IT'S A CATCH-22: AN ANALYSIS OF THE HORN OF AFRICA'S STRATEGIC
SIGNIFICANCE AND ITS ENDURING FRAGILITY

A Thesis by
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Abstract

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SIGNIFICANCE AND ITS ENDURING FRAGILITY

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What is the relationship between the enduring state instability in the Horn and
the region's strategic significance? In the contemporary era, the Horn of Africa is
often illustrated as a region of weak states plagued with instability. Although this is
true, these features that characterize the Horn are not isolated to just this region, so
what makes instability in the Horn different? This thesis explores the cycle of ethnic
tension and state fragmentation that is fueled by the existing domestic contributors to
state fragility as well as the increased pressures from extra-regional actors.

The Horn's strategic location at the nexus of two key elements of the global
economy (the Suez Canal and the petroleum producing regions of the Middle East)
has made this region a magnet for foreign intervention, which is demonstrated by the
cycles of great power geopolitical competition that have cast a shadow over the
political, economic, and security development of this region for nearly two centuries.
The actors present in the region may shift change, but they continue to press on

unresolved pressure points in in a region that is already fragile and vulnerable to state fragmentation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When it comes to the Horn of Africa - composed of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, and Djibouti - perhaps the overwhelming narrative accompanying this region centers around a seemingly never-ending pattern of conflict and instability. In numerous global peace and conflict assessments, including the 2020 Global Peace Index, the constituent states of the Horn consistently rank among the most fragile, least peaceful, conflict-ridden countries in the world. The violence of the Horn that has characterized recent decades has had an incredibly high cost with reverberations felt in the international system. From the immeasurable loss of life following decades of social unrest and civil war to the economic cost of issues, such as piracy and terrorism, that is felt by global powers conducting trade in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world, these security and stability challenges further exacerbate the many structural and institutional shortcomings in the regional state models. While many of the indicators that illustrate the fragility of this region, such as political instability, excess of autocrats, poor economic performance, ongoing intrastate and interstate conflicts, and increasing international military presence, are not unique, several elements differentiate the fragility and weakness of the Horn to the many other global conflicts.

First, the proximity of this region to the strategic maritime routes through the Suez Canal and the petroleum-producing regions of the Middle East defines the Horn's contemporary significance in the international system. The maritime route through the Red Sea connecting Europe and Asia sees 12% of global trade, so any blockages along this route have the potential to cause serious repercussions for international trade (New Zealand Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and Trade 2021). The global economy depends on maintaining free and clear passage through this route as trade flows between the Suez Canal and the Bab al-Mandab strait between Yemen and Djibouti. The Red Sea is less than 20 miles wide in the Bab al-Mandab strait at its narrowest as it flows into the Gulf of Aden, then to the Indian Ocean.

The Bab el-Mandeb receives its increased recognition as a possible choke point in the strategic Red Sea trade route and has witnessed the presence of major economic powers for more than a century to ensure safe passage between the Red Sea to its west towards Europe and the Gulf of Aden to its east towards Asia. From the first "Scramble for Africa" conducted by the European imperial powers to the Cold War powers using the Horn as a strategic arena, the strategic significance of the Horn has colored the region's importance for more than a century. As global political, economic, and security systems continue to become more interconnected, contemporary emerging global powers from Asia and the Middle East have arrived in the Horn to establish their own strategic zones of influence at this nexus of international trade and energy production -- just as major global powers have done before at every historical juncture.

Secondly, the political, economic, social, and security dynamics that accompany the waves of renewed international interest in the Horn undoubtedly have had implications on the historical political development of the region. From the fragility of the Horn's state models and institutions, the societal implications of long-standing imbalanced power and resource arrangements, and the continued involvement of global powers invested in maintaining regional leaders receptive to the foreign presence in the region, these factors continue to challenge the state stability and security are not unique to this region and seem to share the same roots with the many security issues present across Africa. So, what makes creating viable states in the Horn amidst shifts in the international system so difficult? The

enduring state fragility that characterizes the region has resulted in a cycle of ethnic tension and state fragmentation that is fueled by the existing domestic contributors to state instability as well as the increased pressures from extra-regional actors. These weaknesses have made the Horn more vulnerable and susceptible to shifts in the international system at the region's own expense in every historical era leaving the Horn more unstable and insecure.

The following thesis will offer a study into the state and political development in the Horn of Africa to further understand the domestic and external destabilizing factors that challenge the security and stability of the state and regional structures. The scope of this thesis will focus on the political, economic, and security dimensions of the relationship between the Horn's strategic importance in the international system and the enduring patterns of state instability and fragmentation that characterize this region.

The emergence of these regional dynamics and security issues in the Horn of Africa and the greater Red Sea region is not new. The persistence of these issues further illustrates how deeply rooted these challenges stemming from domestic and external stressors are to state and regional stability and how these enduring challenges undermine the capacity of the regional states to respond effectively to these re-emerging challenges. The relative political inexperience of the constituent states of the Horn cannot entirely explain the weak governance processes and constitutional crises witnessed in the region today as shifts in the international system and influence of global powers continue to play an important factor in political, economic, social, and security dynamics. To contextualize and analyze this study about the state and political development, and to understand the enduring state weaknesses in the Horn and the destabilizing factors which contribute to the social tensions and state fragmentation, this thesis will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the origins of state weakness in the Horn? What are the governance and societal challenges from the enduring state weaknesses in this region and their consequences in the region and beyond? How has the strategic significance of the Horn impacted the region's political development? What is the relationship between the enduring state instability in the Horn and the region's strategic significance?

- How have local destabilizing forces - ethnic, clan, and religious tensions - impacted the political, economic, social, and security dynamics at the state and regional levels? How have these forces evolved in the historical context of the region? How do these forces impact the Horn in the contemporary period?

To address these questions, this thesis will be divided into the following sections. The second chapter includes a background to contextualize the themes underscoring many of the security and stability challenges facing the Horn, including the cycles of great power geopolitical competition that have cast a shadow over the political, economic, and security development of this region for nearly two centuries. The third chapter further examines the complex security and stability challenges facing the region with an analysis of the destabilizing factors to domestic stability along political, economic, and security dimensions as well as a look into how the Horn's strategic significance pressures the state and regional systems. The analysis of the domestic contributors to state instability will examine the shortcomings of the state structure in dealing with stressors emerging from social tensions along ethnic, clan, and religious dimensions.

When paired with an examination into the interests and involvement of global actors in the Horn, the third chapter also aims to further understand domestic and external pressures on the state structures in the Horn which exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities in these

systems by focusing on how the region has responded to shifts in the international system from the Cold War to the contemporary era. Since the strategic significance of the Horn is defined by this region's proximity to the greater Red Sea region which is of critical importance to the global economy, it is important to understand this region's historical political, economic, and security relationship with the rest of the world to contextualize the shifts in the international system that influence regional and state dynamics. Many of the domestic level destabilizing factors, weak state structures, and social issues, have been present in this region since independence and continue to shape its post-colonial legacies. What are the key issues facing the Horn in the contemporary era? How have these issues evolved in the historical context of the region? This analysis will focus on the origins of state weakness in the internal dynamics of the Horn's constituent states as well as the political and social implications from the postcolonial legacy that have found their way into the foundations of the state to further contextualize the enduring governance and societal challenges.

This study of the Horn of Africa is both descriptive and analytical. The information presented has been obtained from primary sources, such as government documents, and secondary sources available on the internet, such as research articles, books, scholarly articles, lectures, and panels. The analysis aims to emphasize the importance of the Horn not only as a region but to also analyze the geostrategic role this region plays on the global stage. By contextualizing the interconnected dynamics of the region and regional origins of state weakness, this thesis aims to understand the challenges facing the region as well as opportunities for the regional states to assert their interests in the region amidst the growing international strategic interest and pressure in the Horn.

Theoretical Framework

       This thesis borrows several theories to help outline and analyze the challenges to security and stability in the Horn and how they have evolved alongside shifts in the international system. The shifts in the international system and the involvement of global powers in the region can be viewed through a neo-realist perspective as they are acting in the region based on their own interests and their motivations can be presumed by their position and arrangement in the structure of the international system. The bipolarity of the Cold War era incentivized the US and USSR to use the Horn as a strategic arena in a way that the contemporary global powers present in the region are not able to. This is based on the different distribution of power, alliances, and incentives of the contemporary international structure as states behave differently with one another for their own interests, which includes security. Issues such as security dilemmas, alliance politics, and legitimacy of non-state actors (i.e., regional and global institutions) are relevant to analyzing the challenges to security and stability in the Horn. The constant foreign interventions in the Horn can be explained by the region's centrality at the nexus to two key elements of the global economy, and the realist explanations help explain the implications of the shifting balance of power in the international system and how these external dynamics shape the Horn as a regional system with its own unique security arena.

       The constructivist lens offers explanations that help understand the different socially constructed prisms through which the international system views the Horn. When combined with the realist lens, the constructivist lens allows this thesis to connect variability of the foreign interventions in the Horn to the cycles of great power competition that have been happening over time and will likely continue for long as the legs on which the strategic

significance of the Horn continue to stand. There are constructivist elements that would help understand how the political development of the Horn and the region's interactions with the global powers have influenced the development of state identity and its security interests relative to one another. How are these interests shaped by socially constructed definitions of what is considered to be a security threat? What are the motivations of the foreign powers present in the Horn of Africa, and how have these motivations changed? How have the political, economic, and security implications of these motivations impacted the region's security environment?

For example, the way the US conducted itself in the Horn during the Cold War is not the way the US conducts itself in the Horn today. The motivating threat of countering communism wherever it may be in the world has been replaced by global counter-terrorism operations in the wake of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The emerging extra-regional actors projecting their security presence in the Horn are not the same actors from three decades ago, but their behaviors in the region mirror the way the Cold War powers conducted themselves in the Horn. The actors may be different, but they continue to press on unresolved pressure points that fuel instability in this region. Analyzing the massive presence of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and transnational networks invested in addressing security issues in the Horn that emerged in the contemporary era would benefit from the constructivist lens. As for analyzing the institutional shortcomings of the regional state models and societal stressors to security and stability, this thesis uses nationalism critiques, theories of legitimacy, and many other theories to help make sense of the complex political, economic, and security dynamics that characterize the strategic significance of the region.

