the Eritrean independence from Ethiopia that cut off Ethiopia from direct access to the sea through the port of Asab and Massawa.(Kendie, 1990)

The colonial and imperial rivalry in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century posed a challenge to Ethiopia's economic and geo-political security. French occupation of Djibouti and Italian colonization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reshaped Ethiopia's geopolitical stance and flashing a long term quest for access to maritime trade route. As a result, Ethiopia's foreign policy and National security direction for a long had been externally focused rather than internal issues. The policy direction of governments in Ethiopia has been focused on either answering the quest of direct access to the sea or addressing related tensions (Belachew, 2006 E.C; Tazebew, 2023). It was not until 2002 that Ethiopia has developed an integrated foreign relations and national security policy that was more internally focused.

This study explores the impact of the Red Sea politics on Ethiopia's national security in to three major historical chronicles, i.e. the pre-1991, 1991 – 2018 and post-2018. These periods are divided based on Ethiopian governments' policy direction and priorities towards securing direct access to the sea and the development over the Red Sea. Although, the Copenhagen school of thought was not materialized until 1985, the study will considered the securitization/de-securitization theory to analyze Ethiopian governments' national security directions and their implication within these timeframes. Hence the pre-1991 era was characterized by the Ethiopian rulers at different time put a lot of effort to secure Ethiopia's quest to direct access to the sea. Ethiopian rulers during this period had securitized the access to the sea and Ethiopia's policy priorities towards its neighbors have been affected by this direction. The second period, 1991 and 2018, Ethiopia has become landlocked and the then government of Ethiopia has de-securitized Ethiopia's quest to access to the sea and its policy directions were more internally focused. The third period, post 2018, Ethiopia Re-securitized the issue of access to the sea.

As Verhoven (2018) noted that, the Red Sea serves as a connector rather than a divider between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf States and the region is evolving in to one security complex. The security implication of this development is immense especially in the HoA as there is a significant power asymmetry between the two sub-regions. Ethiopia as a landlocked country in the HoA has to strategically navigate through the challenges to ensure its security

and national interest in the region. This study explores the security dynamics of the Red Sea region and Ethiopia's policy direction to have an understanding of the security implications on Ethiopia's economic and politico-military security.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Landlocked countries face significant development challenges due to their lack of direct sea access and distance from international markets. However, the severity of these limitations varies. Uprety (1994) identifies three major types of states without access (SWA); states with limited access, states with landlocked continental shelf and enclaved states. The states in the first category, although have access to the sea, their coastal line is very small. Whereas, states in the last two categories have no coastal line to the sea. Enclaved states face the most significant difficulties, as they are surrounded by another country and rely solely on a single transit country for sea access, unlike the second category who may have options through multiple coastal neighbors (Uprety, 1994).

For such countries, these transit states play a crucial role. Landlocked nations depend on the stability, development level and cooperation of these states for access to international markets (Faya et al. 2014; Uprety, 1994). Therefore, the development and security of transit states and their relationship with these states directly influence the economic prospects of landlocked countries. Hence, landlocked countries in developed regions are less impacted by their lack of direct access to the sea while land locked countries in developing countries and conflict prone areas are highly impacted. Faya et al. (2014) argues that landlocked countries generally have significantly lower levels of development than the maritime countries of their region. Landlocked developing countries are approximately 20% less developed than they should be. UN-OHRLLS note based on UNCTAD study finds a substantial difference in transport and insurance costs for LLDCs; Nearly two-thirds more of their export earnings to these expenses compared to the average developing country, and a staggering three times more than developed economies (UN-OHRLLS, n.d.).

Ethiopia is among the 16 LLDCs in Africa and geographically and population wise, it is the largest landlocked country. Ethiopia had coastal line at the Red Sea through the port of Assab and Massawa until 1991; hence, the Red sea has been a constant and important factor in Ethiopian politics and national security (Kebede, 2014E.C; IFA, 2024; H/Mariam, 2003E.C.). Ethiopia, for centuries, has been attached to the Red Sea geographically, politically,

economically, and strategically. Article 1 of both the 1955<sup>1</sup> and 1987<sup>2</sup> (1:2) of Ethiopian constitutions states that the Ethiopian territory comprises of “the islands and the territorial waters”. These documents indicate the country’s territorial claim over the Red Sea. Furthermore, the 1946 maritime code of Ethiopia details its Red Sea territory and maritime business activities assuring Ethiopia’s presence on the Red Sea (Belachew, 2006E.C.). The country was dependent on the Red Sea outlet for its diplomatic and economic relation with the outside world. Hence, Ethiopia for the longest part of its history has securitized the issue of the Red Sea. Its sovereignty and territorial integrity have been greatly challenged as a result of the geo-political rivalry of international and regional actors over the Red Sea. Ethiopia’s maritime territory has been challenged with the Portuguese- Ottoman Turkey rivalry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later with the European scramble of the Horn of Africa until it became completely landlocked with the independence of Eritrea in 1991 (Belachew, 2006 E.C; Tazebew, 2023).

After 1991, Ethiopia become dependent on the port of Djibouti for access to international market. This is mainly attributed to the level of the development in the HoA, peace and stability of the sub-region and Ethiopia’s relationship with Eritrea. Faya, et al (2014) identified four major types of dependence on transit states; dependence on transit infrastructure; dependence on political relations with neighbours; dependence on peace and stability within transit neighbours; and dependence on administrative processes in transit. All four types apply in Ethiopia’s context. Ethiopia have an opportunity to sea outlet through its five coastal neighbours. However, Ethiopia’s complex relationship with neighbors (Belachew, 2016 EC); internal and regional peace and stability; weak regional integration and the low level of economic development of these countries left Ethiopia’s situation dire.

As Yohannes Tekalign (2019), noted, today, Ethiopia’s landlockedness cost the country around US\$ 1billion per year and the country is also dependent on the good political will of its neighbors, particularly Djibouti for its economic endeavors. To counter these challenges Ethiopia, throughout its history has been highly invested in this politics and exert a lot of

---

<sup>1</sup> The 1955 revised Constitution, under Emperor Haile Selassie, aimed to modernize Ethiopia's image. It maintained the Emperor's power while introducing concepts like separation of powers and expanded the parliament's role. This constitution is comprised of 131 articles and it was replaced in 1974 with the rise of the Derg.

<sup>2</sup> The 1987 constitution was adopted under the Derg regime through a referendum on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1987. This constitution established a one-party socialist state (Workers' Party) and prioritized national development. While it also guaranteed rights, it guaranteed equality of nationalities based on self-determination. This constitution comprised of seventeen chapters with 119 articles was replaced in 1994.

effort (Political, diplomatic, economic and military) to safeguard its interest of securing a direct access to the Red Sea.

Moreover, the growing militarization of the Red Sea and contention among great powers to gain control of the strategically and economically significant seaway poses a significant challenge to the country's economic, diplomatic and politico-military security (Said, 2024). The competition over control of the waterway leading to maritime boundary disputes, transnational threats, and international crimes, including piracy and terrorism (Tassinari and Maru, 2021), which on the other hand contributes to the increasing involvement of all actors (littoral states, regional actors, and international powers) to protect and secure the waterway. However, with no strong and effective multilateral cooperation and/or policy to the security of the region. Vertine (2019) argues that the lack of coordination among the different architectures and the pattern of amity and enmity relationships in the region creates a gap in managing maritime security effectively. The recent attempt to form the Red Sea Council by Saudi Arabia in 2020 with a purpose to cooperate on the issue of security and enhance regional stability alienated key actor like Ethiopia despite its key role in the regional peace and security (Custers, 2021). Mohammed Said (2024) argued that this event denied Ethiopia its predominant role as an anchor state in the Horn and downplay its centuries-long diplomatic and political efforts to assume its position as the regional hegemon. Similarly, Vertine (2019) argues against the exclusion of Ethiopia from the forums as the country is *the regions most important heavyweight* and an anchor state in the HoA. Said (2024) further argues that the exclusion of Ethiopia from the Forum has multifaceted predicament on its national security.

The study by other scholars like Michaele, et al., (2023) and Verhoeven (2018) indicates that the presence of these regional powers and their competing interests increases regional polarization due to challenges of mistrust and asymmetrical relations of littoral states. Verhoeven (2018), and Gebresenbet and Yohannes (2018) noted the connection between the HoA and the Gulf States and the increasing engagement of the latter in the economic, political and security dynamic of the former. The scholars argue that the two sub-regions are evolving in to one security complex. However, the power asymmetry between the two created a patron-client relationship. These states exploit existing conflicts and weaken regional leadership, create a volatile situation that could lead to further instability and potentially even the breakdown of states in the Horn of Africa (De Waal, 2018). Ethiopia,

surrounded by Arabized neighbours, has its national security at stake as the regional security dynamics gets more complex. Hence, this rises the need for extensive exploration of the nexus between the evolving security dynamics of the Red Sea and Ethiopia's national security. This gap impedes a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts of Red Sea security dynamics on Ethiopia's internal stability and its quest for economic development and regional hegemony.

This thesis seeks to bridge a critical gap in understanding Ethiopia's national security by analyzing the evolving security landscape of the Red Sea region and how it intersects with Ethiopia's government policies over time. Because securing national interests and ensuring state stability in this volatile environment necessitates, comprehensive understanding and analysis of the landscape. By employing the securitization security theory, the research will examine how Ethiopia's engagement with Red Sea geopolitics both influences and is shaped by its economic and politico-military security needs. To achieve a nuanced understanding of these dynamics, the study will assess data through the following two key factors: Securitization of the Red Sea - including the evolving regional security dynamics, including the major players and their interests, as well as Ethiopia's evolving policy direction and strategic interests in the region; and Ethiopia's Internal Political Dynamics – adding to the security predicament.

The thesis then analyzes how these two interlinked factors – the Red Sea's security dynamics and Ethiopia's internal politics – ultimately impact the country's politico-military and economic security. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities Ethiopia faces in securing its interests and maintaining its influence in the Red Sea region.

### **1.3. Objective of the study**

#### **1.3.1. General objective**

The general objective of the study is to critically assess the multifaceted impact of the Red Sea security dynamics on Ethiopia's economic and politico military security.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objective**

Specifically, the research is intended to;

- Analyze the multifaceted security implications of Ethiopia's evolving Red Sea policy on its national security and regional stability.
- Explore the evolving security landscape of the Red Sea (including international presence, maritime threats, and regional militarization) and its security implications on Ethiopia.
- Explore Ethiopia's strategic opportunities to secure its interest on the Red Sea and National Security.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

1. What is the implication of Ethiopia's securitization of the Red Sea to its national security and sub-regional stability?
2. How does Ethiopia's de-securitization of direct access to the Red Sea, reflect and affect its stance within the Red Sea geopolitics?
3. How do the evolving security dynamics in the Red Sea region influence Ethiopia's national security?
4. How can Ethiopia leverage the Red Sea for economic and politico-military Security, despite being landlocked, without disrupting regional security?

#### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The study attempted to thoroughly investigate the nexus between the evolving developments on the Red Sea region and its implications on Ethiopian national security. The study will not bound itself in time as it will enable to thoroughly explore the historical precedents and Ethiopia's evolving engagement with Red Sea geopolitics. This will allow a comprehensive understanding of the predicaments of the Red Sea geopolitics on Ethiopia's national security focusing on the political, military, and economic security of the country. However, the study will be divided in three-time frames, pre-1991, 1991 – 2018 and post-2018, to navigate through Ethiopia's engagement and policy directions and how this interplay with its domestic security and regional ambition. The Red Sea security issues are vast involving global and regional state and non-state actors, maritime crime, and environmental, societal, political and economic issues. This study will delimited itself only to the political, economic and military issue of the security dynamics. It will also focus mostly on the regional actors and their interaction as a result of the discussion with experts.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The Red Sea's security landscape is complex, with scholarly works often focusing on the power politics in the region.. Recent literature looked at specific issues like the militarization of the Region, the growing and assertive presence of international and extra regional actors in the horn of Africa and the predicament of these to the countries in the Horn. Literature on Ethiopia are focused on its landlockedness and the consequent security challenges. However, the multifaceted implications of the Red Sea security dynamics on Ethiopia's broader policy directions and their implications on the national security has been overlooked. The impact of colonialism, the cold war power rivalry, and global and regional powers in the Horn of Africa is explored both by Ethiopian and foreign scholars. For example, Ethiopian Scholars like Belete Belachew (2006 EC), Yakob H/Mariam (2005 EC) vividly showed the impact of imperial and colonial expansion on Ethiopia's national security. Foreign scholars like Aliboni (1985), Qureshi (1979), Verhoeven (2018), Ylönen (2022) explored the security implication of global and regional powers engagement in the HoA. However, there is a gap in literature on the recent development of the Red Sea security dynamics and their implication of Ethiopia's national security. As the global and regional actors engagement increase assertively in the Horn of Africa with their conflicting interest and rivalry to control the littoral countries on the African side through economic, military and political incentives, multilateral cooperation flourish as protectorates of the Red Sea. What will be the fate of Ethiopia, a landlocked country entangle in 'Arabized HoA nation, in this dynamic and complex security of the Red Sea region.

This study explored the evolving security dynamic of the Red Sea and it implication on Ethiopia's national security. It specifically focus on the securitization of the region by Middle Eastern states and Ethiopia and analyse how this policy direction is affecting the country. Hence the study attempted to to bridge the gap in the academic works by critically assessing the implications of the interplay between the securitization of the region and Ethiopia's national security.. Meanwhile, this research could be used for academic studies, further explorations, policy recommendation, and other purposes.

## **1.7. Organization of the study**

The research is organized into six chapters. Chapter one deals with the introductory section that includes the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, Scope of the study, significance of the study and organizational structure of the

thesis. The second chapter discuss the review of related literature around the Red Sea Regional geopolitics in relation to Ethiopian National Security, which are relevant to the researcher's study. In this section theoretical and conceptual frame - works on sectoral approach to security as discussed by Buzan and colleagues (1998). The third chapter will cover the research methodology and design, which are applied to conduct the study. The fourth and fifth chapters examines the data presentation and analysis of the research, as well as the study's findings. Finally, chapter six presents the research's conclusion.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter has three sections. The first section will explore key concepts of this study. It will briefly conceptualize what is meant by National Security and deep dive into sectoral approaches to national security focusing on political security, military security, and economic security. This section also assesses the nexus between geopolitics and national security. Section two focuses on theoretical debate on security and explores contending perspectives on security; it assesses major debates between traditional and contemporary perspectives of security. It specifically shades light on the neo-realist, Copenhagen, and Critical Security schools of thought. The final section will review related literatures on basic issues pertinent to national security: threats and vulnerabilities of national security, national interest, and elements of national power. It will also review related literature on Ethiopia's national security predicaments in the evolving Red Sea security dynamics and geopolitics.

### **2.1. Conceptual/Theoretical framework**

#### **2.1.1. Defining Security**

The concept of security is the most contested subject (Baldwin, 1997; Buzan, 1983/91). However, there is a general consensus among scholars as to what security entails – it is absence of threat (freedom from fear). It implicates perceived threats to the survival of some valued referent object. Krause and Williams (1997) maintained that the meaning of security 'presupposes something to be secured' – the referent object. Hence, when talking about security there are four important questions to be addressed: the 'whose security', 'Security from what', 'how –the means' and additionally the period of time in question. Although there is a general consensus as to what security entails, its core elements; 'whose security' (referent object), 'security from what' and 'security by what means' (how), remain contested. As a result, the definition and application of the term "security" is subject to ongoing debate.

In the traditional concept of security, what is most important to protect, the referent object, was the state and its interest are at the core of defining security, i.e. political independence and territorial integrity are most important values to be protected. This conception of security presupposed threat emanates externally and consider military as a mean to protect the state in the anarchic nature of international system (Buzan et al, 1998: p.2-4). Hence, the state and the

military are the core of the traditional conception of security. However post-cold war era, this conception of Security lost its strong hold as the world system changed and failed to explain the emergence of non-militaristic security threats.

As a result, the concept of security broadened to incorporate many agendas. Scholars also criticize the broadening approach to security, as it would subvert the analytical framework. As Walt (1991, 213), noted that broadening the concept of security would ‘*destroy the intellectual coherence*, of the subject and thereby affects the ability to address critical issues. Collins (2013) also argues that the broadening of the security would blur the distinction between security studies and international relation and political science.

The Copenhagen school offer a new framework of security analysis to bridge the gap between the two paradigms. The Copenhagen school (securitization theory), although a widener, provides a criteria for when and how issues become a security matter to preserve the conceptual coherence of the subject. Buzan et al (1998) critique the traditionalist conception of security centered to one sector – Military – however, at the same time they also critique the wideners conception as it makes the subject ‘*intellectually incoherent*’. In the new framework of analysis, Buzan and colleagues introduced sectoral approach to security and a tool to differentiate a political process form a security agenda. (Collins, 2013: p.131-132)

### **2.1.2. Sectoral Approach to Security**

Sectors in this regard refer to arenas entailing particular types of security interaction. ‘Sectors serve to disaggregate a whole for purposes of analysis by selecting some of its distinctive patterns of interactions. But items identified by sectors lack the quality of independent existence...sectors might identify distinctive pattern but they remain inseparable part of complex whole.’ Accordingly, Buzan and colleagues identifies five security sectors: ‘the military, political, economic, environmental and societal’ and the dynamics of these sectors is determined by a securitizing actors and referent objects (Buzan et al, 1998: p.7-8). This approach recognizes that threats can come in many forms and affect various aspects of society. The sectors are interconnected but at the same time entail particular definition of a referent object. Importantly, Buzan and colleagues emphasize the role of "securitization." An issue becomes a security threat when an actor, like a government or activist group, successfully portrays it as an ‘existential threat’ to a valued aspect of society, the "referent

object." (Shepherd, 2013: p.55). The following section will explore the three security sectors - the political, military and economic – as these are area of interest of the study.

