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ISTANBUL SABAHATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SECURITIZATION OF ISLAM IN ETHIOPIA: EXAMINING DOMESTIC TRENDS AND GEOPOLITICS

Ph.D. THESIS

Jemal Muhamed ADEM

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PH.D. THESIS

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July-2022

THESIS APPROVAL

Upon being assessed in line with the relevant provisions of the Political Science and International Relations Department of the Sabahattin Zaim University Graduate Education Social Sciences Institute, the study titled “Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia: Examining Domestic Trends and Geopolitics” and submitted by Jemal Muhamed ADEM as a Doctoral dissertation was deemed complete. After being defended before the committee on 19/07/2022, the dissertation is approved by unanimous vote/a large majority.

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DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that this Ph.D. thesis dissertation titled “Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia: Examining Domestic Trends and Geopolitics” is my work and I have acted according to scientific ethics and academic rules while producing it. I have collected and used all information and data according to scientific ethics and thesis writing guideline of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. I have fully referenced, in the text and bibliography, all direct and indirect quotations and all sources I have used in this work.

Jemal Muhamed ADEM

Istanbul, July, 2022

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ABSTRACT

SECURITIZATION OF ISLAM IN ETHIOPIA: EXAMINING DOMESTIC TRENDS AND GEOPOLITICS

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July-2022, Page: 250 + x

Historically securitization of Islam was used as a tool in a nation-building project whereby Christian elites in the central highlands of today's Ethiopia attempted to create a Christian nation-state among the overwhelmingly Islamic societies of the Horn of Africa. This study examines such trends in contemporary Ethiopia by emphasizing domestic manifestations and geopolitical contexts. To address the research questions, the study relies on content and discourse analysis as a qualitative research method and theoretical tools of Securitization Theory and Regional Security Complex Theory. This study discovers that securitization of Islam in Ethiopia occurs in the forms of speech acts, policy orientations, and institutional practices that affect the lives and relations of Muslims and the patterns of broader societal interactions in Ethiopia. Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is conducted rhetorically to safeguard the state's national security. However, the security discourses around Islam and ensuing policies have produced insecurities, human rights violations, societal distrust and inter-communal violence, and national mayhem. This study departs from the claim of securitization theory that the audience's threat validation is a necessity for securitization to occur. The findings of this study demonstrate that in non-democratic political systems and cultures, securitizing actors do not need the general public's approval to implement extraordinary security policies. In such contexts, the evaluation of securitization is based on dissident voices produced by securitization policies and practices than a mere audience approval. Evaluating securitization in terms of dissidents enable security studies to prioritize human security and not reduce the complex phenomenon of securitization to elite-level rhetoric.

Keywords: Securitization of Islam, Domestic Trends, Geopolitics, Ethiopia

ÖZET

ETİYOPYA'DA İSLAM'IN GÜVENLİKLENDİRİLMESİ: İÇ EĞİLİMLER VE JEOPOLİTİĞİN İNCELENMESİ

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Tarihsel olarak İslam'ın tehdit aracı olarak algılanması, günümüz Etiyopya'sının orta dağlık bölgelerindeki Hıristiyan seçkinlerin, Afrika Boynuzu'nun ezici çoğunluğu İslam toplumlarında bir Hıristiyan ulus-devleti yaratmaya çalıştığı ulus inşa projelerinin bir aracı olarak kullanıldı. Bu çalışma, yerel tezahürleri ve jeopolitik bağlamları vurgulayarak çağdaş Etiyopya'daki bu tür eğilimleri incelemektedir. Çalışma, araştırma sorularını ele almak için nitel içerik ve söylem analizi araştırma yöntemlerine ve Güvenlik Teorisi ve Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi teorik araçlarına dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Etiyopya'da İslam'ın tehdit olarak algılanması ile Müslümanların yaşamlarını, daha geniş toplumsal etkileşim modellerini ve ilişkilerini etkileyen, politika yönelimleri ve kurumsal uygulamaları irdeler. Etiyopya'da İslam'ın tehdit algısı, devletin ulusal güvenliğini korumak için retorik olarak yürütülüyor. Bununla birlikte, İslam etrafındaki güvenlik söylemleri ve bunu takip eden politikalar, insan hakları ihlalleri, toplumsal güvensizlik ve toplumlar arası şiddet ve ulusal kargaşa üretti. Bu çalışma, güvenlik teorisinin, gerçekleşmesi için hedef kitlenin tehdit olgusu iddiasıyla hareket etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, demokratik olmayan siyasi sistemlerde ve kültürlerde, aktörlerin olağanüstü güvenlik politikaları uygulamak için genel kamuoyunun onayına ihtiyaç duymadığını göstermektedir. Bu tür bağlamlarda, güvenlik değerlendirilmesi, kamuoyu onayından çok, güvenlik politikaları ve uygulamaları tarafından üretilen muhalif seslere dayanmaktadır. Güvenlik konusunu muhalifler açısından değerlendirmek, güvenlik çalışmalarının insan güvenliğine öncelik vermesine ve karmaşık güvenlikleştirme olgusunu seçkinler düzeyindeki retoriğe indirgememesine olanak tanır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İslam'ın Güvenlikleştirilmesi, İç Eğilimler, Jeopolitik, Etiyopya

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Abbreviations

AIAI	Al-Itihad al Islamiyya.
CHS	Copenhagen School
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front.
ETV	Ethiopian Television
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ICG	International Crisis Group
NGO	Non- Governmental Organizations
NIF	National Islamic Front
RSCT	Regional security Complex Theory
UIC	United Islamic Front.
USA	United States of America.
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious FreedomGlossary of Terms

