



ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEPARTEMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict since 2018: Implications for Ethiopia

By

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Advisor: Zelalem Tesfay (PhD)

March 13, 2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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By

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Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University, College of Social Sciences Department of Political Science and International Relations in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Advisor

Zelalem Tesfay (PhD)

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Declaration!

I hereby declare that the research titled "*Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict since 2018: Implications for Ethiopia*" represents my original work and has not been previously submitted as a thesis at any Universities. I certify that all publications referenced in the study are appropriately cited in the references section.

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Ethio-Sudan border conflicts and its impacts on Ethiopia, since 2018. Particularly, it focuses on reviewing conceptual and theoretical aspects of conflict, identifying main causes, and assessing internal and external factors contributing to escalation. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants from various government institutions, research centers, and political entities. Additionally, document analysis of publications and media sources related to the issue was employed. The research findings showed that the internal chaos in Ethiopia, particularly the Federal government and the TPLF conflict, exacerbates the border dispute, with Sudan leveraging Ethiopia's internal challenges to assert territorial claims. Historical disputes rooted in colonial-era treaties complicate the situation. The conflict is shaped by domestic political landscapes, with Sudan using the border issue to divert attention. Involvement of business elites, military figures, and external factors heightens tensions over the Al-Fashaga region. Economically, the conflict disrupts trade, transport, and essential links with Sudan, impacting market losses and essential imports, exacerbating economic distress. The displacement of Ethiopian farmers strains sesame production, aggravating economic challenges. The conflict's broader impacts on tourism, foreign investment, and economic stability emphasize the urgent need for resolution. Politically, stressed relations affect collaborative efforts such as GERD negotiations, emphasizing the importance of strong governance and diplomatic tact. Regionally and internationally, the conflict challenges continental organizations, complicating international relations. Security-wise, the conflict extends beyond territorial disputes to include weapon trafficking, potential terrorist activities, and historical ties to rebel groups, raising concerns about regional stability and humanitarian crises. The conflict's implications for GERD negotiations reveal a complex interplay of geopolitical and economic dynamics, stressing how Sudan's territorial claims could indirectly influence its stance on the dam. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders seeking a deeper understanding of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its multifaceted impact on Ethiopia. Additionally, it emphasizes the necessity for further research to explore potential avenues for conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building strategies in the region.

Key words; Border, Conflict, Economic, Political, Security and GERD

List of Abbreviations

AUBP - African Union Border Program

AU - African Union

EC - Ethiopian Calendar (the calendar used in Ethiopia, approximately 7–8 years behind the Gregorian calendar)

EIC - Ethiopian Investment Commission

ELF - Eritrean Liberation Front

EMoFA - Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

EPLF - Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EZEMA - Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice

FANSPS - Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy

FFC - Forces for Freedom and Change

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GERD - Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

GPS - Global Positioning System

IFA - Institute of Foreign Affairs

IMF - International Monetary Fund

IGAD - Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

IPM - Integrated Pest Management

IPSS - Institute of Peace and Security Studies

OAU - Organization of African Unity

OFECO - Oromia Federalist Congress

PSC - Peace and Security Council

SIRARA - Name of a weekly published newspaper

SPLA - Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLM/A - Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front

UAE - United Arab Emirates

UN - United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

U.S. - United States

VOA - Voice of America

WWI - World War I

WW II - World War II

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Figure 1; Ethio-Sudan boundary - disputed areas in northern part

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Border conflicts revolve around the concept of territory, a term rooted in the Latin word "Terra," meaning "land" or "earth." The global landscape is witnessing a surge in border disputes, spanning various regions across the planet. The dynamic nature of the contemporary global political system is characterized by the emergence of new nations and the continual evolution of frontiers, leading to an increase in border-related tensions. Since the establishment of the United Nations (UN) on October 24, 1945, with 46 initial signatory countries, the organization has grown to encompass over 197 member states. This represents a significant expansion, quadrupling the number of founding states. The cumulative length of international borders among these 197 states totals approximately 250,000 kilometers or 156,000 miles. Notably, only half of these borders have been established through legitimate treaties (Brunet, 2015).

The demarcation of international borders involves a complex negotiation process that engages politicians, lawyers, geographers, and native populations. The ultimate objective of this intricate diplomatic endeavor is to achieve a mutually acceptable and peaceful agreement regarding the delineation of boundaries between involved parties, as emphasized by Alder (1995). According to Brunet (2015), border demarcation and delimitation process in Africa was introduced in the period of European colonialism. The colonial boundaries of Africa are created without knowledge and understanding of the people's social, political economic and psychological characteristics; rather it is based on colonial economic, administration and political interests. 70 percent of the overall lengths of African boundaries that aren't in lined patterns are determined primarily by means of factors related to geography, compared to 30 percent of the continent's borders that do.

Additionally, colonial African borders were drawn without taking into account ethnic affiliations, dividing identical ethnic communities into different states, which caused conflicts over ethnicity in these nations (Mi, 2014). The border delimitation process by the European colonizers was based on dividing the same people, tribes and sometimes family members in to

two countries. Due to this the character of African boundary is arbitrary and it is a major source of bloody conflict, civil war, and genocide in the continent (Davidson, 1992).

Territorial disputes and border issues of the Horn of Africa are not different from the other corners of Africa. The Horn of Africa is located in the Eastern part of Africa and or sub-Saharan Africa. It is conflict and drought prone region of the world. The Horn of Africa is a densely populated region with lack of basic necessity for human beings such as shelter, food, clothing, education; health care, clean water etc. By geographical location and population number Ethiopia and Sudan are more significant and strategic countries of Africa (Yacob 2007).

According to their distance from Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Gulf countries and the Middle East, these two states are highly influential in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Sudan shares a very long and fertile border land areas. Beyond their boundary relation, those two countries have different mutual manifestations. The word Ethiopia is a Greek word means “Black” or “Dark”, correspondingly the word Sudan is an Arabic word means “Black” or “Dark”. Rivers like Sobat, Atibara, Abay (Blue Nile) and Merebare a shared river between Ethiopia and Sudan (Yacob, 2007).

A pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of Ethiopia and Sudan boundary relation is very important to understand the overall Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its political, Economic, security, and GERD implications for Ethiopia. In the pre-colonial period, historical and archeological evidences show that Ethiopia and Sudan has a long time economic, political and social relationships starting from ancient Axumite dynasty of Ethiopia and Meroe kingdom of Sudan. However, the two countries boundary issues were becomes more serious after the 19th century next to the modern Ethiopian history was established. In the mid-19th century Atse Tewodros II (1855 to 1868), (from Quara the border land area of Ethiopia and Sudan) was inaugurate the modern history of Ethiopia (Wondwosen, 2009).

In the reign of Atse Yohannes IV (1872-1889), the Ethio-Sdan relationships were full of suspicious between Khalifa Abdallahi of Sudan and Atse Yohannes IV of Ethiopia. Because of Hewett treaty, by signing the agreement in favor of Egypt, Britain gave Yohannes access to free imports of supplies, weapons, Egyptian assistance in episcopal appointments, plus the return of

Bogos to Ethiopia. Yohannes, in consequently, consented to help the beleaguered Egyptian troops leave the Sudanese villages of Kassala, Amideb, and Sanhit (Ibid, 2009).

During the colonial era there was an agreement between Emperor Menilik II (1889-1913) of Ethiopia and Britain (on behalf of Sudan) about the demarcation of Ethio-Sudan border in 1902. The 1902 treaty was talking about formulating a Joint Border Commission (JBC) in order to apply the border on the ground. Nevertheless, in 1903 the British man Charles Gwynn without Ethiopian representative and disregarding the 1902 agreement, demarcate the Ethio-Sudan boundary. Ethiopia rejected this unilateral action. Since the Post-colonial period, Ethiopia and Sudan relation was full of tension. Both countries were trying to express their aggression by supporting rebel groups of one another. Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930-1974) of Ethiopia supports South Sudan rebel groups and Sudan supports Eritrean rebel groups. In 1972, after a long time facilitation and discourse, Ethiopia and Sudan agreed to approve their border issues through exchanging of notes. In this exchange of notes, the two countries agreed to modify the colonial border lines. This process has failed by the 1974 Ethiopian revolution (Lulit, 2021).

There was an agreement of compromise between Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in 2008. According to BBC (2021) news, in 2008, talks among the two administrations resulted in an agreement to work together. Although Sudan allowed the Ethiopians to live there unmolested, Ethiopia accepted its borders as being valid. It was an ideal instance of a soft boundary' administered in an arrangement that prevented the placement of a 'hard boundary' from disrupting the lifestyles that resided in the cross-border region; there had been cohabitation for generations before just recently, while Ethiopia wanted a clear jurisdictional demarcation.

Following Meles' death in 2012, relationships between the two nations remained friendly, but with Abiy Ahmed's rise to prominence in Ethiopia in 2018 and Omar al-Bashir's fall in Sudan in August 2019, relations between the two nations are once again in uncertainty (Young, 2020). Recently, Ethiopia and Sudan forms a new high-level political committee to handle their border issues. In May 2020, the committee held a meeting in Addiss Ababa and agreed on working together towards their border delimitation and demarcation within the existing framework and treaties as well as to fight illegal activities and to improve the relationships of the two countries people. But in November 2020 Sudan attacked Ethiopia (Lulit, 2021). Therefore, the aim of the

study is examining the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its overall social, political and economic implications of Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia and Sudan have a long time boundary issues. The Ethio-Sudan border conflict is still unresolved. There are different factors regarding the current Ethio-Sudan border conflict. Firstly, the border between Ethiopia and Sudan has not been demarcated since 1902. Secondly, historical claims play a significant role. Thirdly, recent government changes in both countries and the interests of third-party have escalated the issue. Lastly, the conflict is fueled by the desire for fertile land (Mulatu, 2015).

Furthermore, according to Ben (2021) Ethiopian Federal government and TPLF conflict, in addition to a number of other connected incidents, has worsened previous disagreements. Notably regarding the location of the contested Al-Fashaga triangle, that marks the boundary between Sudan and Ethiopia and was only demarcated with an agreement of compromise in 2008. There have reportedly been violent armed conflict and forces were sent into each State's borders. Al-Fashaga may officially retain Sudanese jurisdiction under Sudan's Gedaref State after a compromise agreement was reached in 2008, but Amharan farmers could continue to utilize the land without restriction. Nevertheless, the unrest in Tigray in November 2020 exposed the shortfalls of this agreement as a long-term fix, prompting some to demand for a more permanent resolution to the problem of this contentious border zone.

The Ethio-Sudan border conflicts have different implications for the two nations. The foreign policy formulation, national interest and internal crises of Ethiopia and Sudan are highly affected by the relation they have regarding their border. They have other impacts as neighboring countries like the impact of Middle East, the interest of the west; Egyptians interest on the Nile water etc. Ethiopia and Sudan have a common issue concerning illegal activities in their border land areas and along their common boundary. The Al-Fashaga area (the study area, the reason why the two countries are entered in to conflict) is inhabited and cultivated by both countries' people, but mostly the place has been used by a large number of Ethiopian farmers. This region is the area of confrontation between Ethiopia and Sudan. Due to the instability of both Ethiopia and Sudan there are a large number of refugees camped around the border zone.

Historically, the Ethio-Sudan border conflict has many more influences on the overall relations of the two countries. There are fortunes which bring sustainable development between Ethiopia and Sudan. However, due to boundary conflict still the two countries couldn't promote trade, agriculture, industry; electricity power supply, fuel supply, road transportation and port services moreover the two countries haven't agreement about the development of water flowing from Ethiopia to Sudan. The economic development and political stability of the two countries can be assured by strong peaceful agreement on their boundary problems.

In his 1971 paper titled "The Sudan-Ethiopia Boundary: A Study in Political Geography," Nur, Taha Hassan delves into the historical exploration of the Sudan-Ethiopia border, providing a geographical perspective. While the paper incorporates additional variables impacting location and functionality, it falls short in covering the temporal dimension and overall implications of the border conflict on Ethiopia. Since 2018, there has been a noticeable scarcity of literature specifically addressing the Ethio-Sudan border conflict with a focus on its implications for Ethiopia. The economic, political, security and GERD extents of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict have not been thoroughly investigated.

Similarly, Temesgen and Getachew (2020) conducted a study titled "Impacts of Border in Borderland Conflict along the Ethio-Sudan Border: Evidence from Metema Woreda." Their research concentrates on the factors contributing to borderland disputes in Metema Woreda, located near the Sudanese frontier in North-Western Ethiopia. The paper highlights how conflicts among borderland residents stem from rival property rights and imprecise actual borders. However, their analysis is confined to the impact of borderland conflict in a specific area, namely North Western Ethiopia, Western part of North Gonder Zone Metema Woreda.

In contrast, Wondwosen's paper (2009), titled "Colonial Boundaries of Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Boundary with Sudan," centers on the assertion that the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary treaties of 1902 and 1907 contribute to contemporary border issues between Ethiopia and Sudan. Nevertheless, the study does not encompass the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. Therefore, my forthcoming study aims to make a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge by extensively addressing the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. This endeavor is expected to be of paramount importance for

policymakers, practitioners, diplomats, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and various other key bodies and organizations involved in navigating and resolving border-related issues.

The research investigations pointed out above are looking the Ethio-Sudan border conflict in different point of views. They are not specifically investigated or deal with the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. Unlike those studies, this study investigates the general implication of Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia since 2018. Due to the border conflict of the two countries, insurgent group, contraband illegal activities and a large number of Ethiopian peasant refugees from the Al-Fashiga region are proliferate along the border side. In addition to that, the government changes and military clashes between the two countries have different implications for Ethiopia. Consequently, this study aims to make an attempt to examine issues concerning with the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implication for Ethiopia.

1.3. Central Argument

The central argument of the study is that the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, since 2018 has multifaceted implications for Ethiopia.

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the Ethio-Sudan border conflicts and its multifaceted implication for Ethiopia.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

This research has the following specific objectives.

- To review historical backgrounds of Ethio-Sudan border relations, and conceptual and theoretical aspects of conflict,
- To assess the main causes of Ethio-Sudan border conflict,
- To examine internal and external factors which escalate the conflict,
- To examine the multifaceted implications of Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopian.

1.5. Research Questions

The study has the following specific questions.

- What are the historical backgrounds of Ethio-Sudan border conflict and conceptual and theoretical perspectives of conflict?
- What are the main causes of Ethio-Sudan border conflict?
- How internal and external factors are affecting the border conflict of Ethiopia and Sudan?
- What are the economic, political, GERD and security implications of Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopian?

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Methodology of the Study

The methodology employed in this research is qualitative research, as defined by Ritchie and Lewis (2003), which focuses on clarifying social phenomena within their specific contexts. This approach allows for the exploration of "what," "how," and "why" questions, emphasizing personal interpretations and the examination of literature and documents. Given the complexity of boundary conflict issues and their societal implications, qualitative research is deemed suitable for understanding the Ethiopia-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. It provides a framework for analyzing the behaviors of individuals and leaders within nations, crucial factors in interstate interactions during conflicts. Through qualitative analysis, the researcher aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict's and its impact on Ethiopia. This qualitative approach enables the researcher to define, understand, and contextualize the conflict and its implications, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complex issues at hand.

1.6.2. Method

1.6.2.1. Source of Data

The researcher employed a multifaceted approach to data collection, integrating both primary and secondary sources to comprehensively investigate the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. Primary data was precisely gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants from prominent government institutions. These interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, affording flexibility to investigate deeply into pertinent subjects and extract valuable insights from the informants. Additionally, secondary data was sourced from a diverse array of publications, including journal articles, books, and media outlets encompassing

video and audio content, all accurately selected for their relevance to the issue at hand. This combination of primary interviews and secondary document analysis ensured a comprehensive understanding of the conflict, incorporating perspectives from both authoritative governmental bodies and external scholarly and media sources.

1.6.2.2. Instruments of Data Collection

Interview

Primary data sources were used in this research. The primary data was accurately gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants, drawn from diverse government institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Institute of Foreign Affairs, and the Federal Police. Additionally, data was obtained from reputable research centers such as IPSS, regional organization IGAD, and various political entities, including competing political parties like EZAMA and OFECO. A total of 8 key informants contributed valuable insights to this study. The selection of informants was based on their knowledge of the subject matter and the valuable information they could provide.

Document Analysis

As a qualitative approach that enables the examiner to generate significance, gain insight, and build empirical expertise, document evaluation will also be employed. Moreover, in order to better understand the present Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implication for Ethiopia, the researcher examined a variety of publications along with additional written works like, journal articles, books, media outlets (video, audio etc.) related to the issue as secondary data sources.

1.6.2.3. Sampling Technique

The sampling technique employed in this research was purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on the researcher's judgment and the identification of key informants within the subject area. Purposive sampling was chosen for its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, allowing interviews to be conducted with the right individuals at the appropriate times according to their availability. Unlike random sampling, which requires a clearly defined population and systematic selection process, purposive sampling relies on readily available participants and the researcher's discretion in selecting individuals who can provide valuable insights into the research topic. By employing purposive sampling techniques, the researcher aimed to gather

diverse perspectives on the Ethiopia-Sudan border conflict efficiently and effectively, considering the practical limitations of the research process.

According to the researchers work behavior and for the sake of time this study has a limited number of participants which have a specific knowledge or are familiar for the topic. from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, institutions of foreign affairs, the Federal Police, and the Ministry of Defense. Additionally, from research centers like Institute of Peace and Security studies (IPSS), regional organization IGAD, and from competing political parties like EZEMA and OFECO. A sum of 8 key informants was chosen.

1.6.2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data for this research was qualitative thematic data analysis. The study's conceptual and methodological foundations for examining qualitative evidence centered on the concept of personal interpretations. Thematic qualitative data analysis offers methods for identifying, scrutinizing, contrasting, and explaining important trends or themes. Generating meaning of data via the discovery of themes, ideas, knowledge, trends, classifications, perspectives, and beliefs is an aspect of thematic qualitative data analysis. According to Walker and Myrick (2006), the thematic data analysis incorporates a continuous, inference, and minimal process termed coding that creates the circumstances for developing themes, fundamentals, explanations, and hypotheses. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher applied thematic data analysis techniques. Empirical information was gathered and subjected to theme analysis.

The main issues identified in the study questions served as the basis for thematic categorizations. Themes were used to group or classify the data. The themes were divided into simpler categories of subdivisions and codes. Evidence analyzed utilizing descriptions, explanations, understandings, and interpretations. The data analysis technique planned for this study would prepared by unifying the details about the case, categorizing the data into meaningful themes.

1.7. Significance of the Study

This study has both academic and policy significance. By examining the Ethio-Sudan border conflict since 2018, and its implication for Ethiopia in depth, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on previously unexplored aspects of the topic. Additionally, the findings of this study have the potential to inform and guide future research

endeavors in the field, providing researchers with valuable insights into Ethio-Sudan border conflict since 2018, and its implication for Ethiopia. This study indicates some way-out solutions regarding policy.

1.8. Scope of the Study

This study explores the Ethio-Sudan border conflict since 2018 onwards, with a specific emphasis on its implications for Ethiopia. The border dispute initially involved Ethiopia and Sudan, but tensions escalated following Ethiopia's political reforms in 2018 and Sudan's political transition in 2019. Consequently, the two nations became involved in another conflict in 2020. Despite the Agreement of Compromise signed in 2008, conflicts persisted for a decade, although they were not as intense as those witnessed in 2020. Therefore, I chose to conduct my research shortly after these significant political changes. It concentrates the conflict on the Alfashga region, situated along the Ethio-Sudan border within the Al-Fashaqa Triangle, located in Setit-Humera. This area encompasses significant farming territories, including Mechach and Lugdi, spanning approximately forty to fifty kilometers westward from the border. The research delves into the multifaceted impacts of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict on Ethiopia, focusing on its economic, political, security, and GERD-related dimensions. By narrowing its focus to the conflict of the Al-Fashga region, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how this particular border dispute influences various aspects of Ethiopia's national interests and strategic concerns.

1.9. Limitation of the Study

When conducting this research, various limitations were faced. These included challenges such as the absence of respondents in the appropriate area, place, and time. There were instances of unwillingness among institutional and individual respondents during the interview process, likely influenced by the study's title, which required a wide-ranging presentation of literature. Time constraints posed a significant challenge to the researcher, given the need for an in-depth study. The limited and compacted timeframe became a disadvantage. Additionally, the shortage of studies on the specific concerns of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict's implications for Ethiopia, especially in relation to political, economic, and social matters, along with limited access to relevant documents, presented obstacles.

To overcome these challenges and enhance research effectiveness, strategies include expanding outreach efforts to locate suitable respondents through leveraging social networks and convenience sampling. Clear communication about research objectives, building rapport, and ensuring confidentiality can address respondent unwillingness. Careful time management, including setting clear milestones and prioritizing tasks, can mitigate time constraints. Considering alternative, less time-intensive research methodologies may also be beneficial.

1.10. Ethical Consideration of the Study

Ethical considerations were a pillar of my paper. Interviews were conducted based on the consensus of the respondents. Initially, I introduced myself, providing information about who I am and where I come from. Additionally, I communicated the objectives of my study, emphasizing its academic purposes. Before commencing the interviews, I sought the willingness of the respondents, ensuring their voluntary participation. Respondents were made aware of their rights to speak freely, ask questions, and cancel the interview if they felt uncomfortable. Furthermore, all information shared during the interview was treated as confidential

1.11. Organization of the Study

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter incorporates the background of the study, statement of the problem, central argument, research objectives (general and specific objectives), research questions (specific), methodology of data analysis, data collection instrument, ethical consideration, significance of the study, the scope of the study, limitation of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter covers the conceptual, theoretical frameworks, and empirical analyses of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia. The third chapter discusses Ethiopia's Regional Foreign Policy and the Historical Background of Ethio-Sudan Relations. The fourth chapter of the paper discusses the causes of the current Ethio-Sudan border conflict and the internal and external factors escalating the Ethio-Sudan border conflict. The fifth chapter discusses the overall implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict towards its economic, political security, and (GERD) issues. Lastly, the discussion is ended with a conclusion.

Chapter Two

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

2.1. Conceptualization and Definitions of Border

Previously, border negotiators and many scholars in boundary studies have apply the term boundary, frontier, border and territory as a synonym like an imaginary line to divide one state from another state. However, for some scholars, while boundary is a line, frontier is a zone. Though, this difference is totally acceptable by geographers. However, this definition is automatically dismissed by international legal experts. So, words boundary, frontier, border and territories are similarly applied in a treaties and agreements as a synonym (Nur, 1971). To escape such vagueness it is important to clarify some terms and expressions in my paper. In this study the word frontier, frontier zone, border, border zone, boundary and territory are used as a synonym to separate or divide the land between the two countries of East Africa Ethiopia and Sudan.

According to an analysis of agreements' contents from the standpoint of international legislation, the border is the dividing line that distinguishes the bounds of a single nation from the lands of surrounding Nations. It is acknowledged that every nation is free to practice its authority inside its borders. In this regard, international law defines the border as, from other things, a line dividing geographical spaces in which two separate sovereign nations are practiced their legitimate power (AUBP, 2012).

Bradley (2006) defines boundaries as straight separating lines that are established in a specific area, designed to delineate the distinction between geopolitical and legal parts, whereas borders are the dividing lines that distinguish sovereign states. The Oxford English Dictionary defines boundary as 'the line of anything, whether substantial or immaterial. The dictionary also defines frontier as a boundary line that separates two countries, and border as a line that separates two countries, administrative divisions, or other areas.

Walker (2016) states that boundaries are understood hereunder as ways of temporality delineation and differentiating which might or might not be supported by governmental or judicial rules, might or might not include physical borders, and can or cannot be displayed

physically. On the other hand, the boundary is frequently characterized as a wider notion, used to a broad spectrum of physical, figurative, and cultural worlds, while both frontier and border have typically been executed and have additionally frequently been connected with geographic and territory differences (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013).

Internationally, the lines that completely separate two countries are called borders. Therefore, boundaries are a broader concept than more restrictive borders. Therefore, not every border represents boundaries, even though all borders are boundaries to a certain degree. Still, there is already a significant amount of simplifying and standardization involved in establishing a line between borders and boundaries. To comprehend how borders function, it is not clear enough to say that borders are an "international boundary between two states." Once borders and boundaries have been defined and their particularities outlined, it is crucial to comprehend their functioning (Balibar, 2002).