### **2.1.2.1. Political Sector**

The political sector, perhaps, is the most contested and multifaceted and intersects with various domains of security. Buzan et al (1998) defines political security as 'Political security is about the organizational stability of social order(s). The heart of the political sector is made up of threats to state sovereignty (Buzan et al, 1998: p.141).' Although state security is at the core of political security, it extends beyond the traditional focus on state security to include the protection and stability of political systems, institutions, and the political rights and freedoms of individuals. Political security encompasses the nonmilitary threat to state sovereignty.

All security issues, in some way, are inherently political. Every threat and defense is ultimately shaped and defined by political considerations. However, the authors distinguish it by the means of threat, i.e. if the means is not coercive, economical or other sector, then the threat is political. Buzan (1991), as cited in Buzan et al (1998), defined political threats as:

Political threats are aimed at the organizational stability of the state. Their purpose may range from pressuring the government on a particular policy, through overthrowing the government, to fomenting secessionism, and disrupting the political fabric of the state so as to weaken it prior to military attack. The idea of the state, particularly its national identity and organizing ideology, and the institutions which express it are the normal target of political threats. Since the state is an essentially political entity, political threats may be as much feared as military ones. This is particularly so if the target is a weak state. (ibid: p.142)

Buzan (1983) argued that political threats are not targeted to the physical element of the state, rather to the idea of the state. Internal disputes are exploited to weaken the state. Hence, weak states are highly vulnerable to political threats (Buzan, 1983: p.117-118). What makes political sector distinct from the other is, it is concerned with the idea of the state and the legitimacy of the 'political unit the legitimacy or recognition either of political units or of the essential patterns (structures, processes or institutions) among them.'(ibid: p.144)

#### **2.1.2.2. Military Sector**

The traditional concept of military security is primarily focused on the state as the referral object and threat is mainly external. For the traditional view, security is tied with military, and military capability is at the center of government spending, and the military plays a key role in how countries interact on the world stage (Collins, 2013: p.148-156). The Copenhagen school, however, argues that although the referent object in military security is usually the state, it may include other political entities. Military threat can also be both external and internal. (Buzan et al, 1998: p.22). The scholars move away from the traditional view of military security being all about state security and all military issues being security issues. They argue that in developed democracies, militaries are increasingly involved in maintaining global order through peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. These activities are not about defending the nation's survival or bypassing normal rules, but rather about supporting a stable international system. (ibid)

Buzan (1983) argues that military security usually overrides the other sectors because it involves the use of force. Maintaining the independent identity and functional integrity or securing its major value is at the core of national security of a state (Buzan, 1983: p.64; Nye, 2009: p.223). The use of force is central for maintaining or control of a state's value and integrity, which gives the military sector a paramount significance. Military threats are not always military rather they usually hold political agenda hence the referent object is not always the state. Buzan et al (1998: p.50) argue that:

In practice, the military security agenda revolves largely around the ability of governments to maintain themselves against internal and external military threats, but it can also involve the use of military power to defend states or governments against nonmilitary threats to their existence, such as migrants or rival ideologies.

This discussion of the military sector highly connects military security to the political security. Buzan et al (1998) argued that the two sectors are distinct but sometimes the function of government blurs the line. The government is given the legitimacy to the use of force but at the same time force is sometimes used to gain consent. Securitization in this sector could focus on internal threats or external threats. Internal threat securitization is focused on using force to 'maintain peace' within, 'territorial integrity', and 'government machinery.' However the securitization of external threat will lead to a security dilemma.

When securitization is focused on external threats, military security is primarily about the two-level interplay between the actual armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states on the one hand and their perceptions of each other's capabilities and intentions on the other .... When elites and populations begin to treat the armed forces of other states as threatening, interstate relations generate the classic military security dilemma involving, on the one hand, the proliferation of military technologies, arms racing, and the interplay of national policies for defense and deterrence and on the other the array of policies aimed at muting the security dilemma, such as arms control, arms reduction, non offensive defense, and at times alliances. (ibid: p. 50-52)

It is noteworthy that in securitization of external threat the interplay between the objective capability (the offense/defense) and perception are important elements in the process. As a result, this leading to justified increased military spending and potentially aggressive actions.

### **2.1.2.3. Economic Sector**

This sector is more complex as 'the referent objects and existential threats are more difficult to pin down.' (ibid: p. 22). The economic realm encompasses a vast range of referent objects from individuals and social classes to entire nations and the intricate global market itself. These objects often intertwine, blurring the lines between local and global concerns. (ibid: p. 100-103)

Buzan (1983: p. 79) noted that economic threats are complex to be labeled as national security threats as the nature of the economy is characterized by risk and uncertainty. Liberalist views firms as impermanent entities driven by market forces. While large corporations collapsing can cause shock and economic hardship, their demise isn't necessarily seen as a security threat. This conflicts with the concept of existential threats that underpins traditional security concerns. In this regard, the local and nationalistic impact of the firms is considered in the securitization process. Local governments, unions, and even the firm itself might resort to security rhetoric to save jobs and prevent economic devastation. On the other hand, government reliance on critical industries like defense production - the government itself, or actors like trade unions, might push for state intervention to protect these "strategic firms" deemed essential for national security. (Buzan et al, 1998: p.100-101)

Buzan et al. (1998) argues that economic activity often also triggers security and survival issues in the other sectors, creating an 'overspill effect' (ibid: p. 116). Economic threats,

while potentially severe, are typically narrow in focus, impacting a specific nation's economy without directly threatening its territory or government institutions. Additionally, the economic sector's inherent ambiguity makes it a difficult target for threats. What may seem like a crippling embargo in the short term could incentivize long-term economic diversification. (Buzan, 1983: p. 79-83)

Buzan (1983) further argues that economic threats are vital in national security – in case of access to strategic materials and military capability and threats to domestic stability. A nation's dependence on foreign sources for critical materials like minerals can be a national security vulnerability. Likewise, when a nation's social and political structures rely heavily on sustained economic growth fueled by trade, disruptions in these patterns can cause economic havoc and potentially threaten internal stability (ibid). Most economic disruptions are the normal costs of global economic activity. However, the broader structure of global economic relations can also significantly impact weaker states.

### **2.1.3. Theoretical Debate**

#### **2.1.3.1. Security as a Contested Concept**

The concept of security has long been a source of academic debate among scholars. Because it can be associated with a variety of concepts that function across multiple analytical levels, making it challenging to precisely define scope. For this reason, some scholars described Security as ‘essentially contested concept’ (ibid: p. 6-11). However, other scholars like Wolfer and Gallie, as cited in David A. Baldwin (1997), argue that the concept of security does not qualify as an essentially contested concept. Baldwin argues that the concept of security does not satisfy two of the most important qualification, being ‘*appraisive*’ and ‘*the defining character must generate a vigorous dispute*’, to be classified as an essentially contested concept. (Baldwin, 1997: p.10)

Despite this, essentially contest or not, security generally entails threat and the feeling to be secure; hence the meaning per se is not much contested. However, the questions of ‘whose security’ and ‘security from what’ are paramount and where the disagreement lays as the definition of threat and the value threatened differs empirically (ibid). Traditionally, what is most important to protect was the state and its interest are at the core of defining security, i.e. political independence and territorial integrity are most important values to be protected. This conception of security presupposed threat emanates externally and consider military as a

mean to protect the state in the anarchic nature of international system. (Buzan et al, 1998: p. 2-4)

However post-cold war era, this conception of Security lost its strong hold as the world system changed and failed to explain the emergence of non-militaristic security threats. During this period, the concept of security had broadened (as the type of threat diversifies) and deepened (the referent object) as the core assumption of the 'thing to be secured' and the 'means to secure' moved away from the state and military might, respectively (Collins, 2016: p.2; Buzan et al, 1998: p. 2-4). The concept of security evolves as the global system changes. There are at least three contending theoretical lens that shape the contemporary security studies: Neorealist, the Copenhagen school and the critical security study.

### **Neorealism**

Neorealism or structural realism is one variant of the realist paradigm. The explanatory variable of this theory rests on the structure of the international system as anarchy. Scholars such as Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer, John Herz and Stephen Walt are major proponents of this school. Neorealism theory is based on the assumption that the structure of the international system is anarchic and the 'principle of self-help' and these two elements remain constant (Williams, 2013: p.18). Unlike classical realism focused on leaders' ambitions, Neorealism emphasizes the systemic structure, particularly the anarchic nature of the international system and the competition driven by the distribution of power between states. Waltz (1979), as cited in Williams (2013), argues that despite limited state preferences for survival and unclear decision-making processes, systemic pressures lead to similar outcomes across different international systems. Kenneth Waltz (1979) argues that hierarchy (having a central authority) can actually lead to more chaos and destruction than the anarchy of a multipolar world. The possibility and desirability of cooperation, interdependence, and integration among states depend on the "formal organization" of this anarchic system. Within a formally organized system, states may specialize due to the reduced threat of conflict. This interdependence would not endanger their survival, unlike in an anarchic system. (Krause and Williams, 1996). Neorealism is criticized for neglecting cooperation and struggling to predict specific events.

## **Critical school of Security Studies**

The Theoretical Foundations of Critical School of Security Studies are rooted in a multidimensional analysis of historical contexts and intellectual intersections. This school challenges the traditional conceptions of security and highlighting the importance of power dynamics, identity, and emancipatory politics in understanding security issues (Collins, 2013: p. 67). Critical theory in International Relations can mean several things. One of the key concepts of this school is the idea of security as a socially constructed concept, shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors. This perspective emphasizes the need to critically examine the underlying assumptions and power structures that influence security policies and practices (Krause and Williams, 1997). The school employs a critical approach to security studies. The term 'critic' itself is a point of contention. Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams (2010) state that "the use of the prefix 'critical' is particularly vexed"; all theories are critical. Krause and Williams (1997: X) defines the term 'critical' as '*an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label*'. The Critical security study is a useful way to categorize a range of approaches that have challenged the narrow 'metatheoretical assumptions' of traditional security studies. The critical theory is both broadening and deepening. It is criticized for incorporating everything in to security studies the the security study losses it intellectual coherence.

## **Copenhagen school**

Copenhagen School offers a distinctive perspective on global security concerns. This school diverges from traditional state-centric security theories by emphasizing the securitization process, whereby issues such as climate change can be framed as existential security threats requiring urgent attention (Buzan et al, 1998). The concept of securitization, central to the Copenhagen School's framework, posits that any subject can be elevated to a national security level, influencing policy responses and resource allocations (ibid). Securitization can be defined as a process in which an actor declares a particular issue, dynamic or actor to be an 'existential threat' to a particular referent object (ibid). Two major variables are important in this definition: an actor who declare an issue a security issue and a threat that is existential. Buzan et al (1998) noted that in the process of securitization the actor convince the audience that a dynamic or a threat is a security threat through the 'speech act'. If accepted this enables the suspension of normal politics and the use of emergency measures in responding to the perceived crisis. Security, in this sense, is a site of negotiation between speakers and audiences. (Paul, 2013)

Buzan et al (1998) noted that an issue can be taken out of the security agenda through the same process, which is referred as desecuritization. Desecuritization is ‘the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere.’

Another concept in this school is the regional security complex theory (RSC). RSC highlights the interconnectedness of security priorities within specific geographic regions. Buzan et al (1998) define regional security complexes as ‘set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.’ Buzan (1991:3) identified four major types of threats and their interaction: ‘balance of power contests among great powers; lingering conflicts that emerge between neighboring states; intra-state conflicts, and conflicts that arise from transnational threats.’ In RSCs the existence of amity-enmity interaction and power distribution among the states defines the security dynamics.

The study mainly adopts the Copenhagen school to understand policies of engaged actors towards the Red Sea and the regional security dynamics throughout the analysis. Although, the other theories were also used to have a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted security of the region and relationships among nations in the region. Ethiopia’s national security is impacted by the activity of regional powers in the HoA, the amity and enmity relationship with these powers and its neighbours as well as its engagement in the region. The Copenhagen school allows for a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the policy directions and the regional security dimension. Hence, this school is used as theoretical lens in the analysis to maintain the theoretical coherence of the study.

## **2.2. Empirical Literature**

This section delve in to the security dynamics of the Red Sea and their implications for the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia. It defines Red Sea security dynamics and analyzes the region's key characteristics. The section then explores scholarly works on the security challenges arising from the Red Sea's geopolitical landscape and security complex. It focuses on how these challenges affect countries in the Horn of Africa, with a particular emphasis on Ethiopia's national security.

### **2.2.1. The Red Sea Security Dynamics**

The Red Sea geopolitics and security dynamics is lies on its strategic geographic position linking the Europe and Asia and the Mediterranean Sea with Indian Ocean. The Sea is

considered very important artery for global security and trade by the global and regional powers. It has served as a vital crossroads for international powers for centuries. Over 10% of global trade currently transits this vital waterway. Moreover, the region boasts high economic growth potential, with a projected GDP tripling from \$1.8 trillion to \$6.1 trillion by 2050, fueled by a fivefold increase in trade. This growth trajectory elevates the Red Sea's geopolitical and geo-economic importance. (Heath, 2020)

Historical manuscripts indicate that the Red Sea served as the major trade route and line of communication for civilizations in the north and northeastern Africa and the Middle East. Professor Lapiso Delebo (2010 E.C) as cited in Kebede (2014 E.C: p.33) noted that the Red Sea served as the major line of communication between the great civilizations of Axum, Nubia, Egypt, Greek, and Roma. Controlling the Red Sea has long been a strategic objective for empires seeking to project power and influence. The rise of Arab Sultanates after the 6th century limiting the activities of the Axumite kingdom, weakened the kingdom. Similarly, the Ottoman Turks, during their expansion controlled the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which subsequently weakened the Ethiopian regime then. (Ibid: p.35 -38)

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Egypt Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 1977 – 91, as noted on the book by Alberto Aliboni (1985: P.ix) ‘The Red Rea Region: Local Actors and the Superpowers’ described the significance of the Red Sea as:

A mere glance at a map of the Middle East gives an indication of the paramount strategic importance of the Red Sea. Lying as it does between two continents, Africa and Asia, between the Middle East and the Far East, as well as between Europe and Asia, the Red Sea is at the heart of an area which has seen the birth of civilizations and religions, and which constitutes a link between two worlds and two civilizations. The geopolitical position of the Red Sea is of special importance: bordering the eastern coast of Africa and the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula, it is a vital route for the transportation of oil through Bab el-Mandeb in the south to the Suez Canal in the north. For Egypt, the strategic importance of the Red Sea is even greater. Since the Suez Canal was built in the last century as a link between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, this new sea route very quickly replaced the route round the Cape of Good Hope. The

protection and security of the Red Sea as well as of the Canal itself has been one of the main preoccupations of Egypt as well as of world powers.

In recent histories of colonization and the cold war, the Red Sea holds a significant place. During the cold war, the Red Sea had been a major contention arena for the US and the USSR. Yasmin Qureshi (1979: p.143) describe the situation as follow:

All Suez Canal traffic, to and from the Indian Ocean, must pass the narrow Straits of the Bab el-Mandeb between Djibouti and the two Yemens .... Whoever controls this area controls the oil flow to the Western world. US foreign policy is therefore directed towards keeping this area free of Soviet influence, thereby avoiding any possibility of a blockade of the oil lanes by the Soviet Union.

The then global powers competed to control the strategic waterway through creating alliances with and supporting governments in the Horn of Africa. This external involvement fueled existing conflicts, such as the Ogaden War (1977-78), where the USSR backed Ethiopia and the US supported Somalia (Wilkins, 2019). Today, several major global and regional actors, including the US, China, France, Britain, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, are vying for influence in the Red Sea.

Ghali further explains that the Red Sea has become a battleground for world powers, with global strategies affecting the region and vice versa. Issues like 'free navigation', nuclear non-proliferation, and fighting terrorism are crucial for both regional states and the international community. However, the Red Sea faces numerous challenges, including population imbalances, social unrest, poverty, and external powers vying for resources. No single country bordering the Red Sea is strong enough to ensure its security, further fueling competition among superpowers pursuing their own agendas. (Aliboni, 1985: p. ix – x)

Scholars like Ylönen (2022), Belete Belachew (2024) and Mohammed Said (2024) attributes many of the (in) security of the Red Sea to the legacies of the colonial area. Belachew (2024) argued that one instance of this is the creation of the republic of Somalia by the British which was planned to be included in the common wealth nations.

It can be said that Somalia is a creation and laboratory of colonialism. Although there are other African countries established in the same way, what makes Somalia unique is there has never been a political structure that binds the tribes and the states together. It is primarily the

result of the accidental amalgamation of two colonial administrations: Italian Somaliland (Southern Somalia) and British Somaliland (Somaliland). Within a few days of independence, Italian Somalia was united with British Somalia (Somaliland) to form the Somali Republic. The idea of a Greater Somalia, which aimed to bring the rest of the Somali-speaking peoples under one administration, was also developed. This colonial of expansionism and patronage instilled in Somali politicians for a long time and until today.<sup>3</sup>

As a result Somalia remained a threat for countries in the region and because of its weak government structure, it become the major infiltration point for global and extra-regional global state and non-state actors. <sup>4</sup> The global and regional power engagement in the southern corner of the Red Sea region has continued the become complex with more actors getting involved and competing for the control of the region.