Glosery of Terms

Al-Ahbash	A moderate Islamic movement in Lebanon that doesn’t involve politics.
Da’awa	Calling to Islam through preaching
Deen	An Arabic term of Religion
Derg	A socialist regime which controlled Ethiopia between 1974 and 1991.
Fatwas	Justifications for contradictory issues based on Quran and Hadiss
Hadith	The tradition or saying of the prophet Muhammad.
Hajj	One of the five pillars of Islam, obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca.
Hayatu Sahaba	The life of the companions of the prophet Muhammad
Hijab	Headscarf for women, which covers the head except for the face.
First Hijra	Forced migration of the first Muslims from Mecca to Abyssinia.
Jihad	One’s inner spiritual struggle against sin.
Jihadawi Harekat	Name of a documentary film made by the Ethiopian government in relation to the Ethiopian Muslim movement since 2011
Juma’a	Friday prayer, the most important prayer of the week.
Mahbere Kidusan	An Association of saint
Mejilis	Local name for the Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council that represents Ethiopian Muslims at national level.
Niqab	Is a dress which covers everything but the eyes most commonly worn

	by women followers of Sunni Islam.
Rasul	The messenger
Sahaba	The companions of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) while he was alive
Salat al-ghaib	A funeral prayer in Islamic theology on one who is absent.
Shari’a	The moral code and religious law of Islam based on Quran and Hadith
Ulema	A body of Muslim scholars recognized as expert in Islamic wisdom
Umma	Community of Muslims or people
Wahhabism	Strict adherents to Sunni Islam named after Muhammad Abdul Wahab
Zemene Mesafint	Era of the Princes in Ethiopian History (1769-1855)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter discusses the study's background information, problem statement, research question and objectives, significance, scope, limitations, ethical considerations, and patterns of organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

This Western trend of framing threats vis-à-vis Islam has become an integral part of security discourses in other parts of the world (Cesari, 2009). The western narratives about Islam as the antithesis of democracy, human rights, and tolerance have become a microcosm of global intellectual and policy debates on Islam. African states are no exception to this trend. However, Africa's political culture is highly authoritarian, with massive corruption, human rights violations, underrepresentation, marginalization, and inequality. At the same time, African societies are deeply identity embedded where identity can serve as a source of security, safety, and self-expression even more than states and their institutions (Abbink, 2014). Thus, securitization that involves labeling, threat framing, or risk interpretation in line with a particular identity formation may have broader socio-political implications in a highly heterogeneous and embedded African society. The absence of the rule of law and strong state institutions may lead to identity-based mobilizations against states in which political power is mainly controlled by certain groups of people who share either religious or ethnic identities (ibid). In this regard, Jackson, Gunning, and Breen (2007) argued that the western notion of secularism and security discourses of extremism along specific identity formations might be harmful in societies with diverse historical interactions and cultural contexts. People in traditional communities, such as those in Africa, frequently place greater significance and faith in their religious or ethnic identities than in the state and its institutions to maintain order and ensure security (Markakis, 2013). Although most African states have adopted the western political traditions of secularism as political order to separate religion and politics, the majority of the people in these countries are religious to the extent that religion may serve as an alternative identity to the state (Abbink, 2014). Religion substitutes the state's role when the latter fails to ensure political freedom, equality, and inclusive political and social services.

Ethiopia, a country on the eastern edge of Africa, often called the Horn of Africa, has a long genealogy of statehood from its emergence as the Aksumite Kingdom in the 1st century A.D. to its current form as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. With a population of more than 120 million, Ethiopia is home to diverse religious communities, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, traditionalist religions, and many ethnolinguistic groups. Because of this, Italian historian Carlo Conti Rossini (1937) described Ethiopia as the 'museum of peoples' (Tirmingiham, 1952: 5). The historical accounts of the country's development of statehood and its interactions with diverse religious communities demonstrate that the relationship between the state and different religious groups was characterized by the discriminatory association of the state to a particular ethnoreligious formation while subjugating many of the other identities to assimilation. Orthodox Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia in the fourth century, preceding even the Aksumite Kingdom, and obtained the status of the state religion. Since then, Christianity provided the main political ideology to the successive imperial regimes of Ethiopia until 1974, when the last emperor of Ethiopia was overthrown by popular revolt (Abbink, 2014). However, during this long course of history, other religious identities, including Islam and ethnonational groups, were subject to assimilation and systematic marginalization by consecutive imperial governments (ibid). Despite the diverse nature of Ethiopian society, the country's successive leaders designed aggressive assimilation, marginalization, and exclusionary policies toward different religious communities and ethnolinguistic groups. Ethiopian historical rulers aspired to create mono-religious, mono-cultural, and mono-linguistic states by assimilating other identity groups into Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language (Muhamed, 2016). Religion was used to create a unified country under the umbrella of one religion as a national identity (ibid). However, the imperial government's policies of favoring one religion and thereby molding the national identity of the Ethiopian state failed in 1974 with the removal of the last emperor of theocratic Ethiopia through popular revolts (Dereje, 2011). However, the legacy of the empire’s policies has far-reaching implications on the current state, religion, and social relations of Ethiopia.

Following the popular revolution, the military-led Marxist-socialist regime, often called Derg, controlled power and vowed the divorce of state and church for the first time in Ethiopian history. Dergue replaced the theocratic state model with a secular socialist state that had repressive policies against all religious communities in the country. Although the Socialist regime was hostile to all religious groups, Muslims of the present generation extolled the former for introducing secularism and ending the status of orthodox Christianity as a national religion and the Orthodox Church as kingmaker of the state.

In 1991, an ethnic coalition named the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF hereafter) toppled Ethiopia's Marxist regime and founded a government of ethnic federalism. The coalition government ruled Ethiopia for the last three decades until it was replaced by reformist elements in 2018. Against the imperial and socialist regimes' policies, the EPRDF adopted liberalized approaches to managing religious and ethnic diversities under secularism and the system of ethnic federalism to correct the historical injustices of the assimilationist nation-building project (Serawit, 2018). The current government adopted multicultural federalism and introduced constitutional recognitions and rights to ethnolinguistic and religious groups as remedies. The government reorganized the country into a federation of nine provincial administrations, with the constituent parts of the polity based mostly on ethnolinguistic factors. In Ethiopia, religious and ethnic identities, as well as geographic locales, are frequently bound together.