Chapter 2: Background

The following chapter offers a historical analysis of the Horn from its geography to state formation to highlight the themes that inform the political, economic, and security dynamics characterizing the security condition of the region. What are the origins of state weakness in the Horn and its enduring implications on the region's political and security environment? How has the increasing international importance of the Horn at the intersections of politics, economics, and security impacted dynamics within the region and in the wider world? In what ways have the shifting cycles of great power competition impacted the political and economic development of this region?
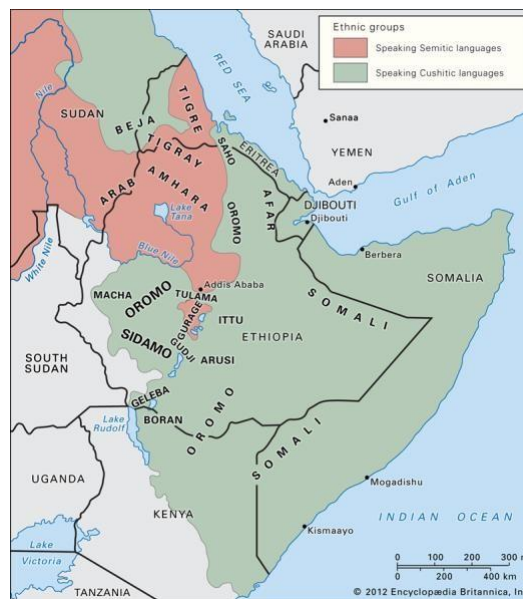

Figure 1. Map of East Africa
(MapsCompany 2020)

Figure 2: Language Families of the Horn
(Encyclopedia Britannica 2012)

2.1 Post Colonial Legacy and The Nation-State Dilemma in the Horn

The Horn is located in northeast Africa and is highlighted by the Nile River Basin and the Great Rift Valley as well as shares a littoral zone with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The people in this region are alike in more ways beyond being indigenous to this region as they share a similar colonial legacy, heritage, and the Cushitic language family (figures 1 and 2). Despite these similarities, the Horn and its two hundred million inhabitants are not a monolith and the region is made up of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multireligious societies. Due to the Horn's proximity to key waterways and land navigation routes, this region has long served as a bridge between the Arab World and the rest of the African continent. The story of the Red Sea is also a story of an Afro-Arab Sea as this geostrategic location has influenced the transregional dynamics through the political, economic, and security development of the Horn and the Arabian Gulf. The Red Sea has connected Africa with the Middle East with centuries of cultural exchange and economic transactions which have created deep and historical bonds between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf.

The construction of the Suez Canal opened up the region to an influx of European economic powers with the military and political power to accomplish their imperial ambitions. The Red Sea trade route had helped to expand maritime trade by the late 1800s and became a major focus for European industrial expertise as the Industrial Revolution had gained increasing momentum in European countries bordering the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. As a result of these developments in the late 1800s, the Red Sea saw an increase in traffic as this development in international trade transformed the strategic significance of the regions surrounding the Red Sea maritime route, and Europe's economic

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powers took notice. The Red Sea corridor also provided a gateway to directly connect the imperial powers, Great Britain, Holland, and France, with their South and Southeast Asian colonies.

The Suez Canal shifted Europe's perception of the Horn of Africa as this development revolutionized international maritime trade and helped develop Europe's economy and expand their colonial conquests. The technological, economic, and political advancements of these countries during the late 1800s came with new tools that allowed Europe to project its military and commercial interests. With the advantage of the innovations in military capabilities and naval technology, the African continent was witness to a historical land grab by European imperial powers orchestrated at the 1884 Berlin Conference. This development eventually transformed much of Africa into massive colonies that produced resources to fuel the economic growth of Europe. The arrival of European colonialism and its aftermath set the stage for conflict, instability, and under-development across the African continent.

The Suez Canal facilitated European expansion into the Arab World and Horn of Africa. Just as European imperial powers carved out territories across Africa without regard for the people that have inhabited this continent for centuries, the British, French, and Italians had been able to grab prime real estate on both coasts of the Red Sea part of the "Scramble for Africa" in the Horn. The British expanded their North African territory to include Sudan, which included modern-day South Sudan, and maintained these territories under the joint-administration of Britain and Egypt. The Greater Somalia nation was split into five territories: the British claimed northern Somalia along the Gulf of Aden as British

Somaliland Protectorate and integrated the southern Somali into Britain's northern Kenyan territory as the Northern Frontier District (NFD), the French claimed the northwestern Somali territory along the strategic Bab el-Mandeb between the

Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden as French Somaliland, the Italians claimed the Somali territory along the Indian Ocean and inwards towards the Ogaden to the west of Greater Somalia. The Ogaden territory is inhabited by ethnic Somalis and was occupied by the independent Ethiopian Empire until becoming integrated with the Ethiopian state. The Ethiopian Empire also included

Figure 3: 1930s Horn of Africa Map
(Stephen Luscombe n.d.)

several diverse ethnic communities whose regions were claimed under the emperor. The Italians claimed the Empire's northern Eritrean territory along the Red Sea. The mountainous Ethiopian terrain made it difficult for the heart of the empire to be occupied by land armies and protected the now-landlocked empire (figure 3).

At the time of European imperialism in the Horn in the 19th century, the coastline along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean was perhaps the region's most important natural resource. To protect their economic interests and investments, these powers also established a security presence in the greater Red Sea region with military facilities that are still standing more than a century later. In the Horn, the European powers were primarily interested in establishing their presence in the region

Figure 4: Greater Red Sea Region
(Justine Barden/US Energy Information Administration 2019)

to safeguard their access to the Red Sea maritime route connecting Europe and Asia (figure 4). Their actions in the region reflected this objective as the European

powers prioritized occupying the land and peoples in proximity to the Red Sea. In comparison to the other colonial entities the British, French, and Italians claimed across Africa that were more focused on the extraction of natural resources, the management of their colonial entities in the Horn seemed to be more focused on gaining more strategic territory and curbing the expansion of the other colonial powers in the region as well as making local allies to ensure their unobstructed access to this territory.

In the 20th century, the success of the Allied Forces in World War 1 (WW1) allowed the British and the French to expand their colonial entities in the former Ottoman Empire, thus creating the blueprint and borders of the modern Middle East through the Sykes-Picot Agreement as well as the treaties of San Remo and Sevres (Hughes n.d.). This development is relevant as their presence in this region created contemporary political structures that have been preserved nearly a century later, including the monarchies that continue to rule the Arabian Gulf with which the Horn shares the Red Sea. The discovery of petroleum in the 1930s in the Arabian Gulf transformed international trade and global energy production, and the Horn's proximity to these key regions renewed this region's significance in the global economy. These Gulf monarchies have since emerged as key players in the Horn's political, economic, social, and security environments in the contemporary era due to their proximity to the Horn and the global influence has been secured by their petroleum-based economies.

In recent years, the Gulf powers have also turned to the Horn to diversify their economies beyond petroleum through investments in port development along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, guarantee food security by investing in agriculture in the Horn, and

expand their security influence into the Horn through the development of military bases. The Gulf powers have linked their political, economic, and military interests with the Horn's since the Cold War due to their shared interests to have minimal disruptions in the Red Sea maritime space. The Gulf powers have also been used as intermediaries between the Western powers and the Horn due to their proximity and shared history with the Horn's constituent states. But unlike other extra-regional powers involved in the Horn, the shared cultural and religious elements between the Horn and the Arab World have added a layer to the role Middle Eastern power has played in the Horn. The Horn's experience with the emergence of religion as a destabilizing force during the Cold War is not isolated from the religious and ideological dimensions of the region's relations with the Arabian Gulf as developments in the Gulf have always made their way into the Horn.

In the 1930s, the transition from depending on steam-powered technologies to more efficient oil-powered technologies and transportation revolutionized global production and further transformed the relationship between the Greater Red Sea region and the world. The global economic powers keen on having access to the Red Sea to conduct maritime trade and extract oil to power their new technologies kept an eye on the Horn as this region's strategic significance was now defined by the location of these strategic assets in the global economy.

From the impacts of the post-colonial legacy on the Horn that impact the region today, the following themes are perhaps the most relevant for this thesis' focus on contemporary regional and state stability and security issues as well as residual impacts on the Horn that continue to color international relations between the region and the international community. The most disruptive consequence of the legacy of European colonialism was perhaps the immediate impact of the imposition of artificial borders in the

region. This disequilibrium as a result of colonialism has created the foundation for the vulnerability and volatility that continue to impede state and economic development in Africa today. These consequences are found in nearly everything that makes up the foundation of the state as the new state models were essentially a power transfer between the local elite and the imperial powers as the latter were disengaging from the region following World War 2 (WW2). The Italian and British Somaliland territories were given independence and united to create modern-day Somalia in 1960. The French remained in French Somaliland until creating Djibouti in 1977 while still maintaining their presence in the region with their military base along Djibouti's coast. The British integrated the NFD with Kenya and Ethiopia integrated the Ogaden territory into its greater state-building project. Sudan gained its independence from the British in 1956, yet still maintained relations for economic and military aid for several years following independence. These borders continue to be preserved as per the 1964 mandate of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and continue to be a source of conflict in the Horn (Jackson and Rosberg 1982).

Unlike the paternalistic presence some European colonial powers maintain in their former African colonies during the decolonization period, the British and Italians departed from the Horn without leaving behind any mechanisms for oversight of the new states they created, which turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. Former colonial powers, such as France, continue to maintain a presence in the political, economic, and security affairs for their former African colonies, and often undermine the state sovereignty of these now-independent states to step into a state's internal affairs when the domestic situation is not compatible with agendas of these former colonial powers.

The British and Italians transferred power to the local elites and left these inexperienced elites up to their own devices to create new states that fit into the nation-state model that dominated the international system. But this nation-state model was not compatible with the political, economic, social, material and security realities of the Horn as well as the existing indigenous institutions in the region upon independence. Before colonization, the region was traditionally made up of decentralized self-governing units and divided among different ethnic groups and clans. These decentralized self-governing units can be considered "nations." The creation of states as the prevailing political unit in the international system contradicted the indigenous political models that already existed. The colonial powers disengaged from the region without ensuring that these new states would be able to succeed and instead created political structures that preserved elements of the local power dynamics during the colonial period. The new state borders drawn by the colonial powers divided ethnic communities among different states and the ambiguity of these demarcations created room for border disputes. When factoring in the fact that the region's nominal borders are drawn by foreigners, this disequilibrium informs the reality of statehood in the Horn. The border conflicts that characterized the Horn during decolonization can be framed within the context of this disequilibrium as the territorial integrity of the regional states were challenged by self-determination claims from within their borders as well as conflicts over territory from their regional neighbors to reclaim territories that were divided by and among the imperial powers.

The internationally recognized legal definition of state from the 1933 Montevideo

Convention on the Rights and Duties of States characterizes states as "as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states" (Chan 2013; University of Oslo 2016). The Horn's post-colonial legacy makes it difficult for the constituent states to meet all of these conditions as the concept of the nation-states as developed in Europe is not neatly applicable to the complex political, economic, and social environment of the region. This is at the root of the nation-state dilemma and political legitimacy issues that face the Horn and much of Africa. This also creates the foundation for the enduring interstate and intrastate conflicts in the region as state and nation-building remain stagnant unless these issues are resolved in a meaningful reconciliation process. As a result, the stagnant political development resulted in the regional states being stuck in a constant cycle of insecurity that corresponds with waves of social tension and weak state models unable to fulfill the basic functions of the state to serve their citizenry.

Perhaps the original sin of the post-colonial legacy in the Horn and across Africa was asking these political elites to develop a new state and political system out of a former colonial entity as well as a new national identity to unite groups of people who have never had to live together. In addition to governance challenges, state development remains an ongoing process in the Horn and the persistent presence of global economic powers in the Horn continues to define the relationship between this region and the world.