Mohammed Said (2024), Verhoeven (2018) noted that the securitization of the region by many actors, both global and regional, further complicated the (in) security dynamics of the region. This has mainly affected the counties in the Horn of Africa because of their internal security situations, further complicated by external actors' engagement, and weak economic status. The growing interests of and rivalry between global and regional powers, high militarization of the region, proliferation of non-state actors, arms proliferation, maritime terrorism and piracy and the amity and enmity patter of relationship resulting in insecurity in some of the regional countries mainly on the African side of the Sea characterize the region today.(Seid, 2024: p.4-9)

**Global and Regional actors Rivalry**

One characteristics of the Red Sea region is the competition among global and regional powers to control the strategic waterway. From Alexander the Great to Napoleon, the Red Sea's strategic location as a vital trade route and chokepoint has made it a constant flashpoint for geopolitical competition. In recent times, this competition has manifested in geo-economic, diplomatic, military, ideological, and geopolitical dynamics that shape foreign policy and political developments in the region (Mehari, 2019). The region's strategic

<sup>3</sup> Rough translation from Belete Belachew (2024), ኢትዮጵያ እና ጎረቤቶቿ የትብብር እና ውዝግብ አዙሪት (Ethiopia and its neighbors: the whirl of cooperation and conflict), P. 139. – the original (Amharic) version is - በደምሳሳው ሲገለፅም ሶማሊያ የቅኝ ግዛት ፈጠራ እና ቤተ መከራ ነች ማለት ይቻላል። በአርግጥ በተመሳሳይ መልኩ የተመሰረተ ሌሎች የአፍሪካ አገራት አይጠፉም። የሶማሊያን ለዋት የሚያደርገው ግን ጎሳዎችን እና ግዛቶችን የሚያስተሳስር የፖለቲካ መዋቅር የተበጀበት ጊዜ አለመኖሩ ነው። በዋነኝነት ሁለት የቅኝ ግዛት አስተዳደሮች ፡ የጣሊያን ሶማሌ (ደቡባዊ ሶማሌ) እና የእንግሊዝ ሶማሌ (ሶማሌላንድ) ድንገተኛ ውህድ ዉጤት ናት። የጣሊያን ሶማሌ ነፃነቷን በተቀዳጀችበት በጥቂት ቀናት ውስጥ ከእንግሊዝ ሶማሌ (ሶማሌላንድ) ጋር እንድትዋሃድ እና የሶማሌ ሪፐብሊክ እንዲመሰረት ሆነ። የተቀሩት ሶማሊኛ ተናጋሪ ሀዝቦች በተመሳሳይ መልኩ በአንድ አስተዳደር ስር ለማድረግ ያለመ የታላቁ ሶማሌ እሳቤ ተወጣ። ይህ የቅኝ ገዥዎቹ የተስፋፊነትና የተጋፊነት ውጥን በሶማሊያ ፖለቲከኞች ውስጥ ነፍስ ዘርቆ እስካለገበት ጊዜ ዘልቋል።

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. P. 139- 143

location has long attracted external actors. Major global Powers and regional players, both state and non-state, have vied for influence in the countries bordering the Red Sea, seeking to shape their political, economic, and social development. While some recent foreign involvement has spurred economic growth, the intense competition for influence often creates a perverse incentive for local actors to exploit these rivalries. Verhoeven (2018: p.341) argued that the power asymmetry within the region and with global actors created a dynamic where some states 'positioned themselves as deserving recipients of aid and foreign direct investment.'

Ylönen (2022: p.1) argues, the external engagement in the region fuels the persistent political instability that waves the Horn of Africa, hindering regional cooperation and affecting the stability of the Red Sea itself. Beyond regional powers vying for control of the Red Sea, its strategic significance has attracted major international actors like the US and China to the region. These global players add another layer of competition to the already complex dynamics. In addition to competing state actors, the region faces numerous security threats, including piracy, arms smuggling (small arms and light weapons), illegal migration, human trafficking, and environmental crimes like toxic waste dumping and unregulated fishing. This volatile mix of actors and threats has resulted in highly militarization and securitization of the region. (Fantaye, 2014: p.14-18; G/senbet and Yohannes, 2018: p. 94)

The 1869 opening of the Suez Canal significantly boosted British political and economic influence due to their existing colonies along the Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea. This strategic advantage spurred France to establish a foothold at the eastern Red Sea coast by acquiring land from local rulers. This has denied Ethiopia its only access to the sea (Belachew, 2006 E.C: p. 27-29). Additionally, the French occupation of the area interrupted the British ambition to connect Cairo and Cape Town via continuous British-controlled territory. Both with the ambition to link up their disparate colonial possessions in Africa entered into conflict, which led to what is known as the Fashoda incidence. The result of this competition has left the horn of Africa with, what Ylönen described as 'the arbitrary borders thrown up by colonial treaties, which separated local population groups and forced them to live in territories of distinct political entities.' This has resulted the (in) security and political dynamics of the Horn of Africa today. (Ylönen, 2022: p. 2)

The 1960's and 70's Cold War turned the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea into a battleground for superpowers. The Yemen war and the Ogaden war were illustration of the impact of the Soviet Union and the United States competition for dominance through a proxy conflicts (Qureshi, 1979: p. 142-59). The Cold War superpowers, locked horns over control of the strategic Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Ethiopia, the regional heavyweight, became a battleground for influence. Both superpowers sought to control these strategic waterways by building spheres of influence in the Horn of Africa through alliances with local powers (Verhoeven, 2018: p. 348). The Cold War superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, played a significant role in fueling insecurity and conflict in the Horn of Africa. Their intense rivalry transformed into a regional proxy war, characterized, as Melvin (2019) describes as, by mistrust and mutual destabilization. By supplying arms to opposing factions and backing rival governments, the superpowers exacerbated existing tensions and contributed to some of the region's most destructive conflicts, such as the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia. (Qureshi, 1979: p.143 – 156)

Regional powers like Egypt and Saudi Arabia also pursued their agendas, including countering Israeli influence and promoting pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism. This external meddling often exacerbated existing tensions. The 1974 communist revolution in Ethiopia sent shockwaves through the region, prompting a realignment of alliances. Destabilizing revolutions and the amity and enmity patterns of relationship between Saudi and Ethiopia who were hegemons of their respective sub-region then. The rise of the Soviet-backed Derg regime in Ethiopia led to Saudi Arabia attempting to isolate and weaken Ethiopia. This included supporting separatist movements in Eritrea and the Ogaden region.(Ylönen,2022: p.1).

De Waal (2017) argued that the defeat of communism and the decline of Cold War ideology weakened nationalism, leading to a mercantile politics. 'The cost of defeating Communism was that nationalism—the one ideology with a proven record of underpinning state building—was also in retreat, replaced by a mercantile form of politics that was fertile ground for developing the political marketplace' (De Waal, 2017: p. 6). Verhoeven (2018) further argues that the cold war created a division between the Horn and the Gulf countries and internally within themselves as well.

Following the defeat of colonialism, the US engagement in the region reduced until the 2001 terrorist attack in the United States and the consequent launching of the war on terror. The launching of the war on terror and the increased piracy activity on the Red Sea, opened the door for new international actors like China and India and existing actors including the US, France, Russia and Italy to upsurge their influence in the region (Melvin, 2019: p.7-8). This period marks the high militarization of the Red Sea region particularly the southern corner of the Red Sea controlling the chokepoint Ba el Mandab. This has made the region a theater for geopolitical rivalry between international actor who seek to advance their geopolitical, geo-economics and strategic interests in the pretext of Maritime security.

### **The Rise of Regional Actors**

Over the past decade, Gulf nations are increasingly drawn to the African side of the sea vying to control and put their influence. The relationship between the Middle East/Gulf and the Horn of Africa has a long and complex history, with the Red Sea serving as a connecting rather than separating force between the two regions (G/senbet and Yohannes, 2018). This proximity has led to a history of both cultural symbiosis and animosity, influenced by rival imperial expansions and violent conflicts. While global attention is focused on the power competition between the US and China in the region, the Horn of Africa has also become a battleground for influence among various regional players. These include Saudi Arabia/ UAE competition with Iran, as well as with Turkey and Qatar, Egypt's struggle to maintain regional dominance and water rights, and its competition with Ethiopia's rising role. Additionally, there is a pattern of competition and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Mahmood, 2019; Feierstein, 2020).

Harry Verhoeven (2018) and Fana Gebresenbet and Dawit Yohannes (2018) treats the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf as security complexes. The scholars argue that the Horn and the Gulf have similarities in many aspects including 'historical ties,' 'culture', 'ideology' and 'religion', which entangles them into a security complex (Verhoeven, 2018; G/senbet and Yohannes, 2018). Verhoeven (2018) explains that these similarities create a situation where the security concerns of one region can easily spill over and affect the other:

For all the obvious differences in wealth and global influence, the Gulf and the Horn are markedly similar in other regards– and it is some of these similarities that are causing them to become increasingly enmeshed with each other in the security realm. Both the Gulf and the

Horn are regional security complexes dominated by the politics of state survival and regime survival; they are regions of the world where the redrawing of borders is not just hypothetical but an empirical reality experienced in the recent past— see the creation of Eritrea, Somaliland and South Sudan as well as the de facto partitioning of Yemen (and, somewhat further afield, Libya). (Verhoeven, 2018: p. 335)

G/senbet and Yohannes (2018) critique the traditional view of the Gulf and the Horn as separate regional security complexes as this conception fails to explain the ‘transregional conflicts’. The existing explanations overlook the significant role of countries on the other side of the Red Sea to the security of the Horn. They argue that the Gulf’s influence should not be seen as "spillover" (external influence), but rather as an ‘inherent’ factor in the region’s security dynamics. Basing their argument on the revised conception of Regional Security Complex (RSCs) by Buzan and colleagues, the scholars explain the ‘interdependent security dynamics’ on the two sides of the Red Sea as ‘Transregional Security Complex.’ (G/senbet and Yohannes, 2018: p. 92)

Although Verhoeven (2018) depart from the perception that the Horn and the Gulf are now single security complexes, he agree their security concerns are becoming increasingly linked, making each region’s stability vital to the other. He argues that the history of mutual insecurity and competition between powerful countries is pushing the Horn and the Gulf towards a more interconnected security landscape. (Verhoeven, 2018: p. 348)

One factor connecting the two regions is maritime security – (in) security of the Red Sea as vital trade route found between the Horn and the Gulf. The security of the Red Sea is affected by the activities of actors on both sides of the Sea. The Red Sea, a vital artery for global trade, and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, its strategic chokepoint, are critical for the smooth flow of commerce and the security of oil-exporting Gulf countries, whose economy is built on petrodollar, as well as for countries of the horn of Africa whose import export is through this water way. (G/senbet and Yohannes, 2018: p. 93)

Hence, both the Horn and the Gulf have a stake in maintaining maritime security of the Red Sea and surrounding. However, due to the economic balance between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf, the Gulf’s wealth fueled their influence, while Horn of African countries became dependent on Gulf aid and remittances. This created a dynamic where the Horn states sought

patronage in exchange for loyalty, highlighting the power asymmetry and its impact on regional politics. (Verhoeven, 2018: p. 341)

The exporting of the rivalry in the Middle East to the Horn of Africa plays a significant role in shaping politics of the countries in the Horn internally as well as their diplomatic relationship. The Saudi- Iran ideological/ political rivalry is one illustration of this dynamics that led to the isolation of Iran from the Horn of Africa, which also led to the engagement of countries in the Horn in the 2015 Yemen war in support of Saudi Arabia allied force (Feierstein, 2020: p. 1-2).

The intra-GCC conflict between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, and Qatar's alleged support for extremist groups, has had negative consequences in the Horn of Africa. Qatar's withdrawal of its peacekeeping force from the Djibouti/Eritrea border led to renewed fighting. Turkey's alliance with Qatar further complicated the situation due to its economic and security presence in the region.

Following the Yemen War, the Horn and Gulf engagement intensified through military and economic investment of the later. Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkiye established military based in Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea asserting their presence in the sub-region. The military based included military cooperation with the host countries in terms of provision of military training and support. Turkiye's pursuit of the Sawakin Island in 2017 alarmed the Gulf States to re-assert their foothold in the horn in the form of economic and military investments (Melvin, 2019; Vertin, 2019). The impact of the competing interest of the regional powers is immense in terms of exacerbating tension among the African states and proxy war.

Beyond security issues, the Gulf is also interested in diversification of their economy. They are also interested in building strong economic ties with their African counterparts. Melvin (2019) noted the need for the Gulf States to diversify their economy in order to reduce their reliance on hydrocarbon (Melvin, 2019: p.10) To this end, the Gulf injected money to the Horn economy in terms of direct investments, and aid.

While all seek to expand their influence, their methods diverge. Turkey focuses on military presence, establishing its largest overseas base in Somalia. The Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, counter with economic muscle, investing in ports and infrastructure across the Horn of Africa in addition to their military cooperation. This competition fuels

regional tensions, with each side viewing the other's presence as a threat. The future of the Red Sea hinges on whether these rivals can find a way to coexist or if their competition escalates into a destabilizing conflict.

In addition, Da Waal (2017) noted that the GCC inject money in the Horns economy in the form of direct political payment. He noted:

This recent wave of Gulf engagement with the HoA has been driven by a host of political and security factors (Obaid 2014), has been facilitated by the economic vulnerability of the HoA, and has been operationalised through political funding direct loyalty payments to political actors. (Da Waal, 2017: p.7)

This created a further complexity in the already fragile Horn of Africa and challenges the AU peace building approach in the region. The African Union (AU) prioritizes a collaborative approach with shared principles, but Middle Eastern states like the Gulf countries operate on a transactional, bilateral basis, offering financial aid for loyalty and favoring military solutions. This creates a situation where the Horn is seen as a secondary concern by Middle Eastern powers who undermine the AU's peacebuilding efforts, prioritizing short-term gains over lasting stability. (Da Waal, 2018)

### **Maritime Security Challenges of the Red Sea Region**

Fentaye (2014) defined maritime security as 'ensuring the safety of maritime traffic from threats.' He further noted that 'Maritime security has more recently come to include the exclusivity and protection of economic investments in so-called exclusive economic zones (EEZ).' Onuoha (2009: 32), as cited in Fentaye (2014), provides comprehensive definition: 'maritime security incorporates unhindered oceanic trade, safe navigation, the safeguarding of coastal communities and their livelihoods, protecting the food chain and preserving the oceanic contribution to the health of the planet' (Fantaye, 2014). This provides a broad definition of maritime security incorporating coastal community protection, safeguarding the livelihoods and well-being of people living near the coast, and environmental security.

The AU charter on Maritime Security and Safety Development provides a narrow definition of maritime security as 'Maritime Security means the prevention of and fight against all acts of threats of illicit acts against a ship, its crew and its passengers or against the port facilities,

maritime infrastructure, maritime facilities and maritime environment.’(Lomé Charter, 2016: p.10)

Both definitions imply the security and safety of the sea and the surround from maritime crime. The Red Sea maritime security is challenged by activities of terrorists like the Al Shebab and Houthi as well as the Somali pirates who are engaged in maritime crime and terrorism. The Somali pirates were major non-state actors operating on the Red Sea attacking ships and vessels, and hold crews, cargos and vessels hostage for a ransom payment. From 2008 to 2011, global and regional powers assert their presence on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in the fight against Piracy in a significant reduction. However, in January 2024, Indian Navy announced the rescue of hijacked ship by pirates of Somalia’s cost. (Aradi, 2024)

Since mid-November 2023, the Iran-backed Houthi militia controls large parts of Yemen and has launched numerous attacks on Israeli and US commercial ships in the Red Sea, claiming to act “in solidarity with the Palestinians.” (Raul, 2023). This has resulted in detour of ship including major shipping companies such as MSC and Maersk. EU report to the European parliament in March 2024 stated that:

Major shipping companies such as MSC and Maersk have started circumnavigating Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, instead of transiting the Red Sea. As a result, the number of ships passing through the Red Sea has decreased by 50 %. Circumnavigation adds an estimated one to two weeks to journeys, and leads to 'longer transit times, more fuel spent, more ships required', and increases the cost of shipping and of shipped goods, with costs also passed onto consumers (Clapp, 2024).

Additionally, a decrease in Red Sea traffic also affects the economies of port along the Red Sea and countries like Egypt, due to the corresponding decline in Suez Canal traffic. Furthermore, the Houthi movement on the Red Sea resulted in the increased global engagement of global and regional powers on the Red Sea.

The Red Sea also serves as a smuggling route for small arms and light weapons. This has fueled conflicts in Yemen, Somalia, and other countries in the Horn of Africa resulting in prolonged internal conflict and destabilizing the region (Horton, 2020). Furthermore,

cybersecurity threats, environmental security threats, migration, and human trafficking are other major security challenges of the Red Sea.