Even though Ethiopia is now officially a secular state, religion plays a transformational social role and has political ramifications in the country's ethnic-driven politics. In a multiethnic and religious country, three religious groups have considerable political significance: Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism. Ethiopia's total population was predicted to be more than 120 million in July 2017, with Sunni Muslims accounting for more than half. Northern Ethiopia's Amhara and Tigray areas, as well as Addis Ababa, are largely Orthodox Christian. Islam is the majority religion in the Somali, Oromia, Harar, Afar, Wollo, and Silte districts and the Dire Dawa city administration. The Gambella and Sidama regional states and the Southern Region and Western Oromia are mainly Protestant. In most areas of the country, ethnic and religious identities coexist in specific territories.

A closer look at Ethiopia's current political trends indicates three types of politically active religious communities: Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Protestantism. The three religious groups have solid social foundations in different ethnic compositions and terrains. They also hold different political attitudes, sets of values about the fundamental goals of the Ethiopian state, and aspirations from the outcomes of politics at multiple levels. The political activities and goals of Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and Muslims can be characterized as hegemonic reactionary, revolutionary, and a resistance movement, respectively (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021).

Orthodox Christianity; The Orthodox Church and Christians seek to reinstate the Ethiopian state's hegemonic political, social, cultural, and economic institutions and national identity. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church's prominence as the kingmaker of Ethiopia's imperial past until 1974 prompted such an articulation of Orthodox Christians. People who are Orthodox Christians and Amharic speakers with primary territorial roots in the current Amahara regional state and other parts of the country disseminate the belief that Ethiopia was once a great nation that needs to be made great again. This group claims that ethnic federalism and the current constitutional order are to blame for all of the country's political issues today. They claimed that the system prioritizes ethnic, linguistic, and religious rights, weakening the state by fostering contentious agendas. This belief is reflected in a variety of political groups and movements, including those advocating for a strong, unified government and citizenship politics and rising ethnic-religious Amhara nationalism. In general, these political parties aspire to resurrect the country's centuries-old institutions based on Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language as the Ethiopian state's national character, despite the country's multicultural composition. These groups have always been reactionaries to most of the country's recent developments, mainly Muslim political assertiveness and visibility in the country's political and socio-economic life and the spontaneous spread of Protestantism. Recently, Orthodox Christians have been converting both to Islam and Protestantism at higher rates (Abbink, 2011).

Protestantism: Protestantism has swiftly spread in the country over the past three decades and considerably altered Ethiopia's religious landscape from the past. Protestantism first arrived in Ethiopia in 1950 due to Swedish and Finnish missionary activities. It has since established itself as a new spiritual identity in Ethiopia, attracting significant public attention, influencing social behavior, and igniting conflict with its existing religious groups (Elliesie, 2014). Protestantism is the dominant faith in the southern region, Gambella, Western Oromia, Benishangul, and some urban centers. Besides its increasing proliferation, Protestants have become active in politics, with many religious community members holding crucial governmental and ministerial positions, often exceeding the number of Muslims and Orthodox Christians. Orthodox Christians have frequently complained that the EPRDF administration supports Protestantism as a religion and Protestants in politics and bureaucracy to appease western countries, particularly the United States. On social media, many commentators associate the election of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed with the influence of the U.S. government's interest in encouraging Protestantism in Ethiopia. Even though the prime minister hails from a Muslim-majority ethnic group, his political pronouncements and the appointment of his co-religious personnel to key government positions have sparked informal debates among Muslims and Orthodox Christians alike. The New York Times reported on January 3, 2019, that "Abiy is constantly invoking religious symbols; especially those linked to American Protestant evangelical megachurches, and has brought a more significant number of Pentecostals into the higher ranks of government." The Protestants aspire to transform the country's socio-politics according to the Protestant political conviction of prosperity gospel, with substantial financial, academic, and diplomatic assistance from the West, primarily US-based evangelical Christian lobby groups.

Islam: Despite the identification of Ethiopia with (Orthodox) Christianity, Islam in Ethiopia is as old as Islam itself (Dereje, 2012). Ethiopia was the first country to recognize Islam and give refuge to Muslims when the Prophet Muhammad in 615–616 instructed his earliest followers, the Sahaba, who were snubbed by the local fellow Arabs in Mecca to seek protection under the Christian king, Najashi Ashrama of *al-Habasha* of Ethiopia (Erlich, 1994). Despite this historic friendly interaction between Islam and the Ethiopian state, Muslims in Ethiopia have been one of the country's most marginalized groups, suffering from a high degree of socio-economic marginalization, political underrepresentation, and oppression by successive regimes in the long imperial history of the country (Dereje, 2011; Mukerem, 2015).

Ethiopia's secular turn following the 1974 popular revolution and the 1991 regime change brought a paradigm shift in the identity of the Ethiopian state and the life of the Muslim community with a new field of possibility for Islam in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2014). With the coming of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power, Muslims in Ethiopia started to enjoy enhanced access to education, economic opportunities, political participation, improved communication technology, and means of transportation, all of which contributed to a reawaking of the previously denigrated Islamic identity (Abbink, 2014). In this regard, Dereje (2011) argued that Ethiopian Muslims were in a "thanksgiving" mood to the EPRDF government for its recognition and institutionalization of religious communities' rights. However, the healthy relationship between the regime and Muslims has gradually changed from accommodation to confrontation, and the government's attitude towards Muslims has changed over time (Dereje, 2011). The animosity between the two even led to skirmishes and tensions in recent years. While the government claims it is threatened by Islamic extremism, Muslims view as government interference in internal religious affairs (ICG, 2013).

The enabling structures framed in the post-1990 period have initiated and created aspirations among Muslims for more rights, mainly manifested by the pursuit and movements for religious institutional autonomy in 2011 (Dereje, 2011). Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds and various ethnolinguistic groups have been sidelined through established national doctrines, institutions, and policies. As a result, they advocate for an inclusive and open political and socio-economic environment (ibid). With a long history of multi-dimensional marginalization in the country's politics, Muslims assert themselves, resisting the old mentalities mainly from Orthodox Christians and seeking more religious freedom and political integration. Islam has taken root within the entire Somali, Harari, Afar, and Silte ethnic groups and the majority of Oromo society. Muslim political objectives include redefining the country on inclusive principles and increasing their share of political engagement and decision-making (ibid). Muslims' increasing exposure to modern education and the ensuing rise of their political consciousness has led them to question the historical notion of the Ethiopian state and the current government's approach toward religious communities.