Lyde (1915) stated that boundaries should be able to promote international interaction, and should also strengthen the interaction of people living in the border areas of two countries. Holdich (1916) expressed that boundaries can be essentially geographical or man-made, but they should be strong enclosures that can be used as a military weapon. Fawcett (1918) says the main purpose of boundary is to protect the country and provide social and military services and protecting good relationships with neighboring countries. According to Ratzels (1895) state is a living thing and boundary is a skin of the state.

Anderson (1996) uses the word frontier to signify international boundary and also the word boundary to designate separations at the sub-state level. Likewise, Shaw (1997) pointed out that international boundary is a permanent line between states determined through physical or natural and legal grounds according to the consent of countries. It will be changeable if the neighboring countries agreed. Agreements on shared boundary are very important to protect international peace, law and order.

Moreover, according to Korkor (2001) boundary is divided in to two categories, which are General and Fixed boundaries. General boundary means the exact location of the border line is not accurately settled or not interpreted on the ground. A fixed boundary is a precisely delineated border on the ground, established through meticulous surveying and accurate information. Smith

(1995) similarly divided border in to two groups as bona fide and fiat border. According to him bona fide borders are geographic or natural borders like river water course, coast lines, mountains etc. Bona fine boundaries are lined naturally without any human knowledge and delineating activities. On the other hand, fiat borders are manmade, totally settled by human activities through dialogue, negotiation, diplomatic relation. Fiat borders need the decision and discussions of human being.

The other scholar Krukoski (n.d) also classified boundaries in to Natural (Geographic) and Artificial boundaries. Natural or geographic boundaries are involves hydric boundaries, river drainage systems, dry boundaries, mountain ranges etc. Whereas, artificial boundaries are include monuments or by using boundary symbols like concrete walls etc. The artificial boundaries are not based on physical features and also they are not established according to ethical, cultural and linguistic background. They are out of the domains of natural and social values. For Ozcan (2002), artificial boundaries are the sources of many border conflicts. According to Caflisch (2006), because of the existence of belief, that natural boundaries are good than artificial boundaries. However, in international law there is no rule and regulations which give priority to natural boundaries than artificial boundaries.

For Ozcan (2002) and Blake (1995), borders are created by four steps. Primarily borders are created through Historical precedents (allocation), second, delimitation, third, demarcation, and fourth, characterization (management). Similarly, according to Jones (1945), there are four stages which establish a border. The first one is political decisions on the allocation of a territory. The second one is delimitation of the border in a treaty, thirdly demarcation of the border on the ground, and finally administration of the boundary as elaborated below.

2.1.1. Allocation

Brown (1994), express allocation as the first mutual consensus among countries about their border rights, outlines on maps, while there is no exact and brief detail or field work. The allocation stage is mostly the responsibility of politicians, diplomats and solders. Allocation or Historical precedent includes the process of finding the culture, values, behavior and psychological makeup of the border zone communities. Additionally, it includes investigating other works if there was the attempt of creating border before. This stage is the main source of border conflict in Africa because a colonial boundary has not included such precedents.

In 19th century, the period of colonialism in Africa, European colonial countries decided roughly to divide Africa without fighting each other. Regarding to this, the Berlin Conference (1884) was the prominent agreement to put Africa under the influence of Europe. The thought of African boundary making has begun mostly in the period between Berlin Conference (1885) and World War the first (WWI) (Nuri, 1971). Similarly, Loisel (2004) argues that almost 87% of African borders were inherited from colonial era. Allocation is the first stage in making border between states. In this stage politician, diplomats, soldiers and other higher official in the negotiation of border are needed. Likewise, different technical committee advisors like historians, cartographers, geographers, lawyers, economists, and computer scientists etc. will also participate in this stage (Blake, 1995).

2.1.2. Delimitation

Delimitation discuss about the explanation of arrangement in the agreement and other supportive materials, documents or it refers to a marked line on a map (Brown, 1994). At this stage, diplomats from both countries passed a decision about the making of border lines on the ground between the two countries territory. Fundamentally, delimitation is a political process. Delimitation is a validation and authorization of agreements on the boundary problem. Representatives from both countries fix the frontier line depending on the surveying documents on agreement and describe the border in detail (Ozcan, 2002).

Delimitation is an essential stage of border making and mostly it is completed by joint commissions. During the colonial era, boundary commissions in Africa used their own uneven survey for their own interest. Regarding to this, the British experience was a good example. They prepare their own Royal Engineering Officer to ratify their colonies boundary. Now days, the border delimitation work is becoming very easy due to Modern technology. Aerial photographs, satellite photographs, satellite images, Global Positioning System (GPS), the measurement of distance from a satellite, GPS receivers, Applications of GPS technology to boundary making, computerized boundary information system, border digital data base etc. are easing delimitation (Blake, 1995).

2.1.3. Demarcation

Demarcation is the process of applying the overall ideas, agreements and intensions of the second phase in to the ground. This stage is the mechanical and technical stage which contains

creating border line, putting symbols, concrete walls, headstone (Ozcan, 2002). Demarcation is a process of bringing the designated arrangements in a delimitation stage in to the ground. It is a means to mark and evidenced the second stage through different border line symbols like pillars, milestones and concretes (Brown, 1994).

More specifically, Krukoski (n.d) argues that the demarcation designers are trying to understand the markers' motivations on the ground. Being a technical stage, there may be a few clarification challenges when locating the rivers, lakes, mountain ranges, or other landmarks that served as the delimitation's foundation on the ground. During the process of demarcation, fixing tombstones or indicators describe the border lines between countries. This phase includes capturing data and information like recording maps, outlines, pictures, etc (Blake, 1995).

2.1.4. Characterization or Administration of the Border

According to Ozcan (2002), this characterization or maintenance stage is the creation of new scripts and symbols in order to fulfill the needs of inhabitants residing around the border line. This stage is the phase of controlling, protecting, managing and administering the border land areas with a series of continuation. The main disadvantage of this stage is the problem of managing and administering large countries with long boundaries to protect and control their border due to the expensiveness of the border management cost (Ibid, 2002).

According to Krukoski (n.d), border symbols are divided in to two: these are primary and secondary marks. Primary symbols are created in demarcation stage whereas secondary symbols are created in characterization stage. Prescott (1987) pointed out those three kinds of international border conflicts. These are territorial, positional and functional. Territorial conflicts arise when states are interred in to competition in order to control a large place of the border land area. Positional conflicts are arising when states are trying to allocate their border line. Positional disputes are mostly occurring before delimitation, however rarely could happen after delimitation. Functional conflicts happened in day today management and operations of the border land area (Blake, 1995).

2.2. Conceptualizing conflict

According to Morgenthau (1948), Conflict has existed from the dawn of humankind. It is a prominent aspect of human society. Men must fight regardless of whether they have weapons or

access to other weapons of violence. Likewise, Bettenson (1950) when viewed from the most extreme and theological standpoint, conflict symbolizes one of man's dual natures: "evil", the antithesis, cooperation, represents the second, the 'good' essence of man. Thus, conflict takes the form of disagreement, rage, argument, hatred, devastation, murder, or war. The aforementioned is not an indication that there aren't any particular sources of dispute. In human civilization, conflict can take many different forms and has many separate causes. In order to address the typical patterns of the majority of disputes in society as a whole, this section explores the crucial subject of conflict definitions, categories and sources.

The word "conflict" already lacks a positive meaning in the realm of philology. It frequently coexists with dysfunctional phenomena like discord, argument, or fighting. Additionally, it is a very nebulous and imprecise idea. Its definition changes depending on the situation because many authors have given it varied definitions. The fact that, there are different kinds of conflict including intra-personal, inter-personal, inter-group, and interstate is the cause. The definition given to it then differs depending on its nature. No matter what kind of conflict it is, all of them have one thing in common: their definitions include conflicting goals or interests. Conflicting parties' incompatibilities of interests are always the source of it (Sheriff F, n.d).

According to Nicholson (1992), conflict is an ongoing condition of animosity among two or more parties. This suggests that two or more parties are on opposing sides of the same subject and lack an agreement. Thus, it implies the achievement of contradictory objectives. Conflict also refers to resistance to an established viewpoint, stance or position. Moreover, for Jeong (2000), conflict arises when multiple groups contend with one another over beliefs, claims to authority, and distribution of resources with the objective of neutralizing, harming, or destroying the rivals. In this regard Anifowose (1982), points out that conflict is a manifestation of the competing interests of various political groups that frequently results in political violence.

Nevertheless, it's crucial to understand that not all confrontation results in war. While conflicts result in war, not all conflicts necessarily result in war. According to Waltz (2007), war is a situation of openly announced hostility among multiple parties that is carried out by regular troops of the parties. From this point of view, we cannot say that the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan is a full-blown war, because until now the governments of both countries have not officially declared war and entered into a confrontation. On the other hand, there have

been a few unusual occurrences where a number of nations have engaged in combat with an irregular force (Ibid, 2007).

The definition of conflict varies depending on the objective of the study and the methods employed by different authors. For instance, according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf (1990), the term conflict refers to a condition in which one identifiable group of human beings stand against the other group in order to achieve their objectives. These groups may be ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic or other groups. Likewise, Coser (1956) defines conflict as a struggle over values, and claims to scarce resources, in this context, the adversary aims to nullify, inflict harm upon, or eradicate their competitors. Moreover, Laue (1987), defined conflict as escalated natural competition between two or more parties about scarce resources, power and prestige. Parties in a conflict believe that they have incompatible goals and their objective is to neutralize, gain advantage over and injure or destroy one another.

In this regard, Mesfin (1999) depicts incompatibility of goals or divergence of interests may be taken as common elements. But, an element to injure or destroy another may not be taken as a necessary component of definition of conflict, because conflict is not always destructive; it may play a constructive role. He further defines conflict as a practice of disagreement on public issues that affect lives of groups, essentially about means and ends regarding their mutual relationships, diverse interests, different values, institutions or organizations.

Equally for Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf (1990), Conflict implies more than competition. When a resource is scarce, individuals may engage in competition for it without full awareness of their competitors' presence or without actively attempting to impede their rivals from achieving their objectives. Competition shades off into conflict when the parties try to enhance their own position by reducing that of others; try to frustrate others from gaining their own ends, and try to put their competitors out of business. These are situations that may, in one way or another, give rise to conflicts among states. In other words, these situations indicate the inevitability of inter-state conflicts in the international system.

2.2.1. Typologies of Conflict

There are different types of conflicts, experienced in the world of humanity. Conflicts come in several forms. Intra-personal tension is a topic that psychology has advocated for. In sociology,

conflict can occur between individuals, inside groups or within units, or between groups. Inter-ethnic or intra-state conflicts, as well as global conflicts, have been recognized by political scientists as well as historians (Sheriff, n.d). Among the mentioned types of conflict, I will try to identify the main ones.

2.2.1.1. Intra-state Conflict

According to Sarkees (2003), conflicts that occur among multiple parties inside a country's globally accepted boundaries have been referred to as intra-state conflicts. These consist of disputes between communities (involving multiple parties, neither of which belongs to controlled by the state power) and civil strife (between a state authority and a non-governmental actor). Another difference is that internal conflicts inside states can be classified as either conflicts over local concerns, such as splits, or conflicts over control of the national authority. Thus, a civil war is essentially a war against the power of the state itself. Either an existing rule is replaced by a new one, or secede creates an entirely new system (and state). A state-to-state conflict is distinct. It is a state-related war. Six categories are used to further differentiate intra-state warfare: military inter-communal uprisings, separatist, irredentist, devolutionary, regime-changing, and social bandit warfare.

According to Yilmaz (2007), Intra-state conflicts are essentially disputes among two or more tribes that have distinct cultural identities. However, if one or both of the parties believe that their interaction is unjust with the current political system; this rivalry has the potential to turn into an open confrontation. Following that, those communities that see each other to be disadvantaged would use conflict to push for progress, for instance the acknowledgment of cultural rights, freedom, political secession, or absolute autonomy. Typically, the focus of conflict revolves around the people who are part of the dominant group or it is on the group members who control the country's political power. As a result, the authority of the state itself is questioned in practically all intra-state conflicts. The law of the state is considered to favor the interests of influential groups and it is considered to be removed.

Burton (1979) stated that, rival groups could be described them according to shared historical occurrences, prized cultural characteristics, or a mutual ancestor. Entirety, there is no reason to assume that one root of ethnic identification is more significant by itself than another, while ethnicity and ancestry may also play a significant role in some situations. Sense of belongingness

to a group is ultimately a question of personal faith. A human growth study tells us that no one has an identifiable personality from birth. A person's identity or personality develops through his day-to-day interactions with a community.

Therefore, there are a variety of elements that may affect how ethnic identity develops throughout that socializing process. Certain social contexts place greater emphasis on similar lineage or race, whereas other contexts may highlight other factors that contribute to a person's ethnic background, like belief system, language, or tradition. He listed discrimination, the political system, the collapse of central authority, economic distress and the unfair distribution of the nation's wealth, historical injuries, the international context, and establishing peace in conflict situations are some sources of intra-state conflict (Ibid, 1979).

According to Sheriff (n.d), conflicts inside a nation may result from economic issues like land, unequal growth, allocation of resources, and a share of revenue mechanism. Besides, conflict may also be triggered by social causes such as value distinctions. Socio-ethnic variables, including actual or alleged racial rebalancing or elimination of races, may also play a role. Examples include the Nigeria-Biafra incident and the 1994 Rwanda massacre segment. Intra-state violence may result from issues of politics including authority-sharing, an authoritative balance or rezoning mechanism in the public sector, uneven representation of politicians, quota regulations, and similar situations. The crises in Mali, Ivory Coast, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central African Republic are more instances of conflicts within states.

2.2.1.2. Inter-state Conflict

Inter-state conflict is a Conflict between states, Means two or more nations and their military forces are involved in to war. Conflicts can arise somewhere and frequently start with an official proclamation (Yilmaz, 2007). Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000), concentrating on inter-state conflicts, listed the following as the main causes of disputes within states: boundary, seceding, freedom, the war against colonialism, autonomy, ideology, government power, regional supremacy, international power, resources, and other. But throughout time, some of those reasons have become less significant as contributing factors to inter-state violence. Unlike before the Cold War and the period of independence, ideology and decolonization are unable to be cited as causes of conflict between states now. Similarly, they assert that there are now notably fewer

inter-state wars involving obvious boundaries. This displays that the factors that bring countries into conflicts are changings throughout the time.

Cobden (1984) asserts that while there isn't a single answer for inter-state conflict, there are various approaches to examining its roots in terms of conflicts inside and across social groups. It is determined that, among other things, Waltz's level of analysis and framework are suitable for critically analyzing the complex root causes of disputes between states. Waltz situates the reasons for the state-to-state battle by dividing his level of analysis into three categories. These include the state, the individual, and the global or systemic level. The primary focus of the individual level of analysis is on how human behavior contributes to war. According to him, hostility originates from the nature of humans. Conflicts begin in men's minds and emotions, as all action does (Waltz, 2001).

The methodology argues that human feelings and greed are the root causes of conflict. This is the source of additional reasons for disputes. Conflicts are not battles between armies, legal systems, or even cultural norms. According to Wright (1964), there are thousands of people fighting each other, with their unique desires, personalities, and actions influenced by laws, symbols, and the orders of a higher-ranking officer. In this case, genetics and experience have a stronger influence on a person's character, mentality, and conduct than situations. This line of reasoning holds that the motivation behind the war may have something to do with the leaders' socioeconomic background, psychological makeup, and individual personality. Waltz (2001), stated that the state inherits the violent behavior and hostile tendencies of its leaders. Therefore, it may be inferred from the individual level of study that the conduct of states is contingent upon the conduct and moral character of its leaders.

On the other hand, the nation-state level of study places more focus on how the political framework is established, how policies are made, how the public perceives things, how advocacy organizations function, how ethnicity and nationalism are emphasized, and how political ideologies and cultural factors contribute to state-to-state conflict. For example, nationalism is a major source of state-to-state disputes Anastasiou (2009). States that have recently been established especially are vulnerable to nationalist issues that cause them to clash with nearby states. For instance, Eritrea fought with neighboring countries like Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen, and

Ethiopia after gaining sovereignty breaking ethnic links, and developing a strong sense of Eritrean nationality (Berhane, 2006)

The elements outside of the state are the main focus of the international system level. Advocates of the system-level method of analysis argue that conditions outside of a state's legitimacy, like the world's order, the number of powerful nations, universal norms affecting their conduct, trends in global commerce and defense cooperation, along with other causes, are what ultimately lead to war (Waltz, 2001).

Generally, a global dispute is another name for this kind of conflict. It is a dispute among more than one state. This kind of confrontation can occasionally turn into an outbreak of war. As a result, every dispute between states is referred as an international. The transfer of harmful or illicit goods across borders, dissolution of relations with one another, and additional variables can all lead to interstate warfare (Sheriff F; n.d).

2.2.2. Causes of Conflict

There is no single cause of conflict. It may be caused by a combination of circumstances. Identifying and comprehending the conflict origins, dimensions, and dynamics is critical. There are several factors that can cause two parties to engage in to conflict resulting in divergent objectives. Various scholars argue over a complex assortment of issues such as economic and political ideas. However, by grouping these difficulties into three major sociological categories wealth, power, and prestige, we might lessen confusing the diversity (Weber, 1947).

Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000), named nine factors that have traditionally been the most contentious source of international conflict: territorial (boundary), secession, independence, self-determination, culture (ideology), national power, geographic prominence, global power, economy. Conflicts experts in the field of political science generally agree with this categorization. Consequently, numerous academics in the area have considered the causes of conflict as deep-seated to the social, political, cultural, and spiritual realms. The most major sources of conflict, with regard to this study are discussed as follows:

2.2.2.1. Boundary

Boundaries have a significant influence on the demands that nation's experience, the danger that they see, the opportunity they see, and the relationships they've established between their

neighbors. This is why national borders are valued by states mitigating extremely passionate commitment; making disagreements over borders between states are more difficult to resolve in the global relationship (Goldstein, 2001). Perhaps the most frequent source of dispute over land is independence, followed by between states boundaries, sovereign waterways, and aviation. Disputes mostly stem from undemocratic that result in aggressive claims to land (Kiefe, 1998).

Territorial conquest and independence have frequently been the focus of political struggle and a major factor in innumerable disagreements, battles, and disasters. The objectives may involve separatism in addition to expanding the territory and the integration of boundaries of ethnicity within the umbrella of the state. In this instance, "secession" refers to liberating a region and its people from the jurisdiction of an existing state and creating a new or independent state. That will rule over the territory and its people.

However, geographical objectives may be implicitly or openly linked to commodities or to minorities of a certain ethnicity or religion. Burton and Edward (1986) have referred to border disputes as classical conflicts. They contend that disputes over territory are among the most prone to conflict since territory is a primary source of conflict. Nevertheless, Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000) assert that rivalry between nations and territorial disputes are the primary causes of global crises according to their current scientific investigations of these disputes.

2.2.2.2. Economic Factor

Lack of resources is one of the causes of conflict. Examples include water, grazing land, and agricultural land, underground and surface minerals. These also encourage foreign direct investment. In general, we can divide these resources into two, called Scarce Resources and Abandoned Resources. Conflicts in Africa comprise the two main categories of resource-related conflicts. According to Goldstein (2001), conflicts over financial resources and wealth redistribution inside and between nations are the main causes of worldwide wars in Africa. Similarly, according to Odunuga (1999), financial problems are important factors contributing to wars in Africa. Furthermore, he contends that since politics and economics are interconnected, the distribution of financial resources has a major impact on the political balance in each community.

Another common source of disagreements is disagreement over scarce land, water, and other natural resources that competing parties may do great lengths to claim as their own, according to Odunuga (1999). The boundary dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan is no different. This is especially evident in the boundary dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan, where states are at odds over scarce and vital resources; particularly water, as well as valuable strategically significant assets like land and vital commodities.

According to Tvedt (1992), the situation regarding water resources in the Nile River valley is as follows: The disparity between the delivery and consumption of water is going to become increasingly problematic in the surrounding area of the Blue Nile region due to social, economic, and growth considerations. That is almost entirely independent of the intentions of the governing bodies of the nations that participated. Competent and practical state administration is required in all downstream nations to avoid direct combat and an aquatic conflict, as well as to carry out successful negotiations and basin-wide agreements. Therefore, there may be a possibility of entering what is known as a basin-wide dispute cycle if these systems and procedures are absent. The fundamental cause of the Ethio-Sudan border crisis is a dispute over territorial farm and grazing land.

2.2.2.3. Political Ideology

Governmental political systems are seen as being one of the main causes of civil war and international war. Odunuga (1999) asserts that while it is true that the majority of modern African governors backed democratic governance when they ran for office. However, they were unable to establish a platform that would have encouraged the development of a political mentality free from prejudice, distrust, extreme viewpoints, and assault. When democratic governance fails to build, most leaders want to gather support by using the border issue as a rallying point for national sentiment.

Every time a new political structure assumes power, conflicts have been witnessed, whether in Ethiopia or Sudan. Conflicts along the border will emerge if one of the countries has a change in authority, whether it is through a coup or a rebellion. Their interaction along the border zone will depend on the shifts in the governments and the political ideologies they adhere to. Some of the main causes of disagreements can be identified as a lack of democratic transformation. An atmosphere that promotes meaningful engagement in the political, social, and economic spheres

can reduce hostilities in Africa. Any effort to keep the average citizen out of this kind of involvement generates friction between the subjects and those in power (Nhema, 2008).

International organizations are also involved in politically motivated national government power struggles. Even the governments of some neighboring countries participate in the political conflict of another country if there is a national interest they want to protect. In implementation, neighboring countries have a significant stake in and support the governance systems of their adjacent nations. The United Nations and other International organizations cannot directly intervene in domestic political conflicts, so they can use neighboring countries in some way. These neighboring countries take advantage of this political conflict by supporting one conflicting party and protect their own interests. Because of this, there are continuous conflicts between many countries due to the involvement of other governments in the private affairs of a neighboring country. The attempts range from vote rigging or persuasion up to supporting rebel groups (Goldstien, 2001).

For instance, enabling this initiative to be successful, the United States of America invested an important number of resources, including military education, financial backing, and arms for the above-mentioned nation to replace the cold war's indirect conflicts. Because of the ongoing border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the US the federal government's endeavor was short-lived and did not provide the desired outcome. A further common instance of this kind of war is the interfering in the domestic issues of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by many neighboring countries, primarily Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi (Ibid).

2.2.2.4. Cross-Border Security Threats

There are many illegal activities in the border area between Ethiopia and Sudan. Throughout their history, they have supported each other's rebel groups. This put them in different contradictions at different times. They support each other's rebel forces by giving military training, armaments, and rations. One country had a certain kind of interventionist politics on the other (Kine, 2005).

The smuggling of narcotics, illegal weapons, and other legal and illegal goods that can be used for terrorist purposes, as well as the provision of arms, rations, and military training to insurgent groups, creates conflict between two neighboring countries. Domestic and foreign terrorist

fighters (FTF) who are classified and suspected as terrorists should be jointly protected. This requires effective border protection and management relations between two neighboring countries to prevent terrorists from crossing the border in all areas of land, air, and water boundaries. Otherwise, illegal gangs can create a problem that can destroy a country if countries don't cooperate when moving illegal goods (<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/>).

Given that it involves ideological motive, the fundamental concept of terrorism is debatable. A liberation warrior for one individual is a terrorist for another (Goldstien, 2001). In spite of the fact that it seems to be a recent development in the history of humanity, it has emerged to be one of the greatest risks to security and peace around the globe in the years following the end of the period known as the cold war. The act of terrorism within the opinion of the aforementioned authors, is the planned or under attack use of abuse by a person or organization to achieve an ideological or interpersonal goal, aimed at demoralizing the general public in order to express its dissatisfaction as utilize on the governing party or other sides to a disagreement (Kinfе, 2005).

Nevertheless, the application of weapons towards people is what defines terrorism. They can be distinct from different kinds of armed struggle that aimed the armed forces and the government's machinery by their declared goal to frighten or terrify the general public. The strategies those organizations use to get the wealthy and powerful to acknowledge their political as well as social needs invariably depend on unexpectedly intelligent and an acute sensibility for voluntarism. It used a variety of strategies, such as murders, hijackings of aircraft, suicidal bombs, armed assaults, threatening of abduction and hostage-taking and different types of bombardment (Ibid).

Violence associated with politics that intentionally and randomly attacks civilians is referred to as terrorism. Other standards can be used in addition to this fundamental definition, but the meanings then take on ideological connotations what is considered a terrorist by one person may be considered a freedom warrior by others. In addition to guerilla combat, terrorism is an extremely cruel, ambiguous universe of faceless opponents and unpredictable techniques. Historically, the goal of terrorism has been to undermine the confidence of the general public so that their unhappiness can be used as coercion against other participants in combat or state governments. This is similar to the goal of producing problems to get news coverage for an objective. The majority of the time, terrorism is the deliberate use of force as blackmail rather

than an act of mindlessness. The only thing that unites terrorists' diverse goals and tactics is their use of violence as a tool of control over other players (Goldstien, 2001).