### **2.2.2. The Red Sea as Security Predicament to the Horn**

Attributed to its strategic significance coupled with the realities of maritime security, the Red Sea is securitized by global and regional actors. The securitization of the Red Sea resulting in the presence of the every global actor in the affairs of the region and projecting their power. As discussed above, the Horn of Africa's political, economic and security realities opened the door for global and extra regional actors to engage in the internal affairs of the sub-region with a pretext of securing the African side of the Sea. Despite the economic growth spurred in recent decades through foreign direct investment, infrastructural development, technology, port developments in Red Sea littoral countries and other economic benefits, major powers and regional players engagements and recurring power struggles among themselves came with their own predicaments as they vie to influence the political, economic, and social development of the region. De Waal (2018) noted that:

There is conflict on a national and regional level in the Horn of Africa. Influences on the region are risky because they open up additional avenues for ambitious players to acquire outside backing, making it harder for the region's leaders to keep control as money and influence flood the political market. The most destabilizing trend in the Red Sea region is the zero-sum competition for influence among Middle Eastern actors and the risks that competition poses to state integrity in the Horn of Africa.

One manifestation of the global and regional powers rivalry is the proliferation of military bases in the region. Major global powers including the US, China, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan and Britain, and regional powers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Israel and Turkiye, all established military base in the horn of Africa. By 2018, there are about 17 military based established in the Horn, among which 9 of them are stationed in Djibouti while the others are spread between Eritrea, Somalia and Kenya (Melvin, 2019).

Militarization of the Red Sea has benefited the region in response to combat terrorism and piracy. In addition, the host countries also benefit from the income generated from leasing their territory for external power. For instance, Djibouti generates more than US\$300 million

annually (PSC, 2019). However, the security implication of the militarization is also immense.

Knorr (1970: p. 50-64) described military power as the ultimate tool of force in the international system that gives a state the power to destroy, occupy, or control another, ultimately compelling them to act against their will. Considering the power asymmetry between the host country and the powers, one can assume the danger posed to the sovereignty of the host nations in the Horn. August 2019 PSC (Peace and Security Council of AU) report raises its concern on the proliferation of military bases in Africa and their potential in jeopardizing regional security structures. Such regional responses emerge out of the willingness of some African states to address certain security challenges outside the framework of the regional economic communities, with the support of a foreign military presence (PSC, 2019).

The foreign military presence will exacerbate patronage, open avenues for interference in the internal affairs of states, and foreign countries' competition complicates the security of the volatile Horn of Africa region (Liyew, 2024; Ikondere, 2021). The foreign military bases in the Red Sea regional security complex carry the risk of increased foreign interference as a result of the geopolitical and strategic competition and regional instability further fueled by corruption and what Da Waal (2017) termed as the '*political market place*'.

Another security threat is arms trafficking. The Red Sea, a crucial waterway for global trade, is also becoming a hotspot for arms trafficking. This illicit activity fuels conflicts, undermines regional stability, and poses a security threat to countries bordering the sea. Illicit arms smuggling plays an immense role in exacerbating conflict in the Horn of Africa. Fantaye (2014) argued that small arms and light weapons trafficking, penetrating the Horn through the coasts of Somalia, in the region significantly contributes to regional instability and violence, with weapons easily reaching civilians and fueling conflicts beyond Somalia's borders (Fantaye, 2014: p.17). One consequence of the Yemen war is the high injection of arms into the region. Horton M. (2020) noted that:

The wars in Yemen and the vast number of arms and materiel provided by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have ushered in a golden age for regional arms traffickers. The flow of weapons and materiel from Yemen to the

Horn of Africa has increased over the last three years, as has the quality and variety of smuggled weapons.

The arms trafficking pause major challenge for the already volatile Horn. For Ethiopia who is rocked in internal conflict between the militias and the federal government, is immense security challenge in prolonging the conflicts.

Amity and enmity pattern of relationship and shifting geopolitical paradigm in the region is another impact of global rivalry in the region. As discussed in the above section, the cold war ideological rivalry between the US and USSR shaped the pattern of relationship with in the region. The shifting alliance between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia following the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia manifested in Saudi's support of the Eritrean independence movement.

Despite the security predicament of the Red Sea, the absence of strong and functional security cooperation or governing architecture is another characteristics in the region. One attempt of such cooperation is the Sana'a forum established in 2002 by Yemen, Ethiopia and Sudan which was later joined by Djibouti and Somali. The then Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, while speaking at the opening the sixth session of the forum noted that the aims to protect the coasts of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea through the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region. (SudanTribune, 2008)

Another effort in this regard is the Djibouti code of conduct signed on 29 January 2009. The conduct is aimed at controlling of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden and latter in 2017 expanded its mission to include illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the trafficking of people and weapons. 20 littoral and non-littoral countries including Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen signed the conduct (Maritime Africa, 2023). The Conduct do not included major global powers engaged in the region, which I believe, would add complexity to its effective implementation.

Recent phenomenon of cooperation is the establishment of the Red Sea Forum in 2019. The council was established by Saudi Arabia and Egypt aiming at the security the Red Sea region. However, the forum is criticized from the start for not including major actors in the area like

Ethiopia, Israel and the UAE. Ethiopia demanded its inclusion to the Forum as it has a stake on the region's security dynamics and the role it plays in regional integration. Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Dina Mufti said 'since the forum is established to tackle illegal human trafficking, weapons smuggling and other related issues, Ethiopia should be part of this form as it could contribute a lot to for strengthening peace and security' (Somtribune Africa, 2022).

Vertin (2019), argues that membership should not include everyone. However to exclude one of 'the region's most important heavyweights; the country of 100 million is the lynchpin of politics, economics, security, and infrastructure development across the Horn', with the sole criteria of being a littoral country is not a convincing rationale (Vertin 2019: p.9-10). Egypt's pressure on the criteria of membership is a manifestation of hydro-political rivalry between Ethiopia and Egypt.

Other regional organizations including the AU, IGAD, Arab league and the GCC operate with their own Red Sea focused agenda. Mahmood O. (2020) noted that 'a key characteristic that emerges is the membership of littoral Red Sea states of multiple and overlapping regional organisations, but none with a clear mandate to coordinate across the maritime space' (Mahmood, 2020). The lack of coordination among the different architectures and the pattern of amity and enmity relationship in the region creates a gap in managing maritime security effectively. In addition, such patterns and competition creates a favorable condition for non-state actors – the case of Houthi in Yemen war and increased engagement of non-regional actors to control this vital waterway undermining the interest of most regional countries.

Overall, this security landscape of the Red Sea, coupled sub-regional stability and Ethiopia's vulnerability have a multidimensional security implication. To its national interest and ensure stability in this volatile environment necessitates a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the Region. Chapter four and five of this study navigate through Ethiopia's security predicament as a result of this complex security landscape.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

### 3.1. Introduction

The main goal of this study is exploring the implication of the Red Sea security dynamics on Ethiopia's national security. The history of Ethiopia is linked with the Nile water and the Red Sea, thereby its foreign policy and national security direction is dictated by the activities about these two waterbodies. The (in) security of the two water bodies have significant implication politico-military, economic and societal security. Successive regimes of Ethiopia put a fierce struggle maintain and/or regain access to the Red Sea. The study explores the security predicament of Ethiopia in light of the Red Sea security dynamics.

This chapter discusses the methodology and research design employed, the sampling techniques selected, the data sources and collection tools used, data analysis and interpretation, and ethical considerations.

### 3.2. Methodology and Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is 'a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem' (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative data collection allows for the gathering of data, that helps in the examination of a dynamics and provide detailed insights. Qualitative research methods, unlike quantitative approaches, encourage respondents to delve deeper and provide richer insights into the problem. Open-ended questions are particularly useful in this context. However, it's important to acknowledge that subjectivity is inherent to qualitative research due to the emphasis on in-depth discussions and interpretations (ibid). Such research approach aims to explore and understand meaning individuals or groups attach to social problems. Therefore, this study will employ the qualitative research approach due to its applicability to the nature of the research problem and method of data collection.

The study explores the fate of Ethiopia's national security in the Red Sea regional security dynamics. Particularly the research is focused on the politico-military and economic security sectors of Ethiopia's national security. Therefore, it utilizes major international security study theories as its analytical framework. It will then critically examine the theoretical

assumptions of these theories regarding national, with a specific focus on economic and politico-military dimensions. Specifically, the study employs the Copenhagen school of security studies. This school help to better analyze the nexus between Ethiopia's policy direction and the Red Sea security dynamics.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

This study utilized a qualitative data collection approach to gain rich insights into the effects of Red Sea security dynamics on Ethiopian national security. Non-probability sampling, specifically purposive and snowball sampling methods is used to identify interviewees. Both primary and secondary approaches of data collection is employed to have comprehensive understanding of the topic.

#### **Primary Data**

Primary data collection helps to gather first-hand information directly relevant to the topic allowing a in-depth investigation of the topic. There are various methods of primary data collection: observation, interviewing and questioner (Kumar, 2012). Guided by the nature of the problem, this research uses interviews as its primary source of data. Interviews are person-to-person interactions with a specific purpose in mind to elicit information, belief or opinion of another person (ibid). - Key informants interviews, including experts in the field of international relations and security studies, as well as relevant current and former government personalities were consulted. This method enable the researcher to target rich information source and gain granular understanding of complex issues. Additionally, Speeches and Public Statements by government officials and other relevant actors will be collected to understand official perspectives on Red Sea security.

#### **Secondary Data**

Secondary sources of data enable to leverage existing information including historical and scholars' perspective to gain insight on the topic (Kumar, 2012). This type of data collections includes data from sources like as government publications, articles, journals, magazines, books and periodicals. Secondary data collection enables a researcher to supplement the research, build a strong foundation, and gain valuable insights without starting from scratch. Hence, to an understand existing works and substantiate the research, secondary data is collected including a comprehensive review of relevant literature, including academic works,

official reports, published and unpublished materials, magazines, and newspapers, conducted. This provided historical, contemporary and contextual framework for the study.

### **3.4. Analysis of Data**

'Data analysis involves collecting open-ended data, based on asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information supplied by participants' (Creswell, 2009). Most common technique of data analysis in a qualitative study is to identify themes through analysis of the information gathered (Kumar, 2012). This approach provides structure and clarity to uncover underlying meaning of the data collected. In this study, data is analyzed thematically, guided by the research questions and the emerging themes from the collected data. This iterative approach allows for findings to be grounded in the data itself (Malterud, K., 2001: p. 483-488). To ensure the clarity and trustworthiness of the analysis, data from different sources (interviews, speeches, documents) analyzed separately before being integrated into a cohesive narrative.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

Recognizing the importance of ethical conduct, this study uphold the highest ethical standards throughout the research process. Participant confidentiality is paramount. All data used solely for research purposes, and anonymity maintained to protect participants' identities.

Adherence to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants is imperative. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and measures are implemented to safeguard their privacy and confidentiality (Smith, A.,2018). For the discretion of the participants, their names were kept confidential and codes were used. These ethical safeguards are essential to protect the rights and well-being of participants throughout the study, in accordance with established ethical norms in social research.

Furthermore, the researcher adheres to academic writing principles, ensuring that the analysis remains objective and free from bias or political ideology. Efforts are made to present the findings accurately, reflecting a commitment to transparency and integrity in the research process.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ETHIOPIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST AND SECURITY

### MENACE

This chapter explores Ethiopia's security menace in connection to the Red Sea. It serves as a connector between the conceptual/theoretical frameworks discussed in the above chapter with the core objective of the study.

The chapter has two sections. First, the chapter explores Ethiopia's geopolitical interest and policy directions across three periods: pre-1991, 1991 – 2018, and post-2018. Then it will shed light on Ethiopia's national security challenges in connection with its geopolitical interest and subsequent policy.

#### **4.1. Ethiopia's Geopolitical Interest and Policy Direction**

Ethiopia is one of the oldest states in Africa and across the globe who have enjoyed a long history of independent state and government traced back to 1000 BC. Throughout its history, Ethiopia maintained relationships with other country maintained commercial and diplomatic relationships. The Red Sea served as the major outlet for Ethiopia's diplomatic and commercial engagement with other countries (Kebede, 2014 EC: p.29-31). He stated that Ethiopia's territory goes beyond the Red Sea and encompasses islands on the Red Sea. Ethiopia possesses her own ships, commercial ports, islands, NAVY. Hence, Red Sea remained Ethiopia's static interest throughout its history. Lapiso Getahun (prof.), as cited in Kebede (2014 EC), noted that 'Ethiopia's national security is strongly interlinked with the geopolitics of the Red Sea and the Abay Gorge. Despite changing regimes, these remained Ethiopia's standing foreign policy interest throughout history' (Ibid: p.31). Except for a brief period between 1991 and 2018, the issue of direct access to the sea has been a major foreign policy and national security agenda. The Red Sea served as an outlet for Ethiopia's commercial and diplomatic relationships but at the same time it was also an entry point for global powers that challenged Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity at different times (Ibid: p.29-81; IFA, 2024: p.3-4). From the Axumite kingdom to 1991, when Ethiopia become completely landlocked, successive regimes has fought to maintain Ethiopia's sea territory. Yakob H/Mariam (2005 EC), noted that 'except the ERDF government, all successive Ethiopian leaders from 'Atse' Thewodros, 'Atse' Yohannes, 'Atse' Menilik, the

reign of Zewditu, ‘Atse’ Haile Selassie and Derg regime, the issue of access to the sea was the priority of their foreign policy and diplomacy.’ (H/Mariam, 2005 EC; p.31)

Looking back to the different regimes and their policy directions toward access to the sea, this study argues that there are three distinct periods. The first one is the period pre-1991 when successive regimes have securitized the issue of direct access to the sea. The second period is the period 1991 to 2018 the then Ethiopian government has de-securitized the issue of access to the sea, although, the agenda was not completely off the table. The third period is the re-securitization of the agenda in the post-2018. Re-securitizing the agenda after 30 years of complete landlockedness has added complexity to the regional security complex and raised much controversy in regional politics, which this study will see in detail in the later section.

#### **4.1.1. Securitization of access to the sea- Pre-1991**

This period marks the securitization of the access to the Red Sea by successive regimes in Ethiopia. It is noteworthy that, in the period in question, it is hard to find an actor officially declaring access to the sea as an existential threat. However, the efforts exerted to maintain and regain Ethiopia’s access to the sea and the special place it occupied in the country’s foreign policy agendas by the successive regimes in this period imply the securitization of the issue.

The Axumite kingdom had been one to the great civilizations and great powers then. Aklilu (Ambassador) (2014 EC) and IFA strategy document (2024), attribute the great civilization and power of this kingdom to its possession of the Adulis port on the Red Sea. During this period, the Red Sea was a major contention arena among the great powers then – including the Axumite, and the Romans – for the control of the sea. However, the rise of the expansion the Arab Sultanates hampered the activities of the kingdom on the Red Sea, which eventually led to the downfall of the regime. (Kebede, 2014 EC: p.31-35; IFA, 2024: p.84)

The regimes following the Axumite king have fought to regain Ethiopia’s dominance over the Red Sea. IFA strategy document (2024) mention that this interest is reflected on the policy of the regime from King Yikuno Amlak to the Solomonic dynasty. The document explains that ‘the regime with in this period had policies towards the North and South of the country. Among the major focuses for the policy towards the North was to expand Ethiopia’s territory and influence to the sea and to deter the expansion of the Arabs and Turks to

Ethiopia by controlling the Red Sea.’ (IFA, 2024: p.86) This policy is an indication of the special place the Red Sea holds in matters of Ethiopia’s National Security.

The expansion of the Ottomans in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and their rivalry with the Portuguese over the control of the Red Sea have cost Ethiopia its sea boundary. The Ottomans allied with Egypt to further separate Ethiopia from the Red Sea. While the Arabs feared that Ethiopia would ally with Europe and control the Red Sea, the Egyptians wanted to weaken Ethiopia for fear that Ethiopia would block the flow of the Nile. One of the strategies these powers used to weaken the central government was to support the different political entities in the country. As a result, Ethiopian leaders have followed strong policies towards the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. For instance, ‘Atse’ Zera Yakob use a policy of granting the Red Sea coast governors a higher status than any other provincial leader, to secure unwavering loyalty. (Kebede, 2014 EC: p.31-35; IFA, 2024: p.86-93)

By the time the Modern Ethiopian history (1855 – 1991) began, Ethiopia had lost its sea territory as a result of external influence from different direction and internal vulnerability, mainly in the time of ‘zemene Mesafint’ or the Era of the Princes in English. Consequently, the struggle to regain its sea territory had been the major focus of Ethiopia’s foreign policy and national security direction in this period. (H/Mariam, 2005 EC: p.31) For instance, regaining access to the Sea was the priority of Emperor Tewdros II (1855-1868) foreign policy objective. European powers controlled the coastline at the time, hindering his efforts to modernize the nation. Tewdros believed regaining an outlet to the sea was crucial for Ethiopia's development. This period was marked by the Ottoman's control of the Red Sea region, and Egypt’s hostility to control the Blue Nile. To this end, he strategize to ally with the Christian world (Europe). This was implied in his letter written to Queen Vitoria requesting support to fight the Turkish who occupied Ethiopia’s sea territory and deterring correspondence. In these correspondences, his prime objective was to obtain support, mainly military from the Christian European states. (Ibid: p. 32; IFA, 2024: p.93-94)

Like his predecessor, Yohannes IV (1872-1889), was unwavering in his commitment to Ethiopia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. His diplomatic correspondence with Queen Victoria, emphasized Ethiopia’s legitimate claim to the Red Sea Coast: ‘By right of descent, Massawa and the Southwestern coast of the Red Sea have belonged to Ethiopia for centuries’ (Gedle, 2002: p. 67, as cited in Yakob H/Mariam, 2005 EC: p.34). The war of Gundet, Gura,

and Awsa to contain the Egyptian expansion and the Hewett Treaty with the British, are illustrations of his effort to regain Ethiopia's access to the sea. (H/Mariam, 2005 EC: p.33-3; Kebede, 2014 EC: p.109-110; IFA, 2024: p.95-96). Especially, the 1884 Hewett treaty, also called the Adwa treaty, is an indication of his strong desire to regain direct access to the sea. According to this treaty, the Ethiopians were promised the restoration of a substantial portion of what is now Eritrea, including control of Massawa. The British also agreed to allow free import of goods, including arms and ammunition, through Massawa. (IFA, 2024: p.96)

However, the British had an additional request: they wanted assistance in evacuating Egyptian troops encircled in Sudan and providing them with a safe haven in his territory, specifically in Bogos. Ras Alula, an Ethiopian general, successfully carried out this task. Unfortunately, the British response was inconsistent. Despite the treaty, they tacitly allowed the Italians to take control of Massawa, which contradicted the agreement. Additionally, Yohannes's commitment to the relief operation put him in direct conflict with the Mahdists, which eventually costed his life at Metemma in 1889. (Kebede, 2014 EC: p. 110)

Emperor Menilik II (1889 -1913), followed similar policy as his predecessors. However, unlike his forerunners, he was more inclined to a diplomatic effort and to the port of Zeila (Djibouti) rather than Massawa (IFA, 2024: p.97). This period was when European powers like Britain, France, and Italy were rapidly colonizing the African coast, threatening to encircle Ethiopia. Despite the victory at Adwa against the Italian colonizers, Ethiopia did not retain access to the sea through the port of Aseb and Missiwa. Due to the external threats, encircling Ethiopia, maintaining sovereignty and territorial integrity was more urging than access to the sea. However, the issue was not completely tossed aside. The Emperor continued diplomatic efforts to regain Ethiopia's sea territory. The diplomatic correspondents with the French, Italy, and the British reasserting Ethiopia's rightful ownership of seaports (ibid: p. 97-98; H/Mariam, 2005EC: p. 37-41; Belachew, 2006 EC: p. 30-33). Despite other pressing issues the emperor Menilik still pursued access to the sea.