Moreover, the post-cold war rapprochement of foreign governments and their agencies to Ethiopia, especially U.S. and European states, has made Muslims anxious about international actors and their religious agenda against Muslims in domestic setups. Ethiopian Muslims have been wary of the existing domestic and external world political spheres since the global context neither welcomes nor supports their domestic agenda and struggle for their civil rights. However, there is a long tradition among Christian elites and successive Ethiopian governments that Muslims may receive political support from Muslim states in neighboring countries and the Middle East. As a result, the government has always viewed Muslims' assertive activities and the quest for more religious rights and institutional autonomy as a political movement and offspring of global and regional 'extremist' and 'terrorist' networks.

The Ethiopian government has identified 'Islamic Extremism' to establish an 'Islamic State' to be ruled under 'Sharia law' as a long-term threat to the Ethiopian state and its secular order (Muhamed, 2015). In this way, the government framed the religious identity of the Muslim community as a national security and existential threat. The process corresponds with what is described as securitization in Copenhagen School's securitization theory. Securitization refers to the methods of labeling certain phenomena or developments as an existential threat to the survival of referent objects, such as the state's national security national and cultural groups' identities, to convince the public that extraordinary measures are necessary to deal with the problem (Adoing, 2009; Bourbeau, 2011). While the government propagates 'Islamic extremism' discourse to label the activities of and pressures from the Muslim community, especially after 2011, the latter has presented it as a question of institutional autonomy. The securitization of Muslims' religious identity and ensuing co-opting of their institutional life did not prevent the religious community from refuting the government's discourse of 'extremism.’ Muslims have considered the government's actions as deliberate defamations and blockages to prevent Muslims from demanding their civil and constitutional rights (Muhamed, 2015). The government's securitized views and narrative towards their religious identity have produced grave resentments among Muslims. For Muslims, the government’s rhetoric and approaches have been primarily perceived as interferences in the internal affairs of the religious community (Dereje, 2011). Such a trend of securitization has multiple levels of developments and actors that reinforce each other in altering the relationship between Muslims and the government in Ethiopia. The Global War on Terror in international politics, Ethiopia's geopolitical setting in the Horn of Africa and its role as the "anchor state in the so-called global war on terror, and religious activism within the Muslim community have to draw new patterns of relationships within Ethiopian society and Muslim identity and state as well (ibid: 17). These securitized narratives and views of the government and some religious figures of the Orthodox Church towards Muslims are likely to draw new patterns of relationships in Ethiopian society. Thus, this study analyzes the trend of securitization of Islam that has come to affect the life of Muslims as both individuals and a community, their relationships with other religious communities and their representatives, the government, and its implications for the country's future at large. The study adopts the concept of 'securitization' as the security logic based on the constructivist knowledge of securitization theory as framed by The Copenhagen School (CPS hereafter). The central assumption in this study is that the securitization of Islam and Muslims through the semantic of extremism in Ethiopia has turbulent effects on religious and societal stability, national peace, and the state-building process at large. The politicization and securitization of Islam essentially impoverishes and threatens the religion's survival while leading the religious community to resent non-religious actors' interference (Cesari, 2009). The study aims to analyze and develop a comprehensive understanding of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, its domestic manifestations and geopolitical futures, its multi-dimensional implications for the life and interactions of Muslims with other religious communities, and its effect on overall national peace.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The securitization of Islam and Muslims through the discourse of 'Islamic extremism' in Ethiopia has gained public sentiments that disturb religious and societal stability, widen social polarization, and affect the national peace and state-building process. Krume (2010:1) argued that securitization of Islam is carried out through the securitization of terrorism in the form of Islamic fundamentalism. As he says, "when one is securitizing terrorism, he can also include the role of Muslims in acts of terrorism in his speech act, thereby indirectly targeting Islam and Muslims."

The government is the primary agent to identify the sources of people's insecurities, communicate the issue to the public to raise awareness, and halt the threatening developments. Dolinec (2010) argued that securitization is primarily state-centric, as security matters are usually dealt with at the state level. The public discourse disseminated by media and politicians is of paramount importance when addressing security issues

(Bonansinga, 2015). Since Islamic fundamentalism and its security meanings have widely circulated in Ethiopia and become part of public sphere discussions, it will not be without implications for an individual's life, societal stability, and the country's destiny. Abbink (2014) argued that the government's discourse on Islamic fundamentalism in Ethiopia has consequences not only for the religious community's political attitudes toward the state and its constitutional order, but also towards other religious and secular communities in the country as it creates and spreads societal distrust within general society.

Similarly, Muhamed (2015) argued that the use of unpleasant terms 'extremists' and 'terrorists' for Muslims by the Ethiopian government in the public sphere would certainly create religious instability within the Muslim community itself and spread a sense of distrust among other religious communities towards Muslims. Societal distrust, in turn, will tremendously affect the national peace and state-building project, which is impossible to realize without the peaceful coexistence of the country's diverse groups. Moreover, the securitization of Islamic religious identity poses challenges to the life of Muslim individuals, religious communities, and the essence of the religion. Thus, the marginalization of Islam and Muslims in the past transformed into the government’s contemporary securitized approach towards Muslims. Having the objective of analyzing such conditions of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, its internal manifestations and geopolitics, and implications for the country's future, the contributions of this thesis partly can be justified by the following considerations. First, though the post-1991 newly introduced semi-liberal political order widens the social space for religious communities, there is no serious discussion among policymakers and academics about the nature of relationships between various religious groups and the state and vice versa. For decades, social scientists have had little interest in understanding the relationship between Muslims, Islam, and Ethiopia (Mukerem, 2015). Second, despite substantial scholarly efforts on the recent controversial developments between the government and Muslims, none of them look at the issue in terms of securitization, which may provide an alternative perspective to understand the condition. Far from not appreciating the existing literature and studies, this thesis will address the issue by systematically analyzing and identifying their theoretical implications through the critical application of securitization theory to answer the research questions. Thus, the twin contributions of this study go to its enrichment of the existing body of knowledge through an alternative perspective to understand the topic under consideration.