2.3. Theoretical Frameworks of the Source of Conflict

The analysis and conception of relevant theories of conflict causes is critical to knowing and understanding the dominant conflict in the studied area. In general, the following are important reasons why policymakers, players, and analysts can benefit from conflict theory. The first important assumption is that theory is not simply an abstraction. It also does not exist in isolation from policy. Theory development is directly related to the evolution of global politics. It frequently represents our desire to not just understand change and difficulties, but also to give better solutions to world order concerns.

The first, theory, displays a discipline's acquired understanding by drawing on similarities between actors, events, and results from around the world. As such, theory can assist us in learning from the experiences of others and overcoming the narrow-mindedness that frequently characterizes policymakers' mental universe. Second, theory supplies us with multiple perspectives for explaining and responding to occurrences. However, this does not imply that theories provide precise answers to all problems and queries. But, they are vital tools that help us organize our thoughts about things and develop our reactions to situations. Theories also aid in anticipating, if not always accurately predicting, the direction of events in world politics (Abera, 2013).

According to Wallenstein (2002), inter-state conflict between sovereign states-usually entails incompatibilities in geopolitik, capitalpolitik, realpolitik, and idealpolitik. The main goal of this sub-chapter is to look at some of the challenging theories of conflict causes that are pertinent to the conflict pattern in the Horn of Africa countries, notably the Ethiopia-Sudan border war. On the basis of this, the conflict theories that are appropriate for the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan will be discussed as follows. We use these theories to examine the scope of the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan and its implications for Ethiopia.

2.3.1. Realism

According to Dunne and Smith (2013), realists place primary emphasis on the state, power dynamics, and the balance of power in international relations. Realist perspectives are guided by

certain principles, among which the state is recognized as the principal actor in the anarchical global society. Realists perceive the state as a unitary entity and attribute rationality and purposeful action to its behavior. The hierarchy of issues facing the state, encompassing considerations of state, nation, or international security, is accorded paramount importance. In realist discourse, military security and strategic concerns are often categorized as high politics, while economic and social issues tend to be considered of lesser significance or low politics.

As Quoting from Paul R. and Mark V. (2012), Realism theory has undergone comprehensive analysis, with significant contributions from influential figures who have shaped its understanding. Among these key figures are: Thucydides (471-400 B.C): Renowned for his historic work, "History of the Peloponnesian War," Thucydides is considered the first realist and a foundational figure in the discipline of International Relations (IR). His perspective held that the past serves as a guide for the future, and he attributed the cause of war to fear associated with a shift in the balance of power.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527): Notable for "The Prince," Machiavelli's work serves as a manual on acquiring, maintaining, and expanding power. His famous dictum, "It is much safer to be feared than to be loved," reflects his realist outlook. Machiavelli observed and wrote about the world as it is, distinguishing him as a realist who didn't forecast an idealized world. His advice to rulers emphasized the importance of interpretation, and he did not advocate for rulers to engage in harmful activities or unnecessary violence.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): Hobbes, known for "Leviathan," presented the first general theory of politics in English. Pessimistic about human nature, he famously stated, "Fear and I were born twins." Hobbes depicted a pre-societal "state of nature" where humans existed in a condition of "everyone against everyone." He described this state as a continual fear of violent death, resulting in a life that is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Hobbes proposed that world peace could be achieved through the establishment of a hegemonic power. These thinkers have significantly influenced realist thought and have left a lasting impact on the understanding of international relations.

Hans J. Morgenthau (1904-1980): he point out six principles of political realism: (1) politics like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature; (2) in

international politics, interest is defined in terms of power; (3) interest defined as power is not endowed with a meaning that is fixed once and for all; (4) universal moral principles must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place; (5) political realism refuse to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe and (6) interest defined as power is an understanding that gives international politics a separate standing and thus emancipates it from other fields of study.

This idea links the rise of states to the constant wars and battles that have characterized human history. As a result, battles and conquests led to the occupancy of an increasing number of countries and regions, which ultimately ended in the creation of states. This theory holds that an entity created through the application of physical force is the main perception of a state. State formation, to put it another way, is the result of powerful society's domination and subjugation of the weak. Because of this, it is believed that a society's physical and armed forces are crucial to the establishment and maintenance of the state (Dunne, & Smith, 2013).

Conflict, according to realists, is an unavoidable feature of world politics. States clash when both sides fear being ousted by the other. This is owing to the egoistic or aggressive nature of humans, as classical and neo-realists identify, and the anarchic nature of the international system, with international affairs viewed as a battle for power by self-interested states (Wallensteen, 2002). A state's overarching interests are survival or self-preservation, which can be achieved through enhancing its power. Due to the manner in which two new governments come to power they will try to form or obtain legitimacy, for that purpose they may ask each other's claims.

Morgenthau, the famous proponent of the realist theory, defined politics as a struggle for power and also defines the fundamental goals of a state “the national interest” in power terms. The most fundamental interest of states, according to this theory is survival: because of the anarchic nature of the global system, territorial integrity and political sovereign are not assured. Moreover, since there is no overriding government to defend the legitimate interests of states and to punish aggression, each state is ultimately responsible for protecting itself and for promoting its own interests in the world community. The international system's anarchic nature requires states to distrust one another and to prepare for conflict by strengthening economic and military power. The desire for power, prestige, and hegemony, as well as the fixation with internal security,

drives the state into conflict (Morgenthau, 1973). In any case, both realism and neo-realism have a leaning towards militaristic thrusts to maintain peace.

According to realists, the existence of a state is safeguarded by protecting national interests and territorial boundaries in an anarchic international system. Therefore, the state is a unitary, homogeneous and rational actor in the view of realists. The state should have a force-based foreign policy grounded on the principle of protecting national interest. Ethiopia has multifaceted border conflict implications with Sudan. It is also in a dilemma in the disputed area of Al-Fashga. This study examines these concerns from the perspective of governmental power and national interest. Since any nation's existence depends on its ability to maintain its sovereign boundaries. Realist theory offers a framework for understanding the effects of disputed borders and how to resolve disputes without endangering the independence of both nations, which might cause to war.

2.3.2. Idealism

Liberals, on the other hand, say that war and conflict are avoidable since humans have the ability to deal with them (Jackson and Sorensen, 2010). The main thinking's of liberalism is that the world can come together in to or under one institution and also, state is not the only actor in the international arena. There also international or transnational institutions and non-governmental organizations are there (McGlinchey, Walters & Scheinpflug, 2017).

Liberalists focus on democracy and peace theory, institution, interdependency, regime theory, neoliberal institutionalism this whole are the way of global governance. According to liberalism state as well as non-state actors even individuals are important in world politics. Economic and other forms of interdependency between states and non-state actors have its own importance. For liberalists the international politics is mattered by economic, social and environmental issues. The contribution of international organization for international relation is the primary concepts of liberalism (Paul R. and Mark V, 2012).

Stoicism argues we all are part the huge universe and human kind we can live together. Human being's capability of thinking separate human kind from other creations of the world. The classical liberalists, focused on individual's role in the state especially in economic affair (Adam Smith and David Ricardo). According to Immanuel Kant peace lover individuals are numerous

with in different states of the world, through this the creations of harmony world among states are possible. He creates a concept of universal citizen and federation among state for sustainable peace. Ricardo Cobden thought focusing on free trade and peace has three ambitions. The first is the conflict of state is derived from the interest of achieving their mercantilist goal. Second, the interference of free trade due to war. Third, in the market of the world the social interaction of international community is increased. The interdependency institutionalism (neoliberal institutionalism) launched by Robert Keohane. An institution has three forms. First, formal intergovernmental or cross national, nongovernmental organizations, Second international regime, Third conventions (as quoted from Paul R. and Mark V, 2012).

To moderate the numerous conflicting inclinations, liberal thinkers advocate a variety of policies, including the promotion of economic interdependence and democracy as essentials, among others. Unlike realism, liberalism believes that mutually beneficial collaboration can occur not only within states but also beyond international borders. Interstate cooperation is viewed as a means of increasing communication, eliminating misunderstanding, and building cultural and institutional systems capable of settling emerging conflicts of interest. Cooperation, however, will cease where enforcement processes are insufficient, as liberal institutionalists argue. Liberal theorists also argue that economic cooperation and interdependence can lead to peace ((McGlinchey, Walters & Scheinpflug, 2017)).

The chance of violent conflict and the use of force between governments can be reduced once they develop a common interest in trade and other economic activity. The rationale is that war would endanger each other's prosperity, and leaders eventually realize that the benefits of economic interdependence outweigh the costs of territorial acquisition. Furthermore, economic interdependence allows them to offset defense expenses. The liberals' assumption of interconnectedness is criticized by realists (Jackson and Sorensen, 2010).

Some realists believe that interconnectedness increases the risk of war by increasing the number of opportunities for conflict or by creating inequities and competing interests, whilst others believe that interdependence has no bearing on war (Ibid, 2010).The other most serious issue raised by liberalism (liberal republicanism) is that of democracy. In this context, Woodrow Wilson, the president of the United States, suggested the "spread of democracy as a key strategy

to maintain world peace". Democracy is regarded as the ideal form of government since it allows citizens to have a say and participate in the day-to-day operations of the state (Weber, 2001).

As a result, democratic states are thought to be more peaceful than authoritarian states. Liberals also believe that democracies are naturally peaceful, as they do not easily go to war and rarely fight one another. The assumption here is that there is a culture of peaceful conflict resolution through communication and negotiation in a democracy. Citizens who oppose war limit the operations of democratic governments (Jackson and Sorensen, 2010). As a result, enlisting civil societies and the public in the peace process can be critical in dealing with conflict. Conflicting parties' emotions and egos can sometimes pull them away, causing them to look to the past rather than the future and to emphasize the destructive rather than the constructive (Galtung, 2004). Under these conditions, creative mediators who can enable and empower the parties to come up with new ideas and thoughts are essential. As a result, as liberals maintained, institutions, both regional and international, are critical in conflict settlement.

2.3.3. Constructivism

As Paul R. and Mark V (2012) mentioned, this theory is ranking the parallel with the main stream top images of international relation realism and liberalism. Constructivist theory has not predictive assumption about the world/the universe. It just gives the current understanding capacity to interpret the issue and phenomena that occurs or face's the world now. This assumption of constructive theory has never seen in the other images of international relation field of studies.

According to constructivist theory our perception is matter everything. Our knowledge is the subject of our understanding. How we see the world is mattered by our interpretation about it. Our understanding about state actors and non-state actors is very important to perceive what realist and liberalist says about the rationality or unitary thoughts of state and non-state actors. World system is always the process of construction. Philosophically and sociologically the theories are rich (McGlinchey, Walters & Scheinflug, 2017).

The primary thought of constructivism is about the relationship of state and how individual interpretations or subjective understandings are shaped the government of the state. It is how individual perceptions are shaped and how the state agrees to institutionalize their ideas, values,

attitudes, norms and beliefs. The sovereignty concepts of the state by constructivism is an agreement or common consensus to make a rule or standard that guide the interaction of sovereign state with one another. Sovereignty is must be a socially constructed institution that all states must have shared equality (Schieder & Spindler, 2014).

Constructivists emphasize social procedures, which are slow to adapt. Ideas like tradition, customs, interest, and identities have strong centrifugal aspects, as Wendt (1999) frequently points out in the Social Theory of International Political Behavior. Constructivists contend that although socially created factors may shift, doing so will be challenging and take time. Constructivism de-naturalizes what is known as the status quo," according to Guzzini (2006), which means that "the notion of power is not merely put into a political framework, however, a further interpretation additionally situated in a broader historically one.

It's a prevalent and informal misconception that constructivist theories don't place a high priority on power (Adler, 2013). This is a misunderstanding because power struggles saturate every social construction's structure and substance. The statement "a stronger state implementing proactive policy is going to have a greater effect on the identity of weak nations instead of inversely" is made expressly by Wendt (1999). According to Hurd (2008), "it is generally accepted that thoughts of power are prevalent in the course of adopting social norms, both in deciding which values exist in the society as well as what values specific actors might grab on to." This aligns with later constructivist research that highlights the power dynamics behind the creation of identities and the spread of norms.

According to Goddard and Nexon (2016), power-political models of international politics do not constitute 'alternatives' to standards, regulations, and other favored subjects of liberals and constructivists. In a contest for effects, they serve as subjects, objects, mediums, and means. Ultimately, they state that actors in international relations apply conventions and values to impact others' conduct, frequently in ways that support power-political goals. Constructivists define the means of power in a broader sense because they believe that important processes of causality might have extensive time horizons. Power comes not only from physical assets but also from resources rooted in identity and beliefs.

Constructivists contend that the paradigm's presumptions on the strength of pathways and the pathway dependency of power in international relations are exposed by the emphasis on the norm. Constructivist research has focused extensively on the formation and spread of norms as well as how those norms create and reshape actor identity. Norm transitions are to the ideational theorist whereas alterations in the equilibrium of power represent to the realist, as stated by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). Their standard explanation of the spread of norms is based on the reasoning of growing benefits.

According to their hypothesis, a "flow influence" happens when a sufficient number of actors adopt a new norm, creating a turning point for quick adoption. Towards the end of the process, players identify themselves as responsible actors and swear allegiance towards them, even if they do not fully believe it. According to them, norm dispersion is an illustration of "designed social construction," in which players use norms to logically reshape identities and choices. Once a standard is successfully globalized, counterbalancing norms are not created; in fact, the very notion of the "reasoning of suitability" is that actor's conduct in a way that avoids drawing attention to them. March and Olsen (2006) point out that regulations are followed due to the fact that they have been viewed as inherent, rightful, anticipated, and legitimate, which is the result of a strong reasoning of appropriateness.

Constructivists assess which actors have the potential to be effective norm-makers in an increasingly catholic manner than realists. Participants with little physical strength may have the advantage through the symbolic field over others who have more physical capacity, as Hurd (2008) puts it. However, the majority of constructivists agree that power can play a significant role in legitimizing norms. The norms upheld by nations widely regarded as effective and acceptable examples tend to gain dominance and spread Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). Similar to Nye's approach to soft power, effective actors are probably going to be more effective in spreading their principles and values all over the globe. Constructivists share the belief of those who support neoliberal institutionalization that obtaining social authority has benefits.

Analyzing the Ethio-Sudan border conflict through a constructivist lens offers a nuanced understanding that goes beyond the traditional realist or liberal perspectives. Constructivism, as outlined by scholars such as Paul R. and Mark V., prioritizes the role of perceptions, ideas, and norms in shaping international relations. Instead of making predictive assumptions,

constructivism focuses on interpreting current events based on the understanding capacity of individuals and societies.

In the context of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, constructivism underscores the significance of how individual and collective interpretations shape the behavior of state actors. It emphasizes that our understanding of state sovereignty, actors' perceptions, and the construction of norms and identities are crucial in comprehending the dynamics of the conflict. One key aspect highlighted by constructivism is the social construction of sovereignty. Instead of viewing sovereignty as an inherent or natural attribute of states, constructivists argue that it is socially constructed through agreements and shared understandings among states. In the case of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, differing interpretations of sovereignty and territorial claims by both countries could contribute to tensions and conflicts.

Furthermore, constructivists emphasize the role of power dynamics in shaping the adoption and spread of norms. While power struggles are inherent in social constructions, they extend beyond physical assets to include resources rooted in identity and beliefs. This broader understanding of power highlights how actors in the conflict utilize norms and values to influence each other's behavior and advance their interests. Norm diffusion also plays a crucial role in constructivist analysis. As norms spread and become entrenched, they shape actors' identities and choices. In the context of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, understanding the spread of norms related to territorial integrity, sovereignty, and dispute resolution mechanisms can provide insights into the underlying dynamics of the conflict and potential avenues for resolution.

Overall, a constructivist approach to analyzing the Ethio-Sudan border conflict offers a rich understanding of how perceptions, norms, and power dynamics shape the behavior of states and non-state actors involved. By deconstructing prevailing assumptions and examining the social construction of sovereignty, norms, and identities, constructivism provides valuable insights into the complexities of contemporary international conflicts.

2.3.4. Human Nature and Violence Theory

The inborn desire of humans is frequently cited as an argument that clarifies the connection with natural capability and motivation for violent action. Since, violence is fundamentally rooted in the nature of humanity itself. Some go so far as to claim that the origins of violent conduct can

be traced back to our ancestors. Researchers in biology and psychology support this hypothesis utilize “animal behavior” or “ethological research” to highlight potential parallels between human and animal conduct. Nevertheless, this hypothesis was eventually rejected by a number of researchers and thinkers, and a meeting held in Seville, Spain in 1986 served as the catalyst for the emergence of numerous other ideas (Jeong, 2000).

The nature of humans is complex. Do we identify as Hobbesian or Rousseauan, evil or noble, angelic or ape-like? According to this line of reasoning, if we habitually use violence, we must belong to a violent creature; if we are peaceful, we have to be humanists. The human mind is an extremely complicated organ with numerous nerve systems that may be distinguished both physically and biologically. The majority of psychologists hold that several intelligences, sections, abilities, tissues, desires, or other sub-systems make up human nature rather than simply one. While some of the aforementioned components may encourage violence, others may work to prevent it (Pinker, S. 2013).

A minimum of 4 various kinds of reasons, each requiring distinct neurological systems, give rise to human violence: (1) Exploitation, it is the source of violence in human nature. Human beings are committed a violence to harm or attack someone who stands in front of their desire or interests. Robbery, rape, invasion, the eradication or relocation of indigenous people, and the assassination or detention of competitors in politics or the economy are a few examples. (2) Dominance, Individuals' desire to rise to the top of the social hierarchy and establish themselves as the dominant, and groups' comparable desire for superiority in terms of tribe, ethnicity, race, nation, or religion. (3) Revenge, the belief that punishment is appropriate for any individual who has violated moral principles. (4) Ideology, common traditions claiming a utopia and are disseminated via social media, coercion, or brainwashing. Violent beliefs, xenophobia fascism, nazism, and communism are a few themes. As in the proverb "You can't make an omelet from scratch without smashing a few eggs," one is allowed to use a limitless amount of power upon those who want to stop in the way of a utopia because it is a world that will be everlastingly wonderful forever (Ibid. 2013).

Professionals in psychology, neuroscience researchers, genetic counselors, researchers in anthropology and political theorists announced that there had been no biological justification for conflict. Instead, they claimed that cultural inheritance and adaptation are a consequence of a

phenomenon involving human management, preparation, and knowledge analyzing that serves with our feelings and inspiring possibilities. In summary, the Seville statement suggests that we have genuine alternatives as well as that it is achievable for human groups to behave responsibly in innovative ways. When it was stated made during the aforementioned conference claims that the source of contemporary human dispute lies in nurture (that is, the environment rather than nature), and the discussion about the connection between nature and dispute is not completely settled (Jeong, 2000).

2.3.5. The Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel in an attempt to address the issue of why individuals prefer members of their community to someone else. As per Tajfel, groups occupy distinct positions in a structure of rank and power. Individual perceptions of one another are altered when they begin to differentiate from "us and them." Tajfel thought that the human need for a stable, good self-concept a healthy social identity was the primary motivating factor driving this behavior. Therefore, it might be inferred that people primarily view their group as positive. However, groupings only take on psychological significance when they have been established relation with various other groups. As a result, individuals within a group work to develop a healthy social identity by making constructive distinctions across their group and other communities (Tajfel, H. 1959).

Additionally, Tajfel (1959) speaks about the issue of what is happening to those in social circles who are viewed as less important than others. A group like this could decide to do one or more of the following: decrease characteristics that show badly on the group; compare one's group with other communities that are ranked further down on their position of structure; depart the group, either mentally or physically; concentrate exclusively on characteristics which contribute to one's group look great; or attempt to alter the present position hierarchy by participating in social transformation. Which of these possibilities is selected, though, will rely on some factors. Thus, social identity theory was essentially a social change concept (Tajfel, 1959).

The fundamental and measurable characteristics of societies that separate one group from another group are shared histories, customs, languages, beliefs, and values. These characteristics of the societies are also upheld by a unified culture passed down through the generations. Additionally, clarified by origins and components such as legends, thoughts, values, and signs

are employed to link ethnic groups (Jeong, 2000). In line with this idea, injury is critical to identity that frequently originates from unsolved past losses and pain leading to conflict (Fisher, 2000).

Each particular group's external contacts and personal views of collective consciousness establish the lines of separation among within and out of the groups. But, a change in the society like progress, which frequently results in competitiveness with other groups, weakens this broader consciousness of their shared past and future. Due to this, identity is increasingly being used as a catalyst for violence throughout the globe. Ethnicity was frequently utilized by candidates seeking for authority as a tool to enlist the backing of the public (Jeong 2000). Furthermore, he adds ideas to strengthen this claim by requesting the sense of belongingness, it is exploited to uphold the dominance of a single community and legitimize prejudice towards various communities.

This study used constructivism as a lens to analyze the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for Ethiopia since 2018. As was previously mentioned, constructivism perceives the state as operating within an international system where ideas, identities, and social norms shape state behavior and interactions. Thus, by using constructivist theory, the researcher examines the implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia.

2.4. Empirical Review

Mulatu (2015) mentioned three reasons why it is particularly challenging to prepare a list of all the border regions disputed by Ethiopia and Sudan. First of all, indigenous farmers freely walk back and forth over the border to grow land and pasture their animals because they have an alternative perception of where the line of demarcation is. Second, the location continues to be largely unpopulated due to issues with malaria and mobility due to the absence of roads; some communities have only begun to grow in the region in recent decades. Thirdly, the governments of Ethiopia and Sudan, respectively, pay very little attention to the problems in the area unless there is a political crisis like the Eritrean and Anya Nia rebel movements.

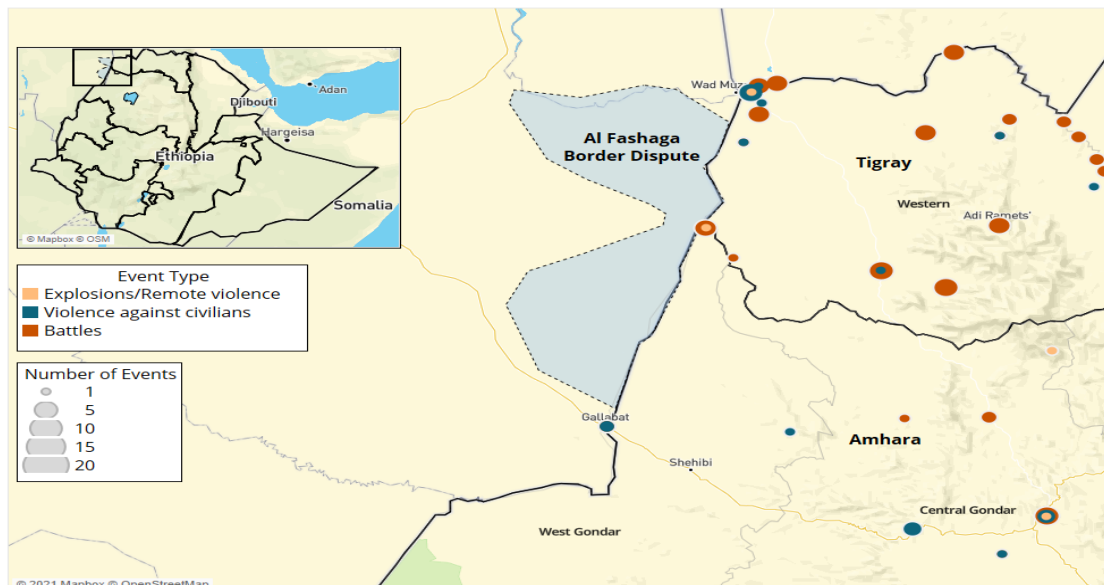
Notwithstanding, the aforementioned issues and the permeability of the border, it is feasible to find some places asserted by Ethiopian farmers based on cultural assumptions and regional

ownership of farms for a long time. These regions roughly correspond to the disputed areas that Al-Nur (1971) found to exist based on claims put forth by the two governments.