The reign of Emperor Haile Selassie marked a more vibrant and strong policy towards the Red Sea. Emperor Haile Selassie used political, economic and in some cases military efforts to regain access to the sea (Belachew, 2006 E.C: P. 54-85). During his tour in Europe, Tafari engaged in discussions with Italian, French, and British officials regarding the possibility of ceding parts of their colonies along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to Ethiopia. However,

several obstacles hindered Tafari's ambitions. France had economic interests in Ethiopia, particularly through its colony Djibouti, which benefited from the lucrative transit trade via the Ethio-Djibouti Railway. France was unwilling to tolerate any Ethiopian port in Zeila or along the Somali coast. Additionally, Italy offered a 99-year lease corridor at Assab in exchange for an Italian-built Asmara-Addis Ababa railway, reinforcing Italy's dominance over Ethiopia. Because this defies Ethiopia's sovereignty and political independence, it was declined (H/Mariam, 2005 EC; IFA, 2024).

Besides the diplomatic efforts, both the Haile Selassie and the Derg regimes have invested a lot in political and military measures. For example, despite the economic situation in the country, both regimes spent hundred thousands of dollars in support of political struggle in Djibouti. The regimes engaged in the political affairs of Djibouti ranging from establishing political parties to influence elections in favor of Ethiopia, military support (training, technical and financial) and construction of infrastructural development (Belachew, 2006 E.C). Emperor Haile Selassie succeeded in gaining direct access to the Red Sea by incorporating Eritrea, as a federation, to Ethiopia. He also established a strong naval base in 1955 at the port of Massawa. However, due to internal political dynamics and changes in the global political order, Ethiopia was unable to maintain its sea territory and became completely landlocked in 1991.

Kebede (2014 EC: P.110) noted that because of the unification of Eritrea and direct access to the sea through the ports of Assab and Massawa, the issue of port was not reflected in the foreign policy of Derg. However, the 1984 Ethiopian foreign policy directions and study of political affairs document clearly stated that ensuring Ethiopia's rightful access to the Red Sea as one of the major foreign policy goals of the country. The document recognizes the '*security*', '*strategic*', and '*economic*' significance of the Red Sea and the importance of defending against the 'Arab' states' ambition of alienating Ethiopia from the Red Sea. It describes the threat from the Arab state as a threat to the ideology of the state. (MOFA, 1984: P. 78-80)

As discussed above, all successive regimes struggle for access to the sea despite the country's internal economic and political situation. Specifically, Emperor Menelik, Haile Selassie, and the Derg regime followed an outward-looking foreign policy with a perspective that threat is mainly external. During these regimes, we can see the securitization of mainly the political

and the military sector, hence building a strong military and political and military diplomacy were the prime national security strategies.

Except the policy shift by EPRDF access to the sea, from the time of Yohannes, Tewodros ect, was the foreign policy agenda. How it is manifested, the efforts, the direction they took, might be different but access to the sea was the dominant foreign policy agenda. The understanding was access to the sea is not only an economic issue but also political and security issue. ... Ethiopia should have access to the sea not only for commercial purposes but also, she should have the responsibility to ensure the security of the region- this is the articulation of the Derg and Haile Selassie regime.

All of the key informants agree that access to the sea for the successive regimes in the period pre-1991 was not only about economic and diplomatic benefit but also about the country's prestige and regional stance. It is about ensuring Ethiopia's hegemony in the region and keeping the country secure. The period pre-1991 marked the securitization of access to the Sea, particularly the Red Sea in the ports of Asab and Massawa and in later times including Djibouti.

#### **4.1.2. The Desecuritization of access to the Sea – 1991 – 2018**

This period in question marks Ethiopia's deprioritization of the issue of the Red Sea and 'willingly' gave away its Red Sea territory. Ethiopia lost direct access to the sea with the separation of Eritrea in 1993. The EPRDF government was highly criticized for recognition of Eritrea without fully analyzing the impact of Ethiopia. Gebru Asrat (2007 EC: P.151) argued that this has left Ethiopia landlocked and exposed the country to immense external pressure. Yakob (2005 EC) noted that the EPRDF perspective then was that 'Ethiopia does not need direct access to the sea, but can utilize ports of neighboring countries.' Bereket Simon, the Communication Minister then, as quoted on H/Mariam (2005 EC), expressed the government's stance that 'Ethiopia does not need the port of Assab, and this issue was not part of Ethiopian government's quest in the Algiers peace agreement with Eritrea.' (H/Mariam, 2005 EC: P. 57-58). Abebe Teklehaimanot (2007: chapter 5), former official, criticized the Algiers agreement as imbalance. He argued that Ethiopia have a legal claim and should defend its right.

This was further instrumentalized in the 2002 foreign affairs and national security policy document. The foreign affairs and national security policy and strategy (FANSPS) document (2002) indicated that the foreign policy of the EPRDF regime is inward-looking. During this period, threats were perceived to come from the inside and the economic sector was securitized. The regime declared that poverty is an existential threat to Ethiopia and much focus was given to the economic development of the country. This was clearly indicated in the FANSPS; the introduction section of the document reads as:

There can be no doubt that the attainment of speedy economic development, democratization and peace is fundamental to the survival of our country which finds itself in a state of abject poverty and backwardness. That is why the Government gives priority to matters that are key to our survival and well-being. Unless the overall policy direction pursued by the Government takes this basic reality into account, our national existence and security will face grave danger. In this respect, it is clear to see that our foreign relations and national security policy and strategy can only have relevance if it contributes to the fight against poverty and promotes speedy economic development, democracy and peace. (FANSPS, 2002): P.7)

The conceptual foundation of this document is lack of democracy, good governance and development determine Ethiopia's survival and the policy followed by the previous regimes is a byproduct of a siege mentality. Unlike the Derg regime policy document that recognizes the national security threat coming from neighboring countries, especially because of the 'Arab' states' influence, this document presumes a minimum impact (both negative and positive) on the economic development of Ethiopia. Although it recognizes such threat, the documents suggests diplomatic means and collaboration of states in the Horn. While these neighbors hold the key to Ethiopia's access to global trade, the document argues that the relationship is primarily transactional; hence, Ethiopia will get unabated port service from neighbors unless interrupted by political issues.

Port service provision is to the mutual benefit of both the provider and the recipient of the service. In fact, if some of our neighbors were not to provide port services to Ethiopia, the damage to their economies would be substantial. Therefore, if seen from the economic and mutual benefit point of views; port services would be provided steadily and predictably, and

that is the way it should be. In general terms, it can be said that at this time, our neighbors do not have much of a positive or negative influence on our economic development. .... the sole danger that would arise is if they were to collaborate to deny Ethiopia the use of their ports or if they were to reduce the efficiency of the ports (Ibid: P.36-37).

This policy document appears to prioritize commercial access to the sea over other considerations and assumes that economic development will resolve associated issues. As a result, the issue of securing direct access to the sea was taken out of the security agenda. Key informant 5 notes that ‘In the post-1991, access to the sea was commodified and the significance of the Red Sea was reduced/desecuritized’. While proponents of this approach may cite certain advantages, most experts claim that the drawbacks are substantial.

Mersha (2024), noted that this policy change has fostered regional integration and improved Ethiopia’s relationship with its neighbours (Feleke, 2024). This was also reflected in the perspective of some of my key informants. Key informant 3 noted ‘We had one option, Djibouti, so we have to smooth out relationship with Djibouti. We need to integrate more with Djibouti, Water is provided to Djibouti from Diredawa, electric, highway. So it led us to regional integration activities, one of the exemplary regional integration efforts in the East Africa is between Ethiopia and Djibouti. That happen accidentally, if we have had access to Asab, the road to Djibouti would not be constructed. This led us to advocate for regional integration and invest in cross-boundary infrastructure.’

However, experts argue that the political, military and economic impact of this policy direction is immense. Key informant 4 noted that ‘As a result of Ethiopia’s landlockedness a small country like Djibouti have the upper hand.’ However, this key informant also argues that this is an issue not because of the policy direction the EPRDF government followed but because of the absence of developed ports and competition in the region. He argues that the issue of the Red Sea is highly politicize in Ethiopia and this should not be the way; in his own words: ‘the Red Sea is in the body politics of Ethiopia. the Ethiopian mind is wrongly constructed, this is also problematic. The issue is made social, economic and political issue; this shouldn’t have been an issue. But the problem is all the ports in the Horn have not developed equally to serve Ethiopia’s comparative advantage, so there is no competition and we are dependent on one port.’

Despite the contending view of experts, the issue of access to the sea remained an agenda in this period as well. One evidence of this is the establishment of Sana'a cooperation forum by Ethiopia, Yemen and Sudan. Although, the forum is a tripartite agreement to enhance cooperation among the three countries, its interest in engaging in peace and security of the southern Red Sea is expressed on the second session. 'The Leaders also reviewed the regional and international situation, which has a bearing on the Sana'a Forum for Cooperation. They expressed their strong desire and commitment to work closely to bring about sustainable peace and security in the Southern Red Sea and the Horn of Africa region.' (Sudan Tribune, 2008)

On his opening remark on the six summit of the forum, 'Meles Zenawi said that as the regional organisation is established to expand overall cooperation among countries located south of the Red Sea, its door is open to countries, which support objectives of the forum.'(ibid). Hence despite, the policy direction, the Red Sea has remained an agenda in Ethiopian politics and interest, especially as the lack of access to the sea impacted the achieved economic. As a result, later, we see efforts of port diversification. The 2012 Lamu port initiative between Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan was part of this effort. Additionally, Ethiopia started diplomatic relationship with Somaliland, a de facto state that Ethiopia denied to recognize because this would infringe on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia (Tazebew, 2023: P. 8-10). Despite this, in 2010 Ethiopia started relationship with Somaliland. He noted the situation as 'Ethiopia has gone the furthers of all states in its unofficial recognition of Somaliland by entering into bilateral agreements for cooperation on various arenas.' Hence, considering the efforts exerted in this regard, its hard to conclude that the issue of the Red Sea was off the agenda in this period, although its in a different form than the previous period.

#### **4.1.3. Re-Securitization of access to the sea – Post-2018**

In 2018 Ethiopia underwent, yet, another reform that sheds a positive light on the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia underwent reform in the political, military as well as economic sectors. One of the results of this reform was the rapprochement of Ethiopia and Eritrea after 20 years of no peace no war state (Gebreluel, 2018). This rapprochement ignited Ethiopia's desire for access to the Red Sea ports of Assab and Messawa. The Eritrean government started the renovation of the ports and road infrastructure (SISAY, 2018).

However, this failed to be realized as a result of the Northern conflict between the Federal government and the TPLF.

In addition, PM Abiy also made an official request to Djibouti to develop and operate a port in Djibouti (Ethiopia Observer, 2018). On the Military front, Ethiopia re-established its Navy force with Proclamation number 1100/2019. Although the establishment of the Navy does not necessarily need access to the sea or port ownership, this proclamation can be taken as an indication of Ethiopia's interest in reasserting itself on the seawater. The French government supported the re-establishment of the Navy (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, n.d.), which explains experts' speculation that the agreement with Djibouti included the establishment of a military base. However, this agreement was also not implemented because of Egypt's influence and Djibouti's neutrality stance in the tension between Ethiopia and Egypt.

These attempts are indication of the current government's policy direction towards the Red Sea, despite absence of a written document in this regard. This position of the government was reasserted by PM Abiy's speech for law makers in October, 2023. This speech marked the move the Red Sea agenda from a political to a security matter. PM Abiy noted that the issue of the Red Sea is a matter of Ethiopia's existence. He expressed the significance of the Red Sea as:

“The Red Sea and the Nile will determine Ethiopia. They are interlinked with Ethiopia and will be the fundamentals that will either bring in Ethiopia's development or bring about its demise... A population of 150 million can't live in a geographic prison... the Red Sea issue is “not a matter of luxury; it is a matter of Ethiopia's very existence.”(EBC, 2023)

This speech has designated the agenda of the Red Sea and the Nile as existential matters to Ethiopia. Although the PM stressed a peaceful means to gain direct access to the sea his expression of taking ‘any necessary’ means to secure this interest is an indication of other measures that the government might be ready to take. In January 2024, Ethiopia signed the infamous MoU with Somaliland, which included an article for recognizing Somaliland. The MoU raised several concerns within and outside of Ethiopia. The news triggered strong opposition from Somalia arguing that it will defy its sovereignty and territorial integrity (Sheikh and Hassan, 2024). This has escalated diplomatic tension between Ethiopia and Somalia. While lots of international actors including AU, IGAD, USA, China, EU, the Arab

league, raised their concerns over the escalating tension and calls for the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia.

Somalia also allied with Egypt and Eritrea in response to the threat from Ethiopia. The three created what it seems like an anti-Ethiopia bloc. With the recent deterioration of the Ethio-Eritrean relationship and the long dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt, the ally among the three poses a threat to Ethiopia's national security. Although the military engagement might be minimal, there is a possibility of proxy engagement and put pressure on the already fragile internal political situation of Ethiopia. Key informant 9 stated that 'Egypt and Eritrea will do anything to sabotage the implementation of the MoU. We believe Somaliland has historical realities for their question, so it is right to grant their quest and get a port. We must pay a price for this. We have analyzed what might come as a result. On the level of defense, we considered the impact and the defense if fully ready to whatever comes.'

This statement by the General at War College is an indication that the Ethiopia government is ready to use even military to secure Ethiopia's access to the sea. This stance of the government is also implied in the interview with informant 7; 'Ethiopia has always been in favor of the unity of Somali and Somaliland but the quest for access to the sea appears to be extremely politicized and externalized. One way or another Ethiopia will have access to the Red Sea but hopefully through peaceful means.'

However, there is controversial perspective on the signing of the MoU with in the experts. Some argue that this move is a violation of Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and AU's constituency act. While other groups argue that Somaliland has been independent for over 30 years and Ethiopia as a sovereign nation have the right to recognition to another country.

Some of the former government officials and experts who argue against the MoU raises a timing question. Although they agree that the Red Sea is significant to Ethiopia's national security, they argue that it is not an existential threat right now. Since Ethiopia is under a lot of stress internally and if something is to come as a result of the MoU, the country will not have the capacity to defend itself. Key informant 2 argues that:

'What we have internally is existential threat, the access to the sea is secondary. Had the country been in peace, this could have been our first threat. However,

now we are fighting full fledged war in Oromia and Amahara. This doesn't mean it is not important to work toward that. If we said we would fight with external enemy because of the Red Sea, those who don't want to see our presence there like Egypt, and Eritrea – we can't confront them in any way, they will support internal opposition like they did before - history repeating itself - so it is important to resolve internal issues first.'

Despite the difference on the time of the re-securitization of the agenda, there is general agreement among experts that internal issue should be addressed first for Ethiopia to get the confidence and the capacity to push for the full implementation of the MoU.

Another concern is that, this was not well thought and strategies move by the government side. One indication mentioned is that there seems to be an indication of reassessment of the issue as international pressure strengthened. Key informant 2 further explains 'Although there is interest to access to the sea, there is no clear and studies policy direction that dictate the how and what kind of access to the sea. One indicator of this is the hold back to push through the implementation.'

I have also observed this on my conversation with MoFA, 'we need to carefully and strategically consider how does Ethiopia go for it, what manner Ethiopia will use, what channel Ethiopia will use, because of its geopolitical positioning.'