This study covers the trends of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, both its internal manifestations and geopolitical aspects examine the historical nature of the Ethiopian state and its interactions with the religious community, the sources of ongoing controversies, and the geopolitical contexts that facilitate the process of securitization.

1.3. Aim of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to examine the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia and its implications for the multifaceted interaction of state, society, religion, national consensus, and the nation-building process. Along with this general objective, the study seeks to address the following specific goals:

A. Examine the domestic trends and geopolitical factors for the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

B. Assess the contextual factors for the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

C. Evaluate the role and reactions of different audiences to the securitization process.

D. Discover the implications of the securitization of Islam for the life, interactions, and relations of the religious community, national peace, and state-building process in Ethiopia.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on these objectives, the study will address the following research questions.

1. Why and how has Islam been presented as a security issue in Ethiopia?
2. What contextual factors contribute to security narratives around Islam in Ethiopian national security discourse?
3. To what degree does the Ethiopian public accept the securitizing narratives around Islam? What does the audience's reaction to the securitization discourse infer about the evaluation of securitization in the Ethiopian context?
4. What are the implications of the securitization of Islam for the life, relations, and interactions of Muslims and Ethiopian society in general?

1.5. The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the following reasons:

1. The essential contribution of this thesis is that it provides fresh and alternative interpretations of the sensitive and timely topic that has been approached in terms of secularism, ethnic and religious conflicts and extremism, the quest for religious freedom, and vertical conflict between the government and the religious community.

2. To enrich the literature on the area of Ethiopia and Islam studies and serve as a reference for those who want to conduct an academic study in the area.

3. To inform policy directions for concerned government bodies in designing multicultural public policies and cultivating the culture of tolerance and peace for the democratic state-building process.

1.6. Limitations of the Study and Ethical Considerations

Conducting scientific research should follow ethical principles, including ensuring the safety of participants of the research project, getting the consent of participants and informing the objectives of the study, keeping the privacy of the participants of the study, and objective interpretation of the information collected from different sources (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the researcher abided by these rules and regulations regarding data collection and arrangements to ensure the study's objectivity.

Despite the researcher's efforts to abide by basic research principles and ensure the academic worth of the study, some limitations could not be ruled out in conducting this study. The first limitation of this dissertation lies in its modest reliance on primary sources due to various constraints such as time, finance, and limited willingness among bureaucrats and ordinary people to engage with questions raised by the researcher. As a result, the thesis relies on secondary sources for most of its parts. Thus, the study utilizes recent research conducted by Ethiopian and foreign scholars, particularly on the recent confrontations between the Ethiopian government and the Muslim population. The thesis used these scholarly works and primary sources, including official statements of politicians, official documents, reports, and documentary sources. Secondly, although the politicization of Islam has appeared in Ethiopian political discourse narratives, there is limited access to security matters in Ethiopia. As a result, the study includes a few security officers' views, particularly about violent developments and incidences.

The relations between the Muslim community and the regime have deteriorated, often manifested through grievances expressed publicly, that might affect the objectiveness of the data from subjects and victims of securitization, members, and agencies of Muslim communities. These factors might restrain the quality of primary sources and push the researcher to emphasize secondary sources. Despite such challenges, the researcher tried to triangulate critical issues in the existing research through interviews with security officers and individuals selected through the purposive sampling method. Another potential limitation of the study might come from the positionality of the researcher. Being a Muslim, the researcher's view of the issue may not exist without some biases on the directions and findings of the study. The researcher minimized these risks by applying research methods and theoretical principles to analyze the data he used during the study. These are some points of self-critiques and reflection. However, the information needed for discourse and content analysis is not limited to affecting the findings of this study.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This study is comprised of seven separate chapters. The first chapter is an introductory chapter that provides the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives and research questions, and the significance, scope, and research methods. The second chapter outlines the theoretical foundations and frameworks, introduces concepts from securitization theory, reviews the relevant and related literature, historical trajectories of Islam in Ethiopia, and discovers its implications for current developments. This chapter also discusses some limitations and criticisms of securitization theory and justifications for adopting this theory, and means of contextualization. The chapter explains the role and status of religions in forming the Ethiopian state with an exciting inference that securitization as a tool of analysis can be employed to study national identity formation by identifying the core values of the state and its competing others as well as its impacts on the contemporary security culture of the state and different group's understanding of the state.

The third chapter gives a brief account of the research methodology and data collection methods. It provides insights on specific research methods, specific data collection techniques and data sources, and theoretical tools of analysis used to complete this study with possible justifications for each method.

The fourth chapter addresses the domestic trends and manifestations of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The chapter examines the political elite's discourse, media content analysis, institutional frameworks, and security practices implicating Islam and Muslims in security terms or security identity nexus.

The fifth chapter discusses the geopolitical factors that facilitate the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Based on the regional security complex theory, this chapter analysis the geopolitical aspects and external factors and actors that have been involved in the securitization process. The chapter scrutinizes how geopolitical conditions in the Horn of Africa, mainly Islamic movements in neighboring countries like Sudan, Somalia, and Egypt, and the U.S. Global War on Terror campaign in the region contribute to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

The sixth chapter discovers the infra-politics security inter-subjectivities, mainly Muslims' counterclaims to the securitization of Islam, and how other religious communities view the government's discourse of Islamic extremism as a threat to the Ethiopian state. One of the criticisms of securitization theory is that it failed to consider the dissenting voice of securitization theory. Partly to fill this gap, this chapter incorporates and reflects the voice of victims of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Moreover, the views and attitudes of other religious communities are included to evaluate to what extent the general public accepts the discourse of Islamic extremism and to what extent the social construction of terrorism vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims is successful. The final chapter draws some conclusive points and forwards recommendations.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and reviews the relevant literature to the subject or topic of this study. The chapter proceeds in three distinct parts. The first section gives a brief overview of the conceptual notes on the concept of security. The second section covers the theoretical frameworks of securitization theory as presented by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies (CHS). The two parts together provide three conceptual tools of analysis; Security, Securitization theory, and regional security complex theory. The third part reflects reviews literature on "Islamic Extremism" as a framework for the Securitization of Islam or through which Islam has been brought to the realm of security and the historical overview of Islam in Ethiopia. The chapter ends by presenting some justifications for studying this topic.