Global powers seeking to increase their stake in the global economy seem to make their presence in the Horn a priority due to its strategic location, but what starts as increased economic engagement later comes with political and security consequences for the regional states. Since the formation of the regional states, the Horn continues to be a region made up

of states that were created by and for international interests. The Horn and its local politics cannot be untangled from the interests of the global economic powers in this region, and this dynamic is present in how responsive local leaders are to what foreign powers want for the region at the expense of their constituencies. This competition between interests takes place across multiple political, economic, and security arenas with the regional governments and their constituents often bearing the consequences. The Horn is essentially a theater of competing interests and the regional states are caught in the middle as local actors get their legitimacy from foreign support as well as the continued need for economic aid. The governance challenges that persist in the Horn have led to inequality, uneven development, and marginalization, which is not unique in the developed world. The persistent cycles of geopolitical conflicts over the Horn as the result of its strategic significance differentiates the constituent states of the Horn from many other developing states. The long-term implications of unaddressed governance challenges exacerbate existing security issues in the region and have since progressed into the enduring resource conflicts and power struggles that characterize the Horn.

From the nominal borders to the power dynamics among social and political groups, the consequences that arise from the region's strategic importance cannot be isolated from local political and security arenas. These dynamics are reflected in the inability of the regional states to assert their sovereignty as competing global powers play out their power competitions within the state's borders. Through the new political and financial institutions developed following WW2, states had to come to terms with a new relationship with their sovereignty as they seemed to only be as sovereign as the more powerful states let them. This new relationship with state sovereignty resonated with states that depended on foreign aid to run their governments and fuel their economies, which was the case for the Horn.

The global political, economic, and security institutions that connect the developing world with the global powers that dominate the international system not only indirectly undermine the capacity for local economic development due to neoliberal economic institutions, but also undermine the development of local politics and ideologies beyond what is deemed acceptable by the powers that dominate the system. The competing interests from international cycles of great power competition are manifested in the Horn with the consequence of cycles of local conflict exacerbated by external actors. The foreign actors find themselves in the region when local issues seem to threaten their economic interests related to the Red Sea maritime space, but these powers do not seem to be interested in solving the roots of the region's security challenges, which would require a different approach to the Horn that cannot be solved by just throwing money at the problem.

2.2 Struggle to Establish Viable States and Cycles of Great Power Competition

In the contemporary era, the strategic relevance of the Horn continues to be defined by the region's proximity to two key elements of the global economy - the Suez Canal and petroleum production regions of the Middle East. The construction of the Suez Canal elevated the importance of the Red Sea region, including the Horn, and introduced political and security consequences as the Horn was progressively integrated into the global economy. The strategic position of the Horn is reflected in the growing extra-regional security presence along the coasts of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Gulf of Aden which define strategic maritime routes. The involvement of global powers in regional affairs has become inseparable from the story of the Horn due to the region's proximity to this irreplaceable global asset for international maritime trade. The conflicting interests in the state-building process among local actors and global powers have created an environment in which the

regional actors are thinking of the Horn through the lens of local politics, while simultaneously extra-regional actors are approaching statecraft in terms of how the regional local politics can play out in favor of their presence to maintain their strategic interests over the movement of oil and

trade, which are fundamental to the global economy. Based on the past several decades of power competition among global actors taking place in the Horn, it seems that local actors and foreign powers have different understandings of what stability in the region means, and this is reflected in the interference by foreign powers to create favorable conditions to serve the interests and influence of global economic powers.

The permeability of the consequences of local conflicts across the regional borders allows for the Horn's security challenges to be viewed through the lens of the Regional Security Complex (RSC) to analyze the connections between state fragility and conflict dynamics in the Horn as a function of the region's strategic significance (Adeto 2019). The ability for these conflicts to also migrate into the rest of sub- Saharan Africa and across the Red Sea into the Arabian Gulf also demonstrates that the dynamics within the Horn of Africa's security environment have implications beyond the regional borders. It is also plausible to assume that the happenings within other security environments make their way into the Horn as well in the effort to manage conflict in this region. But not only is this interaction plausible, but this interaction has also been happening in the Horn for decades and foreign involvement has prolonged local conflict in the region.

The pattern of extra-regional security actors exporting their competitive dynamics into fragile states in the Horn seems to be an enduring phenomenon that continues with the intrusion of new actors and new security issues deemed to be critical enough to warrant

foreign intervention. The relationship between the Horn's international importance and the region's instability fueling processes of disintegration seems to operate in a somewhat predictable cycle in which foreign powers are incentivized to intervene in local security issues because of the threat of local instability on the economic interests in the Red Sea maritime space. The strategic location of the Horn is both a blessing and a challenge for the regional states, but the underdevelopment of political, economic, and security arenas has made what could be an opportunity to engage with global powers for the benefit of the region a serious challenge to security and stability. The competing interests accompanying the great power competitions that have been institutionalized in the Horn due to the region's importance to the international economic system have multiplied the pressure on an already fragile regional system prone to instability and fragmentation. The challenge of balancing foreign interests without risking state sovereignty has been an enduring challenge for governing authorities since independence.

State development amidst shifts in the international system has not been easy for the Horn, and the pressures from the influence of extra-regional actors on security and stability in the regional system cannot be understated. Since independence, the major shifts in the international system were initiated by the Cold War between the US and USSR in which these global superpowers used the Horn as a strategic arena to fight out their competing interests. These powers also wanted to secure their influence over this region for its strategic location for telecommunication operations during the Cold War to manage global proxy conflicts conducted during this era (Schraeder 1992). The US made sure to maintain good relations with Emperor Haile Selassie to continue to have access to Eritrea for its geostrategic location and connect the telecommunication stations and military installations in Eritrea to

the larger network utilized by the US against the USSR. As demonstrated by the Cold War, the ideological shifts in the international system that parallels these great power competitions also discourages local actors from working outside the ideological boundaries as the regional states find no other choice than to fall in line with the ideological frameworks of the global powers that provide foreign aid. This ultimately undermines state sovereignty and the development of local politics and ideologies.

The second major shift is currently being played out and represented by the entrance of emerging economic powers from Asia and the Middle East as they asserting their influence through security and economic engagements in the Horn in the contemporary era in the noticeable disengagement of the global powers that shaped the region and its security and stability issues in the 20th century. The patterns of external intervention established during the Cold War have established precedents that the contemporary powers are also deploying in their entry into this fragile region - just as the regional states are simultaneously going through a critical period in their state development through efforts to institutionalize democratic systems, negotiating historic peace deals ending decades-long conflicts, pursuing new economic opportunities, and moving towards asserting themselves in their own region.

Chapter 3: Analysis into Challenges to State and Regional Stability and Security

The Horn has experienced a whirlwind of political transitions and state-building projects in recent years as the region attempts to move forward with democratization movements and economic development. However, the region's security environment continues to play a decisive role in whether these projects will succeed. The security and stability issues that challenge the Horn are the amalgamation of failures at the domestic level as the regional leaders struggle to deal with the political, economic, material, and social imbalances stemming from the post-colonial legacy. The stagnation of the region's political development during the Cold War era in favor of a culture of authoritarianism comes at the cost of having an unsustainable political culture and an excess of autocrats. The domestic level destabilizing factors present in the contemporary era center around the inability of the state structures to properly address existing tensions within the society as the stability of both the state and society are sensitive to disturbances in the other. The inability to address these issues has since resulted in the local leaders trying to move forward in this stage of the region's development while trying to undo the marginalization and underdevelopment that are at the core of many of the security and stability issues that make moving forward even more difficult.

This chapter aims to analyze the complex security and stability challenges in the Horn and the consequences of state weakness in this region by examining the stress points that emerge from both within and beyond the nominal borders of the regional states. This analysis looks into the origin of the destabilizing factors from within the regional states and the

external pressures from the extra-regional actors involved in the regional system. To understand the domestic contributors to state instability, the following sections examine the regional state models and societal stressors on state stability to further understand how these factors contribute to the existing weaknesses in both the societal and the state levels with limited capacity for governance in the diversified context of the Horn. The failed nation-state model and existing social tensions serve as destabilizing factors in the Horn and are not mutually exclusive when it comes to challenging security and stability. It is necessary to understand the origins of both to understand how they interact at the domestic level. The analysis into the external accelerators of state fragmentation and instability will look into the role extra-regional actors have played in shaping the Horn's political, economic, and security arenas.

3.1 Domestic Contributors to State Weakness

In light of all the civil violence and instability that has taken place in the Horn over the past few decades, it is no surprise that the regional states rank among the most unstable states in the world. A state's status as a stable, weak, or failing state is conditional on its performance in fulfilling the recognized basic criteria of functions of the state (Rotberg 2016). The regional states rank relatively high on the 2020 Fragile State Index with Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan sitting in the top ten as among the world's fragile states. The Institute for State Effectiveness (ISE) summarizes the functions that make up the structural components of a state into the following elements: (1) governance/public sector management, (2) market engagement/regulation, (3) security, (4) infrastructure, (5) rule of law, (6) human capital, (7) public financial management, (8) citizen engagement, (9) asset management, and (10) disaster resilience. When assessing state and regional security and

stability, the connection between the shortcomings of the regional states in fulfilling these functions and the enduring security and stability challenges in the Horn becomes more evident.

With respect to the state and regional security and stability issues, it is clear to see how the regional states have fallen into the realm of weak and failed states as state institutions falling short of providing some public goods and services can open up the space for local conflict as providing physical security is also a responsibility of the state (Adeto 2019; Deutsch 1986; Murphy 1999; Rotberg 2016). The inability for state governments to respond to these state weaknesses seems to exacerbate a feedback loop between state fragility and conflict in which these intrinsically related factors continue to worsen and perpetuate the cycle of insecurity that makes managing local conflict and strengthening the state institutions a difficult task. The effort to manage regional security challenges, such as ethnic and religious-based discrimination and conflict, piracy, terrorism, violations of human rights, all seem to be even more difficult when the state itself is an actor in fueling these destabilizing forces. The region is seemingly stuck in a never-ending cycle of insecurity. The regional political and security arenas are all intertwined, which means that instability in one state is not isolated. These are not characteristics shared among strong states capable of serving their populations.

3.1.1 Structural and Institutional Shortcomings in the Regional States

At the root of the Horn's nation-state dilemma and its widespread implications is that the region was developed by extra-regional powers without the initial commitment to build political and economic systems that were compatible with the indigenous political and legal institutions and cultural systems of the people that would now live in these new states (Degu

2002). These shortcomings initially stemming from the region's post-colonial legacy and the consequences from the cycles of great power geopolitical competition have since escalated into a series of long-term issues that make building effective regional state political structures and institutions an evolving task in the Horn. This type of patronage system would also become fully integrated into the foundation of the state, which created issues for transparency, legitimacy, meritocracy, and competency. This creates additional state-building challenges as this informal system, which has now been further legitimized by the colonial system, undermines institutional development and capacity for governance before the state has even been fully realized (Taddia 2014).