Overall, the post-2018 period witnesses a move away from EPRDF policy and towards a re-securitization of the agenda of the Red Sea. As a result, Ethiopia faced high diplomatic pressure from both regional and global powers who all support Somalia's stance. This is, one, because of Somalia's legitimate question in the eyes of international law. However, this is political due to the geopolitical dynamics and the rise of sub-regional power will have the potential to change the geopolitical dynamics.

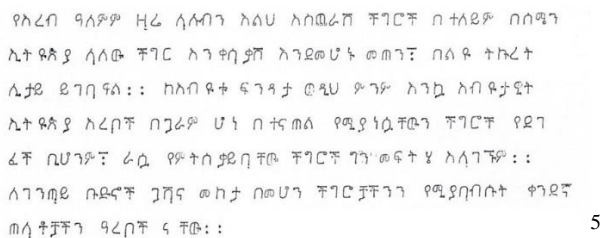
## **4.2. National Security Challenges**

This study recognizes two important factors in assessing Ethiopia's national security in light of the Red Sea security dynamics: Securitization of the Red Sea (including the regional security dynamics and Ethiopia's policy direction to and interest in the region) and Ethiopia's internal political dynamics. These two factors are interlinked and affect the country's politico-military and economic security.

### 4.2.1. Securitization of the Red Sea

Both global and regional actors, including Ethiopia, because of its strategic importance, securitized the Red Sea, further complicating the security dynamics of the region (Said,2024; Verhoeven, 2018; G/Senbet and Yohannes, 2018). The Red Sea geopolitical, as discussed in chapter two, is changing and becoming more complex. However, when talking about Ethiopian national security, the Middle East states engagement in the Horn and Egypt's long long-standing interest in controlling the source of Nile water. Although the impact of the global rivalry is undeniable, the issue of the Middle Eastern states and Egypt in engagement in the Horn stands out in my research and discussions with key informants.

Both the Arab states and, especially, Egypt has a special place in Ethiopia's foreign policy and national security agenda. The 1984 Ethiopian Foreign Policy Directions and Study of Political Affairs document gives much emphasis on the security threat of Arab states. The document boldly said that the 'the Arab states are the agitator of the conflict in the north hence should be given a special emphasis....they aggravate out problems by providing support to secessionist groups; Arab states are our main enemies.' (MOFA, 1984)



የአረብ ዓለም ዛሬ ሳሎንን አላሁ አስጨራሽ ችግሮች በተለይም በሰሜን  
ኢትዮጵያ ሳላጭ ችግር አንቀሳቃሽ እንደሆኑት መጠን፣ በሰሜን ትኩረት  
ሊታይ ይገባል።። ከአሰራር ፍንጭር ወይም ይህም አንድ አብዮታዊ  
ኢትዮጵያ አረብ ግንባታ ሆኖ በተጠራ የሚያነሳቸው ችግሮች የደገ  
ፈቅ ለሆነው ራሷ የሚተሰብድባቸው ችግሮች ገንጠፍት ለላገገኛም።።  
ለገንጠፍ ጠብቆ ገብኖ መከታ በመሆን ችግር ቻፍገን የሚያባብሱት ቀንደኛ  
ጠላቶቻችን ዓረቦች ናቸው።

5

Figure 2. Screenshot - Ethiopian Foreign Policy Directions and Study of Political Affairs, MOFA (1984) Addis Ababa. P. 289

Tekalign (2022) highlights the significance of the Nile water to the Egyptian economy; hence, Egypt has long-standing interest to secure the Nile water by any means. The Arabs, with their ambition to make Red Sea the 'Arab Sea' fought to isolate Ethiopia from the Red Sea littoral state (Tekalign, 2019). This has challenged Ethiopia's territorial integrity, internal political dynamics, relationship with neighboring states and its geopolitical stance in the region. One of my key informants 1 said:

---

<sup>5</sup> Rough translation: 'the Arab world is the main problem to the issues we are facing, especially as they are the main supporter of the issues in the Northern Ethiopia, it should be given special emphasis. After the revolution, although Ethiopia supported the Arabs in mutual and individual issues, this has not been reciprocated. They are our main enemies supporting secessionist rebels in the country.'

‘The development of Ethiopia would also put her in a closer position on the Red Sea affairs and forced to play a smart foreign affair amongst those in the arena. But Ethiopia’s growth could bring much deeper threats, such as Egypt- for reasons such as Nile, but also the risk of gaining power because of getting closer to the Red Sea affairs. Egypt has worked on spreading propaganda and has went to the extent of requesting a land to establish a military base in Somalia... Turkey’s efforts to occupy a military base in Sudan, even though failed to secure an agreement with Sudan, shows Turkey’s ambition to secure a sphere of influence over the Red Sea. This for me is a threat to Ethiopia, because going back in history, during the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire had active control over the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea region, and it was during this period where Ethiopia fought many wars and lost control over ports. Hence Turkey’s expanding involvement in the horn of Africa poses a threat to Ethiopia.’

In addition to control of the Nile water, Egypt have interest on the Red Sea because the traffic at the Bab-el Mandeb affects the traffic on the Suez canal hence influence its economy. Consequently, Egypt will not allow Ethiopia, its nemesis, to have presence on the Bab-el Mandeb area as this will give Ethiopia another leverage for their negotiation over the GERD. Mohamed (2023) noted that ‘for Egypt, the lack of access to the sea by one of its geostrategic rivals, Ethiopia, has serves a significant advantage in influencing the Red Sea states. If this situation were to change, it would directly implicate Egypt’s dominance of the Red Sea vis-à-vis Ethiopia.’ (Farah, 2023)

Egypt’s president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s, bold statement, noting that ‘Egypt will not allow anyone to threaten Somalia or affect its security ... especially if they ask it to intervene’ (AlJazeera, 2024) is an extension of Egypt’s unabated effort to alienate Ethiopia from direct access to the sea.

Another implication of this is the role Egypt played in the alienation of Ethiopia from the Red Sea Forum, an act undermining Ethiopia’s geopolitical stance as a hegemon in the sub-region and denying Ethiopia's role in the region. Key informant 3 noted that Egypt uses all means including international diplomacy to alienate Ethiopia from the Red Sea and weaken the country. For example, he said ‘Egypt played a great role in Eritrean independence – the then UN secretary general, Butros Gally, was an Egyptian, and Egypt put a lot of effort into

making Ethiopia landlocked. Even currently with the Red Sea forum, Egypt played the biggest role in excluding Ethiopia.’

Ethiopia’s policy direction to and interest in the region is the other factor assessed. As discussed in the above section, the agenda of the Red Sea occupies a special place in Ethiopian political and security history. Ethiopia’s securitization of the Red Sea and the efforts made to maintain and regain its sea territory influenced its current relationship with its neighbors. Ethiopia's historical agreements with colonial powers, while intended to secure its national interests and territorial integrity, are now being used by Somalia to portray Ethiopia as a neocolonial actor in the current tensions surrounding the MoU with Somaliland. This is manifested in the policy brief of Heritage Institute 2024:

Haile Selassie tried to annex Zeila, a historical Somali port town, to Ethiopia between the late 1920s and early 1950s. To secure Zeila, he initiated a radical strategy of negotiating colonial power to exchange the Haud region for Zeila, which the current MoU is said to be centered on, and which is adjacent to Djibouti. Haud is a large swath of Somali territory and has been part of present-day Ethiopia since the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897 when Britain ceded it to Ethiopia for the latter’s support in suppressing Somali clans (Somali Heritage institute, 2024: P.5).

The policy document also presents the 2006 military intervention, as an extension of Ethiopia’s expansionist agenda. This narration is also somehow, reflected in the writings of Eritrean social media activists. This narration will threaten Ethiopia’s image and acceptance in the sub-region.

The landlocked ness of Ethiopia is also the result of the policy followed by the EPRDF regime. As discussed in section 3.1, this policy left a significant gap in the country’s politico-military and economic security. The dismissal of the Navy, experts argue, separated one segment of the national army leaving the military apparatus incomplete. As key informant 2 noted ‘A military is complete when it has NAVY, Army, and Airforce now cyber is included.’hence, Ethiopia’a military was under capacitated as a result of its landlockedness.

The economic development is also hampered because of lack of access to well-developed commercial port and dependence on Port of Djibouti. In addition to the economy, all informants argue that Ethiopia lost its diplomatic confidence because of its landlockedness.

As key informant 6 describes that ‘A country as big as Ethiopia lives at the mercy of a small country like Djibouti’

#### **4.2.2. Internal Political dynamics**

The second factor to assess is Ethiopia’s internal political security. The impact of the internal political dynamics of Ethiopia can be seen in two ways: on one hand, it is considered as the result of external power engagement in the country. This perspective is seen in the 1984 Ethiopian Foreign Policy Directions and Study of Political Affairs, as shown in Figure 2 above (MOFA, 1984).

On the other hand, as argue by most of the experts, the internal political dynamics is also Ethiopia’s vulnerability that invited external actors to penetrate. Looking at the historical trends, Ethiopia was cut off from sea and faced threats to its territorial integrity, particularly during periods of weakness or internal political strife. For example, the time of ‘Zemene Mesafint’ and the successive leaders until the time of Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was cut off from the Sea. The internal political rivalry of this era, left the country weak. Hence, the three successive leaders – Emperor Tewodros, Emperor Yohannes and Minelik II were occupied with reconstructing the country. Hence, this factor is important in Ensuring Ethiopia’s national security, which is why some of the experts I talked to prioritized the issue over the Red Sea Agenda.

In conclusion, the study identifies the Middle East-Egypt politics in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia’s policy direction and internal political stability as major influencing factors. These three issue stand out as highly influencing Ethiopia’s national security in light of the Red Sea. The implication of these factors to Ethiopia’s national security in all security sectors – political, military, economic, social, and even the environment sector. These implications will be discussed, focusing on the first three sectors, in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE RED SEA GEOPOLITICS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

Modern conception of national security can be traced back to the Westphalia Treaty. The state as a referent object is comprised of three elements: the idea of the State, the institution of the State and the Physical Base of the State. The idea of the state, although linked with the institution of the state, it is more that the functions of the state. Buzan (1983) states that 'defining the idea of the state in reference to basic functions of providing civil order, collective goods and external defence' does not take us very far.... they indicate little about what binds the people into an entity which requires such services.' The idea of the state goes beyond the function of the states to include the construct of the state – entities, values, interests, etc. Hence when talking about the strengths and weaknesses of these elements determine the strength of the state (Buzan, 1983). Hence as defined, in Nye (2005: 223), national security of the state is 'the absence of threats to its major values.' Wolfers (1960) 'National security objectively means the absence of threats to acquired values and subjectively, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.' That is, for the state to be secured, its territorial integrity, sovereignty, population, culture & economic security is significant.

Aklilu (2014) noted that national security is one of the core values of the idea of the Ethiopian state. The sense of independence is deeply rooted as a nation, which helped the country to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity from external aggression (Kebede, 2014 EC). As discussed in Chapter Three, Ethiopia fought many wars to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity, especially to maintain its sea territory. Markakis (2011,) noted this situation as 'This state has been compelled to fight persistent challenges to its territorial integrity, forfeiting in the process the prospect of socio-economic development and political stability.' (P.6)

The history of Ethiopia is highly connected with the Red Sea and the Nile water. The complex security dynamics of the two water bodies have shaped Ethiopia's foreign relations and national security strategies. As these securities become more complex, Ethiopia's

national security will continue to be threatened. Verhoeven (2018) and Fana and Dawit (2018) treats the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf as security complexes. The scholars argue that the Horn and the Gulf have similarities in many aspects including historical ties, culture, ideology and religion, which entangles them into a security complex (G/Senbet and Yohannes, 2018; Verhoeven, 2018). The asymmetric power between the two sub-regions – Middle East and the HoA- further complicates the security, especially in the HoA (De Waal, 2018). As discussed in section 3.2 of chapter 3, two major factors influencing Ethiopia’s national security are identified – securitization of the Red Sea and Ethiopia’s internal political stability. This chapter will explore the implication of the Red Sea security to Ethiopia’s politico-military and economic security with in these two subsets.

## **5.1. Politico-Military Security**

The Red Sea Security dynamics poses political as well as military security threats to Ethiopia’s National Security. Political threats aim to undermine the stability, institutions, and legitimacy of the state and the government in power. Military threats, on the other hand, target the country's ability to defend itself through armed force. However, it is noteworthy that political and military threats are often interconnected.

### **5.1.1. Implication to Political Security**

In consequence, to the securitization of the red and Ethiopia’s internal political stability, the study identifies three major political security threats – Ethiopia’s regional stance and ambition, Diplomatic relationship and internal instability.

**Implication on regional stance and ambition:** Ethiopia is a unique country in the HoA whose historical comings complicated its relationship with neighboring nations. Ethiopia’s Red Sea littoral neighbors, except Eritrea, are members of the Arab League. Eritrea although not a member has an observer status in the League. This complicates Ethiopia’s national security. For instance, in the tension between Somalia and Ethiopia due to the latter’s signing of the MoU with Somaliland to secure access to the sea, the Arab League showed its loyalty to Somalia. Another such instance is their support for Egypt in the negotiations over the GERD. In addition, as key informant 3 noted, the lack of strong regional integration in the Horn of Africa leaves Ethiopia’s security at risk. However, this loyalty is not only attributed to the Horn countries affiliation to the Arabs but also the Gulf ambition in the region. Ethiopia, for a long has been the regional Hegemon and have an ambition to maintain that

role in the region, which Ethiopia seems to be losing as a result of its internal political stability. Informant 7 noted that ‘Ethiopia positioned itself to be the powerhouse of the region. The MoU is not only economic, and military, but it expands Ethiopia’s foreign policy influence, it will bring back Ethiopia’s powerhouse status. Ethiopia should continue as the sub-region powerhouse. Key informant 7 noted that ‘We need to minimize whatever will reverse us back’. This ambition of Ethiopia, conflicts with the Middle Eastern and Egyptian ambition in the region (Verhoeven, 2018). Given the power asymmetry between Ethiopia and this power and weak regional integrity in the Horn, Ethiopia have limited ability to pursue its ambition in the region. Hence Ethiopia’s national interest and ambition in the region will continue to be challenged as the Red Sea security dynamics is expected to become more complex.

**Implication of foreign policy direction:** Ethiopia’s landlockedness and the security dynamics in the region pushed the country to adopt a policy based on mutual benefit and regional integration. Ethiopia also followed a collective security principle for a long as a result of the region’s security complex. This has benefited the region in terms of improved cross-boundary infrastructure hence enhancing cooperation. However, as Ethiopia’s economy grow, Ethiopia become more dependent on the Djibouti for access to ports, which gives the smallest countries like Djibouti the upper hand over Ethiopia. This dynamics resulted a turn in Ethiopia’s policy direction – from regional integration to focusing on National Security. The byproduct of this is observed in Ethiopia’s bold move to recognize Somaliland in return to access to a sea outlet. This will further complicate the regional security complex and put the countries in the Horn in two a security dilemma. This issue is also implied in the notes of the discussion on the MoU with the General at War college:

‘Eritrea and Egypt’s interest is clearly known and it seems like they advocate and support anything that might hinder the implementation of the MoU. Hence, we are expecting proxy, they might not directly engage but through training and equipping Somalia’s military they might try to disrupt. We have military in Somalia and their wellbeing should be ensured, if something happen, we have to protect Somaliland..... We are aware and thought of how we will deal with anything that come from the outside and the internal problems.’

Such security dilemma, further exacerbates Ethiopia’s security predicaments as it have a multifaceted implication on Ethiopia’s opportunity to diversify its access to international

market, and/or even access the already existing route, because it disrupts the peace and security of trade routes. In addition, such tension will open the door to non-state actors like Al-Shaba to flourish as states are entangled in the security dilemma.

**Complex diplomatic relations:** The assertive and increasing engagement of global and regional actors in the region will complicate Ethiopia's diplomatic relationship. Ethiopia's landlockedness affected its diplomatic confidence; as key informant 3 noted 'we are now considerate of everyone's interest'. As regional and global actors' presence increased the 'question of who will Ethiopia negotiate' with remains significant.

In addition, the increasing completion among the Gulf States creates a challenge of balancing interest. Ethiopia faces the challenge of balancing its own interests with those of the Gulf States and its neighbors. This requires careful diplomatic maneuvering to avoid alienating any party. Overall, the Gulf States' engagement in the Horn of Africa is a double-edged sword for Ethiopia's diplomatic relations. While it presents opportunities for economic growth and cooperation, it also introduces competition and the risk of increased tensions. Ethiopia needs to navigate this complex landscape carefully to maintain good relations with its neighbors.

**Shifting geopolitics:** the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland over access to port, have implication on the geopolitics of the Horn in terms of shaping alliances and the regional power dynamics. Recognition of Somaliland means the formation of yet another sovereign state in the Horn. In the wake of the MoU Somalia president made successful alliance with Eritrea and Egypt. The diplomatic relationship among the three countries strengthen, which seems the creation of anti-Ethiopia bloc. Djibouti and Middle Eastern countries like the UAE will possibly ally with Somalia because Ethiopia's direct access to port is against their economic interest. Kenya maintained a 'neutral' position and showed to mediate between Somalia and Ethiopia. However, this gives a good opportunity for Kenya to present itself as an anchor state for the West. Kenya build it economy, it is relatively internally stable and align itself with the West, hence with a possibility of taking Ethiopia's place as an anchor state in the Horn. Ethiopia seems a loner state with an increased diplomatic pressure from every direction, which puts the implementation of the MoU in question. The reassessment of the MoU by Ethiopia will have its own implication on the diplomatic relation between the two countries.