2.1. On the Concept of Security

Although the study of security as a distinct subject of academic inquiry is a relatively recent phenomenon, the issue of security has been discussed and practiced since the time of human presence on the Earth (De Poul, 2008). However, scholars find it hard to reach a consensus on security. Some view security as an essentially contested concept, while others consider it in objective material or military terms (Bourbeau, 2011). Others favor alternative ways to think about security by widening and broadening the scope of the concept of security. Contemporary security studies have opted for the third line of argument. Security is an open and complicated concept with many different meanings for people who interpret security in differing circumstances (Bjarnadóttir, 2012). What constitutes security matter and threat to security depends on the values cherished by individuals, groups, states, societies, and institutions (Cottey, 2007).

For Ole Waever (1995), the pioneer of securitization theory, security has an everyday meaning, i.e., being secure, safe, not threatened, and the like. The lexical definitions of the concept of security generally denote the absence of threat or being free from any form of vulnerability, for instance, from losing one's job, physical assaults, or violation of the state's sovereign territory (Bjarnadóttir, 2012). The classical explanations of security are associated with the creation of the state in the sense that people united to form an organized political community for security (Raychev, 2014). In this sense, historical empires, kingdoms, and modern states are all an extension of people's desire for security or collective safety under the umbrella of an organized political community. In this sense, security is the driving force behind human society's mobilizations to create and institutionalize the post-Westphalian order of modern sovereign states. Security forms the core of public goods that states provide to their citizens mainly through the legitimate monopoly of means of violence and use of force (Saxer, 2008). The establishment of the state as an organized political entity in its various forms ended people's insecurities from the absence of organized social and political institutions. The state symbolizes its citizens' collective security and safety and social norms and values. Since its inception in 1950-60, the discipline of security study has been dominated by state security or national security. Security was primarily perceived as protecting the state's sovereignty by preserving territorial frontiers maintaining political independence, and core values of states from foreign threats (Cottey, 2007). The only way to ensure a state's security is through its military capabilities to defend its interest in the anarchic international order. The traditional understanding of security is national security, where the state is the referent object. The state's ultimate aim is to survive in an anarchic international system by resisting aggression from other strong states in the system. The Westphalian dogma of state sovereignty reached its apex during the Cold War period, where *"the notion of 'security' used to be defined in political/military terms as the protection of a state's boundaries, its integrity, and its values against the dangers of a hostile international arena"* (Doty, 2000: 73 cited in Kaya, 2009:8). This traditional approach of security studies has its roots in the realist school of international relations. According to the realist tradition the ultimate goal in the global system is to assure their survival in a chaotic environment, mainly through the development of military might. States, according to realism, are rational actors capable of calculating costs and benefits for their behaviors, acts, friends, and foes (Paul, 2004)

The referent object is the state, and the security measure is military capabilities. The underlying assumption of this approach is that the security of citizens is the natural result of state security.

The post-Cold War era marked the emergence of new ways of thinking about security that challenged the earlier notions of security. The developments later crystallized as a body of thought in the Copenhagen School of security studies. The post-Cold War security environment necessitated shifting from the traditional security paradigms of national security to the security of the people as threats to the well-being of human society do not always have a militaristic character (Rothschild, 1995).

The first contribution to this new development in security studies came from Barry Buzan's work, "People, state and fear," published in 1983. Buzan shocked the old established security discourses of national security and military power when he famously argued that security is not just about states, but related to all human collectivities. Since then, the center of attention of security studies has been shifted from an exclusive focus on the national security or security of the state to the safety of people, both as individuals and an international collectivity (De Poul, 2008).

Against the traditional objectivist and restrictive view of security in terms of national security in the form of maintaining the territorial integrity of states through military muscle, Buzan (1983) introduces the framework to understand security in terms of five distinct sectors; military, environmental, economic, societal and political with due recognition to non-state actors in the process. The primary rationale for this has appeared to be the need to reallocate from *"protecting the state to protecting society,"* both as collective and individual beings against any "evil '(Kaya, 2009:8; De Paul, 2008). This development has broadened and widened the scope and notions of security in a way that it becomes a core aspect of the life of human society (Kaya, 2009). The military security sector is concerned about states' military capability and offensive and defensive potentials in an anarchic international order (Buzan, 1983). The political sector focused on the institutional stability of states, systems of government, and the ideological sources for their legitimacy (ibid). The economic aspect of security represents access to the material and financial resources and markets necessary to sustain good welfare and state power (ibid). Societal security deals with preservations and continuous progress of the collective identity of groups, such as the cultural values, language, customs, religion, and national identities (De Paul, 2008). The environmental aspect of security refers to maintaining a healthy ecological environment both at local and planetary levels as an essential support system to all human enterprises (ibid). This attempt to widen and deepen the notions of security did not culminate in a dialogical process through which the concept of security has evolved. Rather, the subject matter of security studies continues to undergo inward reflexives on its traditional assumption (Collins, 2007). The current usage and understanding of the term security has transcended its traditional limits of protecting the state from its ideological and military enemies to cover many issues such as migration, environment, ethnic claims, and religious revivalism (Kaya, 2009). More significantly, in contrast with the previous objectified accounts on the formation of security, in recent times, issues have become security matters through a social construction process called securitization (Doty, 2000).

Kasim (2013) identified four crucial elements to understand and explain security within the securitization theory framework: existential threat, referent object, emergency conditions, and exceptional or extraordinary measures. The first element, referent object, may be a state, identity group, an environment, or politico-military focus, depending on circumstances, distinctly entitles superiority over other issues and is ultimately allowed to survive that deserves absolute priority. By declaring that the existence of a particular referent object is threatened by new developments such as terrorism, securitizing actors, often elites, claim exceptional to extraordinary measures must be taken to affirm the referent object's ultimate survival (Taureck, 2006). The formation of referent objects depends on intersubjective agreements among various subjects as to whether the claim made by the actor is legitimate or not (Charrett, 2009).