According to Mulatu (2015), the boundary regions that Ethiopians have asserted are thought to be between twenty and fifty km broad, though the exact widths may differ according to the area. The majority of the disputed territory is fertile farmland created by the floodplain dumps of the place's main water streams. Thus, the attempting to remove Ethiopian farmers from this area will not only deprive them of rich agricultural land, but also deprive them of water from the main rivers in the region. It can be seen that the areas listed below are conflict zones with occasional clashes between Ethiopian and Sudanese farmers.

The first area is the majority of the Al-Fashaqa Triangle is located in Setit-Humera. It covers a portion of the main farming areas of Mechach and Lugdi and stretches for roughly between forty and fifty kilometers west of the border. The second area is Delelelo-Shimelegara: a region that stretches between Abderafi south to Metema along the eastern bank of the Gwang River. It encompasses the fertile farming region bordered by the Angereb and Gwang, two significant rivers. This region includes the vast areas of land that the Gwang, Angereb, and their sources'

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floodplains have left behind.

The third area is Taya-Fazrah is the name given to the area that stretches southward from the cities of Gallabat and Metema to the Shinfa (Rahad) River. Included in the territory is the

territory that Gwynn included in the 1903 delineation to encompass the Kunjara tribe in the Republic of the Sudan. Taya and Fazrah were border checkpoints, and the area around them was held by the Ethiopians of Mahibre Silasse Monastery and used as a nature preserve for wild animals and pasture for livestock. The fourth area is Nefsgebeya: Stretches southward through Metekel across the Shinka River. A large portion of the fertile land for farming in Nefsgebeya is covered in bamboo forests, gum trees, and acacia. Since there aren't numerous structures that could affect the ecological, there are plenty of wild creatures in the surrounding region (Ibid, 2015).

The primary focus of my research is the Al-Fashaqa Triangle. This area, situated predominantly in Setit-Humera, encompasses key farming regions such as Mechach and Lugdi, spanning approximately forty to fifty kilometers west of the border.

Literatures show that The British political commissioner delineated the border between Ethiopia and Sudan on the behalf of Sudan. This demarcation continues to be a source of contention between Sudan and Ethiopia (Baharu; 2002). There has been little research on the border conflict between Sudan and Ethiopia. As I discuss below, in recent years, some studies have tried to understand the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan. Almost the majorities are emphasized on some particular aspect of the border conflict. There is no study that has tried to explore the multifaceted implications of the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan for Ethiopia.

Alemayehu (2019) tried to study the boundary tensions and frontier claims between Ethiopia and the Sudan from 1950-1974. According to him, before the end of the 1950s, border disputes and the need for new borders were major issues in both Ethiopia and the Sudan. There was little farming activity and the borderline areas on the two sides of the boundary were deserted. In the regions of Sitt-Humera and Matema, an agricultural renaissance got underway in the late 1950s in the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie. With the help of tractors and contemporary automated machineries the farming sector can produce profitable crops in the area. Since then, the problems of controlling the frontier farming areas have been increasing. As a result of this agricultural revolution, the landowners of Wolkait and Armachio were able to cultivate the vast and undeveloped borderland between the Angereb and Setit rivers. In addition, they cultivated areas

called Mechach, Lugdi, Redada, Galanzeraf, Doblob, Amberkit, Miolmeda, Kormur and Alkadran.

The border people of Ethiopia did not like Sudan's expansion into Setit-Humera and Metema and confiscation of property, destruction of crops, burning of houses, loss of human life, etc. These and similar threats, as well as the deployment of the Sudanese police forces in the border area, are causing serious complaints. In the early 1960s, the Ethiopian government established a special security group in Setit-Humera, Metema and Qara districts. In addition, in the early 1960s, the Ethiopian government began arming the local community with weapons to defend itself against the Sudan invasion force. Nonetheless, the local security soldiers of Ethiopia lacked enough weapons and were unable to offer the bordering inhabitants any security guarantee. The Sudanese border protection police slaughtered farmers by lighting fire to their homes on the Setit-Humera borderline in April 1967. They also took away multiple machines, cotton, sesame and arrested over 365 Ethiopians (Ngaza, 1974).

Temesgen and Getachew (2020) emphasize, the administration provided the peacekeeping troops from Korea and the Congo with large-scale agricultural land in Setit-Humera and Metema. Farmers in the area ultimately migrated to unoccupied border areas starting in the latter part of the 1960s due to a lack of agricultural land, frequent droughts, and starvation. As a result, there were conflicts between the Sudanese and Ethiopian peasants living on opposite sides of the frontier over land use. Both the Ethiopian and Sudanese conceptions and understandings regarding the possession of specific farmlands are in conflict with one another. Ethiopia has been managing the Guang as a natural boundary between the two nations since ancient times, as both the rulers and the populace were aware of it.

Instead, the Sudanese ruler highlighted the Gwynn accord and asserted ownership over both of the aforementioned regions that are beyond its borders. The Sudanese landowners retaliated against the Ethiopian peasants' westward expansion of their agricultural land by burning the crops, enslaving workers, and seizing cattle and harvests. The Sudanese government paid particular attention to the eastern bank of the River Guang Valley because it had a lot of fertile land that was perfect for farming. Ethiopians known as Setit are involved in agricultural claims and conflicts in Setit-Humera that stem from the government's control over Umberga and the Al-Fashaqa region (Ibid, 2020).

Emperor Haile Sellasie was deeply worried with the discovery of the Sudanese action in Setit-Humera. Soon after, the Emperor sent 500 police officers, under the command of Brigadier General Yimam Goshu, from Addis Ababa to Setit-Humera. With these words, the Emperor gave Yimam Goshu instructions to exert every effort: If anyone crosses our border, if possible, refuse peacefully or forcefully. These police forces were stationed in Abderafi, Radam, and GelanZeraf in May 1967. If landowners and Sudanese border patrol officers posed a threat to Ethiopian borderland societies and their farming activities, the contemporary police force was instructed to perform better (Yihun, 2016).

Ethiopia had to unquestionably react in kind to all of the aforementioned events. As a result, on August 6, the year 1972, the Ethiopian government sent parts of the Second Military Regiment from Eritrea to Setit-Humera to protect the region and maintain the present situation against a strike by Sudan. With Setit-Humera serving as its primary base, certain army units were stationed in GellanZeraf, Radam, and Abderafi. This was intended to monitor daily progress in Sudan's frontier and control the unrestricted operations by the Sudanese. Furthermore, protection from danger for Ethiopian peasants farming in the disputed Setit district was also intended (Alemayehu, 2019).

Residents of the Ethiopian borderland in Metema Yohannes town accept the Amira River and the bridge as the border. The reason for this is that the towns of Metema Yohannes and Galabat share economic interests. Residents in each community gain from one another. As a result, they regard the two towns as jointly owned. Mountains and trees have been used to designate the border in the southern section of Metema Yohannes town. However, looking at clear and consistent border markings is difficult. The Ethiopian-Sudanese borderland is roughly where the clay plains meet the slopes of the Ethiopian escarpment (Johnson, 2010).

Temesgen and Getachew (2020) asking informant in the area and noted that when we see a mountain, we claim it as Ethiopian land, and when the Sudanese see a flat land, they claim it as their own. As a result, in some borderland areas with a combination of both geographical features, such as Merbya, Delelo, Forgena, Mendoka, and Dilber agricultural areas, there is misunderstanding about land ownership. Both Sudanese and Ethiopians claim these farmlands.

According to Wondwosen (2009), The Anglo-Ethiopian boundary treaties from 1902 and 1907, which were drawn up in 1903 and 1909, correspondingly, were largely responsible for the current border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan. His essay examines the conflict's context in history and provides information on the present Ethio-Sudan border dispute. Furthermore, he asserted that the border between Sudan (then under British control) and independent Ethiopia was never delineated nor marked until Charles Gwynn arrived in to the area. Despite efforts, the Ethiopia-Sudan border was not established until 1902. During Emperor Menelik's reign, the British re-conquered Sudan by defeating the Sudanese Dervishes (Mahdists) in 1897, and covertly defined the Ethiopia-Sudan border to acquire strategic dominance over the Ethiopia-Sudan borderland region.

Given the existing circumstances between Ethiopia and Sudan, Ethiopia is strongly opposed to Sudan's occupation of its land, which began in early 2020 in November. Based upon data collected from seventeen subjected farmers who cultivated around Humera and Maikadra, the Sudanese military crossed and attacked the Ethiopian border regions starting in November 2020. They killed numerous individuals, taken away tractors as well as additional vehicles, and demolished wealth predicted to be worth ETB 226, 940,736.00. The aforementioned farmers, who were given interviews to the weekly published SIRARA newspaper on January 13, 2013 EC, and who had traveled to Addis Ababa to present the petition to the prime minister's office, claimed that comparable devastation of property and seizing had happened in the Lugdi, Mechach, Delelo, and Abutir areas, and that the issue to persist today (SIRARA, 2013 EC).

Apart from the statement made by Ato Desalegn Tassew, the head of administration of the West Gondar Zone, during a press conference on the 18th of December 2013 E.C, Sudanese military forces began infiltrating 180–200 farming shelters in the western Gondar zone regions (Metema, Quara, and West Armachiho) on the 27th of October 2013. They killed and relocated over 1700 inhabitants of SelamBer village, taking and setting fire to properties using mechanized forces armed with guns and mortar. Over ETB one billion was estimated to have been lost in total loss of property and looting (West Gondar Communication Office, 2020).

Accusing the Sudanese National Armed Forces of violating the fundamental tenets of International law and peaceful settlement of disagreements by unexpectedly occupying Ethiopia and destroy properties, burning camps, attacking and displacing countless Ethiopians and

controlling abandoned Ethiopian Armed Facilities, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a press release on February 19, 2021. The government of Sudan to put an end to its offensive, refrain from aggravation, and adhere to a mutually beneficial resolution of the borderline dispute is the request that the Ethiopian government has asked (MOFA, 2021).

According to BBC (2021), Ethiopia and Sudan began boundary demarcation negotiations in 2008. Prior to this, however, no attempts were made to consult local borderland residents. Technical experts and representatives from both countries' governments participated in the demarcation procedure. Nonetheless, the demarcation procedure failed mostly owing to the failure to consider local stakeholder and public opposition to the demarcation process. In line with this, the African Union Border Program (AUBP, 2014) states that undertaking a program to sensitize the local population is one of the important phases of border demarcation; however, colonial borders were drawn without such programs, and it is now a source of conflict between borderland dwellers because they advance contradictory claims over borderland resources.

The border between Ethiopia and Sudan lies specifically between the Setit and Angareb rivers, known as the Mazega or Al-Fashaqa triangle on the Sudanese side. Attention and negotiations regarding this border area are ongoing, with discussions between Addis Ababa and Khartoum aimed at delineating the issue. However, complications arise from the ambiguous behavior and overlapping interests among various levels of government involved in border governance management. To sum up, there are gaps in the body of knowledge about different Ethio-Sudan border conflict research topics. Another significant issue is the lack of comprehensive studies on the implications of Ethio-Sudan border conflict in Ethiopia.

Chapter Three

3. Ethiopia's Regional Foreign Policy and Historical Background of Ethio-Sudan Border Relations

3.1. An Overview of Ethiopia's Regional Foreign Policy

The nations around the Horn of Africa rely heavily on one another (Le Gourielles, 2018). Their shared boundaries, cultures, and socioeconomic spheres can all be examples of this. Ethiopia is the country located in the Horn of Africa with the greatest number of international boundaries, next to Kenya and South Sudan (Henneberg & Stapel, 2020). This suggests that what happens in Ethiopia has a significant impact on the Horn of Africa and inversely in this region. Ethiopia's enormous size and population have contributed to its status as the primary player and active contributor in maintaining regional peace and security.

Powerful army, extensive boundary share, and geopolitical power are the reasons for its potential influence towards the region. According to Le Gouriellec (2018), the nation of Ethiopia was additionally able to have an impact on sub-regional as well as regional organizations like the AU and IGAD, each, in terms of its political, economic, and security objectives. As a result, the Horn of Africa is directly impacted by what is happening in Ethiopia.

According to Ethiopia's Foreign Policy and National Security Strategy (2002); Ethiopia has a long history of friendliness as well as conflict with the Horn of Africa nations. Therefore, it is possible to let sentiments influence our evaluation of their significance. It's possible that in our efforts for progress and democratization, we have a partiality to overstate or underestimate the impact of our neighbors. When assessing the circumstance, it's critical to remain emotionally neutral. Upon closer inspection, Ethiopia's Horn of Africa regional policy strategy document was partially created for quick political review rather than a long-term strategy.

In reality, very little focus or policy emphasis is placed on the massive strategic importance of the Horn of Africa. According to the notes, the Horn of Africa is valuable for port services, and our neighbors cannot be perceived as sources of investment and economic development. This limited understanding of the Horn of Africa prevents both a comprehensive understanding and the strategic vision that any foreign policy and national security strategy should take into account

as a foundation. It replaced restraint and strategic outlook with the current political climate, when characterizing the relevance of neighboring nations as "little and limited" (Ibid, 2002).

According to Ethiopia's foreign policy, surrounding nations' potential for short-term economic development is restricted (Le Gourielles, 2018). It says that this is due to a lack of funding and capital; at the moment, development is not greatly impacted by the small degree of product and market similarity. But they might have a good long-term effect on our economy. Nonetheless, it indicates that nearby nations have the potential to influence Ethiopia's economic growth both in the short and long term via their ports (FANSPS, 2002).

Under Haile Selassie's rule, Ethiopia lacked a formal written foreign policy. Despite this, foreign affairs were managed directly by the king, who conducted diplomatic engagements worldwide at his discretion. This hands-on approach yielded positive outcomes, including Ethiopia's hosting of the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, showcasing successful diplomatic efforts and fostering cooperative relationships with African nations and leaders (Mersha, 2024).

In contrast, during the Derg regime led by Mengistu Hailemariam, foreign affairs were primarily focused on external threats, mirroring the approach of Haile Selassie's era. The Derg regime heavily invested in military buildup while neglecting internal challenges. This external-centric focus led to conflicts with neighboring countries like Somalia and Sudan. Eventually, the Derg government, fixated on external enemies, was toppled by internal opposition groups and Eritrean rebels (Henneberg & Stapel, 2020).

So, during the reigns of Haile Selassie and Mengistu Hailemariam, Ethiopia perceived foreign powers as the primary threat to its security and national interests. However, the approach shifted with the ascent of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991. EPRDF administration adopted an "inside-out" strategy, emphasizing internal rather than external threats to Ethiopia's security and national interests (Mersha, 2024). The EPRDF diverged from past foreign policy paradigms by prioritizing internal concerns over external ones. Their focus encompassed issues such as drought, economic growth, and governance.

The Horn of Africa's regional security situation as assessed by FANSPS (2002) is probably going to have an adverse effect on Ethiopia. This means that domestic concerns are given more priority than foreign concerns and foreign policy influences. Ethiopia has been significantly

impacted by the security scenario in the Horn since 2002. Several noteworthy examples include Ethiopia's armed "intervention" in 2005 in Somalia and Ethiopia's subsequent deployment of peacekeepers to that nation. In addition, a key instance is the ongoing threat that terrorist activity poses to Ethiopia's security.

The other essential one is South Sudan's 2011 sovereignty, which has had a major effect on Ethiopia's foreign policy and national security, as has the ongoing civil war that the nation began two years later. Nevertheless, the present operational policy has run its course due to its inability to adapt to the dynamically shifting geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa (Henneberg & Stapel, 2020).

According to the famous Horn of Africa analyst Alex de Waal (2019), the 2002 Ethiopian Foreign Affairs and National Security White Paper were written by EPRDF immediately after the war with Eritrea. This was also a doctrinal statement addressing the contemporary problem of Ethiopia. In part, it was a protest against internal critics who said that Ethiopia should have continued the war with Eritrea until Ethiopia won, regardless of the outcome. Conversely, Ethiopia's foreign policy of 2002 confirmed the importance of the Middle East region in Ethiopia's foreign relations and national security policy. It is important to recognize the special focus of the Middle East to directly and indirectly influence our economic development in significant ways.

Broadly speaking, the policy paper states that, the Middle East strategy that we adopt must be grounded on understanding and backed by pertinent studies and analyses. We should never follow our emotions or inclinations. The goal of our policy should be to lessen the detrimental impacts of the issues that limit the growth of our partnership. Our policy needs to be very specific and take into consideration the unique circumstances of every Middle Eastern nation (Ibid, 2019).

It is unquestionably the truth that Ethiopia's interactions with the Middle Eastern states need to go beyond today's political climate, as well as cultural and emotionally motivated policies. About this identically strategically vital region of the globe, Ethiopia must embrace prospective growth and strategic analysis in our foreign policy. The identity of our neighbors in our region is not up to us. Only by prioritizing long-term strategic considerations over temporary foreign

policy calculations will we be able to learn from our previous errors and historical advantages in the region. It's also crucial to emphasize that Ethiopia's existing foreign policy lacked the strong concept of institutionalism and foreign policy dynamism that is essential for responding to an unexpected and quickly changing world. In today's rapidly changing global landscape, Ethiopia's foreign policy needs to evolve from rigid ideological stances, such as Marxism, to embrace a more flexible development-oriented approach. This entails reducing excessive spending on security and fostering economic partnerships with multiple countries (Mersha, 2024).

Henceforth, if Ethiopia's foreign policy endeavors to formulate a strategy cognizant of the multifaceted benefits neighboring countries offer beyond mere access to ports, it will substantially contribute to fostering stability within the region. Conversely, a policy that lacks comprehension of the regional dynamics may fuel a scenario where nations engage in reciprocal suspicion, resorting to alliances with external powers to safeguard their own interests, thereby jeopardizing future solidarity and impeding mutual prosperity. To counteract this, the Ethiopian government ought to fortify and refine its approach by prioritizing initiatives such as the construction of regional railways, the provision of electricity to neighboring nations, and the enhancement of transport infrastructure interlinking adjacent countries.

As elucidated earlier, Ethiopia's foreign policy has traditionally been predicated on the analysis of security threats and national interests originating both internally and externally. Regrettably, this paradigm, adhered to by successive administrations including the Haile Selassie government, the Derg regime, and the EPRDF, has proven inadequate. Hence, it is imperative to pivot towards a foreign policy framework that accentuates cooperation, acknowledges the mutual interests shared by neighboring countries, and remains attuned to the dynamic global landscape. Such a recalibration is indispensable for fostering regional stability and advancing collective prosperity. One notable example is the fact that the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (FANSPS) paper, which is now in use, has not been updated despite substantial changes on a national and international level since it was first formulated and documented in 2002 (Yohannes, 2017). Nevertheless, as of December 2023, the foreign policy paper hadn't been updated. Still, rumors are circulating that the recently appointed Abiy government is formulating a new foreign strategy. I will be focusing on Ethiopia's relation with Sudan, in an effort to examine Ethiopia's relationship with its neighbor.

3.2. Ethio-Sudan Border Relations in the Pre-colonial Period

3.2.1. Ethio-Sudan Relations before and after the Rise of Atse Tewodros II (1855-1868)

A pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of Ethiopia and Sudan relation is very important to understand the overall Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its multifaceted implications for Ethiopia. Ethiopia and Sudan have a long time economic, political and social relationships starting from ancient Axumite dynasty of Ethiopia. However, the border issue between the two countries began from the 19th century, after the establishment of modern Ethiopia (Wondwosen: 2009).

According to Tekle Tsadik (1981), during the period of Zemene-Mesafint, Sudan was under Turko-Egyptian control. They advanced and reached the Sudanese province Sinar (which is the then names of the place), that was located near the border of Ethiopia. After capturing Sinar, they crossed the city of Meteman and started making unexpected raids on Denbiya and Qara provinces. In this occasional attack, they captured many people and looted cattle and property. The local governor, Dejach Knefu, heard that the Turko-Egyptian forces were invading his territory. And the people were horrified. Dejach Goshu also calmed the people down. Then, Dejach Kinfu also faced a war with the Turco-Egyptian army on the Etio-Sudan border area.

According to Krishnamurthy (1973), Before Tewodros II took central power; Ethiopian kings had lost their central authority under the Zemene-Mesafint system. The governors of Gojam, Begemeder, Showa, and Tigre therefore had individually developed diplomatic relationships with foreign nations. Ethiopia has been divided as well. Only the regional governors had relationships with foreign countries. Additionally, Egypt's territorial aspirations in Ethiopia were developing during this period. Egypt, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali, traveled through Sudan to reach Ethiopia's western frontiers in order to extend its territory. Consequently, the increasingly intense border dispute has occasionally intensified. This wasn't looking too well for Ethiopia Because the Muslim Turks dominated the shore of the Red Sea, Ethiopian trade was hindered. To keep Ethiopia weak and under its control, Turkey prohibited the import of weapons. Ethiopia was under these conditions, and Turkey and Egypt's combined imperialist force was drawing closer to its frontiers. The region was under the influence of Europe's malicious political and commercial ambitions. To protect itself, Ethiopia required a powerful central authority. Under these explosive circumstances, Theodoros II rose to face all assaults.

The Eastern Africa made up of the continent's two oldest nations, Ethiopia and Sudan. The two countries are known for both friendly and antagonistic connections with one another. The establishment of an independent Christian empire in the Ethiopian north around the 4th century A.D. is related to that the nation's growth (Markakis, 1974). But, the jurisdiction of the state has gradually and incrementally grown to the south, incorporating the modern-day southern regions of the nation. On the other side, while northern Nubia and the southern forest edge are home to many ancient settlers and civilizations, Sudan's modern history dates back to the entrance of Islam in the fifteenth century (Bell, 1973). The histories of the two adjacent nations are intertwined with domestic dynamics and external influences and invasions.

Ethiopians have practiced Christianity primarily a belief system until the Messenger of Allah's companions entered the nation in 615 A.D. in search of safety. But, according to Trimingham (1965), the faith grew to be a serious challenge to the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia. The fact that, Islam is gaining great acceptance in North Sudan and rapidly spreading to Somalia, Djibouti and the coastal areas of Kenya has caused Ethiopia to be surrounded by Islamic governments. The combined forces of Turkey and Egypt have repeatedly attempted to attack Ethiopia by passing through the border of Sudan. It is historical memory that the Jihad campaign of Ahmad Gragn in 1527 was also supported by Turkey (Ibid, 1965).

Accordingly, Ethiopia began to fear and distrust its borders with Sudan since the Dervish army invaded and destroyed Ethiopia regularly with the motive of those circumstances. Moreover, in 1887, the Dervish army invaded Gondar and the destruction of human life and property became a sufficient indication of the threat that Turkey was oppressing Ethiopia. Since the aforementioned time, this has affected Ethiopia's relations with its Islamic neighbors. This was evident in 1961 when an organization opposing Ethiopian union was formed in Cairo under the name Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). Countries of the Arab League, particularly Egypt, backed this initiative. Egypt specifically thinks Ethiopia can be destroyed via the front (Legum, 1977).

3.2.2. Ethio-Sudan Relations in The reign of Atse Yohannes IV (1872-1889)

Despite the fact that the two countries have had very long-standing economic and political relationships, the most prominent ties in the contemporary era actually began in the nineteenth century. In the reign of Atse Yohannes IV (1872-1889), the Ethio-Sdan relationships were full of suspicious between Khalifa Abdallahi of Sudan and Atse Yohannes IV of Ethiopia. After

capturing Sudan and the Massawa region, the Egyptians made an effort to take over Ethiopia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia who ruled from 1872–1899 stopped the Egyptian onslaught in the battles of Gundet and Gura, in 7-9 March 1876. In the year 1882, the British established a colony in Egypt and took control of all of its belongings, which includes Sudan. Meanwhile, the repressive authority of the Anglo-Egyptians was being resisted by the Sudanese Mahdists, who ringed the Egyptian troops in Kassala, in 18 June, 1881 (Wondwosen: 2009).

Consequently, the British chose to interfere when Mahdist forces surrounded Egyptian army's in Khartoum. Finally, British arbitrator, Rear Admiral Sir William Hewitt, sent to Emperor Yohannes' the IV of Ethiopia to get the cooperation of Ethiopian army. On June 3, 1884, a deal had been reached. In honor of the place wherein the agreement was approved, the agreement is referred to be called the Hewett Treaty. In this pact, England granted Emperor Yohannes IV autonomous importation of supplies, arms, Egyptian assistance of episcopal selection, and the return of Bogos to Ethiopia. Consequently, Yohannes agreed to help the stressed Egyptian army leave the Sudanese towns of Kassala, Amideb, and Sanhit (Temesgen and Getachew, 2020).