**Escalation of internal tension:** Ethiopia's internal politics has always been affected by external interference. Political oppositions have a culture of seeking support from external actors like Egypt, Eritrea and the Arab states. The Gulf states engagement in the recent war between the Ethiopian Federal government and the TPLF in support of the federal government exacerbated the conflict and the casualties (Gebru et al, 2023; P.13-15). The internal political difference in the country opens the door for these parties to engage in the internal matters of the country.

The Re-securitization of access to the sea by the Ethiopian government justifies the diversion of resources to this front. As key informant 9 note 'as a result of the MoU, Ethiopia also have the responsibility to extend its hand to Somaliland's security.' Such measures creates leads to resource diversion, competition with neighbors, and opportunities for external meddling inflaming existing ethnic divides, and hindering peace efforts.

### **5.1.2. Military Security**

Ethiopia lost one segment of its military – the Navy – as a result of the de-securitization of the agenda. This has left Ethiopia with an Air force and ground forces. This has created a gap in the offence and defense system of the military. Key informant 2 noted that 'A threat is best defended before it reaches the ground, once a threat reaches the ground the defense will be complex' Hence, the re-establishment of the Navy in 2019 will strengthen Ethiopia's military capability, in terms of having a full military apparatus. In addition, Ethiopia can protect its ships on the Red Sea and will not depend on other country's military to secure its commercial ships. This will boost Ethiopia's confidence in engaging in Red Sea security matters. Ethiopia can assert itself to ally with other forces in the Red Sea in the fight against piracy and other maritime security issues.

**Prolonged internal conflict:** Despite Ethiopia's effort to strengthen its military, the militarization of the region threatens Ethiopia's military security. The rivalry of the regional and global power plays a role in aggravating the already fragile internal stability of the country – as it was evident during the Northern Conflict between the Ethiopian federal government and the TPLF.

The existence of non-state actors and arms smuggling in the region makes access to weapon easy. Additionally, the security dilemma in the Horn of Africa, the amity and enmity pattern,

weak governments and stated, and weak regional integration provides the opportunity to rebels and government oppositions to easy access of weapons, gain support, hide in neighboring state to fight the central government.

**Compromised Military Capacity:** Ethiopia's military capacity is as a result of the imbalance military advancement and lack of military intelligence. Ethiopia's military technology does not match with the advanced technology used by these powers. This jeopardizes Ethiopia's capability to defend its security and compromises its military system. Key informant 9 noted that 'during the Northern conflict, the West was against the federal government's interest, and there were incidents of transporting TPLF from their base in Djibouti. If they can land in Mekele and transport people without the knowledge of the Ethiopian government, that indicates that they must have done something. They must have jammed our radar and other security systems.'

Another factor that endangers Ethiopia's military security is its landlockedness. Ethiopia's military intelligence is always compromised because of the surveillance at the port. As Key informant 2 noted 'Ethiopia has no military secrets; hence our national security is always at risk' Ethiopia's complex relationship with its neighbors adds fuel to Ethiopia's vulnerability. Ethiopia has unresolved border issues with all of its neighbors, putting the country at risk of border conflict. The case of Sudan's border encroachment while Ethiopia is in Civil war in 2020 (Crisis Group, 2023).

**Implication on Ethiopia's military intervention in the Horn:** Ethiopia has been a major player in the regional peace and security agenda. This can partly be attributed to its landlockedness and the need to secure its trade route. This policy direction, has played a great role in advancing Ethiopia's interest in the region and standing as an anchor state in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has the largest peacekeeping operation in Africa, which played a significant role, in its strategic importance to the West. However, Ethiopia seems to be losing the race to Kenya, an emerging hegemon, as the country rotates in its internal issues. Ethiopia's alienation from the Red Sea Council, denies the role Ethiopia has been playing in the region for a long time. This influences Ethiopia's strategic importance in the region, leaving Ethiopia a 'lone runner' in a West and Arab-affiliated region. However, Ethiopia losing its military ground in the region leaves Ethiopia vulnerable.

**Escalated Military tension in the region:** Ethiopia's assertive move for access to port, creates a feeling of insecurity in neighboring countries. PM Abiy's speech for law makers about Ethiopia's need for port ownership by 'any means' has been controversial within and outside. Although, the PM speech emphasized on peaceful means the media portrayed the news as Ethiopia plans wage war on its neighbor (Zelalem, 2023). This misrepresentation significantly contributed to the rise in military tensions, particularly between Ethiopia and Somalia. Additionally, concerns have grown about a potential relapse into conflict with Eritrea, another neighbor with a long history of animosity towards Ethiopia.

## **5.2. Economic Security**

Buzan et al (1989) defined '*Economic security concerns access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power*'. Geusau et al, (1982:3) the 'level of development, the size and geographical situation of a country and the availability of basic inputs', are of paramount significance for national security. Collier (2007), as cited in Tezera (2010), noted the importance of putting extra effort to ensure their economic development and national security. Faye et al (2014) noted that landlocked countries' economic development is hampered because of their dependence on neighbors for international trade. Hence, their relationship with neighbors, peace and security and infrastructural development in the region is highly significant.

Ethiopia is the biggest landlocked country in the world and exists in the Horn of Africa security complex. Lack of port development and instability of the region has made Ethiopia dependent on Port Djibouti. This sad reality increases Ethiopia's economic vulnerability in light of the unpredictable Red Sea security dynamics.

**Cost of Port Service:** Studies indicate that 95% of Ethiopia's import and export is through Djibouti. Not all the ports in the Horn have developed equally to serve Ethiopia's comparative advantage, hence Djibouti have significant leverage over Ethiopia. Few years back, Djibouti's economy was highly dependent on the port service it provides to Ethiopia's import and export. However, recently Djibouti is leasing its ports for global and regional actors for their military and commercial purpose. Consequently, creates significant imbalance on the interdependence interplay between the two countries. Djibouti increased port service tariff at different times without consulting Ethiopia (Belachew, 2006 EC). Which raises the

need for diversification of ports on Ethiopia's side followed by initiatives of the LAPSSET corridor in 2012 and the recent controversial MoU with Somaliland in 2024 (Tazebew, 2023).

**Impact on port diversification strategy:** the increasing engagement on regional powers in the Horn African sub-region can be both an opportunity and a challenge for Ethiopia's Port diversification strategy. In one hand the port developments in the region would be a good opportunity for Ethiopia to access the international market through the ports of more neighbouring countries. However, by few and economically advanced nations like UAE and China which leaves Ethiopia's capacity to negotiate with such nations in question. Hence the port diversification strategy is threatened by the interest of regional and global actors like the UAE and China. Ethiopia is the only landlocked country with a big market in the Horn of Africa. Hence, port investments in the sub-region are mainly targeting Ethiopian market. Therefore, entangling Ethiopia in this dilemma of balancing its interest and relationship with these nations.

In addition, the militarization of the region leave Ethiopia with few options. Current data indicates that there are more than 10 military based as compared to the four major commercial ports. As the region if further militarized, Ethiopia's options to diversify its port access will be limited.

**Impact on foreign investment in Ethiopia.** Belachew (2006 EC) argues, that the efforts made to attract foreign investment did not yield the need result. This is because of the lack of access to port. The incentives provided to attract investment did not much the costs of transportation and port serve. Transportation cost, logistical challenges and delays for moving goods in and out of Ethiopia, discourage investors to commit in Ethiopia. Additionally, heightened security risks in the sub-region lead to higher insurance premiums for companies operating in Ethiopia. This additional expense makes investment projects less attractive financially. This has affected the overall economic advancement and access to capital.

Ethiopia's internal security stability is another factor that will continue to affect the volume of foreign investment in Ethiopia. The internal security situation, heighten risk perceptions for foreign investors. Leading to hesitation to invest in Ethiopia, especially in coastal areas and projects reliant on maritime trade routes, thereby, also affecting product diversification.

**The presence of non-state actors and the maritime security:** this issue is another burden to Ethiopia's economic security. Ethiopia have 11 commercial ships on the Sea which are the pillar of its import and export. Hence, any activity on the Red Sea endanger the ships and create delay. This will in turn have implications on the domestic economy. The presence of the Houthi that controls Yemen and key ports along the Red Sea have significant implication on Ethiopia. Their activities, including missile attacks on commercial ships and threats to international shipping lanes, disrupts maritime trade in the region. This potentially impact the movement of goods to and from Ethiopia, which relies heavily on Red Sea ports for its imports and exports. This disruption also leads to additional shipping costs, delays of import and difficulty exporting products.

**The emergence of the Red Sea Council:** as a regional allied force have both positive and negative impact. It provides security to the region contributing the peace and stability of the sea, safeguarding commercial ships from maritime military threats, fighting non-state actors etc. However, on the other hand, the council is dominated by Egypt and Saudi Arabia; hence can be used as an instrument by Egypt to re-assert its dominance on the Red Sea. It will also give the opportunity to influence, Ethiopia's Red Sea littoral neighbors. Therefore, putting pressure on Ethiopia's economic interest and thereby pushing its agenda over the Nile/GERD.

Buzan et al. (1998) argues that economic activity often also triggers security and survival issues in the other sectors, creating an 'overspill effect'. The insecurity of the economic sector have impact on the other security sectors. It determines the level of Ethiopia's nation security vulnerability.

As discussed in chapter four and this chapter, Ethiopia's policy towards the Red Sea is one of the factor affecting its national security and regional engagement. The securitization, desecuritization and resecuritization of the question of access to the Sea has been discussed as major policy directions under successive regimes in Ethiopia. However, there remains the question of the successful securitization and de-securitization of this quest. To answer this question, it is important to look at the nature of the regime. According to Buzan et al (1998) successful securitization entails that the securitizing actor must convince a relevant audience that the referent object is 'existentially threatened' and justifying measures beyond the normal political deliberation. 'A successful securitization thus has three components (or

steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules.’(Buzan et. al, 1998).

The Ethiopian regimes in the pre-1991 period exerted many efforts to regain access to the sea. Because the regimes are imperial and totalitarian, the speech act in this period is not vivid, the securitization is analysed by the measures taken regain access to the sea. Prior to the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, the question of access to the sea was in the political spectrum as there are no extraordinary efforts other than diplomatic efforts. However, Emperor Haile Selassie has successfully securitize the issue. This is manifested in the measure taken including political, military and economic measures in Djibouti and Eritrea as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

The desecuritization of the issue of access to the sea by the EPRDF led to the landlockedness of Ethiopia and the resulting security predicament. Although, Prime Miniters Meles Zenawi official taken the issue out of the security agenda, the high resource allocation to access to port, military investment in the sub-region, diplomatic efforts including secretive negotiations with Somaliland entail the issue is not just in the normal political deliberation. In addition, the desecuritization speech of the premier was criticized the party leadership (Haile Mariam, 2005 EC; Asrat, 2007 EC).

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION

Ethiopia's national security is intertwined with Red Sea security. Successive Ethiopian leaders followed more or less similar policy direction towards the Red Sea. All leaders, except for a brief period in the EPRDF regime, have always prioritized the agenda of the Red Sea. However, securitized or desecuritized, the Red Sea has lived in the body politics of Ethiopia and played a significant role in shaping the country's foreign policy and national security directions.

Securitization of the Red Sea by global and regional actors has advantages and disadvantages. The security and economic investment in the region benefits countries in the HoA in terms of economic advancement, military experience/advancement and economic integration through cross border infrastructure such as China's belt and road initiative. The presence of these powers in the region is also advantageous to minimize the impact of non-state actors in the sub-region. However, this policy direction also leads to the presence of competing interests in the sub-region vying to put their strong foothold. As a result, the relationship among countries in the Horn is roughen and polarized. This fosters friction and polarization among Horn of Africa nations, hindering strong regional integration and creating a security dilemma.

Ethiopia, as a landlocked state in the region is highly affected by this security terrain. The security landscape further complicates the severity of its landlockedness. Ethiopia is and will be challenged to compete with these powerful states to advance its interest in the region. Overall, Ethiopia is entangled with such dilemma of balancing interest: securing its national interest on one hand and maintain good relationship with its neighbours and these powers.

Ethiopia's securitization of the Red Sea benefited the country to regain access to the sea through the port of Assab and Massawa during the reign of Haile Selassie. However, this same policy direction fostered an outward-looking approach by the Derg regime, potentially influencing its perception and response to internal political issues. Similarly, the recent resecuritization has created tension in the sub-region and developing anti-Ethiopia sentiments. Hence, the question remains; is this policy direction beneficial for Ethiopia?

This study argues against securitization of the Red Sea by Ethiopian government. The issue of direct access to the sea as an existential threat is highly questionable as the internal political dynamics and security terrain of the country is challenging the countries integrity. This does not mean that the quest to access to the sea is not important, it is highly important for the countries national security. However, the internal issues require more immediate and extraordinary measures, because this internal issue are also additional factors affecting Ethiopia's engagement in the region.

Ethiopia should capitalize on its policy of regional integration and collective security. This will be advantageous to improve Ethiopia's relationship with its neighbors and foster regional integration. This will provide Ethiopia the opportunity to advance its national interest and safeguard its security. Ethiopia should also foster multilateral engagements, proactively engaged in regional and international forums and strategically exploit existing forums to secure its national interests.

Overall, the Red sea has been a constant and important factor in Ethiopian politics and national security. The country faces pressure to navigate a complex web of competing interests while safeguarding its own national security. Ethiopia's ability to assert itself regionally will also depend on its success in navigating these challenges and developing a strategic approach to the Red Sea. This necessitates the need for further specialized research of the security terrain including issues of state building, regional integration, and the evolving nature of terrorism, as it is advancing from the tradition to a more sophistication with access to state power as witnessed in the case of the Houthi.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdi Sheikh, & Abdiqani Hassan. (2024, January 2). Somalia rejects port deal between Ethiopia and somaliland | reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalias-cabinet-calls-emergency-meet-ethiopia-somaliland-port-deal-2024-01-02/>
- Admin. (2023, November 13). *Strategic approach to implementing Djibouti Code of Conduct on maritime security*. Maritimafrica. <https://maritimafrica.com/en/strategic-approach-to-implementing-djibouti-code-of-conduct-on-maritime-security/>
- Africa, S. (2022, February 26). *Landlocked Ethiopia Demands Inclusion in Red Sea Forum*. SomTribune. <https://www.somtribune.com/2022/02/26/landlocked-ethiopia-demands-inclusion-in-red-sea-forum/>
- Aklilu Kebede. (2014EC). የኢትዮጵያ የወጭ ግንኙነት ከጥንት እስከ ዛሬ (2nd ed.).
- Al Jazeera. (2024, January 21). *Egypt's el-Sisi says Cairo will not allow any threat to Somalia*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/21/egypts-el-sisi-says-cairo-will-not-allow-any-threat-to-somalia>
- Aliboni, R. (1985). *The Red Sea Region: Local actors and the superpowers*. Croom Helm.
- Alting von Geusau, F. A. M., Pelkmans, J., & Adler-Karlsson, G. (1982a). *National Economic Security: Perceptions, threats, and policies*. John F. Kennedy Institute.
- Alting von Geusau, F. A. M., Pelkmans, J., & Adler-Karlsson, G. (1982b). *National Economic Security: Perceptions, threats, and policies*. John F. Kennedy Institute.
- Aradi, G. (2024, January 5). Indian navy rescues sailors on board a ship attacked by pirates off Somali coast. *Www.bbc.com*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67889662>
- Asrat, G. (2007 EC). *ሉዓላዊነትና ዲሞክራሲ በኢትዮጵያ* (2nd ed.).
- Baldwin, D. A. (1997). *The concept of security*. Cambridge University Press.
- Belete Belachew. (2016 EC). *ኢትዮጵያ እና ጎረቤቶቿ የትብብር እና ውዝግብ አዙሪት* (1st ed.).

Buzan, B. (1983). *People, states, and fear : the national security problem in international relations*.  
Wheatsheaf Books.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner.

Clapp, S. (2024). AT A GLANCE Maritime security: Situation in the Red Sea and EU response.  
*Members' Research Service PE*, 760, 366.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2024/760366/EPRS\\_ATA\(2024\)760366\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2024/760366/EPRS_ATA(2024)760366_EN.pdf)

Collins, A. (2013). *Contemporary Security Studies* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Collins, A. (2016). *Contemporary Security Studies*. Oxford University Press.

*Containing the volatile Sudan-Ethiopia border dispute*. Crisis Group. (2023, August 2).

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia-sudan/containing-volatile-sudan-ethiopia-border-dispute>

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

[https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog\\_609332/objava\\_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf](https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf)

Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu, & Fana Gebresenbet Erda. (2018). Transregional Conflict Crossing the Red Sea: The Horn of Africa. *Comparativ*, 28(6), 90–108.

<https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2018.06.05>

De Waal, A. (2017). *Conflict Research Programme Horn of Africa and Red Sea Synthesis Paper*.