The state structure is perhaps weak by design due to how the region was constructed, but the regional environment has informed how the local political actors navigate this system and the state-society relationship. In the contemporary era, the regional states continue to struggle with asserting their state sovereignty and territorial integrity against local non-state actors, their regional neighbors, and foreign powers. The regional states demonstrate different degrees of state weakness, and this analysis aims to identify common themes in their political development that have further weakened this state structure and contributed to state instability and insecurity. This analysis will focus on the destabilizing influences on the region's security environment that originate from the political sphere, such as the emergence of factionalized elites, the culture of authoritarianism and growth of personalized power, and implications for governance from the asymmetric dependence on foreign allies for aid as well as political legitimacy to some extent.

As a consequence of these destabilizing influences, the region has developed an unsustainable political culture that limits opportunities for institutional and democratic

reform into long-term state-building projects. These influences not only weaken state capacity for governance, but it's difficult for the state to respond to security issues when the state itself plays a destabilizing role. Elite politics incentivizes a competitive political marketplace in which elites consolidate power and resources for themselves, and there will always be groups excluded from both formal and informal political systems. This leaves even more room for resentment and resistance to build up as these excluded groups attempt to secure at least some power and resources for themselves. In this type of political and social environment, security, as a necessary public good, becomes even more contentious when people do not believe that the state is working for them.

In the long term, these contributors to domestic instability have also led to an absence of local institutions and mechanisms to ensure the political legitimacy, accountability, and predictability of the governing authorities. Generations of regional leaders have been susceptible to adopting authoritarian leadership styles as they navigate political systems and decades-old conflicts that have been shaped by cycles of military regimes that have interfered with the development of democratic institutions. The fragmentation and conflict amongst political actors as they focus on power-sharing agreements rather than governance results in inefficiencies in the government, which has broader implications for the government's ability to govern and fulfill the responsibilities expected of functioning states. This inability to move beyond conflict within the government has resulted in growing dissatisfaction, distrust, and negative perceptions of the political legitimacy of the governing authorities as these officials fall short of the public expectations for what they want from their governments (Repucci and Slipowitz 2021).

The dynamics between the have and have nots in the contemporary political processes continue to be informed by the politicization of identity and the informal hierarchy

legitimized by the colonial powers. This legacy is reflected in the political and institutional development of the modern state, including the emergence and dominance of local elites from ethno-cultural groups that were privileged from the colonial administration era. This transfer of responsibilities to the local political elites created a precedent across the region in which transfers of power and resources were conducted in the absence of the mechanisms and institutions to hold regional leaders accountable and encourage transparency to limit corruption. These dynamics inform the politics of exclusion and structural inequalities across the region and continue to be replicated and legitimized through these political structures.

According to the 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index, which tracks perceived public sector corruption out of 180 countries, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan rank among the most highly corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International 2020). There is a causal relationship between increased corruption and bad governance. Corruption not only hinders the distribution of goods and services that are designated for the public, but also undermines the political, economic, social, and military institutions designed to serve the public interest in the long term. Despite democratization efforts, the political arenas across the region continue to be dominated by a single party, or at least a party or coalition associated with an ethno-cultural group. Attempts to expand democratization efforts, such as organizing elections, continues to be a contentious affair in the region as the failure to manage political differences between ethno-cultural groups and regions re-emerges and often escalates into local conflict. The 2021 *Freedom in the World* Report on the state of democracy globally ranks the regional states of Horn, excluding Somaliland, as 'Not Free' (Repucci and Slipowitz 2021). While the litany of problems that accompany the fractionalization of elites and the concentration of state power is not an issue unique to the

Horn, the lack of institutions that allow for accountability and transparency – due to the lack of mechanisms to manage destabilizing political forces - has allowed for the shortcomings at the political level to radiate into all parts of the state.

Similar to any other group, elites work towards their interest, and preserving elite interests does not always coincide with the fair and equal redistribution of political power and policy concessions necessary for democratization (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005). The inability for a state's institutions to provide accountability and fulfill its expected responsibilities and duties leads towards a slippery slope to where the public goods are privatized or not executed at all as well as political goods are designated for a privileged constituency. Considering that this is a very tall order that many states continue to struggle with, it is not inconceivable that the Horn will continue to stagnate in the process of its state development.

Although local elites were able to consolidate power through elections and formed parties and coalitions, they were engaged in conflicts over power-sharing. The permanence of elite politics is not unique to the region, but its role in undermining local political and institutional development should not be understated as the state and nation-building projects across the region are all framed in the interest of preserving their interests. These dynamics make it increasingly difficult to create forms of governance that are democratic and effective in responding to domestic instability when discord among the political actors itself continues to be a driver of instability. This impact of the culture of authoritarianism on political development is reflected in the region's legacy of autocratic and military regimes, which have further stunted opportunities for democratization. The power struggles across the region mirrored each other as these conflicts reflected social tensions stemming from an imbalance

in the informal hierarchy amongst ethno-cultural groups created by the colonial powers. The emergence of elite politics and their focus on internal disputes instead of state and nation-building projects was not conducive to building new states that were free and equitable for all those that lived within the new nominal borders.

The systematic exclusion of marginalized ethno-cultural groups and the territories they inhabit from gaining access to political and public goods distributed by the new state has led to the exacerbation of pre-existing socio-economic differences. This further contributes to weak governance because the government was not designed to work effectively for the wider society from the start. These embedded vulnerabilities in the fabric of society threaten to disrupt any semblance of political stability and social cohesion. The clearest consequences are the disparities created in the social and material conditions among ethno-cultural groups as well as between the political representation and distribution of public services to the regions that are further from the centers of power. This representation of minority interests can be seen in the way a disproportionate level of state resources is set aside for development and the advancement of select constituencies, while resources are diverted to serve other minority interests, such as engaging in conflicts to either expand state territory beyond the nominal borders or regain control of territories that seek self-determination. The existing mistrust in their governments among regions marginalized from power meant these regions often already cultivated their own ethnic militias or had armed forces that had existed before the colonial era.

The perceived illegitimacy of the governing authorities discourages citizen participation in state activities due to a lack of trust in the central government. For example, it may be difficult for governments to collect revenue from the citizenry to fund the functions

of the state if the people do not trust their government. It may also be difficult for a perceived illegitimate government to encourage citizens to enlist in the national army, which has since resulted in ethnic militias across the region that are loyal to a specific leader from their ethnic group even if the national army dissolves into factions. By using the tools of the state against its own citizens to regain control over these territories, the state was met with local armed militias, thus creating the initial context for many of the armed struggles across the Horn.

As the governing authorities were engaged in political conflict, the military emerged as an institution isolated from political coalitions fighting for power and as an institution capable of providing some semblance of stability. Unlike local political actors, the structure of the military creates an alternative identity for its members, whereas the political actors were still holding onto their ethno-cultural identities and this informed how they navigated the political structure and whom they were serving. Additionally, the military as an institution has multiple command structures and layers of accountability, unlike the underdeveloped political institutions the governing authorities were navigating. Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia all experienced military coups when political and constitutional crises amongst the governing authors hindered capacity for governance and the state and nation-building projects that their constituencies expected. Following Sudan's independence in 1956, this new state experienced a military coup in 1958 and continued to be under military regimes until 2019. Somalia witnessed a coup in 1969 by Soviet-trained military officers. Ethiopia's Emperor Selassie was overthrown from power by a unit of Marxist military officers in 1974. The ideological aspect that defined the Cold War also plays into the military coups across the Horn as all of the region's military leaders at the time of the coups aligned with the Soviet axis. The emergence of elite politics in the Horn and the mechanisms built to consolidate power has indirectly led to a culture of authoritarianism

where political power is personal and as the political processes and institutions are expected to defer to the rule of the state leader.

The militarization of society as a result of a competitive security environment in which elites utilize the state function to maintain their status quo at the expense of other socio-political groups, it is understandable that these groups consolidate power and arms to form militias strong enough to counter the state. In turn, the ruling elite also builds up even more power and arms to counter these insurgencies that threaten their grip on power. Understanding how these socio-political groups operate in the context of the Horn makes it easier to see how divisions within the social environment can exacerbate legitimate stressors to state and regional stability and provides the most compelling evidence that stress in the domestic realm is contributing to state instability resulting in the frequency of weak and collapsed states with rampant corruption in this region.

The culture of authoritarianism in the Horn has had huge implications for democratization from the undermining opportunities for local political development, electoral disruptions, limitations on free media and expression, and the abuse of human rights and democratic institutions. Although the backsliding of democratic institutions and processes seems to currently be a global phenomenon, the expansion of authoritarian rule in the Horn continues to persist because all of the tools are already there for the regional leaders to further consolidate their power, despite having expressed intentions of introducing structural change in the political system. At present, the region is witnessing an escalation in violence due to the disruptions of elections from delaying the election dates or changing the rules to undermine the local opposition.

The new leadership in Sudan is currently trying to navigate the broken state structure and economy following the 2019 overthrow of the former dictator, Omar Bashir. Election

delays have resulted in civil unrest in Somalia as the current president, Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo, failed to organize elections before his term expired as specified by his mandate and he seems to have undermined other political actors from organizing elections independently (The Horn 2021). The conflict in Ethiopia between the central government and the Tigrayans, an ethnic minority, reflects the ambitious military imperial project from the former empire as the central government sent in the national army after the Tigrayans attempted to independently organize regional parliamentary elections following election delays. This conflict has since resulted in a man-made humanitarian crisis with thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees who have fled into neighboring Sudan, and allegations of human rights abuse against the troops that have been sent to back up the Ethiopian troops, including the Eritrean national army (Walsh and Dahir 2020).

The inability to manage the instability that emerges from the Horn and that is created by local political actors leaves the regional states susceptible to foreign involvement. But, instead of trying to address the deeply rooted problems that arise from poor governance, social tensions, and dependence on foreign aid, the international community is left with dealing with symptoms of this issue as it moves beyond the regional borders to disrupt other political, economic, and security environments. A snapshot of the region today demonstrates that the destabilizing forces that challenged security and stability in the past are still currently at play, and this can directly be traced back to the preservation of the state institutions and structures built by the region's former autocrats. The region's legacy of autocracies is not something of a distant history as former officials that played key roles in these regimes continue to hold positions in power in their current state institutions, such as legislative bodies and the military as seen in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia.

Despite being independent for more than sixty years, the regional leaders still derive some of their legitimacy from the foreign actors that have shaped the region, and this foreign support for these local leaders will always be conditional on their compliance with the agendas of the extra-regional actors conducting business in the Red Sea corridor. The combination of both weak state structures, the emergence of elites, and the excess of autocrats creates fragile state architecture susceptible to foreign involvement in domestic affairs. Efforts to link the interests of foreign actors with regional interests have often come at the expense of developing effective institutions and governance as well as undermining state sovereignty. Due to the perceived illegitimacy of political actors that makes it difficult to collect taxes coupled with a poor tax base and limited natural resources, the regional states must seek out foreign aid to exercise the responsibilities of the state, such as government expenditures and developing national armies. State sovereignty has also been constrained by this asymmetric dependence on foreign economic and military aid. In exchange for this foreign aid, extra-regional actors are motivated to come into this region, with all of its intricacies and weaknesses. In effect, due to the Horn's geostrategic significance the regional states of the Horn have become client states.