The Dervishes of Sudanese and Ethiopian troops engaged in combat as a result of Emperor Yohannes's support the Egyptian soldiers to escape from the Mahdist. On the 23rd of September the year 1888, Ras Alula, among Yohannes' committed warriors, defeated the Mahdists under the leadership of Uthman Dinqna at Kufit (Bahru, 2002). The Benishangul Gumuz region was attacked by the Mahdists as payback. They followed the Egyptians on foot and arrived in the Najo area (Welega), but they were retreated back when they saw Ethiopian forces there (Ibid, 2002).

The Mahdists took over Metema which in turn the Egyptians had escaped along the northern frontier. King Teklehaymanot of Gojam was ordered by Emperor Yohannes to attack the dervishes. The army of King Teklehaymanot won from the beginning but was defeated by the troops of dervishes later. The dervishes attack the governor of Gojam, who was in the area and invaded Dembia and Gondar (Bahru, 2002). According to Sanderson (1969), Khalifa Abdallah, the leader of dervishes, sent a message to Emperor Yohans saying that if you do what I say, I

will stop the war and not attack you, and I will order my soldiers not to cross your border. Subsequently the city of Gondar was attacked and destroyed by Khalifa's troops. Emperor Yihans was in a violent conflict with the Italians in the north, so he wanted to avoid the war with the Mahadists and sent a peace offer to the leader of the dervishes.

Sanderson (1969), states that Emperor Yohannes sent a message to the Mahadists commander, he said the following; Let us not kill the poor and the harmless to no purpose, but let us both unite against our common enemies, the Europeans. If they conquer me, they will not spare you, and they will destroy your country. It is, therefore, our common interest to agree to fight and conquer them. The Mahdists ruler refused Yohannes' reconciliation proposal, and on March 9–10, 1889, in Metema, the two forces engaged in a bloody fight that ended with Yohannes' execution.

In the ultimate analysis, as Rubenson (1976) states, Emperor Yohannes inherited two strong opponents (the Mahdists and the Italians) by assisting the Egyptian army. By assigning a force commanded by Ras Alula and fighting the Mahdists, Yohannes carried out his half of the Hewett treaty. He assigned an army commanded by Ras Alula to combat the Mahdist in order to allow the Egyptian soldiers to pass safely and freely. However, the British broke their end of the treaty and let the Italians a newly emerged force in the region take over Massawa, which the Egyptians were leaving behind (Bahru, 2002).

3.3. Ethio-Sudan Border Relations during the Colonial Period

3.3.1. Ethio-Sudan Relations in the Reign of Atse Menilik II (1889-1913)

Yohannes died in the year 1889, and Menelik II (1889–1913) succeeded him as the country's king. In the beginning of his reign as Ethiopia's monarch, Menelik favored kindly ties with Sudan. The situation of Italy was very threatened to Minilik. The Italians were pressing aggressively into Ethiopia's northern territory. Because of this, Minilik would probably have wanted a capable Ally if he had been forced into war. Inappropriately, the Sudanese leader still holds a complaint against Ethiopia. Sudan declined to fight alongside Ethiopia in opposition to their shared enemy, the Europeans. Ethiopia was consequently left to fight the Italians on its own. Menelik defeated the Italians in 1896 with a remarkable solo victory (Berry, 1968).

The international recognition of Menelik has grown as a result of Adwa's win. Several European nations, including the French, British, Germans, and others, sent representatives to Menelik to ask his cooperation. Consequently, the Sudanese the governor wasted little time in accepting Menelik's gesture of brotherhood shortly after the battle of Adwa. Mohammad Othman was brought to Menelik's administration by the Khalifa with little requirements. Khalifa required Menelik to cut off any connections to Europeans before allying with Sudanese. Despite Menelik initially rejecting the Sudanese request, the two nations eventually forged an affiliation in 1897. (Bahru, 2002).

Berry (1968) asserts that as a friend, Menelik secretly notified the Khalifa about the Anglo-Egyptian troops' intended attack on Sudan. In exchange, Khalifa cut off his friendship with Benishangul Shaik, who was the earlier strong dissident of Menelik's crown. The Mahdists were defeated in September 1898 by Kitchener's Anglo-Egyptian army. Sudan failed to reclaim its sovereign status until 1956 (Yacob; 2007).

The Treaty of 1902

Beginning in 1898, conversations were placing involving Menelik and Colonel Harrington, the Great British ambassador in Addis Abeba. The British administration hired two groups, one headed by Major Gwynn and the other by Major Austin, to conduct a boundary designation assessment the next year. Major Gwynn was assigned the task of surveying the northern part of the territorial boundary, beginning at the Sobat River and ending at the Nile. The southern portion, from Rosieres on the Nile up to Lake Rudolf, was the responsibility of Major Austin. While Major Austin finished his study in July 1900, Gwynn finished on May 1900. An Irish surveyor named Captain (which was subsequently general) Charles Gwynn served as the mastermind behind the establishment of the boundary line between Ethiopia and Sudan. The line of demarcation between Ethiopia and the then-British-ruled Sudan was not marked or defined till Charles Gwynn arrived in the frontier region (Mullatu, 2015).

Gwynn (1937) claimed that, the region is relatively undeveloped and backward and that its size makes it impossible to draw appropriate boundaries. On each side, the borders have never been drawn. Four significant issues were mentioned by Gwynn (1937) as obstacles to the Ethiopia-Sudan border delineation process during that time. Which were stated as follows: firstly, Insufficient automobiles and airplanes that may be used to conduct inspection flights and transfer

materials for the workers on the area. Secondly, the employees' lack of access to both nourishment and water was due to the limited availability of goods in the bordering zone. Thirdly, the Ethiopian government is incapable of sending competent individuals to speak on their behalf. Fourth, Ethiopians' opposition to having Europeans represents them throughout the boundary-drawing process.

Furthermore, the British demanded Menelik's affirmation that British and Egyptian sovereignty beyond the hinterland that surround the White Nile, encompassing Kordofan and Dar Sennaar were acknowledged. Major Harrington, a British administrative agent stationed in Somaliland, followed the Road trip. Menelik was effectively discouraged from supporting Khalifa by the Rodd expedition. The assignment of James Rennell Rodd to the ruler of Abyssinia brought about an assurance of impartiality around the component of emperor Menelik by ensuring the western boundary of Abyssinia through the domains of the two governments Great Britain and the Mahdi (Wondwosen, 2009)..

Gwynn was subsequently chosen to serve as a British governor to create a definitive delineation of the Kenya-Ethiopia boundary after finishing his assignment across the Sudan-Ethiopia boundary. In 1908–1922, he returned to Ethiopia to complete his new task. The Ethiopian government was unable to designate a European or Ethiopian envoy to draw up and define the frontier because of Menelik's illness. Furthermore, the Ethiopian government was unable to provide regional authorities with permission to support or support Gwynn's current operation across the Kenya-Ethiopia boundary. As a result, following some months' postponement it was subsequently determined that Charles Gwynn must bring out the task with no authorized Ethiopian agents (Gwynn, 1937). The only thing Gwynn had to do to complete his assignment across the Kenya-Ethiopia boundary was to demonstrate to the indigenous peoples of frontiers which the England administration was willing to acknowledge.

The Agreement of 1907

The border across Ethiopia and Sudan in addition to Kenya and Ethiopia was established by the 1907 Agreement with regard to the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, which covered the area that ran from 6°N parallel and 35°E direction to Lake Turkana. Major Austin conducted the border survey for this section. He submitted his findings in August 1900, but because it took so long for the two administrations to resolve their disputes, the agreement did not become law until 1907

seven generations earlier. Major Gwynn was hired in 1908 to mark both the border with Kenya and the border beginning at 6°N parallel to Lake Turkana. The delineation was finished by Major Gwynn in 1909 without any assistance coming from the Ethiopian part (Wondewisen, 2009).

3.3. Ethio-Sudan Border Relations in the Post-Colonial Period

3.3.1. Ethio-Sudan Relations in the Reign of Atse Haile Selassie I (1930-1974)

Immediately following obtaining freedom in 1956, Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia wasn't cordial. Military organizations opposing to Haile Selassie's regime existed across the Sudan-Ethiopia frontier throughout 1961 and 1974, and Sudan was providing military assistance for those groups. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) are two examples of this. The Sudanese provided intermittent backing to these militias. Following Sudanese practice, the royal family of Ethiopia began assisting the "Anya Nya" rebel force across Southern Sudan. From 1955 to 1972, Sudan experienced an insurrection that was often referred as being the "First Civil War" in the country's background (Young, 2007).

The escalation of border disputes and assertions between the two nations was followed Numieri's (1969–1985) taking power in Sudan. Ethiopia felt offended by new policies implemented by the Numieri leadership. His administration kept up the border regions' rapid fortification and militarization. First, on January 12, 1969, the rulers of Sudan sent out more than 150 soldiers to Gallabat, which is about 10 miles away from Ethiopian borders. These soldiers were supplied with machine guns and other firearms. After several months, Sudan sent more than 200 soldiers with powerful weapons to Gallabat, which is very near to Metema on October 24, 1970 (Ngaza, 1974).

On October 26, 1970, two days later, it stationed its military force in Merimiya, close to Metema. Furthermore, Sudan constructed new camp in Jebal Gana, Suf Wuha, and Lugedi, which are 5 kilometers away from Gellan Zeraf, and stationed 100 soldiers at each camp location. Additionally, Sudan constructed a sizable military installation in Embarkit, which is relatively near to Setit and housed a small contingent of Ethiopian law enforcement officers. Along the Guang River, Sudan also constructed a number of police departments and other military bases. Sudan constructed multiple police stations in the Gallaluban region, ranging close to Abderafi, in June 1971 (Ibid, 1974).

Ethiopia had to unquestionably react in kind to all of the aforementioned events. As a result, on August 6, 1972, the Ethiopian government sent parts of the Second Military Regiment from Eritrea to Setit-Humera to protect the region and maintain the status quo against an attack by Sudan. With Setit-Humera serving as its primary camp, certain military forces were stationed in Gellan Zeraf, Radam, and Abderafi. This was intended to monitor ongoing movements in Sudan's territories and prevent unrestricted invasions by the Sudanese. Furthermore, it aimed to protect the Ethiopian farmers living in the Sitit Humera area (Alemayehu, 2019).

The 1972 Peace Conference of Sudan in Addis Ababa

To persuade the insurgent to engage in negotiations through the Sudanese authorities, In order to negotiate a conclusion to the "first Civil war" in Sudan, he made the decision to welcome the two groups of rebels and the leadership of Sudan to Addis Abeba in 1972 (Young, 2007). On February 16–17, 1972, the Southern Sudan Independence Group and the Sudanese administration of President Nimeri met in Addis Abeba for a peace convention. Vice chairman and Ministry for Southern Issues Abel Alier served as the head of the Sudanese committee. EzboniMindiri served as the leader of the Southern insurgents (Hoile, 2002).

The first civil war was successfully resolved as a result of the talks. Communication among Ethiopia and Sudan remained usually favorable from 1972 till the middle of the eighteenth century. In the year 1975, Sudan made a failed effort to resolve the dispute among the Ethiopian government and the Eritrean insurgents. But when the Sudanese People Liberation Army (SPLA) began what was known as the "Second Civil War" or "Anyanya II" (1983-2005) and seemed to be challenging the Sudanese head of state, ties among Ethiopia and Sudan subsequently turned very nasty (Young, 2007).

Ethio-Sudan border dialogues in 1972

Ethiopia began border delineation negotiations with Sudan following attending a fruitful arbitration discussion between the South Sudanese rebels and the Sudanese government. According to Mburu (2003), in 1972, both countries exchanged notes on the border dispute. The Baro significant dispute was not resolved, and no plans were made to put an end to criminal activity and create harmonious relationships involving the grazing residents, according to a letter interchange with Ethiopia and Sudan. The year 1972 Ethiopia-Sudan dialogue dropped lack of a

sustainable for a long time solution insofar as it failed to clarify how the line of separation ought to cross across the Baro salient (Ibid, 2003).

To reach a more definitive agreement over their line of separation in 1972, Ethiopia and Sudan exchanged notes, accepting the majority of the 1903 designation, the 1902 borderline Agreement, and the need for certain line modifications. Since the 1972 Exchange of Notes, which demanded a contemporary borderline separation, the two States have periodically collaborated on mutual surveying and monument construction projects. Technically, delineation activity is still being done as of 2019. There are regional territorial battles between Sudanese and Ethiopian farmers in the Al-Fashaga until 2020 (Young, 2007).

3.3.2. Ethio-Sudan Relations in the Reign of Derg (1974-1991)

The main causes of the antagonistic relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan from 1974 to 1980 might be attributed to the two nations' participation in regional Cold War rivals as well as the escalation of their domestic problems. During that time Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia received US help, and the Soviet Union provided armaments to Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Libya. The Sudanese public's admiration for the people of Eritrea grew after Numeiri's overthrow in 1985 (Bayissa, 2011).

At the Assembly of the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) fourteenth meeting, a reconciliation commission made up of seven nations was established to resolve the dispute between the governments of Sudan and Ethiopia. December 1977 saw a meeting of the reconciliation committee in Freetown. To discuss strengthening cooperation between Ethiopia and Sudan, the foreign ministers of the two nations meet in Dar es Salaam on June 18, 1978. President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone, who was also the OAU Chairman at that time, mediated a meeting between the leaders of the state of the two nations in February 1979 (Ibid, 2011).

The relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan continues to be hostile without any improvement during the Derg regime (1974–1987). Freedom campaigns in Ethiopia were sponsored by Sudan, and Addis Ababa sided with the Communist bloc. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, everything began to change. Bashir began an initiative of rapprochement and mutually beneficial relationships that lasted for twenty years because of the Sudanese government's

decision to change its stance on the reconstruction of the Renaissance Project. This could have been Bashir's most significant foreign policy accomplishment (Young, 2020).

The main rebel groups that were formed during this period include OLF (Oromia Liberation Front), Shabia (EPLF Eritrea People's Liberation Front), ELF (Eritrea Liberation Front) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Sudan was supporting militants which are mentioned the above in Ethiopia. Additionally, Sudan also opposed the contemporary Ethiopian people's revolution and national unity. In contrast, The Derg gave the SPLA significant army and logistics support. Besides, it supplied the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) with trained along with funding channels (Alemayeu, 2019).

In the Gambella, there are amenities, a media facility, and potential locations for refugee camps. Operated under the supervision of UNHCR, The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) fought in retaliation for Ethiopia's support. Indirect disputes between the Derg and the GPLM (the Gambella People's Liberation Movement), and OLF (the Oromo Liberation Front).The two groups operated out of the Sudan and fought guerilla conflicts with the Derg and SPLA along the Upper and Blue Niles. Comparable to how the Sudanese government engaged the SPLA in Gambella by using Ethiopian rebel organizations (Bayissa, 2011).

The GPLM and the Sudanese army were persistently attacking the frontier zones of Gambella's Akobo and Jikawo. Besides, the Sudanese military had backed the coordinated attack and protracted control of Assosa in 1989–1990 by OLF. The financial, political, and social circumstances facing people in Ethiopia and Sudan have gotten worse as a result of the aforementioned regional disputes and indirect warfare (Molla, 2002).

The Derg operationally sponsor the SPLM/A's. Local disputes have been employed by Ethiopia and Sudan for their own private geopolitical ends. The Department of National Defense's records made it evident that the SPLA, under the command of Garang, had been working closely with the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defense since the start. In addition, did Ethiopia offer fuel; supplies, medical care, and logistical support, however, highly skilled Ethiopian law enforcement and Air Borne soldiers gave numerous SPLA mercenaries extensive warfare instruction at various SPLA army bases in westward Ethiopia (Ibid, 2011).

Among the many armed Ethiopian opposition, some of them get help from Khartoum and attack Ethiopia. Although some of them joined the Eritrean opposition groups, the Eritrean war was not resolved even after the change of the royal government in Ethiopia. Some organizations such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) had a better relationship with Somalia than their activities on the border of Ethiopia and Sudan. Other organizations such as the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the TPLF were established in Ethiopia, but they carried out their activities in Sudan. In the border region between Sudan and Ethiopia, a fresh arrangement of armed groups was developed in 1991, following the fall of the Derg and the takeover of government in Asmara and Addis Ababa by the EPLF and EPRDF (Young, 2007).

The leaders of the two countries met and agreed to close the offices of the rebels in their respective countries, expel the rebel leaders from their respective areas and close their common borders. In order to implement this, they decided to establish an integrated defense and intelligence committee between Ethiopia and Sudan. During the negotiation between Ethiopia and Sudan, the Ethiopian military administration asked Sudan to help them to prevent the Eritrean rebel forces from using the Sudanese border to get various supplies to avoid the war in the north. The Ethio-Sudan defense sub-committee met on June 16, 1982 and decided to work together to prevent hostile acts within their common air, land and sea borders. The contract was signed on May 10, 1982 (Johnson, 2013).

The Derg intended to send Ethiopian military units into the Sudanese territory of Arkiko, Tokar and Mama, Jelhante and Tabah valley in collaboration with the Sudanese military. The goal was to obstruct the paths of communication and gateways that the EPLF forces utilized for entry into Eritrea at Nakfa and Sala. The Derg's ultimate goal included closing the joint boundary and driving the rebels out of Sudanese territory. For a variety of reasons, the Sudanese government was unable to keep the Derg's requests, although the Derg's persistent and continuous demands. As a result, efforts to normalize relations between the two nations were stopped, and they both went on to aid rebels in their surrounding areas and use them as substitutions for one another (Nyaba, 1997).

3.3.3. Ethio-Sudan Relations in the Period of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front /EPRDF/

According to (Cliffe, 1999), following the EPLF and EPRDF coming to power; there was a temporary decrease in the number of militant groups operating on the frontier. The National Islamic Front (NIF), which was declared victorious in the 1989 revolution in Sudan, was substantially responsible for the political changes that occurred in Ethiopia and Eritrea. There was cause for optimism for the future of mutually beneficial relations in the Horn of Africa, as the NIF had backed the insurgents in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Along with the end of Soviet involvement in the area and the end of the Cold War, this era also saw a decline in Western interest, though not immediately. However, the ideologically motivated NIF launched an effort to spread its brand of radical Islam among its neighbors, especially Ethiopia and Eritrea. Nevertheless, even for a little while, there could not be peace between the nations.

NIF opened embassies in Eritrea and Ethiopia to mend strained relations between the countries. The Sudan government started providing educational opportunities for Sudanese, Ethiopian, and Eritrean Muslim students. To achieve its goals, it employed several Islamic non-governmental organizations with close ties to the government. They made Sudan's official radio station broadcasting their Islamic thought. In Khartoum, it was heard that the Muslims in Ethiopia and Eritrea are suffered by the Christians (Young, 2007).

In addition, NIF leader Hassan al-Turabi thought that Ethiopia would be destroyed shortly. Using this as an opportunity, he dreamed of establishing an Islamic Oromo government in Ethiopia and building Islamic politics from Sudan to the Indian Ocean. Ethiopia and Eritrea frequently cautioned the Sudanese government to cease its operations out of concern for a potential dispute with Sudan, but to little effect. The failed killing of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the city of Addis Ababa in June 1995 marked a turning point in Ethiopia-Sudan relationship. In Egypt as well as Ethiopia this required backing from certain members of the ruling party in Sudan (Ibid, 2007).

As per Young's (2020) explanation, the conclusion of the Cold War brought about the rise of the National Islamic Front (NIF) in Sudan and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in Ethiopia. Up until that point, the two nations' relationship had alternated between friendship and antagonism. The recent arrival of governments in Ethiopia and Sudan has

improved relations between the two nations compared to their previous state. In an area with numerous security issues, it had produced a good shared benefit. As a result, in 2008 there was an agreement of compromise between Ethiopia and Sudan.

According to BBC (2008), the two countries reached an agreement to jointly develop the border area. Sudan allowed Ethiopian farmers to live and work in the area without any problems. Ethiopia, on the other hand, was in the process of accepting the previous border agreement. It was intended to be an ideal example of a soft border governed by a law that prohibits the establishment of a "hard border" to prevent livelihoods from harming communities living within borders with various difficult security threats. They agree to this contract, but Ethiopia wants a clear separation of jurisdiction. Following Meles' death in 2012, relationships between the two nations remained friendly, but with Abiy Ahmed's rise to prominence in Ethiopia in 2018 and Omar al-Bashir's fall in Sudan in August 2019, relations between the two nations are once again in hostility.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Republic of Sudan engaged together in a covert deal in 2007 to negotiate boundary changes. At one time, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi stated that the EPRDF government was in negotiations with Sudan over the border when responding to a question asked by the House of Representatives. He claimed that efforts are being made by his administration to alter the boundary. At that time, many Ethiopian farmers were displaced from their farms and property. Countless hectares of agricultural land have been taken by the Sudanese. After Meles' death in 2013, Prime Minister Hailemariam renewed the arrangement to put up poles alongside additional monuments in the field (Mulatu, 2015).

Recently, Ethiopia and North Sudan conducted border negotiations; however, the South Sudanese side has not brought up the subject of border demarcation. First, this is because the Republic of South Sudan became independent in 2011. The nation is currently concentrating on domestic issues. Second, and most crucially, the border among Ethiopia and South Sudan has greater clarity as it does in the North because it mostly parallels natural borders, such as the banks of the Baro and Akobo Rivers with their waterways. Yet, single would anticipate that both North and South Sudan will fall within a single set of UN global agreements' criteria during

subsequent treaty or delineation discussions because earlier agreements were reached on the part of one party only (Wuhib, 2020).

He claims that for a year, during EPRDF there has been less fighting between Ethiopia and Sudan because of the friendship relations between the contemporary governments of the two nations. Hailemariam Desalegn became Ethiopia's prime minister when Meles Zenawi passed away in 2012. Since the land has up to now been managed under the agreement arrived through EPRDF, these issues were not visible until 2020. This suggests that having cordial ties with neighbors is beneficial. The EPRDF was losing support a few years ago as a result of internal unrest.

3.3.4. Ethio-Sudan Relations since the Post 2018 Political Reform

Compared to Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have closer commerce and cultural relations. Nonetheless, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was invited by the Sudanese Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) to lead negotiations in June 2019 over the ongoing violence in Sudan. However, FFC were unable to accept Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the president of Egypt. Despite the 20 years of good relations between Ethiopia and Sudan, due to the various issues faced by both countries, they do not confirm their future friendly relations. Because of this, Future shows that the good relationship between the two countries is threatened through the following three things. First, it is the creation of new mutually incompatible governments in both countries; secondly, there are difficulties over the unity of the administrations in Sudan and Ethiopia; and, thirdly, neither nation has total control over the districts along their shared border (Alemayehu, 2019).

There are two main aggravating external causes in addition to these internal ones. The first is the growing problem that began in the middle of 2017 between the Gulf States and the Horn of Africa. The United States of America is supporting Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt on one side of this dispute, while Qatar and Turkey are on the other. Other nations are being persuaded to favor one of these two realms over the other. Second, the Trump administration unveiled a new Africa policy in December 2018. The goal of this new African policy is to lessen China's and Russia's influence on the continent. Ethiopia and other nations whose economies depend on China's assistance may have issues as a result. Positive connections exist between Sudan and both parties (Young, 2020).

Since the EPRDF regime had good relations with Sudan, when a new political leadership came to Ethiopia in 2018, it was accompanied by various reforms, which put the relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan in vagueness. He deposed the senior political and military leaders in the EPRDF who had established good relations with Sudan. The new Ethiopian leadership first tried to establish good relations with Sudan. On May 1, 2018, Sudan and Ethiopia agreed to establish a joint force to defend the Renaissance Dam. Two days later, the transition leadership made an official visit to Khartoum. The new leadership's focus on Sudan was to prevent them from forming an alliance with the former TPLF leaders (Middle East Monitor, 2018).

In addition to the Al Fashaga case, in 2019, there was an illegal transfer of weapons from Sudan to Ethiopia in the border area of Ethiopia and Sudan. The illegal weapons were smuggled in through irregular armed forces operating in the Amhara and Oromo regions. In this case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia has blamed the government of Sudan and its security forces for not having sufficient restrictions. However, the government of Sudan and the security forces has declared that they are not responsible for the transfer of illegal weapons (Sudan Tribune, 2019).

Relationships between the two countries were good after 2012. Abiy Ahmed's ascent to becoming prime minister in Ethiopia in 2018 brought back uncertainties to the bilateral relationships. The primary cause has been the escalating instability in Ethiopia (Gunnar, 2020). Although Sudanese army and government officials had forged strong ties with TPLF under Meles' rule, there have been worries in Addis Abeba about an imminent partnership between Khartoum and Tigray. Sudan was given notice not to make contact the members of the TPLF by Abiy in 2018 (Young, 2020). Addis Abeba is going to be on the lookout for any indications that both Sudan and Egypt could be backing the TPLF considering the present state of affairs in Ethiopian and the controversy over the reconstruction of the Renaissance Project. Sudan has thus far promised to arbitrate the Ethiopian crisis alongside other nations and the African Union (AU).