[https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100160/4/De\\_Waal\\_horn\\_of\\_africa\\_and\\_red\\_sea\\_synthesis\\_paper\\_published.pdf](https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100160/4/De_Waal_horn_of_africa_and_red_sea_synthesis_paper_published.pdf)

DE WAAL, A. (2018, July 11). *Beyond the Red Sea: A new driving force in the politics of the Horn*. African Arguments. <https://africanarguments.org/2018/07/beyond-red-sea-new-driving-force-politics-horn-africa/>

- Djibouti code of conduct. (2023, October 31). *Strategic approach to implementing Djibouti Code of Conduct on maritime security*. Maritimafrica. <https://maritimafrica.com/en/strategic-approach-to-implementing-djibouti-code-of-conduct-on-maritime-security/>
- Dr Neil Melvin/SIPRI. (2019, May 8). *The new external security politics of the Horn of Africa Region*. Policycommons.net; >. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/2369890/the-new-external-security-politics-of-the-horn-of-africa-region/3390905/>
- EBC. (2023, October 13). *ከጠብቃ ውኃ እስከ ባሕር ውኃ Etv | Ethiopia | News*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5F025eiDcI>
- EPRDF Foreign affairs and national security policy and strategy (FANSPS). (2002)
- Estifanos Balew Liyew. (2024). Geopolitics of the Red Sea: Implications of foreign military bases expansion to the Horn of Africa security. *African Security Review*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2024.2340015>
- étrangères, M. de l'Europe et des A. (2020, February 18). *France and Ethiopia*. France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/ethiopia/france-and-ethiopia-65128/>
- Fantaye , D. (2014). Demessie Fantaye Regional Approaches to Maritime Security in the Horn of Africa. In *www.fes-ethiopia.org*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/10880.pdf>
- Farah Hersi, M. (2023). Ethiopia's Quest for Access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden: Historical Precedents and contemporary implications. *Academy for Peace and Development*.
- Farah, Dr. M. (2023). *Ethiopia's Quest for Access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden: Historical Precedents and contemporary implications*. Academy for Peace and Development.
- Faye, M. L., McArthur, J. W., Sachs, J. D., & Snow, T. (2004). The challenges facing landlocked developing countries. *Journal of Human Development*, 5(1), 31–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649880310001660201>

- FEIERSTEIN, G. M. (2024, August). THE IMPACT OF MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL COMPETITION ON SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA .  
<https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/The%20Impact%20of%20Middle%20East%20Regional%20Competition%20on%20Security%20and%20Stability%20in%20the%20Horn%20of%20Africa.pdf>
- Garnett, J. (1979). *Theories of peace and security: A reader in contemporary strategic thought*. Macmillan.
- Gebreluel, G. (2018, September 18). *Ethiopia and Eritrea's second rapprochement*. Al Jazeera.  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/9/18/ethiopia-and-eritreas-second-rapprochement>
- Gebru, M. K., Zeru, G., & Tekalign, Y. (2023). The impact of the Middle East and Gulf States' involvement on the Horn of Africa's peace and security: Applying regional security complex theory. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 32(3), 223–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12301>
- H/Mariam, Y. (2005 EC). *አሰገብ የሚገኝ ፍቅር: የኢትዮጵያ የባህሪ ጥያቄ* (5th ed.).
- Heath, N. C. (2024, January 9). *A Red Sea geopolitics primer*. Fares Center.  
<https://sites.tufts.edu/farescenter/a-red-sea-geopolitics-primer/>
- Horton, M. (2020). Arms from Yemen will Fuel Conflict in the Horn of Africa. *Terrorism Monitor*, 18(8). <https://jamestown.org/program/arms-from-yemen-will-fuel-conflict-in-the-horn-of-africa/>
- Ikondere, B. A. (2021, October 7). *The Horn of Africa Security: "A foreign Military Garrison" of Great Powers*. Centre for Multilateral Affairs (CfMA). <https://thecfma.org/the-horn-of-africa-security-a-foreign-military-garrison-of-great-powers/>
- Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). (2024). *የሁለት ወጋዎች ዐቢይ ስትራቴጂ*. IFA.
- Josephs, S. G. & J. (2024, January 3). *Red Sea attacks: "our shipping costs have jumped 250%."* BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-67865064>

- Krause, K., & WILLIAMS, M. C. (1997). *Critical security studies: Concepts and cases*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Krause, K., & Williams, M. C. (1996). Broadening the agenda of security studies: Politics and methods. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40(2), 229. <https://doi.org/10.2307/222776>
- Liyew, E. B. (2024). Geopolitics of the Red Sea: Implications of foreign military bases expansion to the Horn of Africa security. *African Security Review*, 1–13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2024.2340015/>
- Mahmood, O. S. (n.d.). *Competition, cooperation and security in the Red Sea*. ISS Africa.  
<https://issafrica.org/research/east-africa-report/competition-cooperation-and-security-in-the-red-sea>
- Malterud, K. (2001). Qualitative research: Standards, challenges, and Guidelines. *The Lancet*, 358(9280), 483–488. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(01\)05627-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(01)05627-6)
- Markakis, J. (2011). *Ethiopia : the last two frontiers* (1st ed.). James Currey.
- Maru, M. T. (2019). *The great game in the Horn of Africa*. The Great Game in the Horn of Africa.  
<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/the-great-game-in-the-horn-of-africa-23372/amp>
- MARU, M. T. M. T. (2017, June). *A regional power in the making: Ethiopian diplomacy in the Horn of Africa*. South African Institute of International Affairs. <https://saiia.org.za/research/a-regional-power-in-the-making-ethiopian-diplomacy-in-the-horn-of-africa/>
- Mersha Zenebe Felek. (2023). The implications of Ethiopia's foreign policy dynamics towards the Horn of Africa since 1991. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2287316>
- MOFA (1984) *Ethiopian Foreign Policy Directions and Study of Political Affairs*, Addis Ababa.
- Mohammed, M. S. (2024). The Red Sea Regional Security Complex: The implications of the Red Sea Forum for Ethiopian national security. *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2024.2343232>

- Nye, J. S. (2005). *Understanding International Conflicts*. Longman Publishing Group.
- Observer, E. (2018, April 29). *Djibouti, Ethiopia strike port deal, Djibouti to partner in Ethiopian airlines, telecom*. Ethiopia Observer. <https://www.ethiopiaobserver.com/2018/04/29/djibouti-ethiopia-strike-port-deal-djibouti-to-partner-in-ethiopian-airlines-telecom/>
- PSC Report. (2019). Questions over foreign military presence in Africa. In *ISS Africa*. <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/questions-over-foreign-military-presence-in-africa>
- Raul (Pete) Pedrozo. (2023, December 8). *Securing the Maritime Domain in the Red Sea - Lieber Institute West Point*. Lieber Institute West Point. <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/securing-maritime-domain-red-sea/>
- Red Sea attacks: “Our shipping costs have jumped 250%.” (2024, January 3). *Www.bbc.com*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-67865064>
- Salad, R. (2024, March 3). *Ethiopia’s MoU with Somaliland: A Threat to Somalia’s Sovereignty and Regional Stability*. Heritage Institute. <https://heritageinstitute.org/ethiopias-mou-with-somaliland-a-threat-to-somalias-sovereignty-and-regional-stability/>
- Sebastian Clapp, (2024), Maritime security: Situation in the Red Sea and EU response
- Shepherd, L. J. (2013). *Critical approaches to security : an introduction to theories and methods*. Routledge.
- SISAY, A. (2020, July 6). *Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed visits Eritrean ports*. The East African. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ethiopian-pm-abiy-ahmed-visits-eritrean-ports-1401770>
- Smith, A., (2018). *Ethics in research: principles, processes, and challenges*. Routledge
- SudanTribune. (2003, December 30). *The Second Summit of the Sana’a Forum for Cooperation - Joint Communiqué*. Sudan Tribune. <https://sudantribune.com/article2102/>
- SudanTribune. (2008, December 31). *Ethiopia’s Prime Minister says Sanaa Forum is open to all*. Sudan Tribune. <https://sudantribune.com/article29618/>

- Tekalign, Y. (2019). Regional security dilemma for Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea. *African Security Review*, 28(3–4), 189–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2020.1718721>
- Tezera Tazebew. (2023). Ethiopia's Quest for Utilizing the Port of Berbera, Somaliland, since 2010: Drivers, Processes, and Challenges. . *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 56, 1–28.
- UN-OHRLs, (n.d). Vienna programme of action for landlocked developing countries for the decade 2014 – 2024  
[https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/vienna\\_programme\\_of\\_action.pdf](https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/vienna_programme_of_action.pdf)
- Verhoeven, H. (2018). The Gulf and the horn: Changing geographies of security interdependence and competing visions of Regional Order. *Civil Wars*, 20(3), 333–357.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2018.1483125>
- Vertin, Z. (2019a). *Toward a Red Sea Forum: The Gulf, the Horn of Africa, & Architecture for a New Regional Order*. The Brookings Institution. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Red\\_Sea\\_Forum\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Red_Sea_Forum_English_Web.pdf) Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper
- Vertin, Z. (2019b, May 19). *Turkey and the new scramble for Africa: Ottoman designs or unfounded fears?* Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/turkey-and-the-new-scramble-for-africa-ottoman-designs-or-unfounded-fears/>
- Wilkins, S. (2019, September 6). *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden: Lessons from an Obscure Cold War Flashpoint in Africa*. War on the Rocks. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/buried-in-the-sands-of-the-ogaden-lessons-from-an-obscure-cold-war-flashpoint-in-africa/>
- Williams, P. D. (2013). *Security studies: An introduction*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ylönen, A. (2022). A scramble of external powers and local agency in the Horn of Africa. *Notes Internationals CIDOB*, (280), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.24241/notesint.2022/280/en>

Uprety, K. (1994). Landlocked states and access to the Sea: An evolutionary study of a contested right. *Penn State International Law Review*, 12(3), 401–496.

<https://elibrary.law.psu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1339&context=psilr>

Zelalem, Z. (2023, November 27). *Is landlocked Ethiopia starting another war over ports in Horn of Africa?*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/11/7/is-landlocked-ethiopia-starting-another-war-over-ports-in-horn-of-africa>

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Interview guide

#### **General Understanding of the Red Sea's Security dynamics: *(for all interviewees)***

- Can you discuss the historical context of Ethiopia's engagement with the Red Sea and how this has evolved over time?
- How do you assess the current geopolitical landscape of the Red Sea region, and what are the primary security concerns?
- What are the main challenges for and opportunities to Ethiopia in securing its interests in the Red Sea region?
- What adaptations or shifts in strategy have you observed in Ethiopia's approach to managing its national security in light of changing Red Sea dynamics?
- How do global maritime trends and policies impact Ethiopia's strategy and actions concerning the Red Sea?

#### **The interplay between the Red Sea dynamics, Ethiopian policy direction and her Security *(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Defense University)***

- How did the de-securitization of Ethiopia's access to the sea impacted the country's national security, specifically economic, political and military security?
  - Despite the fast-growing economy, why the then regime put less effort for the country's quest for secure access to the sea?
- How does Ethiopia's unabated efforts in ensuring the country's direct access to the sea, in the regimes post-1991, influenced its domestic political security as well as the country's relationship with her neighbors?
  - Diplomatic relationship
  - Domestic security
- How do you assess the relationship between Ethiopia's internal political dynamics and its Red Sea policy?
- How much does the Red sea security dynamics influences Ethiopia's policy direction and National security strategies towards its neighbors and international and trans-regional powers on the Red Sea?

#### **Recent Developments *(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Defense University)***

- How do you assess the recent securitization of Ethiopia's access to the Sea?
  - What factors have motivated Ethiopia's the recent securitization of access to sea? What Changed?
  - How do you see the impact on domestic political realities?
- What factors impacted Ethiopia's implementation of the 2016 agreement with Somaliland and UAE?
- What is at stake for Ethiopia as a result of the MoU? To what extent this would affect the regional security in general and Ethiopian Security in particular?
  - Especially if Mogadishu allows the establishment of Egyptian Naval base?
- What other opportunities do you think Ethiopia has to secure her interest on the Red Sea?

**External Powers and Regional Dynamics:** (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Defense University, Ministry of trade and regional integration*)

- How does the amity and enmity dynamics among Red sea littoral states impact Ethiopia's security and geopolitical interests?
- How do you assess Ethiopia's alienation from the Red Sea Council, given the purpose of its establishment and Ethiopia's role in the HoA and high dependence on the Red Sea? What implications does this have on Ethiopia's strategic positioning as an anchor state in the Region?
- How do you assess the impact of increasing and assertive engagement and investment of international and transregional powers in the African Side of the Red Sea?
- Could you elaborate (if any) on Ethiopia's efforts in fostering international cooperation and partnerships to enhance its maritime security and economic interests in the Red Sea

**Military Security issues** (*Defense University and Ethiopian Naval Base*)

- How do you assess the Red Sea dynamics impact on Ethiopia's military security, in terms of military spending and structure?
- How do you assess the impact of the presence of foreign military bases to Ethiopia's National Security and its interests?
- How do you assess the contemporary Red Sea engagement to the country's military security?

- What is the threat and opportunity of Ethiopia’s Military Security as a result of the recent agreement with Somaliland and the tension with Somali?

**Economic Security** (*Ethiopia Shipping and Logistics Service, Ministry of trade and regional integration*)

- How do you see the impact of the Red Sea Security dynamics on Ethiopia’s Economic Security?
- How much does Ethiopia’s de-prioritization of the Red Sea, in the post 1991, affected its economic development?
- How do you assess the contemporary Red Sea engagement to the country’s economic security?

**Recommendation**

- What future trends do you anticipate in the Red Sea security dynamics, and what implications might this have for Ethiopia and how should Ethiopia prepare to address these?
- What policy recommendations would you offer to Ethiopian policymakers to navigate the complex Red Sea security environment effectively?

<b>Code of the participant</b>	<b>Remark</b>	<b>Location of FGD</b>
Informant – 1	Institute of Foreign Affairs	Addis Ababa
Informant – 2	Expert/ researcher in the area	Addis Ababa
Informant	Expert/ researcher in the area	Addis Ababa
Informant – 4	Former government official (diplomat)	Addis Ababa
Informant - 5	Institute of Foreign Affairs	Addis Ababa
Informant - 6	Retired military personnel (General)	Addis Ababa
Informant - 7	MoFA	Addis Ababa
Informant -8	Ethiopian Navy	Addis Ababa
Informant -9	War College	Addis Ababa

## Appendix B

To have comprehensive understanding of the security dynamics in the region, the following resources were used.

Maritime fair trade (2024, April 4). *Red Sea Crisis & Attack Unveiled: A Comprehensive Guide*. Maritime Fairtrade. <https://maritimefairtrade.org/red-sea-crisis-attack-unveiled-a-comprehensive-guide/>

Toğa, O. (2023, December). *Iran's Growing Presence in the Horn of Africa and Yemen - İRAM Center | Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara*. Iramcenter.org; center for Iranian studies. [https://iramcenter.org/en/irans-growing-presence-in-the-horn-of-africa-and-yemen\\_en-2442](https://iramcenter.org/en/irans-growing-presence-in-the-horn-of-africa-and-yemen_en-2442)

BREWSTER, D. (2018, February 7). *Base race in the Horn of Africa*.

Www.lowyinstitute.org. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/base-race-horn-africa>

Kłosowicz, R. (2015). The Role Of Ethiopia In The Regional Security Complex Of The Horn Of Africa. *Ethiopian Journal Of Social Sciences And Language Studies*, 2, 83–97.

Sheger FM 102.1 Radio. (2021, April 13). *Sheger Cafe - ጭና በበረታቦች የሐገራችን የውጭ ግንኙነት ላይ መዓዛ ብሩ እና በለጠ በላቸው (ዶ/ር) ያደረጉት ውይይት*. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T4XrYKxzdA>

Tadesse, T. (2019). REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: THE ROLE OF ETHIOPIA AT THE CENTER OF INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES [Review of *REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: THE ROLE OF ETHIOPIA AT THE CENTER OF INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES* ]. *International Journal in Commerce, IT and Social Sciences*, 6(10).

Tesfagiorgis, G. (n.d.). *Access to the Sea in the Context of Eritrea and Ethiopia*. Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://eri-platform.org/swfiles/files/Access-to-the-Sea-in-the-Context-of-Eritrea-and-Ethiopia.pdf>

Zewde, B. (1999). *የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከ1847 እስከ 1983* [Review of *የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከ1847 እስከ 1983* ]. Addis A

baba University press.

- Getahun Ashine, S. (2024). The new global superpower geo-strategic rivalry in the red sea and its implications for peace and security in the horn of Africa [Review of *The new global superpower geo-strategic rivalry in the red sea and its implications for peace and security in the horn of Africa* ]. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* , 9.
- WORKING PAPER SERIES Regional Organizations and Security Governance: A Comparative Assessment of IGAD and ASEAN*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/61101/1/LSE-Working-Paper%5B2%5D.pdf>
- Verhoeven, H. (2015). *Africa's Next Hegemon-Behind Ethiopia's Power Plays Africa's Next Hegemon Behind Ethiopia's Power Plays*. <https://aigaforum.com/articles/Africa-Next-Hegemon.pdf>
- Henneberg, I., & Stapel, S. (2020). Cooperation and Conflict at the Horn of Africa: A New Regional Bloc Between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia and Its Consequences for Eastern Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 000203972093668. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039720936689>

# DECLARATION

This thesis, titled, " The Red Sea Security Dynamics and its Implication on Ethiopia's National Security," represents a new contribution on my part. All information used in the thesis is appropriately cited, and it has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

**Declared by:**

Name of the student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of submission: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by:**

With my endorsement as a university adviser, this work has been submitted to Addis Ababa University's Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) for examination.

Name of Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of submission: \_\_\_\_\_