3.1.2 Societal Stressors to State and Regional Stability

The limitations in the capacity and capabilities of the regional states of the Horn are further exacerbated by the enduring implications of the Horn's post-colonial legacy and state formation process. As a result, the regional state models and political structure are unable to support the functions of the state that are expected of recognized states. The one element of the Horn's political structure that was not necessarily transferred to the new state elite during among regional states that detailed the responsibilities of the states to serve its citizenry. In a

region that was once made up of decentralized political units and divided among different kinship networks (i.e., clans and ethnic groups), the goods and services that people used to rely on their networks for were now the responsibility of a new central government. While some of the regional governments are able to provide some key public goods, the historical challenges stemming from societal stressors, institutional shortcomings, and the vulnerability to foreign influence make it even more difficult for the regional leaders to expand their capacity for governance.

Whether the state will experience fragmentation is a question of the strength of the central government and institutions in maintaining a sense of political stability and social cohesion to hold the state together. When a weak central government fails to provide key public goods, including security, the factionalism that may develop as a response can be identified based on the divisions within the society and social environment. The factions are operating in a competitive political and security environment while vying for power and resources in the absence of strong governance structures and institutions that would help a central government balance the different competing interests in a more legitimate and predictable fashion. The security environment becomes even more competitive based on the perceived legitimacy and strength of the central government from the perspective of the different groups who were not privileged during the political development process. Across the Horn, the instability in each context is driven by a specific set of factors in each state, but these conflicts seem to parallel one another as drivers of state fragmentation and social tension. This challenge is not isolated to the Horn as the rise of identity politics during the decolonization period led to the politicization of the interests of socio-political groups - clan and tribal networks, religion, regional identities - being fully entrenched into the

foundation of the post-colonial state across Africa. The early stages of the region's political development coincided with the Cold War, so these conflicts held an ideological dimension in addition to the ethnic, clan, and religious dimensions that already inform the region's conflicts. The development of political institutions requires a meaningful representation and participation of the socio-political communities that live within the state, and the power competitions that exist on many levels - (1) competing interests among socio-political groups, (2) interest conflict between socio-political groups and the state, (3) interstate conflict, and (4) competing pressures from external forces - make it even more difficult to build social cohesion and overall political stability (Degu 2002).

The role of contentious identity politics at almost every aspect of the state continues to present a challenge to state stability and undermines state capacity for governance. The interrelated dynamics among the political, institutional, social, and economic implications of the informal competition between the many different socio-political identities in the Horn is a system-wide issue. It is a serious challenge to develop a cohesive political community of the new state in multi-ethnic and religious societies with competing interests among ethnic, religious, regional, and other sub-national identities. Even the most ethnically homogenous state in the Horn, Somalia, continues to experience tensions among clans and tribes as well as against the Somali state.

In Sudan and Ethiopia, the societal stressors are ethnic and religious tensions. The factionalism experienced in Ethiopia and Sudan as multi-ethnic and religious societies does not reflect the same societal divisions in Somalia. When the governance structure is not equipped with mechanisms to engage in conflict reconciliation for a fragmented society, the existing rifts may exacerbate the existing failures at the state level, furthering state

fragmentation and decay. Fragmentation and political instability at the state level are symptoms of disorder at the societal level as well. Since independence, the regional states seem to exacerbate existing instability and fragmentation at both state-level and within the society as the state cannot properly address social tensions while still being a cause of this instability. A sense of social cohesion is necessary to building a new national identity of the new state that is inclusive of those living within its borders, which the regional governments were tasked with after independence. The failure to do so has resulted in a rift between the people and the state and this continues to grow without the commitment to building social cohesion and diverse participation in-state development.

The regional system continues to experience extreme social tensions that accelerate destabilizing processes, such as state fragmentation, with weak state structures that are unable to effectively govern and keep the peace without resorting to using the tools of the state to systematically suppress marginalized groups. During the decolonization era, the regional leaders had to undertake state-building projects through the development of institutions and processes to expand their capacity to govern. But it is the nation-building aspect of building a new state with its ambiguous borders and inherited arbitrary social hierarchy defined by the colonial powers that continue to be a driver in societal tensions. The regional leaders relied on the use of nationalist rhetoric that had anti-imperialist undertones, but what does it actually mean to be a part of the new Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese states? Across the region, democratization efforts have brought up old wounds as the power imbalances that were at the root of the fragmented regional states' politics that hinder the development of democratic institutions and processes. These challenges are a reflection of the realities that defined the context on the ground during decolonization.

This incongruity between the concentration of power among a specific political elite and the marginalization and exclusion of other social-political groups of political processes frames the many civil conflicts that continue to weaken security and stability in the region. Among the state and nation-building goals of the new Sudanese and Ethiopian elites included maintaining all this new territory that they had found themselves in control of thanks to the imperial European powers. This meant building up militaries that could counter the emerging insurgencies in territories that sought self-determination. The imposition of artificial borders on the region continues to be a source of intra- and inter-state conflict in the Horn as the borders divide many ethnic communities into different states.

Nation-building in Ethiopia and Sudan, two states containing many different ethnocultural communities, leaned more towards reflecting the priorities of the elites in power, which included elevating the status of their cultures and languages as the national language and conducting cultural assimilation (Clapham 2009, 1969; Degu 2002). The Amharic emperor and elites in Ethiopia had to settle armed conflicts fueled by self-determination claims within their new borders from territories inhabited by ethno-cultural groups marginalized from the seats of power, including Oromia, the Tigray, the Ogaden, and Eritrea.

In the case of Eritrea, the Ethiopian government has undermined this territory's autonomy and political development shortly following Ethiopia's transition into a federal state following WW2. The decades-long conflicts between Sudan and South Sudan have their origins in the suppression of the armed militias during the decolonization period as the British were drawing the new borders of an independent Sudan. These civil conflicts in both

Ethiopia and Sudan were also fueled by the central government's desire to hold onto the natural resources that present in these regions that wanted to secede. Both conflicts were resource conflicts fueled by ethnic and religious tensions. At the time, Eritrea had been Ethiopia's only outlet to the Red Sea, which was necessary to conduct trade and support the local economy (Kaiman 2017). The discovery of oil deposits in South Sudan made holding onto this territory even more critical for the Sudanese government to offset the damaging impacts international economic sanctions have caused on the Sudanese economy.

Unlike the elites in Sudan and Ethiopia, the emerging Somali elites in the Greater Somali Nation found their expected territorial borders upon independence cut short as the borders of the new Somali state, created through a union between the former British and Italian Somaliland territories, did not reflect the extent of the Somali nation. The pan-Somali nationalist project was instrumental in nation-building as the Somali nation united in their shared ethnicity but failed to establish social cohesion as Somalis continued to lean on the traditional clan structures for power and resource-sharing agreements. The political marketplace that emerged in Somalia incentivized a return to these clan structures where political elites were able to consolidate political power for themselves, which translated into political power for their clan networks.

When the existing social tensions and informal clan competition of Somalia made their way into the weak state structure, the rules of the political marketplace became clearer as clans were trying to consolidate power in the early state and institutional development processes. The goals of the new Somali elites included expanding their own military capabilities and expending state resources in the name of irredentism to unite the Somali peoples that were the de jure control of another state. This irredentism was met with support in these territories who all felt a connection with Somalia not only as members of the same

ethnic community but the same new political community that united Somalis as well. These irredentist pursuits were very much not welcomed by the states that these territories were a part of as the Somali claim over these regions challenged the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

In Somalia, the clan conflicts ultimately led to the collapse of the Somali state in the 1990s as the monopolization of power of the ruling military regime led to military fragmenting into armed clan militias. The social conflicts that threaten state and societal stability in both Sudan and Ethiopia have ultimately led to the emergence of violence in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies. This leads to bigger questions on how to mitigate conflict in diverse societies and how to build a state structure that is inclusive of all the people that live within its borders. The complex social dynamics of the Horn coupled with its strategic significance make implications for societal instability even more complicated as these contentious dynamics have implications beyond the regional borders. The influences from global actors involved in the region also impact regional dynamics by exacerbating the existing weaknesses in the state model and in the society. Across the region, clan, ethnic, and religious tensions are all playing out against one another as destabilizing factors. The internal state weaknesses as a result of domestic level destabilizing factors - ethnic, religious, and clan tensions - were left unsupported by a weak state structure. The combination of both weak state structures and social tensions creates an opportunity for external forces to place pressures on these existing vulnerabilities to exacerbate an already complex social and political crisis and accelerate these destabilizing factors into fragmenting the state.

3.2 External Accelerators of State Fragmentation and Tension

The Horn's geographic proximity to structures and networks that support and influence dynamics in the international system means that the Horn can never be isolated from shifts in the international system. The following sections will provide a general overview of how these shifts in the international community have made their way into the regional system of the Horn. What dynamics characterized these shifts in the international system? How has the involvement of these global powers in the region impact governance, economic development, and security in the Horn? Why do the regional states suffer from processes of disintegration, and to what extent are these processes fueled by state weakness as a result of the persistent cycles of great power competition over the Horn? The evidence from this thesis points to several key conclusions about the relationship between the Horn's strategic significance and state fragility.

First, it's undeniable that international interests are at play throughout the region's historical development from the demarcations imposed by the imperial powers post-WW2 creating the nominal borders of Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, and Ethiopia to tensions that fuel processes of state fragmentation to create Eritrea, South Sudan, and the contemporary de facto jurisdiction of Somaliland. From transferring power to a non-democratic local political elite to supporting the regime security of monarchs and military dictatorships, the extra-regional actors have played a hand in undermining the development of democratic institutions and processes. Extra-regional actors have been playing a destabilizing role in the Horn since its inception, and the creation of a socially constructed image of the Horn as a region riddled with instability that requires the presence of extra-regional actors to stabilize has since become a very costly self-fulfilling prophecy, costly in terms both financial expenditures and the loss of life. The Horn continues to witness constant interstate and civil

conflicts over power, resources, and territory that exacerbate ethnic, religious, and clan tensions in a fragile region prone to fragmentation.

Second, the foreign intervention in this region seems to be constant as extra-regional powers that seek to play a larger role in the global economy stake their claims and expand their influence through bilateral arrangements to distribute economic and military aid to their regional allies to secure their access to this region. The variability in these cycles of foreign intervention can be demonstrated by the different approaches taken by the extra-regional actors. The specifics of the different ways foreign actors may have changed in the contemporary era, but the question of "why" that underlie their motivations in this region has not changed despite the change in extra-regional actors.

3.2.1 Horn of Africa as a Strategic Arena in the Cold War Era

The political, economic, and security developments across international, regional, and state levels following the post-WW2 world order shaped the Horn's long-term security and stability in the 20th century into the contemporary era. At the international level, the costly destruction from the war across Europe resulted in the imperial powers demonstrating less commitment and political will to expend their now limited resources to hold onto their colonial entities, which were also experiencing a rise in anti-imperialist and nationalist sentiments. At the regional level, the post-WW2 era was defined by the constituent states engaging with one another as independent states and developing their own unique relations while in the shadow of the Cold War, which exported external pressures onto the state consolidation processes across the region (Al-Anazi 2001).