A top-level Political Council on border Problems was officially constituted by the respective prime ministers of both Sudan and Ethiopia with the purpose of discussing the revival of the border delineation processes. From May 16–17, 2020, in Addis Ababa, the High Political Committee, which was established under the agreement between Sudan and Ethiopia, assembled.

A decision made during this meeting was to work together to combat criminal activity near their shared boundaries. And they also agreed that attempts should be made to settle the disagreements about the boundary demarcation. However, these terms of the negotiations were not adhered to by the Sudanese side (Tamirat and Muluken, 2023).

The act of Sudan has damaged social, economic, and mutual trust as well as attempts to create a peaceful boundary delimitation process. As a result, Sudan invaded Ethiopia on November 4, 2020. Sudan did this when the Ethiopian National Defense Force was conducting a law enforcement campaign against the Tigray National Regional Government. Thus, the government of Sudan has violated the agreements of peaceful resolution of problems between Ethiopia and Sudan and the international law on non-violent resolution of conflicts (Ibid, 2023).

Before and after the 1902 agreement, as well as following the document exchange in 1972, Ethiopian farmers cultivated the land that Sudan now occupies. It was under the control of Ethiopian jurisdiction. It is known that the Sudan-Ethiopian joint border technical committee team conducted an aerial study and registration holding in the border area in 2004/2005. Based on this aerial study, it was confirmed that Ethiopians live west of the Gwin line and that commercial, social and political activities are carried out according to Ethiopian law. Although Sudan has invaded Ethiopian land by force, Ethiopia has repeatedly stated that it still wants to resolve the conflict in a way that respects the interests of both sides through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ethiopia has announced that it is still ready to demarcate the line and settle the border dispute according to the legal framework and previous agreements (Wuhib, 2020).

Chapter Four

4. The Cause of Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict and Internal and External Exacerbating Factors Since 2018

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Four, I analyze the data gathered from various primary data sources, which consists of eight respondents, as well as data collected from several secondary sources. The majority of the interviews come from government entities like ministerial offices and rival political parties, non-governmental organizations, and different research centers. In addition, secondary data from books, magazines, news, and journal articles, as well as significant news sources like the Sudan Tribune, concerning the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan were used. This research is based on the Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict as of 2018 and its implications for Ethiopia.

4.2. The Cause of the Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict Since 2018

Tensions have intensified at the shared border between Sudan and Ethiopia since the end of 2020, particularly in the area of Al-Fashaga, which lies between Ethiopia's Amhara and Tigray regional governments and Sudan's eastern district of Al-Qadarif. The Ethiopian government has accused Sudan of encroaching on Ethiopian territory and exploiting the instability along the border. The conflict between the Federal government of Ethiopia and the TPLF in the country's north has further exacerbated the situation (ISS, 2021).

Ethiopia has also alleged that other external actors, notably Egypt, are fueling the conflict. This is in reference to a military cooperation deal between Egypt and Sudan, which includes a mutual defense accord (MOFA, 2021). On the other hand, according to ISS (2021), Sudanese military leaders claim that Ethiopian farmers, aided by local militia, have been expanding their farms into Sudanese territory, leading to violence and loss of life. Sudan maintains that Al-Fashaga has always been part of its land. However it is part of Ethiopia.

The border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan since 2018 has multiple underlying factors, as indicated by information gathered from interviews, a review of relevant literature, and official

statements released by Sudan. On the Ethiopian side, Bereded (2023, interview)¹ shed light on the multifaceted nature of the current border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan. He listed three reasons as the main causes of the conflict of the border. The first is that Sudan began the invasion believing Ethiopia was weaker due to internal upheaval or they regarded Ethiopia's Federal government war with TPLF as a gap. He also, describes that the Ethiopian Federal government started operation in Tigray in November 2020. The law enforcement activities in the north part of the country have an immediate effect on the ongoing national border dispute among both nations. This is due to the outbreak of the conflicts; the Ethiopian government informed the Sudanese government that they were going to close their bordering. This is the same thing the Sudanese have always done when they think Ethiopia is weak by internal upheaval. In the past, they have attempted to invade Ethiopia in circumstances similar to this, particularly under the administrations of Emperor Haile Selassie and the Derg.

Second, both Ethiopia's and Sudan's domestic political situations are major factors to the ongoing boundary dispute between the two nations. The Sudanese administration's domestic political environment occasionally caused them to bring up boundary difficulties to shift the focus of the people from domestic to global matters. However, the two administration officials' sincere diplomatic efforts are disregarded by the Sudanese transitional military government, which has taken drastic measures to seize ownership of the questionable region known as Al-Fashaga. Because they have internal problems on the Sudan side, Sudan invaded the border to get the support of the people and to divert the attention of the people. Ethiopia did not use the Sudanese internal conflict as a gap and did not invade them. In fact, what Ethiopia wants is for them to sit down and solve their problems around the table, but the Sudanese saw Ethiopia's internal problems as a gap and invaded Ethiopia (Ibid, 2023 interview).

According to Bereded (2023, interview) the third key factor is a competition arises among nations, with particular focus on Egypt's involvement in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) development and negotiation processes. Initially, Sudan supported Ethiopia in the GERD initiative. However, as Ethiopia progressed with the dam's first stage, Sudan reversed its stance, aligning with Egypt. The motive behind Egypt's collaboration with Sudan is to buy

¹ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

additional time for Ethiopian parties to fill the dam in subsequent stages. The mutual armed pact between Egypt and Sudan is perceived as a potential means to exert pressure on Ethiopia's government. In response, the Ethiopian government emphasizes a commitment to resolving border disputes through dialogue rather than resorting to force or unilateral actions

Furthermore, Kathryn (2023, interview)² explained that the ongoing Ethio-Sudan border conflict has its roots in historical claims and various other issues. Both countries have asserted ownership claims over the region due to its fertile land, agricultural significance, for food security, ethnic influences, and control over smuggling and illegal trade. She stated that the colonialist border contract that the Britain, the power that established colonies in Sudan and the Ethiopian emperor agreed in 1902 to demarcate the border of the two countries. However, in 1903, Charles Gwynn, a British surveyor, delineated the boundary between the two nations; nevertheless, Ethiopia rejected the demarcation, sparking a conflict that endured. This marked the beginning of the disputes, after Sudan gained autonomy in the year 1956; territorial problems between the two nations became very sensitive.

Sudan and Ethiopia reached a deal resulting in the 1972 Exchange of Notes. Ethiopia consented to cooperate on redrawing the border while keeping the existing Gwynn line in mind. Sudan consented to redraw the line in accordance with negotiated corrections, giving up its claim that the Gwynn Line is the final delineation. Therefore, it is quite evident from the 1972 Exchange of Notes that Colonel Gwynn's delineation is either definitive or permanent. To address boundary re-demarcation, Ethiopia and Sudan created cooperative measures in accordance with the Exchange of Notes (Bereded, 2023, interview)³.

According to Gizachew (interview, 2023)⁴ a major Cause of conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan is a treaty signed by Sudan while it was under British colonial administration and the then Ethiopian Emperor Menilik II in the year of 1900s. He claims that, it is a matter of unfinished border agenda. Of course, when you look at Ethiopia's border situation, it is unfinished in almost every direction. The Sudan border is one of them. Since the 1900s, there were about three

² Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

³ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

⁴ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

agreements regarding with Sudan border, but all of them had their limitations. He articulates the border line made by Major General Gwyn is the most controversial; at the first place Ethiopia was not represented. Second In fact, according to some elders, the time when Gwyn drew the border is in October and November, from July to December, which is not the ideal time to move into the area, because the rivers are full in the winter, the land is muddy, the forest is dense, and there are many Beasts, it is not only difficult for demarcating the border. It is impossible to move and cross the area for other some issues, so it makes the line unacceptable.

Third, if you see the Gwyn line, it may cross at the top of a mountain, but the colonial borders are straight lines, which makes it invalid. The fourth is that we Ethiopians do not believe in a straight colonial border or a line that goes on the top of a mountain, instead, we believe in natural borders such as rivers, mountains, valleys, etc. It makes the border not acceptable. Fifth, population settlement; “Ethiopians live in Sudan beyond the border we claim to be ours, and the Sudanese live beyond the land they claim inside of Ethiopian border, which is one of the things that make the issue of the border difficult” (Gizachew, interview 2023).

In addition to this, Gizachew (interview, 2023)⁵, listed other causes for the controversial nature of the border. The attitude of center-periphery, if the center is peaceful, they think that there is no problem at the periphery, just protecting the center. Seasonal agriculture; as it is a desert, the farmer goes to the area during the farming season and after producing and collecting the crop they are returning back to their home. When both countries governors and leaders were preoccupied with domestic issues, they attempted to assert their right to territory that they had never previously requested during the day of peace. Sudan has experimented with this not only in this era and under this regime, but also during the periods of various Ethiopian emperors. Not only has Sudan been invaded, but Eritrea also attacked us during the period of transition, and Somalia did so during the reign of Ziad Barre. The other issue which worsen the issue of the border, that he stated is that “business people interfere on all sides, especially on the Sudan side, Most of the business peoples are soldiers. Even if they are not soldiers, since the Sudan military is corrupt, a business man can pay and deploy or command the soldier. During the harvesting

⁵ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

season, the Sudanese investor comes with some soldiers and collects what the Ethiopian farmers have produced.

Additionally, the region where Alburhan was born is the source of border disputes between Ethiopia and Sudan. This is where he began his military service. Alburhan is a person who has lost a lot of unofficial border conflicts. He harbors resentment towards the neighborhood of Al-Fashiga. His attacking of Ethiopia may have been angry or seeking revenge on the past lost. (Egypt Independent, 2021). Alburhan was educated in Egypt and has a military agreement with the Egyptian president al-Sisi. Alburhan's invasion of Ethiopia is not supported by the intelligence of Sudan. They have become a flicker state or an unrealistic state. The countries of the region are obsessed with turning their internal problems into border wars, for example Eritrea, Somalia and now Sudan (Gizachew, 2023, interview)⁶.

An anonymous participant “A” (interview, 2023)⁷ highlighted that previous agreements did not confer exclusive territorial claims to either Sudan or Ethiopia. This absence of clear ownership, in his view, has led to the pursuit of temporary solutions for the ongoing border issue. He emphasized the dynamics of power play, noting that both sides engage in strategic maneuvers, with perceptions of Ethiopian government strength influencing these interactions. Additionally, he also identified local interests as a driving force in the dispute, with investors seeking to leverage the issue for personal gain. He underscored the role of the business elite, framing the matter as an economic concern. Sovereignty emerged as a critical aspect, alongside geostrategic implications given the region's significance as a port-processing area. This interview enriches the research by offering nuanced perspectives on the complex interplay of political, economic, and strategic factors shaping the ongoing border tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan.

The Embassy of the Republic of Sudan is reluctant to provide information regarding the concerns, thus it is challenging to undertake the primary gathering of data or interviews with them when I visit. But in order to fully address the volatile border that exists among both nations today, the conversation also looked into official pronouncements by Sudan along with additional secondary literature.

⁶ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

⁷ An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

There are different factors in which Sudan is involved in the dispute; military officials from Sudan assert that the dispute began because Ethiopian farmers began extending their agricultural land through Sudan via the help of regional security forces, whoever they blame for murdering individuals and arguing that Al-Fashaga has always been part of Sudan. Colonel General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, the commander of the Sudanese armed forces, made a trip to the region and spoke with the soldiers defending the frontiers. Despite more than twenty-five years of violations, dangers, and complaints, according to Al-Burhan, Sudan has remained sympathetic with its territory for an extended period of time. However, anything has its limits (VOA, 2021).

According to him, Ethiopia initiated the dispute, not the Republic of Sudan, and they're now a battle for a reason. Additionally, he claims that Ethiopian forces had slaughtered our landowners and our women, burned the land to ashes, and declared that it was not Sudanese, accusing Sudan of invading their homeland. Sudan contends that borders markings can be fixed through professional discussions, as the line of separation has already been established. It asserts that Al-Fashaga is now officially acknowledged as Sudanese land by various Ethiopian administrations (VOA, 2021).

Sudan claims that in purchase to preserve its goodwill with the former Ethiopian administration, solely Ethiopian farmers were permitted to plant crops on the land; nevertheless, Ethiopian authorities have announced that the line of demarcation has not yet been drawn. The unauthorized and risky buildup of hostilities regarding the contested al-Fashaga region, caused by Ethiopian army aircraft entering Sudanese airspace, is one of the primary factors of the present crisis, as stated by Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, Sudan reports that government-backed violent Ethiopian groups murdered a minimum of 8 citizens inside the bordering towns of Wad A'aroo and al-Liya (PSC, 2021).

According to this, Tongo (interview, 2021)⁸, chairman of the Sudan boundary commission, discussed the historical context of the border dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia. He highlighted disagreements over border demarcation dating back to the early 20th century, including Emperor Menelik's objections to the 1911 agreement. Tongo's insights shed light on the complex historical background of the border issue. The British government granted King

⁸ Mauz Tongo, Chairman of the Sudan Boundary Commission, was interviewed by Al Jazeera on January 15, 2021.

Menelik access to specific areas of Sudan without asserting authority, adhering to the 1902 treaty's boundaries. Major Charles Gwynn drew the demarcation line and created boundary columns in 1903 at the Ethiopia-Sudan intersection.

A boundary commission established in 2001 by Ethiopia and Sudan marked the frontiers, with a joint political committee approving the study in 2010 and implementation in 2013. Sudan and Ethiopia have no disagreements about boundaries, with border commissioners working collaboratively for years to address any conflicts. Khartoum has acknowledged responsibilities since 1972 and expresses no territorial claims in Ethiopia, emphasizing cooperation due to their intertwined history and ties. Both nations operate under Sudanese legislation, ensuring the presence of Sudanese citizens in the region (Aljazeera, 2021).

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is the second most significant factor contributing to the present boundary dispute with Sudan. Political analyst Alfatih Mahmoud, based in Khartoum, acknowledges a low likelihood of immediate conflict; however, he insists that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is the root cause of the dispute. Mahmoud maintains that this disagreement holds the potential to escalate to armed conflict, prompting the two sides to engage in both warfare and negotiation (VOA, 2021).

The present situation is a result of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), according to Sudan's Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation Yasser Abbas. Any decision taken unilaterally by Ethiopia regarding its hydroelectric construction or the Great Renaissance Dam in July could put Sudan's national security at risk. According to him, the independent filling of the dam endangered the security of the Roseires Dam, the livelihood of twenty million Sudanese residing riverside of the GERD, and the supply of water for consumption to the country's drinking health systems. It additionally endangered the production of electrical power from Sudan's Merowe Dam and Roseires Dam. His remarks correspond with escalating hostilities among Ethiopia and Sudan over contested lands close to their common boundary. That's in addition to the conflict around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which Ethiopia is constructing near the Sudanese boundary on the banks of the Blue Nile (Reuters, 2021).

Therefore, the current border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan is a complex issue with multiple underlying causes. Information gathered from interviews, literature reviews, and official statements reveals several key factors contributing to the ongoing conflict.

1. **Internal Upheaval in Ethiopia the War with TPLF:** According to, Bereded (interview, 2023)⁹ suggests that the Ethiopian Federal government's operations in Tigray, starting in November 2020, had an immediate impact on the border dispute. The internal conflict in Ethiopia, particularly the government's focus on TPLF, created a perception of weakness, leading to Sudan's invasion.
2. **Both Countries Domestic Political Situations:** Both Ethiopia's and Sudan's domestic political environments play a significant role in the border dispute. Sudan's transitional military government, facing internal problems, has used boundary issues to divert attention and gain support. Ethiopia, despite its own internal challenges, did not exploit Sudan's internal conflict for territorial gain (Bereded interview, 2023).
3. **Historical Claims and Unfinished Border Agenda:** The historical context, dating back to the colonial era, contributes to the border dispute. Kathryn (interview, 2023)¹⁰ emphasizes that both countries claim ownership of the region due to its fertile land, agricultural significance, ethnic influences, and control over smuggling. The colonial-era border agreements, such as the 1902 treaty and Charles Gwynn's demarcation in 1903, are sources of contention. Gizachew (2023, interview)¹¹ points out that the treaty signed in the 1900s, during British colonial administration, has left the border issue unresolved. Major General Gwynn's demarcation is disputed for various reasons, including the timing of the survey, the nature of the border line, and the disagreement on natural borders versus colonial straight lines. An anonymous participant “A” (interview, 2023)¹², notes that previous agreements did not clearly confer exclusive territorial claims to either Sudan or Ethiopia. The absence of clear ownership has led to temporary solutions and

⁹ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

¹⁰ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

¹¹ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

¹² An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

power play between the two nations, with perceptions of Ethiopian government strength influencing the interactions.

4. **The Business Elite Interests and Military Involvement:** Gizachew (interview, 2023)¹³ highlights the interference of business interests, especially on the Sudanese side, where businesspeople, some of whom are soldiers, exploit the situation for personal gain. The involvement of military figures and the influence of corrupt practices exacerbate the border tensions. Participant “A” (interview, 2023)¹⁴ identified local interests as a driving force in the dispute, with investors seeking to leverage the issue for personal gain. He underscored the role of the business elite, framing the matter as an economic concern.
5. **Territorial Expansion over Al-Fashaga Region:** The primary cause of the conflict is the territorial dispute over the Al-Fashaga region. Sudanese military officials argue that Ethiopian farmers, with the assistance of regional security forces, extended their agricultural land into Sudan. Sudan claims that Al-Fashaga has historically been part of its territory and accuses Ethiopian actions, including alleged killings and destruction, as provocations leading to the conflict (VOA, 2021).
6. **GERD as a Contributing Factor:** The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam emerges as a significant factor in the dispute. Analyst Alfatih Mahmoud, based in Khartoum, sees the dam as the root cause, with the potential to escalate into armed conflict if not addressed. Sudan's Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Yasser Abbas, expresses concerns about the dam's impact on Sudan's national security. For Ethiopia the involvement of other nations, particularly Egypt's interest in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), adds a layer to the conflict. Initially Sudan supporting Ethiopia in the GERD initiative, Sudan reversed its stance, aligning with Egypt. This shift, as suggested by Ambassador Bereded, is driven by Egypt's desire to buy additional time for filling the dam and using the mutual armed pact with Sudan as leverage against Ethiopia (Reuters, 2021).

¹³ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

¹⁴ An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

In deduction, the Ethiopian and Sudan border conflict is a multifaceted issue, encompassing historical, political, economic, and regional factors. The various perspectives provided by key figures shed light on the complexity of the dispute, requiring careful consideration of diplomatic, historical, and geopolitical elements for a comprehensive resolution.

4.3. Internal and External Exacerbating Factors of the Ethio-Sudan Border conflict Since 2018

According to Nahu Televiven, the only media that are paying attention to the Ethio-Sudan border conflict on the Sudan side are only Sudan Tribune and Suna. On the Egyptian side, Ahram Online, Egypt Today, Daily News Egypt and more than five Egyptian media outlets report on the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan at least once a day. Those who analyze the issue say that this is a media strategy used by Egypt to escalate the issue (Nahoo, 2021).

According to the data gathered from interview and from the literature review there are different factors which triggered the current Ethio-Sudan border conflict. Bereded (interview, 2023)¹⁵ the internal problems are the main aggravator and cause of the current Ethio-Sudan border invasion. However, the need and the pressure to control the situation and the intervention of a third party are the external factors escalating the issue. Some seeks to use Sudan as a launching pad to influence Ethiopia in order to safeguard their national interests particularly Egypt. Additionally, since the area is currently gaining international attention, East Africa will be under a lot of pressure from those seeking to dominate the political activities of the Red Sea.

Considering this, Kathryn (2023, interview)¹⁶ stated that internal exacerbating factors include domestic political unrest in countries, ethnic tensions, border conflicts in the Al-Fashaga region, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), illegal trade and smuggling, resource scarcity, militarization, the formation of armed groups, and displacement of refugees. These factors collectively weaken government control in the border area. Externally, economic interests, geopolitical considerations, and Egypt's interests are additional contributing factors. Notably, Egypt and Sudan have a military agreement.

¹⁵ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

¹⁶ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

In light of this, Tibebu (2023, interview)¹⁷ highlighted that when a country experiences weakness, foreign powers seize the opportunity to advance their national interests. There is a concern that some nations might invest significantly to undermine Ethiopia, utilizing Sudan as a means to obstruct the dam. Notably, the current civil conflict in Sudan has led to migration of its people to Ethiopia, a situation suggesting that if there were hostilities between Ethiopia and Sudan, such migration patterns would be unlikely. East Africa, being a region of global interest, draws attention to Ethiopia as the predominant strong force in the area. This strength has attracted efforts from perceived adversaries to undermine Ethiopia, understanding that the destabilization of Ethiopia could have cascading effects on the entire Horn of Africa. He additionally, emphasized that any disturbance in Ethiopia, affecting its 120 million people, could lead to widespread migration, causing disruption in the Horn of Africa region.

The underlying motive of these actions by Ethiopia's adversaries is seen as an attempt to destabilize the area and gain control over strategic regions such as the Red Sea and the Nile basin. Ethiopia, with its abundant manpower and competitively priced energy, becomes an attractive destination for various projects and investors. Maintaining peace and prosperity in Ethiopia would potentially attract investments from diverse countries, a scenario that contradicts the interests of those working against Ethiopia's stability and development (Tibebu, interview 2023).

Accordingly, Wasihun (2023, interview)¹⁸ assert that “our internal unity, participation in civil war, and transitional state are the escalating factors of the Sudan invasions. Additionally, considering external factors, given the geographical importance of the East African region and the observed foreign intervention, it is unrealistic to assume that nations with regional aspirations will refrain from exerting pressure on Sudan”.

An anonymous participant “A” (2023, interview)¹⁹ stated, that the invasion by the Sudanese is mostly exacerbated by domestic weakness; the political shift in Sudan itself has an impact; for

¹⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023

¹⁸ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

¹⁹ An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

instance, this would not have occurred if Al-Bashir had been in power. *“I believe that the security connection between Sudan and Ethiopia is centered on two issues: the Nile and the border dispute. Had there been a really strong relationship with Alburhan, it would not have reached this level. I don't think both issues can be solved easily, so I think their fate is to continue to weaken each other”*. There can be no other party outside of Egypt, which is a remote and fragile place, and the external reason is not beyond consideration. Internal turmoil is the key issue.

Based on the data collected from interview, the Ethiopian and Sudan border conflict is influenced by a combination of internal and external exacerbating factors.

Internal Exacerbating Factors:

1. **Ethnic Tensions:** Ethnic divisions within the countries add complexity to the internal situation and may exacerbate conflicts. In addition, the Amhara militia and informal armed groups put pressure on the federal government because of the border. Both Ethiopia and Sudan face internal political challenges, contributing to the overall tension in the region (Bereded, interview 2023)²⁰.
2. **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD):** The construction and management of the GERD add a layer of complexity, involving water resource disputes and potential economic impacts (Kathryn, interview 2023)²¹.
3. **Illegal Trade and Smuggling:** Illicit activities across the border contribute to insecurity and may be linked to broader conflicts (Ibid, interview 2023).
4. **Resource Scarcity:** Competition for scarce resources, exacerbated by factors like population growth and climate change, adds pressure to the region (Ibid, interview 2023).
5. **Militarization and Formation of Armed Groups:** Tibebe (interview, 2023)²² the presence and buildup of military forces in the border area escalate the potential for

²⁰ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

²¹ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

conflict. The emergence of armed groups further destabilizes the region and weakens government control.

External Exacerbating Factors:

1. **Media Strategy by Egypt and Economic Interests:** Egypt's strategic use of media outlets to report on the conflict daily suggests an external effort to escalate the situation. External actors, seeking to exert influence over the region, may intervene, further complicating the conflict. Egypt's interests, particularly in relation to the Nile, play a role in shaping the external dimension of the conflict. External nations may have economic interests in the region, contributing to geopolitical competition and conflict (Nahoo, 2021).
2. **Geopolitical Considerations and Global Interest in East Africa:** Broader geopolitical considerations may impact the conflict dynamics, with regional powers contending for influence. The global interest in East Africa attracts efforts from perceived adversaries to undermine Ethiopia, recognizing its role as a strong force in the region. Attempts by external actors to gain control over strategic regions like the Red Sea and the Nile basin contribute to the conflict dynamics (Tibebu, 2023 interview)²³.
3. **Military Agreement between Egypt and Sudan:** The military agreement between Egypt and Sudan indicates a coordinated approach that may escalate tensions (Kathryn 2023, interview)²⁴.