The second element is the existential threat which refers to any condition or disastrous event, for instance, acts of terror, that endangers the referent object's ultimate legitimacy to survive (Poutanen, 2015). Securitizing actors claim that unless avoided by any means necessary, the existential threat will jeopardize the ultimate existence of the referent object (state, secular political order, or society) in a certain feature. Presenting an issue as an existential threat is a public admission that: '*If we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our way)*' (Buzan et al. 1998: 24). What constitutes an existential threat also depends on the degree of shared understanding of what is meant by such a danger to security among different sections of audiences of the securitization process (Adoing, 2009). Solidum et al. (1991) introduced three categories of threats: actual, potential, and fictitious. According to them, actual threats are real conditions that can reduce security at the moment.

In contrast, potential threats are conditions that tend to minimize security but are not transformable to actual threats due to some constraints. The third category, fictitious threat, is perceived to reduce security but does not exist in reality. The third category fits with the concept of threat in securitization theory.

The actor's move of framing a threat is followed by the third element, the declaration of a state of emergency. The whole aim of securitization is to take the issue, framed as a threat from everyday politics, into the realm of emergency politics to deal with it through extraordinary means. By stating that a particular referent object is threatened in its existence, a securitizing actor takes the issue beyond the sphere of everyday politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without legal procedures as in everyday politics (Charrett, 2009, Floyed, 2016).

The fourth element is extraordinary measures. Securitizing actors adopt extraordinary measures or legitimize breaking rules and constitutional norms as necessary to eradicate the potential threat and ensure the referent object's survival (Buzan et al. 1998, 25). Overall, securitization theory explains how the issue becomes a security matter and how security actors create threats to persuade their audiences about the existential threat and justify implementing extraordinary means to deal with that presumed threat (Yavor, 2015; Rayman, 2014).

2.2. Theoretical Contexts

Theoretically, this study relies on the constructivist's knowledge claim of Securitization Theory and Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) presented by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. The Copenhagen School is a body of work mainly associated with Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and their collaborators, who made a tremendous contribution to the development of securitization theory. A number of scholars have applied securitization theory to study the security politics of all sectors and it has become the benchmark in contemporary securitization studies (Adoing, 2009; Charrett, 2009). The following sub-sections provide the basic tenets of securitization theory and Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to establish the theoretical basis for the analytical sections of this study.

2.2.1. Securitization Theory

The Copenhagen School introduced the Securitization theory, established in the 1980s at Copenhagen Peace Research Institute. Copenhagen scholars Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, who jointly authored the book *Security: A New Framework of Analysis* in 1998, laid down the basic tenets of securitization theory. They made two essential contributions to contemporary security studies. First and foremost, it expanded security understandings beyond the traditional militaristic and state-centric notions to a more human-centric approach, either as an individual or societal or global collectivity. Several dimensions of security, economic welfare, cultural identity, environmental concerns, and political rights need broader considerations than military issues (Waever, 1993). Secondly, the Copenhagen School offered a "constructivist operational method" to understand how problems become security matters (Nyman 2013, 52).

The main argument of securitization theory is that, by definition, "something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so" (Waever, 1993:6). Security is socially constructed and starts with the act of utterance. What is regarded as a security issue or a threat to security is not based on an objective assessment of facts but through inter-subjective understandings and perceptions developed and circulated in society (Bjarnadóttir, 2012)? According to Waever (1995:7), security can be anything that a securitizing actor says it is to use his word "by uttering "security," a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area and thereby claims a special right to use ever possible means necessary to block it." The speech act here is not just a word but is accompanied by the claim that the development deemed threatening has to be blocked by every possible means. Buzan et al. (1998: 32) explained securitization as a "precise understanding of who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results and, not least, under what conditions (what explains when securitization is successful)." Thus, security does not have any given pre-existing meanings, but rather is something that can be produced, facilitated, and enabled mainly by securitizing actors (Waever, 1995).

Securitization theory can be comprehended by five key elements: security, securitizing actor, referent object, audience, and speech act (Anthony, Emmers, & Acharya, 2006). Security is an entirely socially constructed fact, meaning it is handmade by securitizing actors without objective assessment of facts. Security is a self-referential activity, both a means and an end; something becomes a security issue because it has been labeled so (Diskaya, 2013). However, understanding security as an intersubjective and socially produced phenomenon doesn't signify that everything can become a security issue out of thin air. It still needs securitizing moves by the securitizing actors. They have to present the issue as an existential threat to a certain designated referent object and make a significant segment of the general public believe in the threatening aspect of that development (ibid). Thus, the issue becomes a security issue if the audience agrees with the securitizing actor that the referent objects' existence is threatened by the supposed threat (ibid). Only the acceptance from the audience transfers the issue from the realm of ordinary politics to the sphere of security in which elites are allowed to break standard rules and legal procedures and carry out emergency measures. Thus, it is noteworthy that for the Copenhagen School, "security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues of normal politics" (Wæver, 1993: 29). For that reason, the Copenhagen School promotes desecuritization, by which issues are transferred from the rule of exceptionality to the realm of normal politics and the public sphere (Diskaya, 2013).

A securitizing actor is somebody or a group who performs a securitizing speech act and urges the need to defend the security of a referent object (Buzan et al. 1998). It encompasses a broad range of entities who engage in identifying, articulating, and framing the threat and make securitizing claims through their public speech acts that the referent objects to, for example, political order, government institutions, cultural values or civilizations, environment, or territorial integrity, are threatened by those particular threatening developments. Securitizing actors may be governments, international organizations, civil society actors, political leaders, lobbying institutions, and pressure groups (Charrett, 2009). Though these figures take the lead in articulating an issue as a security matter, their articulation is subject to various interpretations by different sections of the audience or society. In this regard, Buzan et al. (1998: 31-32) argued that every community member has alternative views and interpretations of security. However, due to the power structures in security fields, certain actors, particularly state elites and institutions, hold tremendous advantages in articulating and defining security threats (ibid). Their advantageous position in power structure helps political leaders to spread panic and fear among the public even by creating horrifying chaos using the security and intelligence apparatus and media to convince the broader audience on the issue being related to security and the need for extraordinary approaches to protect the referent object (Bjarnadóttir, 2012). Although securitization is a state-centric activity, in the sense that only political leaders, security officers, and state institutions can officially speak on behalf of referent objects, there are other categories of actors that request to defend the security of the referent object, and that can considerably influence the decisions in the security arena. Buzan et al. (1998) call this group of securitization actors as functional actors.