The disengagement of the European powers that once dominated the international system prompted a shift in the balance of power through which the US and USSR emerged as

rival dominant states and arranged the system into a bipolar structure along a Western and Eastern axis. Both superpowers utilized similar playbooks to exert their influence in this new world order, and their competitive dynamics and strategic confrontations resulted in a zero-sum game in which the gains of one of the axes meant the loss of the other. This relationship is especially reflected in the strategic confrontations turned proxy conflicts and security engagements at a global scale the Cold War powers conducted in regions that were in proximity to strategic elements of the global economy, especially oceanic commerce, as these regions maintained their importance despite the change in hands of the powers that dominated the international system. Through the realist lens, the US was incentivized to move into the Horn to fill in the space left behind by the former imperial powers for the sake of protecting its economic interests from the USSR, and the same can be said for the USSR's interests in the Horn.

In the newly independent Horn, the frosty relations between the US and USSR were reflected in their strategic confrontations as they supported and funded competing state and non-state actors, thus indirectly fueling the many cross border conflicts across the region and civil wars that have come to define the tumultuous security arena of the Horn. The security developments in this region throughout the Cold War period that challenged Western access to key maritime routes and Middle Eastern oil, such as the Suez Crisis (1956), the OPEC Crisis (1973), and the Iranian Revolution (1979) made these global superpowers double down in this region (Schwab 1978). This included supporting the regime security of leaders in strategic states, or at least projecting their political, economic, and military influence into the state's internal dynamics to guarantee a regional ally that was more supportive of the axes' objectives.

Unsurprisingly, the Cold War superpowers used the same tactics across Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and at present, many states in these regions are still dealing with the consequences of this interference in their state development. While the case of Central America is not the focus of this thesis, the economic and security engagements in Central America during the Cold War reflect similar strategic moves conducted in the Horn by the global superpowers. Central America's proximity to the Panama Canal only heightened its importance and brought a spotlight onto this region for its transformation of maritime trade, similar to the Horn's strategic significance with its proximity to the Suez Canal. Billions of dollars' worth of cargo is facilitated through the Panama Canal, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the Suez Canal, linking Europe and Asia, making these waterways crucial to maritime trade that supports the global economy (Rodrigue and Notteboom 2021). Notably, like the Horn, the proximity of Central America to the Panama Canal is factored into this region's strategic significance in addition to the major agricultural exports from Central America. As a result of being considered strategic arenas during the Cold War, both the Horn and Central America witnessed economic and security consequences from the interference of the Cold War powers projecting influence in the political arenas of these regions.

This constant foreign interference to further facilitate international trade through these strategic waterways has created an environment in which the states in proximity to these waterways become magnets for foreign interference, which weakened the states themselves. As the title of this thesis alludes to, these regions and their constituent states are stuck in a Catch-22 in which state weakness and its resulting security issues incentivize foreign intervention, but foreign intervention then furthers the existing state weaknesses by creating

new state weaknesses and security issues. For decades, these strategically significant regions and their peoples have been stuck in this costly predicament, not by their own making which forces the regional states and their leaders to participate in a system that ultimately depends on their complicity in their inevitable undoing for the sake of keeping the global economy afloat.

In the early years of statehood in the Horn, the regional governments were primarily looking towards global powers to support their economic development projects as well as procure security arrangements to bring a flow of arms and military buildup to the region to ensure their regime stability. The region's most important resource continued to be the coastline adjacent to the Red Sea, and the local political actors used this aspect to their advantage as they tried to appeal to potential foreign allies for foreign aid support. Political elites in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan that inherited power from the former imperial powers had to determine how to balance political representation of the many sub-national - ethnic, religious, clan, regional, etc- identities that were demanding a seat at the table. These power-sharing arrangements, or lack thereof, set the stage for the divisions within their countries that would begin to crack under the pressure from the shifting alliances and power dynamics of the Cold War world order. The emerging inter-state conflicts taking form across the region meant that local leaders were also looking for military aid to use against domestic groups that challenged their regime stability.

At independence, the regional states looked outwards towards the global powers currently dominating the international system for political, economic, and military aid necessary for constructing their new states through the lens of the local elite to whom the responsibilities of the state had been transferred by the former imperial powers at

independence. In exchange, their donor allies would have access to the coveted Red Sea coast to secure their interests in the new era. Following independence, the elites in Sudan still maintained close ties with the UK, and the UK continued to maintain an interest in Sudan due to its proximity to the Suez Canal. In 1958, Sudan experienced a military coup, which was the first of several military regimes. The implementation of economic sanctions against Sudan throughout the 20th century took its toll on the Sudanese economy, leading to an asymmetric dependence on the only global powers that continued doing business with Sudan, the Gulf monarchies. In absence of institutions and mechanisms to hold the head of state accountable in a political environment with extremely personalized and centralized power, the monopolization of power often triggered political reform to rebalance power within the state. This occurred across the Horn with varying degrees of success and frequently resulted in the repeat of these destabilizing cycles as there is not any change done to the political structures and institutions that allowed this extreme consolidation of power to occur in the first place as well as no serious change in the behavior of the extra-regional actors that just sought a local ally to secure their access to the Red Sea.

Following WW2, the Ethiopian monarchy had been reinstated by the Allied Powers and looked towards the US and other former allies of the monarchy for economic and military aid. In a new post-WW2 world order dominated by sovereign nation-states and not monarchies and dynasties, the Ethiopian Amharic leadership was keen on creating a federation to integrate the regions it had occupied as an empire instead of accepting the many self-determination claims that had been emerging throughout its territory (Degu 2002; Kigen nd). This included keeping a strong hold over Eritrea, otherwise, Ethiopia, a large empire with millions of people, would be landlocked and at the mercy of its neighbors for access to the sea to conduct trade. The imperial ambitions that were present in Ethiopia before WW2

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were maintained by undermining the development of local opposition in regions that wanted to secede, and suppressing self-determination claims that threaten the territorial integrity of this emerging Ethiopian state using military aid from its allies such as the US (Clapham 1989, 1969). Over the course of the Cold War, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea would escalate into a civil war that continued after the secession of Eritrea in 1991. Ethiopia and Eritrea did not sign a formal peace agreement and normalization of relations until 2018, which was also conducted in the spotlight of the contemporary geopolitical competition over the Horn amongst the Gulf powers that have emerged in the Horn as both a stabilizing and destabilizing force.

Among the priorities of the emerging Somali elites, the Pan-Somali nationalist project informed both the state and nation-building goals of the new Somali state (Schraeder 2006, 108). In the pursuit of irredentism as a political goal to expand the nominal borders to unite the Somali regions that were integrated into Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (then known as French Somaliland), the new Somali state became somewhat of a pariah in the eyes of the OAU as Somalia's attempt as shifting its nominal borders violated the 1964 OAU mandate to maintain existing European imposed demarcations over the newly independent African continent. Unlike Sudan and Ethiopia, the new Somali elites could not rely on their former alliances seeing that there were not any and the anti-imperialist nationalist sentiments of the Somali elites had led the new government to search for allies that were not their former colonial masters. The new Somali elites first reached out to the US to seek economic and military aid to pursue its irredentist ambitions, but the US had declined as that these irredentist ambitions threatened the territorial integrity of the US's local regional ally,

Ethiopia. When Somali leaders realized the US would not give them the military support, they had sought to pursue these irredentist ambitions, Somalia quickly turned towards the USSR to request Soviet political, economic, and security support, which it had received. In 1969, Somalia had experienced a military coup led by military officers trained in the USSR, leading to the rise of Siad Barre, thus creating an explicitly Soviet-aligned government in the Horn, which was a serious cause for concern for the US.

In 1974, Ethiopia also experienced a military coup by a group of security officers, known as the Derg, that overthrew Western-aligned Emperor Halie Selassie in favor of a Marxist military leadership, thus making Ethiopia another Soviet ally in the region (Kissi 2012). The USSR took over US-built military installations in Ethiopia-controlled Eritrea territory (Ododa 1985; Schraeder 1987). The Derg established a military dictatorship led by Major Mengistu Haile Mariam from 1974 to 1991 as Ethiopians faced famine and other critical challenges at home. In 1977, Siad Barre felt that the period of instability and violence in Ethiopia following the 1974 coup was the right time to use Somali military power acquired from the USSR to further his irredentist goals to take back the Ethiopian controlled Ogaden region and reunite it with Somalia. Instead of supporting Soviet-aligned Somalia, the USSR supported Ethiopia to push back the Somali invasion with the help of other Soviet allied troops. The Ogaden War put the USSR in an awkward position, but the Soviets decided to back up the Ethiopians as they defended their territorial integrity against Somali aggression. Barre felt betrayed by his Soviet allies and turned instead towards the US for economic and military aid, which he received. This was a win-win for the US as they were able to take advantage of Somalia's strategic location to further its goals in the region and were able to give just enough aid to the Barre regime to discourage Somalia from returning

to the Soviets (Schraeder 1987, 1992). Somalia joined the Arab League in 1974 as the first non-Arab member. Similar to other Soviet leaning Arab League members, such as Libya and Iraq, Somalia opposed expansionist US foreign policies in the region. However, after Barre flipped from the Soviets to the Americans, Somalia moved more towards the conservative Gulf members in Arab League, such as Saudi Arabia, which was a key US ally. This move signaled a regional and global realignment as Somalia also moved away from former allies, including Libya, which backed Ethiopia as a fellow Soviet ally.

Barre's political failure in Ogaden led some military officers at home from key clans to look towards replacing him (Schraeder 2006, 1987; Ododa 1985). It is during this period when there was the deepening of Somalia's clan divisions as Barre started ordering violent attacks on thousands of innocent Somalis, especially in the northern Somaliland region. The clan conflicts evolved into clashes between the national government and armed militias, which escalated into a full-blown civil war in 1991. Simultaneously, neighboring Ethiopia was also experiencing the fall of the Mengistu government as the result of a coalition of armed ethnically based political opposition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (Kissi 2012). The EPRDF would go on to design the new Ethiopian state, although the weakness of undeveloped institutions and factionalized elites continued.to prevail in the new system.

There are several lessons to take away from the political history of the Horn during the Cold War. The political conflicts and fragmented political coalitions in the early civil governments across the region led to the extreme consolidation and concentration of power, and the military coups across the region acted as a force to balance the local political system.

The culture of authoritarianism that is rampant across the Horn is due to the governing authorities undermining opportunities for the development of local political opposition. The leadership of the Horn during the Cold War provides different examples of how political leaders consolidated state power from Ethiopia's monarchy with Emperor Halie Selassie to military coups elevating the status of Somalia's Siad Barre and Sudan's many coup leaders. Since the state systems are built around the regime survival of the person at the top with ultra-personalized notions of power (dictatorships), the system falls apart without these strong men at the center. Although the pathways are different, the mechanisms they used were very similar.

Through these coups, the military considered itself as the only institution capable of providing some semblance of stability. The military structure allows for an alternative identity for its members beyond the ethnic, religious, and clan identities that the societies in the Horn were structured around. The multiple command structures of the military also allow for multiple layers of accountability. In the cases of Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia, the military coups were fueled by several factors, but the following three seem to be common themes in the region: (1) the inefficiencies of the civilian governments led to the underdevelopment of key political institutions and processes, (2) the paralysis over questions of succession as there were not any mechanisms that allowed the transfer of power between leaders, and (3) the ideological dimension of the Cold War. The extra-regional actors in the Horn play a heavy hand in creating these factors from the post-colonial legacy creating factionalized elites, normalization of authoritarianism, and the support of regional regimes regardless of their performance at home as long as they allowed the extra-regional actors to have unrestricted access to the Red Sea and conduct business as usual.