Overall, the border conflict is a complex interplay of internal and external factors, with political, economic, and geopolitical considerations shaping the dynamics of the region. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of both internal and external drivers to find sustainable solutions to the conflict.

²² Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023

²³ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023

²⁴ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

Chapter Five

5. Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict since 2018, Implications for Ethiopia

5.1. Introduction

In Chapter Five, I discuss the implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia since 2018. This discussion is based on the data collected from respondents and relevant literature.

5.2. Economic Implications of Ethio-Sudan Border conflicts for Ethiopia since 2018

In accordance with Tamirat and Muluken's (2023) analysis Ethiopia, being landlocked and lacking in oil resources, strategically relies on Sudan as a crucial port and an alternative oil source, primarily through Nile Petroleum Average. The significant role of public transport connecting the two nations has traditionally facilitated robust trade, tourism, and investment activities. Unfortunately, the ongoing border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan has resulted in the suspension of public transport connecting in all directions until the issue is resolved. Notably, Ethiopia and Sudan emerges as the primary beneficiary in the import and export dynamics between the two countries, marked by a distinct difference in exported goods.

According to Ethiopian Investment Commission EIC (2019), Ethiopia predominantly exports primary goods to Sudan, including coffee (not roasted or decaffeinated), tropical wood, ox, natural gums, resins, gum-resins, natural oleo-ins/balsams (excluding gum arabic), camels, natural honey, live sheep, goats, footwear with rubber, beer made from malt, and upper parts thereof (excluding stiffeners). Conversely, Sudan contributes factory products to Ethiopia, encompassing benzene, regular or super petroleum oils, natural oleo-ins/balsams (excluding gum arabic), furniture, textile products, edible sunflower and safflowers oil, seat nests, machines with individual functions for industries, and soap in powder form. This intricate trade dynamic underscores the economic interdependence of these neighboring nations, making resolution of the border conflict crucial for the resumption of mutually beneficial trade relations.

Based on this, Gizachew (interview, 2023)²⁵ emphasized that Ethiopia considers the current conflict on both sides as detrimental. However, Ethiopia views the present situation as

²⁵ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

particularly challenging. The disunion of Sudan is perceived to have no economic benefit for Ethiopia, especially given the significant number of Ethiopian farmers residing in Al-Fashaga. From an economic standpoint, the potential migration and displacement of Ethiopian farmers would impose severe economic strains on Ethiopia, leading to increased unemployment. This situation would not only exacerbate internal problems but also pose challenges in the context of global food scarcity resulting from conflicts such as the Eastern Europe Russia and Ukraine war. Being neighbors with a troubled nation is deemed unfavorable for Ethiopia, considering the potential negative impacts on employment, foreign exchange, and overall security.

Similarly, Tibebu (interview, 2023)²⁶ stressed the importance of stability for attracting investors in terms of tourism and foreign direct investment. Political instability can lead to difficulties for individuals, interference from foreign countries, and loss of credibility on the international stage, and damage to the nation's diplomacy. The International Monetary Fund IMF (2020) highlighted that wars have enormous economic and societal consequences, leading to unimaginable distress for people, as historical instances repeatedly demonstrate. Disputes can hinder economic development and investment due to factors such as the death toll, damage to organizations, labor and facilities, political unrest, and increased ambiguity. These challenges persist during and after a conflict, making it difficult to escape the "conflict trap."

Furthermore, wars can compound difficulties for government treasuries by reducing income, eliminating a portion of revenue sources, and simultaneously increasing the cost of arms. The dynamic results in heightened national debt, budgetary shortfalls, and diverted funds from humanitarian and infrastructure expenditures exacerbate the detrimental effects of conflicts. Reduced commerce, investment, and production are primary ways in which conflict hampers economic progress. Other significant impacts include the loss of material and human capital, especially through forced displacement, along with catastrophic consequences on education and medical care. When these factors are combined, they contribute to the continuous deterioration of an economy's productive capacity. According to hypothetical analysis provided by the IMF in 2020, wars are associated with a 15–20% real GDP per capita decrease over a five-year span compared to a scenario in which there is no conflict (IMF, 2020).

²⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023

According to, Bereded (interview, 2023)²⁷ it was revealed that our farmers have experienced displacement from the land, which serves as their primary source of income. These individuals have not only been forced out of their homes but have also lost their daily livelihoods. The humanitarian aid delivery, necessitated by the government to provide shelter and other essential resources for these affected citizens, has imposed a significant burden on our economy.

Though specific numerical figures are not currently available, given that the region is a major producer of sesame, substantial losses have been experienced. Despite these challenges, the Ethiopian side has chosen to maintain a stance of silence. This decision is rooted in a desire to preserve amicable relations with our neighboring country, emphasizing the importance of fostering and sustaining good relations between the two nations. Similarly, according to Gizachew (interview, 2023)²⁸, the location is deemed crucial due to its rich soil, military suitability, and attractiveness as an investment destination. Arabs are interested in investing there; it will generate a very good foreign exchange.

Accordingly, Kathryn (interview, 2023)²⁹ indicates that the region has abundant agricultural resources. However, the ongoing conflict is expected to have negative effects on agricultural activities, potentially leading to food insecurity and endangering the local communities' livelihood due to the loss of grazing land for livestock. The conflict is also likely to impact economic activities within the community, as continued instability reduces investor confidence. Additionally, regional economic integration is anticipated to encounter difficulties, and there will be significant consequences for refugees and humanitarian efforts.

Aside from this, Bereded (interview, 2023)³⁰ stated that the conflict will result in significant economic consequences for both countries. On the Sudanese side, there will be a loss of a major market equivalent to the size of Ethiopia's population. On the Ethiopian side, the import of goods such as red onions and similar products from Sudan will cease, leading to a shortage in domestic

²⁷ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

²⁸ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

²⁹ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

³⁰ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

supply. This will disrupt the livelihoods of people in the affected area, potentially causing migration due to the impact of the war. The conflict will also have negative effects on collaboration programs, harm tourism activities, and further strain foreign exchange reserves. Additionally, Sudan's struggle with electricity could impact Ethiopia's ability to engage in barter trade, as the instability caused by the conflict would hinder such arrangements.

According to Wasihun (interview, 2023)³¹ Ethiopian farmers economy depends on the Al-Fashiga area affected by the border conflict. The region is home to a significant number of pastoralists and farmers, and its fertile land is rich in minerals. Losing this area would mean a loss of economic benefits for Ethiopia. The products from this area not only serve the local population but also contribute to exports, particularly goods like sesame, which helps address Ethiopia's foreign exchange issues.

In contrast, anonymous participant “A” (interview, 2023)³² reveals a different perspective. According to him, there are some uncertainties regarding the economic implications of the border conflict for Ethiopia. While there may be some economic pressure due to the disruption of products like sesame and onions coming from Sudan, it is not perceived as a major national-level crisis. The area affected by the conflict is known for its busy agricultural activities, and the farmers there understand the transient nature of their occupation. Therefore, the economic impact is not expected to be significant at a national level. Instead, the demolition resulting from the conflict will likely hurt many Ethiopians who work in the area as day laborers.

Besides this, Tiruneh (interview, 2023)³³ highlighted the potential economic repercussions of the conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan. Mr. Tiruneh emphasized that Ethiopia's exports, particularly energy products, to Sudan could be disrupted, leading to a loss of income for Ethiopia. He also pointed out that essential imports such as onions and fuel come through Sudan, and any interruption in this supply chain could have severe consequences. Furthermore, he stressed the interconnectedness of Ethiopia and Sudan's economies, noting that Sudan is a member of the Arab League and a significant source of oil imports for Ethiopia. Any disruption

³¹ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

³² An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

³³ Tiruneh Gamta is the Secretary General of the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) party. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 14, 2023.

in oil imports from Arab countries, which are crucial due to their geopolitical proximity, would result in increased expenses for Ethiopia and potentially lead to a wider economic crisis, food shortages, and hardships for the people.

Additionally, he also emphasized the shared challenge of poverty faced by both nations and suggested that cooperation rather than conflict would be more beneficial. He stressed that both countries could work together to overcome their shared economic challenges, and that waging war would only further harm their economies. Instead, he advocated for collaboration as a means to prosperity for both nations (Tiruneh, interview 2023).

In a statement made during an interview with Fana television on February 4, 2021, Yebital Aemiro, Ethiopia's ambassador to Sudan highlighted the significant harm suffered by Ethiopian residents in the area following the Sudanese army's takeover. He reported that the Sudanese soldiers not only stole tractors, equipment, mills, and other agricultural instruments but also set fire to tents and drove out Ethiopian day workers who had been working in the region. Additionally, they looted harvested crops and seized unharvested ones (Fana, 2021). Conversely, the ambassador stated that the invasion by Sudan resulted in significant damage to both property and human life, with estimated losses reaching nearly 1 billion birr (Alain, 2021).

Desalegn Tasew, the West Gondar Zone Administrator, further elaborated to the BBC that the consecutive actions of the Sudanese army in the area resulted in the displacement of residents and extensive destruction of property. He stated that the Sudanese soldiers burned various properties, machinery, warehouses, and farmers' grain, and then transported some of the collected sorghum and cotton products to their own districts while burning the remaining properties. Desalegn estimated that the attack led to the destruction of property worth more than one billion birr. He also mentioned that approximately 400 to 500 farmers in a small kebele called Salam Ber were forced to leave their village, resulting in the displacement of about 1,750 families (BBC, 2020).

In general, the Ethio-Sudan border conflict has unleashed a multifaceted economic crisis with far-reaching implications. Firstly, the suspension of vital public transport links has disrupted well-established trade routes, hindering robust trade and commerce between Ethiopia and Sudan (Tamrat and Muluken, 2023). Secondly, the displacement of Ethiopian farmers from the Al-

Fashaga region, a vital agricultural area, has led to the loss of economic benefits, particularly in sesame production, a major export. This displacement has also fueled increased unemployment, exacerbating internal problems and contributing to global food scarcity resulting from conflicts (Bereded, interview 2023)³⁴. Thirdly, political instability and conflict have the potential to deter tourists and investors, affecting crucial sectors for economic growth, such as tourism and foreign direct investment (Gizachew, interview 2023)³⁵.

Additionally, the conflict poses significant economic consequences for nations, disrupting trade, and endangering essential imports like fuel for Ethiopia. The conflict also threatens regional economic integration, reducing investor confidence and hindering collaborative efforts between nations. The affected region, crucial for Ethiopia's economy, faces the loss of fertile land and minerals, impacting exports and addressing foreign exchange issues (Ibid, interview 2023). The consecutive actions of the Sudanese army have resulted in extensive destruction of property, machinery, warehouses, and agricultural assets, estimating losses worth more than one billion birr (Alain, 2021). Lastly, hypothetical analysis by the IMF (2020) suggests that wars are associated with a 15–20% real GDP per capita decrease over a five-year span compared to a scenario without conflict, emphasizing the urgent need for resolution to mitigate long-term economic repercussions.

5.3. Political Implications of Ethio-Sudan Border conflict for Ethiopia, since 2018

According to Bereded (interview, 2023)³⁶ it is evident that the conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan has significant implications for the relationship between the two countries and the wider region. He emphasized that, Ethiopia's decision not to respond to Sudan's illegal invasion was a strategic one aimed at preventing further escalation and avoiding third-party intervention. This underscores the delicate balance of maintaining peace while safeguarding national sovereignty and preventing external interference from powerful countries interested in the region.

Furthermore, he claims that improved political relations between Ethiopia and Sudan would be mutually beneficial. There is a broad range of areas in which both countries can collaborate. The

³⁴ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

³⁵ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

³⁶ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) serves as a significant link between Ethiopia and Sudan. Upon its completion, the dam will bring benefits to both countries in terms of agricultural development and electricity generation. Additionally, Ethiopia values its relationship with Sudan, as Sudan provides support to Ethiopia on the international stage, particularly concerning the GERD and other important matters. All these political relations, however, will be impacted by the invasion of Sudan over the border. This, “*I believe is the political impact from the border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan*” (Bereded, interview 2023).

Additionally, Gizachew (interview, 2023)³⁷ highlighted that strong governance and effective defense are crucial in shaping foreign policy and attracting international support. Conversely, inaction or silence in the face of an invasion could invite interference from outside parties and compromise national security. This underscores the importance of maintaining a strong defense and governance to uphold the nation's standing in the international community and attract foreign direct investment.

The repeated border clashes between Sudan and Ethiopia have led to increased tension and strained relations between the two nations over time. Consequently, their political ties have weakened. In response to this situation, Sudan and Ethiopia established several collaborative committees, including those focused on border demarcation, security, joint border affairs, and Ethiopian-Sudanese defense. These joint committees serve as platforms for both countries to engage in discussions addressing their common border-related concerns (Gizachew, interview 2023).

Tibebu (interview, 2023)³⁸ emphasized the complexities of Ethiopia's foreign policy, particularly in managing relations with neighboring countries. Engaging in conflicts with neighboring nations can have far-reaching political repercussions, affecting Ethiopia's international standing and relationships with global organizations. This highlights the need for careful diplomatic navigation to safeguard Ethiopia's sovereignty, maintain regional stability, and protect its international standing.

³⁷ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

From the perspective of opposing parties, the political consequences of the border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan are extensive. Wasihun (interview, 2023)³⁹ underscores the significance of sovereignty in this matter. He emphasizes that the government's primary duty is to safeguard the country's sovereignty and borders, and this responsibility extends beyond the well-being of the citizens to include the protection of national borders. Even if the land seems vacant, handing it over has political repercussions, as it becomes a historical record that requires a legal foundation. He also insists on the importance of justice, stating that neither giving away one's rights nor taking someone else's should occur without proper justification. He claim the diplomatic impact of such actions, emphasizing that both engaging in war and addressing border issues through diplomacy have lasting effects.

Moreover, according to Tiruneh (interview, 2023)⁴⁰ there are political implications associated with the border conflict. He asserts that Sudan, in its invasion of the Ethiopian border, is not acting alone, as it receives support from other countries and governments. This collaboration could potentially lead the Ethiopian government into conflicts with those supporting Sudan. For instance, since Sudan is a member of the Arab League, Ethiopia risks damaging its relationships with other league member countries. The geopolitical alliances involved in the conflict further complicate the political landscape, adding an extra layer of complexity to the ongoing border tensions

Examining the political implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia, insights from an anonymous participant “A” (interview, 2023)⁴¹ reveal that a nation's strength may diminish if its borders are breached. Such an occurrence could foster the misconception that terrorist groups and other nations could easily achieve their objectives within these vulnerable nations. In the context of the border conflict between the two countries, Kathryn (interview, 2023)⁴² emphasizes that it not only fosters mistrust between nations but also has a ripple effect on regional engagement. The influence of the African Union on continental issues is impacted,

³⁹ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

⁴⁰ Tiruneh Gamta is the Secretary General of the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) party. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 14, 2023.

⁴¹ An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

⁴² Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

and it introduces complexities to international relations. The diplomatic pressure on the state becomes challenging, and there is a potential risk of a reduction in funds from the international community. This underlines the multifaceted and far-reaching political consequences that arise from border conflicts between nations.

The ongoing border dispute between Ethiopia and Sudan, coupled with other internal challenges, has resulted in a loss of political stability in Ethiopia. Various Amhara nationalist groups have exerted pressure on the federal government, claiming that the border has been violated. According to Soliman (2023), rebel groups have aligned themselves with Sudan and have been critical of Ethiopia's political situation. The conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan in Al-Fashga, as well as the involvement of Egypt and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), has further exacerbated Ethiopia's internal political turmoil. This is due to Sudan's support for Ethiopian opposition armed groups.

Additionally, the federal government has been engaged in battles against armed forces in the Benshangul and Oromo regions in recent years. Furthermore, with the backing of Sudan, the armed forces of Gumuz have targeted materials intended for the construction of the GERD, posing a significant obstacle to the completion of the dam. Additional regional and geopolitical players, including Egypt, Eritrea, and the Gulf Arab states, are actively pursuing their individual interests within the conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan. This dynamic further complicates the potential for resolving the mutual conflict and addressing the shared border issue (Soliman, 2023).

According to Tamirat and Muluken (2023), in the realm of politics, the two countries mutually supported each other on the international stage. Ethiopia stood by Sudan when the International Criminal Court accused the Sudanese leader, Omar Hasan Al-Bashir. Notably, Ethiopia strongly condemned the International Criminal Court's attempt to apprehend Al-Bashir during the African Summit in South Africa. Ethiopia firmly opposed the International Criminal Court's intervention in developing countries and Africa, emphasizing concerns about human rights violations and war crimes.

Additionally, Ethiopia and Sudan forged an agreement to promote peace and stability in the region. As part of this cooperation, terrorist groups that had undergone military training in

Eritrea and were planning to cross the Sudanese border into Ethiopia with the intent of destroying the Tekeze power generation dam were caught. They were subsequently brought to trial, showcasing the effectiveness of the collaborative efforts between Ethiopia and Sudan under their agreement for regional security (Tamirat and Muluken, 2023).

In light of the circumstances and geopolitical positioning of the Horn of Africa, Abiy Ahmed embarked on addressing political, economic, social, and security challenges diligently upon assuming office in 2018. He has introduced the Medemer concept to Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in an effort to improve stability and sustainable development. Moreover, the aim is to reduce conflict and foster an increase in domestic wealth. Both the early talks between Sudan's opposition parties and the two-decade-long conflict between Sudan and Eritrea were settled amicably on the basis of this Yemedemer philosophy. This Medemer philosophy seeks to unite the nations in the region in their efforts to settle disputes amicably, while also enhancing economic resources, developing a shared security agenda, cultivating a culture of knowledge sharing, maximizing the fair use of our natural and man-made resources, and elevating Ethiopia's profile internationally through collaboration with its neighbors (Girma et al, 2021).

As John (2020) notes, political volatility and the Red Sea situation in Horn Africa, as well as Abiy Ahmed's rise to power in Ethiopia, have made the relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia insecure. In addition to this, the fact that Abiy's relationship with the TPLF is getting worse and the Sudanese political and military leaders have close ties with the TPLF leaders and this has made the issue even more escalating. Ethiopia and Sudan signed a military agreement on May 1, 2018. This was to protect the Renaissance Dam.

Things seemed to be going well at first when they decided to form a coalition army. Two days later, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy, will enter Khartoum for a working visit. But before returning to Ethiopia, he warned Sudan to cut ties with the TPLF. Furthermore, a peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea was declared in July 2018. Sudan, which charges Eritrea with interfering in its affairs, has already been put in jeopardy by this quick political shift. This has weakened the political relations between the two countries (Soliman, 2023).

Since December 19, 2019, the Ethiopian government, in collaboration with the African Union, has been at the forefront of resolving the protests and disputes in Sudan, adhering to the premise

that African problems should be solved by Africans. In addition to holding separate meetings with the nation's ruling military council, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with leaders of all opposing parties in Khartoum. Ethiopia's swift response to the protests in Sudan was driven by several key factors. The two countries share a lengthy border and Ethiopia firmly believes in the principle that African issues should be resolved by Africans. Additionally, their long history and cultural ties, along with mutual economic needs and Ethiopia's strong security capabilities in the region, all played a role in this proactive approach. Despite efforts to strengthen political relations, the recent border conflict has strained the relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia (Tamirat and Muluken, 2023).

As a result, the political implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia since 2018, as discussed in various interviews and sources, are outlined as follows. Firstly, the conflict impacting mutual relations and the wider region, posing challenges to improved political ties, particularly concerning the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Invasion-related challenges impact collaboration areas such as agricultural development and electricity generation, leading to increased tension and strained political ties between the two nations (Bereded, interview 2023).

Secondly, Gizachew (interview, 2023)⁴³ claims the conflict as a potential wrong model for others contemplating invading Ethiopia, emphasizing the importance of strong governance and effective defense in shaping foreign policy. Inaction or silence in the face of invasion could compromise national security and attract interference or invasion.

Thirdly, Tibebu (interview, 2023)⁴⁴ underlines the complexities of Ethiopia's foreign policy, especially in managing relations with neighboring countries. Engagement in conflicts can have far-reaching political repercussions, affecting international standing and relationships with global organizations. Fourthly, Wasihun (interview, 2023)⁴⁵ emphasizes the political significance of sovereignty, highlighting the government's duty to protect national borders. Surrendering

⁴³ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

⁴⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

⁴⁵ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

seemingly vacant land has historical and legal implications, affecting diplomacy and long-lasting consequences.

Additionally, Tiruneh (interview, 2023)⁴⁶ notes the involvement of other countries in supporting Sudan's invasion, potentially risking damage to relationships with Arab League member countries and adding complexity to geopolitical dynamics. Furthermore, an anonymous participant "A" (interview, 2023)⁴⁷ highlights that breached borders may diminish a nation's strength, impacting trust between nations, regional engagement, and introducing complexities to international relations. The internal fallout includes a loss of political stability in Ethiopia, with Amhara nationalist groups pressuring the government, and rebel groups aligned with Sudan criticizing Ethiopia's political situation. Regional and geopolitical players, including Egypt, Eritrea, and Gulf Arab states, actively pursue individual interests within the conflict, complicating its resolution and adding layers of complexity to regional tensions.

Kathryn (interview, 2023)⁴⁸ notes that the conflict challenges the influence of the African Union on continental issues, introducing complexities to international relations and potentially reducing funds from the international community. Lastly, the conflict obstructs development projects, such as the construction of the GERD, with Sudan's support for Ethiopian opposition groups causing disruptions and obstacles (Tamirat and Muluken, 2023). Overall, the Ethio-Sudan border conflict presents multifaceted political implications for Ethiopia, ranging from strained international relations and geopolitical complexities to internal political turmoil and challenges to development projects. The delicate balance of maintaining peace, safeguarding sovereignty, and navigating complex diplomatic landscapes underscores the gravity of the situation.

5.4. Security Implications of Ethio-Sudan Border conflict for Ethiopia since 2018

Tibebu (interview, 2023)⁴⁹ claims the Ethio-Sudan border conflict has the major security implications related to the potential rise in illegal weapon trafficking. He emphasized that this

⁴⁶ Tiruneh Gamta is the Secretary General of the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) party. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 14, 2023.

⁴⁷ An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

⁴⁸ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

⁴⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

could lead to various crises in the region, including illegal human trafficking and creates an environment conducive to terrorist activities. He also pointed out that these security challenges could ultimately lead to increased poverty and regression in the surrounding countries.

Based on this, Bereded (interview, 2023)⁵⁰ expressed concern over the disruption of peace, escalating tension across the region, and a break in production within the contested zone. This disruption extends to products intended for foreign exchange, raising questions about sovereignty and potentially creating vulnerability for the penetration of terrorist groups. Ambassador Bereded emphasized the need for a strong defense strategy, noting the stored forces that could be deployed to address potential threats in various locations. Additionally he claims that it makes Ethiopia vulnerable to various security problems. It will be a zone with many displaced people. It will make Ethiopia under pressure.

On the other hand an anonymous participant “A” (interview, 2023)⁵¹ expressed deep concerns about the heightened risk of illicit weapons trafficking in the region due to the Ethio-Sudan border conflict. The sovereignty of the border is a crucial concern, with illegal smuggling activities expanding beyond established boundaries. Control is effectively enforced only along the asphalt road, while the remaining sections remain unmonitored, providing free entry and exit opportunities. This uncontrolled environment poses a serious security threat, as individuals can move across the border at will, potentially facilitating the trafficking of illegal weapons.

According to Gizachew (interview, 2023) between 1961 and 2020, an estimated 17 to 18 armed groups operated in Ethiopia, with 15 of these guerrilla groups using Sudan as safe havens or sanctuaries. Armed factions like the (TPLF) and Kemant receive military training and logistical support from Sudan. This support extends to groups such as the Ginbot 7 and the Somali Liberation Front. Notably, missiles have been launched into Ethiopia from Sudan by TPLF and Kemant rebels, underlining the immediate security threats originating from the border conflict. The ongoing conflict not only heightens regional security concerns but also serves as a destabilizing factor with potentially severe consequences for peace and stability in the area.

⁵⁰ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

⁵¹An anonymous participant, referred to as "Participant A," holds a Ph.D. and works as a researcher at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 20, 2023.

The information provided in the phone interview with an anonymous participant “B” (interview, 2023)⁵² highlights several critical issues stemming from the Ethio-Sudan border conflict. Firstly, the entry of Ethiopian and international citizens seeking refuge in Ethiopia due to the conflict poses significant security threats and challenges. The increased flow of people across the border has created opportunities for illegal activities.

Moreover, the displaced Ethiopian farmers in the area are facing severe shortages of essential resources, including water, electricity, medical supplies, and transportation. This scarcity complicates the management of the needs of the displaced population, exacerbating an already challenging situation. The interviewee also highlighted the prevalence of illegal goods trafficking across the border. Smuggling activities include items such as onions, perfumes, clothes, and bottled water from Sudan into Ethiopia, as well as the illegal export of grain products and livestock from Ethiopia to Sudan. These illegal trade activities not only have economic implications but also pose security risks and challenges for Ethiopia. Furthermore, while illegal weapons trafficking are not a significant issue due to widespread local armament, the overall situation presents significant security implications for Ethiopia. The combination of security threats from resource shortages in refugees, and illegal goods trafficking creates a complex and challenging environment for law enforcement and security forces in the region (an anonymous participant “B”, interview 2023).

According to OCHA (2023), it has been reported that the number of individuals from various countries, including Sudan, who have migrated to Ethiopia as a result of the Sudanese war and border conflict, has reached 91,500 as of November 2023. The primary entry points for refugees into Ethiopia are Metema in the West Gondar Zone and Kurmuk in the Asosa Zone of the Benshangul region. During this forced migration, the majority of displaced individuals are Ethiopians. The data indicates that 43 percent of refugees are Ethiopians, 39 percent are Sudanese citizens, and 18 percent are from other countries.

⁵² An anonymous participant, identified as "Participant B," is an individual member of the Federal Police, holding the position of North West Ethiopia Transboundary Crime Control Commander. The interview was conducted via phone on October 23, 2023.

The security implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia, from the Perspective of competing Parties as emphasized by Wasihun (interview, 2023)⁵³ from EZEMA and Tiruneh (interview, 2023)⁵⁴ from OFECO, bring to light several critical issues that pose significant challenges for Ethiopia's security. Wasihun (interview, 2023) the Director of Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA) Party Affairs, emphasized the security risks stemming from the ongoing conflict in Sudan. He pointed out that while there are peaceful refugees seeking shelter in Ethiopia, there are also individuals crossing the border with secret missions, potentially posing security threats. Moreover, he raised concerns about the possibility of outside involvement by a third party, indicating that the open and invaded border area presents a dangerous threat to Ethiopia's security.

Tiruneh (interview, 2023)⁵⁵ during an interview at the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) office highlighted the social implications of the conflict. He expressed concerns that the lack of adequate security services for the border communities could lead to demonstrations and riots. Additionally, he emphasized the mobility of border communities and stressed the need for collaborative efforts to address concerns related to peace and security, emphasizing that the security of one party is closely linked to the security of the other.

Valuable insights were obtained through an interview at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Kathryn (interview, 2023). From a security perspective, the Ethio-Sudan border conflict manifests in escalating internal displacement within the region. The situation has the potential to give rise to proxy conflicts, contributing to the proliferation of armed groups, including terrorist non-state armed groups and militia factions. The repercussions are particularly pronounced among women, creating a disproportionate impact on their well-being compared to other segments of society. The conflict further exacerbates challenges related to public or citizen insecurity, placing immense humanitarian pressure on the affected populations and resulting in humanitarian crises. Transportation issues, especially concerning vulnerable groups like children, women, and the elderly, add an additional layer of complexity to the crisis. The regional power

⁵³ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

⁵⁴ Tiruneh Gamta is the Secretary General of the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) party. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 14, 2023.

⁵⁵ Tiruneh Gamta is the Secretary General of the Oromia Federalist Congress (OFECO) party. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 14, 2023.

dynamics are significantly influenced, with water security emerging as a critical concern that transforms into both internal and external problems, escalating to an international issue.

An Addis Ababa University professor and researcher of African affairs Dr. Samuel told for Al-ain Amharic News about the fact that East Africa is an area with complex interests of Western, Far Eastern and Middle Eastern countries; because of this the Sudanese war may continue to change its shape. In particular, Dr. Samuel told to Al-ain that the unresolved issue of the common border between Ethiopia and Sudan and the continuation of the Sudan war will make the issue more complicated. In addition, he said, individuals with missions that could harm Ethiopia's interests in the name of refugees may enter to Ethiopia and terrorists may get an opportunity to organize more. He added that this could be an additional threat to Ethiopia's economy, which is being tested by drought, war, high cost of living and lack of foreign currency. It will be recalled that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently stated that the war in Sudan will inevitably harm Ethiopia and that an 11-member diplomatic committee has been established to reduce the damage (Al-ain, 2023).

The fact that individuals are being forced to stay in cramped conditions until they can cross the border underscores the urgent need for enhanced security measures and humanitarian interventions to protect vulnerable populations. The implications of these practices extend beyond immediate security concerns. They also have broader social, economic, and humanitarian consequences. The exploitation of vulnerable individuals through human trafficking undermines efforts to promote human rights, social justice, and stability in the region. It also contributes to the erosion of trust between communities and law enforcement agencies, hindering efforts to address security challenges effectively (Research and Evidence Facility, 2020).

Ato Desalegn Tasewu, Administrator of West Gondar Zone, reported property destruction and casualties near the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. Two individuals lost their lives, four were injured, and over 1700 people were displaced. Around 200 farmers claimed Sudanese soldiers damaged valuable cultivated property. Mr. Desalegn revealed attacks initiated by the Sudanese army in October, expressing concern about their occupation and emphasizing the need for cessation. Property damage was acknowledged since October 27, with ongoing burning and damage to farmers' camps from November 3rd to 4th as Sudanese forces expanded into new territories (BBC, 2020).

Generally, based on information gathered from both primary and secondary sources, the security implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia since 2018 are extensive. Firstly, according to Tibebe (interview, 2023)⁵⁶ from the Ministry of Defense noted the potential rise in illegal weapon trafficking due to the conflict, posing risks of crises, illegal human trafficking, and creating a conducive environment for terrorist activities. This, in turn, could lead to increased poverty and regression in the surrounding countries. Bereded (interview, 2023)⁵⁷ from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses concerns over the disruption of peace, escalating tension, and questions about sovereignty, raising alarms about vulnerability to the penetration of terrorist groups.

Secondly, historical supports for armed factions like OLF, TPLF, and Kemant from Sudan, resulting in immediate security threats, destabilizing peace and stability in the region (Gizachew interview, 2023)⁵⁸. Thirdly, a phone interview with an anonymous participant “B” (interview, 2023)⁵⁹ the North West Ethiopia Transboundary Crime Control Commander emphasizes security threats, particularly in refugee camps facing shortages of essential resources, exacerbating an already challenging situation and posing risks of demonstrations and riots. Fourthly, OCHA data reports a significant influx of displaced peoples due to the border conflict, raising security risks and potential threats as individuals with hidden missions cross the border (OCHA, 2023).

Finally, Kathryn (interview, 2023)⁶⁰ highlights escalating internal displacement, potential proxy conflicts, militarization, and regional power dynamics influenced significantly, with water security emerging as a critical concern. The displacement of farmers necessitates humanitarian aid delivery, imposing a significant burden on Ethiopia's economy. Additionally, the practice of locking illegal immigrants in narrow rooms and extorting money reflects ruthless exploitation, stressing the need for enhanced security measures and humanitarian interventions. The conflict

⁵⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebe Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

⁵⁷ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

⁵⁸ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

⁵⁹ An anonymous participant, identified as "Participant B," is an individual member of the Federal Police, holding the position of North West Ethiopia Transboundary Crime Control Commander. The interview was conducted via phone on October 23, 2023.

⁶⁰ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

has resulted in loss of human life, injuries, and displacement, highlighting the destruction of valuable property and impacting farmers and communities.

5.5. The Implications of the Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict on the Grand

Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) since, 2018

If two countries are in conflict, it can hinder their ability to find a resolution to any outstanding issues between them. The conflict, regardless of its nature, must be addressed between the two countries involved. Ethiopia and Sudan have yet to come to an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issue. GERD holds significant importance for Ethiopia, extending beyond just economic implications to touch upon its very existence. Amidst this unresolved matter, a border dispute in Al-Fashga has emerged, potentially impacting the negotiation process. There is a risk that third-party countries seeking to safeguard their own national interests may become involved in the conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan for personal gain.

Ethiopia's announcement in 2011 to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile River at a cost of billions, led by former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, marked a transformative initiative aiming to position Ethiopia as a key African power hub. The GERD is Ethiopia's largest hydroelectric project, holding historical, political, economic, and geopolitical significance for both the nation and the Nile River valley. It symbolizes compromise and national unity within a fragmented society (National Geographic, 2011).

According to Bereded (interview, 2023)⁶¹ emphasizes a significant and interconnected aspect of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, specifically its potential impact on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) negotiations. According to him, the ongoing conflict along the Ethio-Sudan border could introduce complications and interruptions into the negotiation process for the GERD. A key concern raised is the involvement of third parties with assigned interests in the GERD. He also suggests that these external actors might exploit the existing conflict to disrupt either the negotiation process or the dam's completion. The implied threat is that the Ethio-Sudan border conflict could provide a fertile ground for proxy wars or interventions by external forces with strategic interests in the GERD.

⁶¹ Bereded Animut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

The potential consequences of such disruptions are significant. Postponements in the GERD negotiation process or its completion could have far-reaching effects on Ethiopia's development plans, regional stability, and the overall balance of power in the area. The link between the border conflict and the GERD negotiations underscores the complexity of regional dynamics and the interconnected nature of geopolitical interests. In light of these potential risks, he emphasizes the importance of Ethiopia taking proactive measures to safeguard against any attempts by third parties to exploit the situation for their advantage. This proactive stance is crucial to ensure the uninterrupted progress of the GERD negotiations and completion, which are of paramount importance to Ethiopia's economic and energy security (Bereded, interview 2023).

Gizachew (interview, 2023)⁶² from Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), an interesting perspective on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was presented. Notably, he suggested that Sudan's primary interest might lie more in the territorial dispute over Al-Fashga rather than a direct focus on the GERD. According to him, while Sudan might adopt a stance opposing Egypt in the context of the dam negotiations, there is a possibility that they are positioning Al-Fashga as a potential area for compromise. This perspective introduces a hidden layer to the dynamics surrounding the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its implications for the GERD. The assertion that Sudan may prioritize Al-Fashga over the GERD in its negotiations with Ethiopia and Egypt underlines the complexity of regional interests and the interconnected nature of geopolitical considerations.

Additionally he claims that, the Ethio-Sudan border conflict, which involves territorial disputes and has the potential to escalate into more significant regional tensions, could indirectly influence Sudan's stance on the GERD. As the border conflict unfolds, Sudan's strategic priorities and the compromises it seeks may be influenced, thus impacting its position in the GERD negotiations. The suggestion that Al-Fashga could be a subject of compromise implies a potential trade-off or bargaining chip that Sudan might employ in broader negotiations involving the GERD. This intricately links the territorial disputes in the border conflict with the ongoing discussions and geopolitical maneuvering around the GERD (Gizachew, interview 2023).

⁶² Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

According to Crisis Group's (2021) report, disruptions in Al-Fashaga are linked to Sudan's belief that acquiring fertile land in the region can boost its economy and strengthen its position in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) negotiations. Economic challenges from the Bashir era, including debt and subsidy issues, limit Sudan's financial resources. Frustrations over essential services and economic management have led to protests. Additionally, high-ranking military officials with business interests in Al-Fashaga could influence Sudan's approach. Speculations suggest Sudan may lease agricultural land to Gulf Arab states as part of its economic recovery plan. Amid justifications for Al-Fashaga, the main driver seems to be Sudan's strategy to exert influence in GERD talks, straining relations with Ethiopia (Crisis Group, 2021).

Based on Tibebe (interview, 2023)⁶³ it was revealed that Sudan has denied the filling of the Nile Dam, claiming that they have not accepted the agreement for its filling up to that point. They took actions to hinder the first round of filling when it was being carried out. The interview also highlighted that the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is seen as a solution to the unemployment problem for millions of people. It was mentioned that Sudan's stance on the dam has softened as they now reluctantly agree to it, acknowledging that once the dam is full, it will contain water. These developments suggest that Sudan's stance on the dam is evolving and may have implications for the ongoing negotiation process.

Apart from this, Wasihun (interview, 2023)⁶⁴ expressed concerns regarding the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) within the designated timeframe. According to him, the ongoing dam negotiations and the border issue should not be treated as separate matters. He believes that Sudan can be intricately linked to the dam discussions, making it challenging to address them independently. Consequently, this interconnectedness may pose a barrier to the successful conclusion of the dam deal.

Kathryn (interview, 2023)⁶⁵ from IGAD provides several key aspects related to the Ethio-Sudan border conflict and its potential implications for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)

⁶³ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebe Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

⁶⁴ Wasihun Tesfaye is a Director of Party Affairs at the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA). The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on December 10, 2023.

⁶⁵ Kathryn (Ph.D.) is a dedicated researcher at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the interview was held in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

were emphasized. She stressed the complex regional power dynamics and the emergence of a water security issue as critical components of the ongoing conflict. The Ethio-Sudan border conflict, according to her, has spill-over effects that extend beyond territorial disputes. Despite these regional complexities, Sudan has not yet accepted the GERD agreement. It is noteworthy that Sudan plays a distinctive role and has its own contributions to the negotiation and agreement processes concerning the GERD.

As GERD talks worsen, Sudan and Ethiopia experience heightened tension. In January 2021, negotiations abruptly ended as Ethiopia and Egypt wanted to maintain control over technical aspects despite Sudan's call for AU experts to play a larger role. The strained situation at Sudan's border with Ethiopia makes both parties less inclined to engage in further talks. Sudan's Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources expressed concern over the dam's completion, suggesting that the national security of Sudan is directly threatened. The escalating rhetoric, increased hostilities, and previous AU discussions' limited effectiveness lead some to speculate that the GERD issue might be taken to the UN Security Council (Lowings, 2021).

Sudan's evolving relationship with Ethiopia has influenced trilateral GERD discussions with Egypt. Initially supportive of GERD, Sudan's stance shifted due to changing diplomatic ties, now expressing concerns about environmental impacts. As tensions rise with Ethiopia, Sudan aligns more closely with Egypt, leading to increased mutual defense efforts. Sudan's fears about GERD's potential adverse effects have prompted joint drills with Egypt. Egypt perceives the dam as a threat to its water access, making forceful threats if Ethiopia doesn't comply, a claim Ethiopia disputes (Holmquist and Rock, 2023)

As a whole, the Ethio-Sudan Border Conflict grips several implications for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Firstly, the conflict could extend and expose the GERD negotiation process to third-party intervention, potentially leading to proxy wars or external interventions linked with strategic interests in the dam. The diplomatic tensions between Sudan and Ethiopia, especially during trilateral discussions with Egypt on GERD, have influenced the situation. Secondly, any disruptions or delays in GERD negotiations or completion could significantly impact Ethiopia's development plans, regional stability, and overall balance of power. Proactive

measures are deemed essential to safeguard against attempts by external forces to exploit the border conflict for their advantage (Bereded, interview 2023)⁶⁶.

Thirdly, Gizachew (interview, 2023)⁶⁷ claims Sudan's potential use of the territorial dispute over Al-Fashga as a bargaining chip, indirectly influencing its stance on GERD negotiations with Ethiopia and Egypt. Treating the GERD and border issues separately may pose a barrier to successfully concluding the dam deal. Fourthly, Crisis Group's report indicates that Sudan's disruption in Al-Fashaga is economically driven, aiming to revive its struggling economy and enhance its negotiation power on GERD. High-ranking military officials with business interests in Al-Fashaga might further complicate Sudan's approach (Crisis Group, 2021).

Lastly, Tibebu (interview, 2023)⁶⁸ exposes, Sudan's growing stance on the GERD filling. Initially denying the filling and taking actions to hinder it, Sudan now reluctantly agrees to the dam, recognizing its significance once full. This evolving stance suggests changing dynamics in the negotiation process. Despite complex regional power dynamics and Sudan's yet unaccepted GERD agreement, the interconnected nature of these issues emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive and proactive approach to safeguard Ethiopia's interests in the region.

⁶⁶ Bereded Anmut, Ambassador and Director of Border Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMOFA), conducted an interview in Addis Ababa on October 11, 2023.

⁶⁷ Gizachew Asirat, (Ph.D.), serves as the Director of African Affairs and Researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The interview took place in Addis Ababa on October 23, 2023.

⁶⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Tibebu Ephraim, serving in the Chief Department at the Ministry of Defense, holds the position of Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, and leads the International and Local Relations Team. The interview with him took place in Addis Ababa on October 19, 2023.

6. Conclusion

The rising tensions in the Al-Fashaga region between Sudan and Ethiopia are a multifaceted issue with historical, political, and economic implications. The internal turmoil in Ethiopia, particularly the conflict with the TPLF, has fueled the border dispute as the Ethiopian government's focus on internal matters allowed Sudan to assert its claims over the disputed area. Historical disputes stemming from the colonial era, including the contested 1902 treaty and border demarcation by Major General Gwynn in 1903, have further complicated the situation.

Both Domestic political situations in both countries have also played a role, with Sudan's transitional military government using the border issue to divert attention from internal problems. The involvement of business elites, military figures, and external factors has further triggered the conflict, with both sides presenting conflicting claims over ownership of the Al-Fashaga region. Sudan accuses Ethiopian farmers of encroaching on its territory, while Ethiopia contends that the border demarcation is not finalized, stress ongoing tensions and power struggles.

The Ethio-Sudan border conflict is driven by a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, ethnic tensions, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), illegal trade, resource scarcity, militarization, and refugee displacement contribute to regional instability. Externally, Egypt's media strategy, economic interests, geopolitical considerations, and a military agreement with Sudan further complicate the situation. External adversaries' efforts to destabilize Ethiopia aim to gain control over strategic regions such as the Red Sea and the Nile basin. Ethiopia's potential for economic development makes it an attractive destination for various projects and investors, creating a clash of interests between those promoting stability and those seeking to exploit vulnerabilities.

Economically, the conflict has significant implications for Ethiopia, disrupting trade, transport, and essential economic links with Sudan. This disruption has led to the loss of a major market for Sudan and hindered Ethiopia's imports of vital goods like red onions and fuel. The displacement of Ethiopian farmers from the Al-Fashaga region has impacted sesame production, leading to economic strains including increased unemployment and internal problems. The broader economic consequences, affecting tourism, foreign direct investment, and overall stability, underscore the urgent need for a resolution to foster mutual prosperity. Diplomatic efforts are

crucial to mitigate the conflict's impact on food security, GDP, and foreign exchange reserves, with the goal of ensuring sustainable growth for both nations.

Politically, the conflict has strained Ethiopia's relations with Sudan, complicating collaborative efforts on regional projects like the GERD. It challenges regional organizations like the AU and IGAD, introducing complexities to international relations and potentially reducing international support. Security concerns extend beyond territorial disputes, encompassing illegal weapon trafficking, potential terrorist activities, and historical support for rebel groups, thus exacerbating regional instability and humanitarian crises.

The Ethio-Sudan border conflict presents a complex array of security challenges for Ethiopia, extending beyond territorial disputes to encompass issues such as illegal weapon trafficking, potential terrorist activities, and historical support for rebel armed groups. The conflict raises concerns about regional stability, socio-economic impacts, and humanitarian crises, with implications for internal displacement, proxy conflicts, and militarization. The loss of life, destruction of property, and displacement of communities stress the urgent need for strategic interventions to address the multifaceted security threats posed by the conflict.

The implications of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) extend far beyond territorial disputes, illuminating a complicated interplay of geopolitical, economic, and negotiation dynamics since 2018. Concerns about potential disruptions in the GERD negotiation process, as stressed in discussions, bring attention to the risk of external actors exploiting the border conflict for their advantage. Insights into Sudan's potential use of Al-Fashga as a bargaining chip reveal an additional layer of complexity, where the territorial dispute could indirectly impact Sudan's stance on the GERD. Mention of the potential obstruction of the GERD's filling underlines the evolving nature of Sudan's stance and the need for adaptive strategies in the negotiation process. The interconnectedness of the GERD and border issues emphasizes the challenge of addressing these matters independently.

A constructivist analysis of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict emphasizes the significance of perceptions, norms, and power dynamics in shaping the behavior of state actors. Constructivism emphasizes that sovereignty and territorial claims are socially constructed through shared understandings and agreements among states. Differing interpretations of these concepts by

Ethiopia and Sudan contribute to the tensions and conflicts. Power dynamics in this context extend beyond physical assets to include resources rooted in identity and beliefs, with actors utilizing norms and values to influence each other's actions. Understanding the diffusion of norms related to territorial integrity and dispute resolution mechanisms can provide insights into the underlying dynamics of the conflict and potential resolution pathways.

As well, further research could explore the socio-cultural impacts of the conflict, analyze the role of international actors, and investigate potential pathways for conflict resolution through regional cooperation, examining how external actors influence and are influenced by the dispute. Investigating the role of media and public perception in shaping nationalistic sentiments and policy decisions could also offer valuable insights. Additionally, exploring the long-term socio-economic impacts of the conflict on local communities and regional development would enhance understanding of the broader implications.

A thought-provoking question that emerges from this conflict is: How can regional and international stakeholders effectively mediate such complex disputes to foster long-term stability and development, considering the intertwined nature of historical claims, political dynamics, and socio-economic interests? Addressing this question is crucial for creating sustainable solutions that benefit both nations and the broader region.

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Appendixes

Appendix-I: List of Key Informants

S/N	Name	Organization	Position	Date
1	Ambassador Bered Animut	Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director of Border Affairs	11/10/2023
2	Kathryn (PhD)	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development /IGAD/	Peace and Security researcher on the Horn of Africa	18/10/2023
3	Gizachew Asirat (PhD)	Institute of Foreign Affairs	Directorate of African Affairs and Researcher	23/10/2023
4	Lt. Col. Tibebe Ephraim	Ethiopian Ministry of defense,	Director General of Defense External Relations, Military Cooperation, Head of International and Local Relations	19/10/2023
5	Mr. Wasihun Tesfaye	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice /EZEMA/	Director of Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice /EZEMA/Party affairs	12/10/2023
6	Anonymous participant	Institute of Peace and Security Studies	Researcher	20/10/2023
7	Mr Tiruneh Gamta	Oromo Federalist Congress /OFECO	Administrator of Oromo Federalist Congress /OFECO/	14/10/2023
8	Anonymous participant	Federal Police	North West Ethiopia Trans boundary Crime Control Commander	23/10/2023

Appendix-II: Interview Guide Questions for key Informants

My name is Nigus Alemu and I am a master's degree student of International Relations and diplomacy at Addis Ababa University. The purpose of this interviewing guide is to collect information or data to conduct study to meet the requirements for the Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy. This strategy was developed to help people understand more regarding the repercussions of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict since 2018, implications for Ethiopia. Considering the information you provide about the present Ethio-Sudan border dispute and its implications for Ethiopia are pinpointed and examined.

Your willingness to take part in this study makes me very happy. I'd want to start by getting your permission to record this interview. Because I will be able to listen to our chat over and over while I am transcribing, I want to record it. In turn, this will help me maintain the data's accuracy and prevent me from interpreting your responses incorrectly.

I humbly request that you provide as much accurate data as possible as an outcome. I therefore promise that every data you provided me will be treated in confidentiality.

General Information

1. Date and place of interview
2. Name
3. Position/Responsibility.....

Interview Guide Questions

1. What do you think about the causes of the current Ethio-Sudan border conflict?
2. What is your opinion about the internal and external factors which triggered the Ethio-Sudan border conflict?
3. Given the fact that there is ongoing internal crisis on both countries, how do you reflect on its dimension on the border clash between them?
4. What is the intention and interest of the Ethiopian and Sudanese government on the contested land of Al-Fashiga/?
5. What do you think; the governments are required to do in terms of the border agreements that have been made in the past?

6. What are the implications of the current Ethio-Sudan border conflict for Ethiopia as a whole? And specifically?
- From the economic point of view, what do you think about the economic advantage that Ethiopia has lost and will lose in this border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan?
 - In terms of politics, what is the impact of the conflict on Ethiopia's foreign policy and relations with its neighbor? And beyond?
 - What do you think about the impact of the Ethio-Sudan border conflict on Ethiopia's national security?
 - Considering the current situation of Ethiopia, what pressure do you think the conflict will have?
 - What kind of connection do you see between the border conflict and the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam/GERD/?
7. Do you have any other suggestions and ideas?