The location of the Horn itself puts this region in an interesting position during the Cold War as it is both geographically distant enough from the spheres of influence of both superpowers, which allows the local regional leaders to shift alliances. But the Horn is just far enough from the centers of these spheres of influence to become a strategic theater for competing interests between the US and USSR, and this best reflected in the many political-military conflicts across the Horn during the Cold War, most notably the Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia.

In addition to the exportation of Cold War dynamics into the Horn, shifts in the Islamic World towards different interpretations of political Islam were also felt in this region to which Sudan and Ethiopia were sensitive as the multi-religious societies in the region. After WW2, the formation of the Arab League in 1945 created a diplomatic arena for collective action and security arrangements and further connected the Arab World and the Horn politically. The Arab League members from the Horn of Africa are Sudan (1956), Somalia (1974), and Djibouti (1977). Somalia and Djibouti belonged to the Arab League based on their shared Islamic faith and centuries of relations with the Arab World, which further isolated Ethiopia and the Christian communities in Sudan. The Ogaden War was the result of many destabilizing factors coming to the forefront as this conflict was a conflict over territory stemming from ethnic and religious tensions coupled with global superpowers providing military aid and the capabilities to their regional allies to make this conflict possible.

The Horn became increasingly divided along religious lines within the Islamic World and witnessed the implications of the emergence of both Sunni-Shia tensions and tensions within Sunni Islam. Somalia and Sudan experienced the rise of political Islam from competing Islamic schools of thought within their borders with increased economic relations

with Saudi Arabia, a US-ally during the Cold War. This set the stage for religious tensions between the Muslims and Christians of the region and increasing conflict within Islamic communities in the 1970s and 1980s. This religious tension is important to contextualize as history has a way of repeating itself in this region because religious divisions have again redeveloped along fault lines as a result of the power competition over the influence of this region. The religious tensions have shaped regional dynamics within the Horn and transregional dynamics with the Gulf as well as impacted alliance formation and stability with external powers interested in the Horn of Africa.

By the end of the Cold War bipolar world order in 1991 with the fall of the USSR, the accumulation of the unmanaged political and social problems that plagued the Horn had evolved into state, institutional, and social dilemmas that exacerbated the existing security and stability issues the region was unable to address. The Cold War arrived in the Horn as the region was undertaking a series of state-building projects, such as institution-building, political and economic development, and balancing political power between all the different sub-national identity groups that now resided in their new borders drawn by the imperial powers. The involvement of the Cold War powers in the region's affairs meant that these processes critical to effective state governance, thus security and stability, were interrupted. The trajectory of the region's statecraft was again at the behest of foreign powers who were involved in the region for its renewed strategic significance in the global economy. The lingering consequences from this intervention include the exacerbation of existing domestic issues, thus further limiting the capacity for governance. State weakness hampers state effectiveness, and this couldn't be truer when applied to the context of the enduring state fragility in the Horn. The regional states found themselves unable to respond to domestic and regional crises due to limitations on governance and institutional building stemming from the

enduring consequences from the region's post-colonial legacy and Cold War on state development. In the arena of local politics, the increased monopolization of political power across the region coincided with the arrival of the Cold War powers. This encouraged the emergence of a culture of authoritarianism, strong-man politics, and an unsustainable political culture that incentivizes the involvement of extra-regional actors in local affairs. The marginalization and exclusion from political power and public goods have exacerbated the state of underdevelopment that characterizes the Horn as these power and resource struggles intensified into a number of domestic conflicts across the region witnessed during the Cold War and continuing into the contemporary era.

3.2.2 Balancing Act in the Contemporary Era

The seeds of instability that were planted in the 20th century came to fruition in the contemporary era as the regional system continued to witness tumultuous social tensions, weak state structures and institutions, and foreign interference in regional affairs. The structure of the international system has shifted in the contemporary era from a bipolar system with the US and USSR at the two poles to a more multipolar system in which there are more fluid alliances that are less geographically determined and are characterized by the emergence of multiple poles in different regions.

The Horn's regional system had entered the new world order with five states in the region as Djibouti gained its independence from France following decades of domestic strife in 1977 and Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1991 after decades of conflict. In 2011, the region was joined by its sixth state, South Sudan, following years of negotiations to secede from Sudan. The self-determination claims that characterized the early independence period did not subside even at this stage in the region's development. The decolonization period left the regional states with even more unanswered questions as the regional borders continued to

be contested and revised due to local conflict. The suppression of self-determination claims created more tension domestically as the lines between the nation and state remained unaddressed. Overall, the region emerged into the 21st century even more fragmented with underdeveloped state systems and more vulnerable to external pressure.

The inability for the local states to address instability and uneven development is linked to global powers using the Horn, as well as other developing regions, as laboratories for modernization and development theories during the early stages of their state development. These theories continue to be prevalent in economic development circles, but the underdevelopment of the Horn's political and economic arenas only demonstrates that these attempts have evidently been unsuccessful. In fact, this underdevelopment has only exacerbated local instability and insecurity and has since prompted the involvement of extra-regional actors in regional affairs, which then feeds into this never-ending cycle of local conflict bringing in foreign actors and foreign actors exacerbating local conflict. After the international community stepped into the Horn to address the downward spiral the region had found itself in towards the 1990s, the failure to contain this violence and instability led to a period of disengagement from global powers following the Cold War.

The GWOT redefined the strategic significance of the region in the 21st century and reintroduced the US in the security arena of the Horn due to the emergence of security threats, such as terrorism and piracy. The contemporary economic powers felt that it was a priority to assert control over the fragile spaces in the Horn to limit the exacerbation of the existing instability to interfere with trade in the Red Sea, as the Cold War powers did before them.

The GWOT shaped the US lens towards the Horn in two specific ways as it relates to the US in the Horn. First, the GWOT had created an environment in which any Islamist

organization was placed under scrutiny to search for any radical Islamist tendencies. The US government had the political will and financial means to prioritize US counter-terrorism efforts to counter what the US classifies as "terrorism" anywhere in the world or support local actors in their own counter-terrorism efforts to limit US military engagement in local conflicts seemingly without consideration for how these operations will impact the local governance. The latter is what happened in Somalia in 2006 as Mogadishu became the seat of power for the Islamic Court Union (ICU).

The US military engagement in Somalia has long been justified as counter-terrorism as the US government helps the Somali government fight non-state actors with ties to Al Qaeda, thus connecting Somalia to the global War on Terror. Ethiopia, which has historically been led by Orthodox Christians, was worried that the Islamism next door could stir up instability that made flow into Ethiopia or that these Islamist sentiments may strike a chord with their own Muslim populations (Sanders 2006). This led to neighboring Ethiopia to lead a foreign intervention into Mogadishu to root out the ICU and support the new Somali government created by the international community, whereas the local Somalis had perceived this intervention as an invasion seeing that the ICU had ousted the warlords the locals resented for consolidating power and recreating clan tensions. During the 2006 Ethiopia intervention in Somalia with US air and intelligence support, ICU leadership fled Mogadishu with their radical youth militia, Al-Shabaab. The emergence of Al-Shabaab with its Islamist ties is what fully drew Somalia into the GWOT and led to the US establishing the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Germany to coordinate all US military operations in Africa with an AFRICOM base in Djibouti.

The long-term implications for US foreign policy from the War on Terror are evident in Somalia with an increasingly militarized foreign policy as more resources are put into counter-terrorism operations than to helping the Somali government build its capacity for governance. Engaging in counter-terrorism efforts seems to be efficient for the US's short-term objectives in the War on Terror, but these operations are not sustainable. In addition to engaging in counter-terrorism operations and strengthening the Somali government's ability to combat Al-Shabaab, the US has also been involved in addressing piracy in the Gulf of Aden from the Puntland region. Global powers joined together to form an anti-piracy coalition as the threat of piracy impacted maritime trade and security in one of the most strategic shipping routes in the world. Many of the states involved in the anti-piracy coalition have established military installments in Djibouti to coordinate their operations and project their security presence in the region. The instability in Somalia has also brought together a coalition of African Union troops (African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)) to provide peacekeeping missions and create the space for the Somali leaders to expand the Somali state's very limited capacity for governance and move forward with state-building projects.
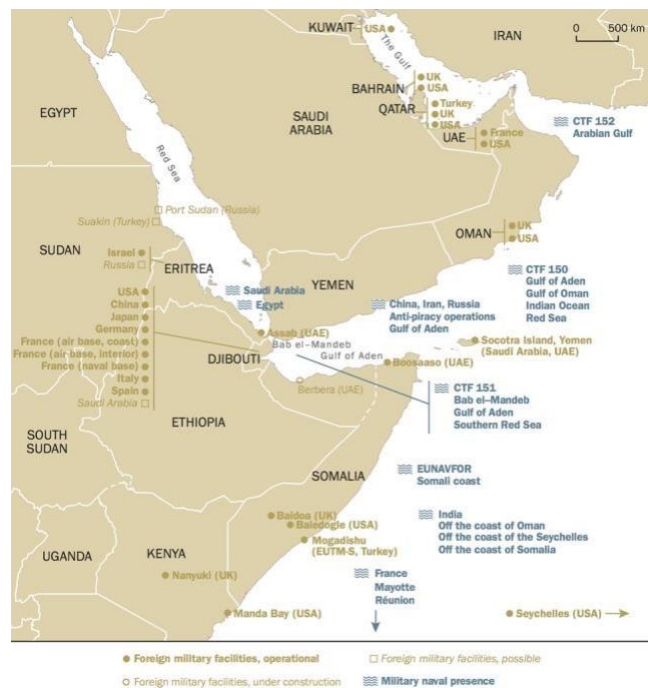

Figure 5: Foreign Military Forces in the Horn of Africa (Melvin 2019)

Figure 6: Commercial Ports and Military Bases in the Horn of Africa (Jessica Larsen and Finn Stepputat/Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)2019)

As witnessed time and time again, the response of the international community is to use the instability in the Horn as an entry point to set up security outposts and military bases along the Red Sea coast. In the contemporary era, this introduced economic powers from the Middle East and Asia that were at a point in their own state development to project their influence and security capabilities for the sake of ensuring that the instability in the Horn did not migrate into the Red Sea maritime space and impact their economic development. Some of these economic powers are following up their increased security presence in the Horn to take advantage of the region's strategic location with the development of ports along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean (figures 5 and 6).

One of these countries that have arrived in the region for anti-piracy operations and established a security presence is China, which has made the US very nervous. China's security presence in Djibouti highlights the strategic significance of the Horn and is heightening anxieties as this world economic power continues to expand its military and commercial operations in Africa. In the place of the usual Western economic powers that had been present in the region's affairs, the emergence of China as a player in the region over the past two decades has been met with different attitudes among regional leaders. For starters, China has become one the largest foreign donors to the Horn across Africa, and is backing up its interest in the region with infrastructure development as part of its One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR). The large-scale infrastructure project aims to create a large network of

ports, railways, and airports to facilitate the movement of Chinese goods and extract raw materials in Africa to support Chinese industrial growth (Breuer 2017, 2-5; figure 7).

In the Red Sea region, China has invested in a high-speed railway connecting Djibouti City and Addis Ababa, which is Ethiopia's main outlet to the Red Sea (Kaaman and Fowler 2017; Tarrosy et al. 2020). The presence of China in the region is causing some discomfort among the foreign powers that were once heavily involved in the region, such as the US and European powers, and also found themselves competing with China at an international level (Lee 2015; Vertin 2015). These tensions, like the tensions between competing Arabian Gulf powers, have made their way into the Horn's regional affairs as well. These external dynamics continue to be a source of pressure on an already vulnerable regional system as the constituent states are at a stage in their regional development to assert their own interests.

Figure 7: China's Belt and Road Initiative Map (Merics 2018)

The expansion of the Arabian Gulf powers in the Horn and the strengthening of trans-regional dynamics stem from the emergence of security threats close to the Gulf in recent years, namely the Arab Spring (2011), that made the Gulf powers expand their security arenas outward to secure the regime security of their local allies to protect their own (International Crisis Group 2020, 2019). This change in trans-regional dynamics between the Horn and the Gulf has elevated Ethiopia's status as a key regional player for Gulf interests in the Horn. The Arab Spring has restructured regional dynamics
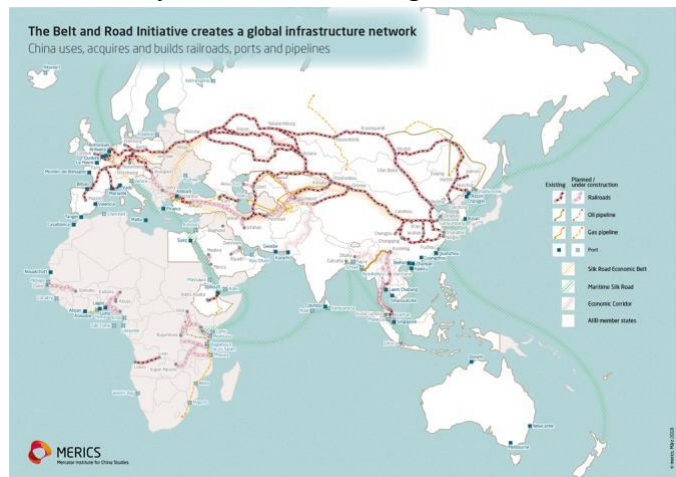
in the Horn by weakening Egypt's status in the region as Egypt's domestic politics has become increasingly tumultuous following the Arab Spring. This has allowed Ethiopia to emerge as the regional hegemon as its neighbors have become increasingly unsettled by volatile domestic politics and vulnerable to the stress from the renewed international interest in the region.

Another point of contention between Egypt and Ethiopia is the latter's construction of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) along the Blue Nile River, a major tributary that feeds the Nile River. The GERD will slowly redirect water that would have flowed to Egypt instead to Ethiopia and Sudan for agricultural purposes and energy production as a hydroelectric dam. This dam project has increased anxieties in Egypt as the country depends on the Nile for activities across its economic sector from agriculture to tourism. The GERD project has been further legitimized by Egypt's Gulf allies as they engage with Ethiopia and Sudan to secure their food supply as more arable land is made available by redirecting the Blue Nile. The increasing hostilities between Ethiopia and Egypt have been manifested in the "water wars" surrounding the GERD project. It seems that in the contemporary era, resource conflict continues to be a source of instability in the Horn. The militarization of the African coast of the Red Sea may become a problem for the Horn as conflicts elsewhere, such as Yemen, come to an end and these military powers may bring their attention to the internal affairs of the region (Benaim and Hanna 2018; Devermont and Thomas-Jensen 2021).

The increasing influence of the Middle East and China challenges the status quo of Western influence in the Horn of Africa, and it is still not possible to fully grasp the effects of this new relationship. But what can be understood is how the interventionist policies of the new competing powers, such as supporting local proxies, can have the unintended consequence of potentially destabilizing the Horn, which can be observed in the aftermath of

the Cold War. The manifestation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis in the Horn is already starting to show some of these unintended consequences, and the absence of the US as a counterweight may accelerate the restructuring of the region. The Gulf powers have stepped up as a mediator in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace talks and as a positive force in Sudan, but have caused some division in Somalia as the 2017 GCC split has manifested itself in Somalia's domestic politics (Vertin 2019). In the pursuit of projecting their own influence in Somalia and furthering strategic political, economic, and security interests, the competitive dynamics displayed by the Gulf states in Somalia may risk state-building efforts and accelerate state fragmentation. A coherent US foreign policy in Africa may be absent, but the US can play a background role in keeping diplomatic channels open to avoid, or at least delay, a conflict in the region that will eventually threaten the interests of all the countries involved (Beniam and Hanna 2018).

The presence of these competing powers not only brings billions in foreign investment for much-needed infrastructure development but has the potential to lead to instability in the region. These powers are intervening in the domestic politics of the Horn in hopes of gathering support for their interests, and also supporting local rival proxies that may challenge the leadership in their respective countries. A major concern is whether the countries of the Horn can successfully play these competing interests off of each other for their own self-interest, or will they lose control over their own region by these global powers in a way that harms their own economies, political stability, and territorial integrity.

Although the regional states were experiencing different degrees of political and social crisis throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century, the roots of their problems remained similar and can be organized into three general contributors to state weakness. First, the regional governments are still struggling with the limited capacity for governance

due to poor institutional development and corruption. These institutional shortcomings have made the regional states unable to respond to the emergence of instability and violence within their societies and governments. The regional governments were unable to provide security and public goods within their borders, which made them unable to serve the public, thus weakening their own legitimacy within and outside their nominal borders. Second, the monopolization of power paired with the marginalization and exclusion of political goods continues to fuel social tensions along ethnic, religious, and clan lines. The erosion of civil rights and democratic space has resulted in the local political actors looking outside their states towards providing legitimacy to their authority, economic aid to support their struggling economies and state budgets, and military aid to defend their regime stability from local challengers. This has allowed for the development and maintenance of asymmetric relationships between the constituent states of the Horn and their donor allies.

Third, the militarization of both the state and non-state actors continues to be a destabilizing force across the region. At the state level, the regimes in power use the tools of the state to consolidate power and suppress marginalized socio-political groups that have been vying for political power and seeking self-determination. The excess of arms amongst non-state actors allows for challengers to emerge against the regime in power, which exacerbates domestic violence that has produced conflicts with casualties at genocidal proportions. When extra-regional actors are factored into the region's security environment, the presence of these actors developing military bases along the Red Sea coast and providing arms to their local allies, both state and non-state actors, only serves to exacerbate existing domestic conflict and threaten regional stability and security. Finally, the region's relative weakness is a liability to regional order as the continued dependence on extra-regional actors has made the Horn more vulnerable across political, economic, and security arenas. This

weakness also makes the region more susceptible to the intervention of foreign powers in regional affairs to fulfill the responsibilities a strong local leadership was meant to perform.

The region still has not undergone any significant stabilization and reconciliation processes to address the roots of these long-term consequences - ethnic tension, destabilization, and state fragmentation - that Horn continues to experience in the contemporary era. At present, Somalia and Ethiopia are facing extending election crises fueled by tensions that have been building up for decades and left to operate in an underdeveloped state structure with institutions unable to hold its leaders accountable when they utilize authoritarian means. Sudan is in a critical moment in this state development, and is caught in the middle of several power competitions as well as witnessing a wave of refugees fleeing from Ethiopia's state-sanctioned violence in its Tigray region (Walsh and Dahir 2020).

The renewed focus from the international community following decades of disengagement has since triggered a renewed cycle of destabilization and social tension along similar pressure points. The landscape of the international system has changed greatly in recent decades as increased globalization connects political, economic, and security systems. The stakes have been raised as the international system will continue to be impacted by the repercussions of the instability in the Horn migrating into the Red Sea maritime space. The relationship between the patterns of instability from the increased involvement of extra-regional powers in regional affairs that accompany the region's strategic importance must be addressed for the sake of millions of people who live in this region. If not, the Horn will continue to be trapped in a cycle of governance issues, underdevelopment, and marginalization that continue to play into the insecurity and instability of the region.

Moreover, the unsustainable approaches utilized by the global powers attempting to

neutralize the state of instability of the Horn should also be re-evaluated. These methods only

exclude and limit the agency of local actors as the international community determines the

fate of the region without the participation of actors that live in the Horn.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The challenges of instability and poor governance across the Horn have their roots in the enduring inequality, uneven development, the marginalization that have affected the region since independence and that have only been exacerbated by the involvement of the political, economic, and military powers interested in the region. When these issues erupt into security threats to the maritime space, global powers that already have an economic presence in the region use the regional instability as an entry point to intervene even further in the region without ever getting to the roots of the problem. Getting to the roots of the problem would mean accepting that the Western powers that created the architecture of the region do not exactly have the best track record for statecraft, and instead would allow local actors to have more agency in designing their future. Creating meaningful change in the Horn requires a major paradigm shift in the way global powers interact with the region because continuing with business as usual has only exacerbated and deepened security issues that continue this cycle of foreign engagement at the expense of the Horn.

State development in the Horn is often conducted in the shadow of shifts in the international system corresponding with the change in hands in between the global economic powers seeking to dominate the Red Sea maritime space. This directly affects the region as the shifting balance between foreign powers and their agendas is reflected in the way these powers treat the Horn as a strategic theater to expand their own capacity to conduct business in the Red Sea. The social construction of the Horn as a region filled to the brim with hostile actors that endanger the Red Sea corridor and make governance nearly impossible was an image created by extra-regional actors to justify their presence in the region. This image has itself become a self-fulfilling prophecy, and the Horn has become stuck in this strange loop,

not of its own making, and has become weakened to the point where the regional states are not equipped to move out of this decades-old cycle. To put it bluntly, the involvement of extra-regional actors in the Horn's regional affairs embedded the seeds of instability in the statecraft of the region. The persistent presence of foreign powers and the shifts in their priorities both enabled the growth of this inability and continues to shape the region to maintain this cycle of state weakness and instability.

While there has been meaningful progress in democracy and governance across the African continent in recent decades, many countries, including those of the Horn of Africa, continue to be marked by political instability and civil strife that have been left unsupported due to underdeveloped state institutions and organizations. The Horn is often characterized as a region made up of failed and weak states, and while this reputation has persisted since the period of independence, it is important to address the origins of the domestic and foreign stressors on stability and security in the region that have led to this reputation. While the path to peace and stability in the Horn may be difficult, the over one hundred million people who call this region home continue to demand more effective governance by their leaders and deserve peace and stability.

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Vita

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Ms. Mohamed was an involved student on Appalachian's campus through her time serving as a university tutor as well as her membership in several student organizations, including her leadership of the Muslim Student Association. She was a recipient of the Wilson Scholarship and a member of the Appalachian Honors College.