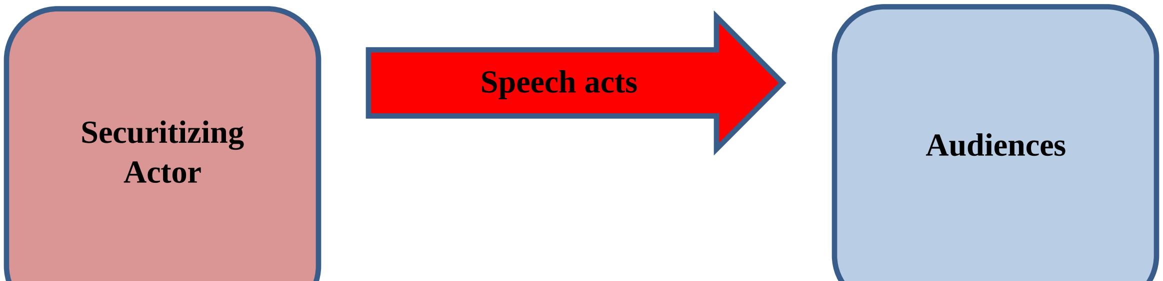
Referent objects are individual, group, and collective identities, militaries, national identities, the environment, national sovereignty or an ideology, and economic resources that have ultimate legitimacy to survive (Buzan et al., 1998; Sulovic, 2010). Traditionally, the referent object for security policies and studies has been the nation-state in the form of retaining its territorial integrity, sovereignty, and its identity (Wæver et al. 1993). However, securitization theory draws a lot more range of possibilities for referent objects; anything securitizing actors attempt to construct can be a referent object, "the one that to which one can point and say 'It has to survive; therefore, it is necessary "(Buzan et al., 1998:36). However, this doesn't mean that securitizing actors are always free from constraints of contextual factors and can successfully securitize everything they want to securitize (ibid). Instead, some types of referent objects are easier than others depending on various circumstances, including the nature of audiences and their relation to the subject of securitization (ibid).

The audience in the securitization process represents the general public to whom the securitizing actors inform and narrate about threatening developments to the referent object's existence (Caballero-Anthony and Emmers, 2006). For successful securitization to occur, the audience must agree and be convinced that the issues are of a security-nature and the government's willingness to take extraordinary measures to tackle the problem

(Sulovic, 2010). The role of the audience is paramount in the securitization process as security and threats are defined 'among the subjects' (Buzan et al., 1998: 31). The audience is not a mere recipient of the elite's security articulations and narratives but an active agent that significantly affects securitization, which is the intersubjective construction of security assets (Côté, 2016). Security is a product of people's social interactions and intersubjective beliefs that create shared meanings, values, norms, and identities through which people give importance to the social and material world (ibid). Shared ideas, deals, and attitudes not only determine people's real-world interpretations but also construct and inform people's interests and behavior (Guzzini, 2000).

The fifth element, the speech act, refers to the public declarations about the emerging danger and its threatening aspects to convince the broader audience that the referent object is existentially threatened and the need for extraordinary measures (Caballero-Anthony and Emmers, 2006). Securitization is described as a symbolic speech act (Wæver, 1995). Using security expressions does not interpret the existing realities but creates a new reality (Stritzel, 2007). In this regard, Waever (1995:55) argued that "the utterance itself is the act …by uttering 'security,' a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means to block it." By transferring certain developments out of everyday politics and the rule of the game, the actors claim a right to take extraordinary measures to handle the issue (Buzan et al., 1998)

Generally, securitization refers to the process of labeling certain developments as an existential threat to the survival of referent objects, such as state sovereignty, national security, the economy, national or cultural identities, or the environment, so as to convince a significant part of the general public about the necessity of taking extraordinary means (Adoing, 2009; Bjarnadóttir, 2012; Bourbeau, 2011). The process is said to be successful if and only if it transforms the audience's mode of thinking about the issue in terms of security matters than of everyday politics and supports the extraordinary ways of dealing with it (Adoing, 2009).



Approval of threats

Figure 1: The Copenhagen School Framework of Securitization Theory

2.2.2. Regional Security Complex Theory as a Geopolitical Tool of Analysis

The logic of territoriality retains a vital function in security and securitization studies (Buzan & Waever, 2004). Geographical adjacency is the factor that ties the security concerns of states together in the same regional formation (Reynold, 2009). The idea of a security complex was first outlined by Buzan (1983: 106) in his book, People, State, and fear, where he defined a security complex as: "a group of states whose primary security concerns links together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another." In the book *Regions and Power; The Structure of International Security*, Buzan and Waever (2004) consolidated the idea of a security complex into a full-fledged theory called "Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)." The core concept of the theory is that the process of securitization and security problems of states in the same regional system are interlinked and cannot reasonably be scrutinized separately (Buzan & Weaver, 2004). In this context, the region refers to the level where states cannot think of their securities as separate from each other (ibid).

The regional level security's formation is where global and national security extremes interplay and aggregate. The interdependence between the system-level global powers and their regional alliances manifests (ibid). The regional security complex is constructed from the fears and aspirations of individual units or states, which are derived from their domestic fractures and features (ibid). The regional level security formation and dynamics help to grasp the security of separate states in a particular region and global power intervention in the region. In other words, the international system’s securitization and desecuritization manifests in regional security formations. Thus, the regional level as the locus of conflict and cooperation between and among states in the region and global powers serves as the level of analysis in the study of securitization processes in an individual state, the interstate relations, and patterns of regional and international actors' interaction in the region.

The central tenet of RSCT is that "*since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters"* to what they call security complexes (Buzan and Weaver, 2004: 4). A security complex refers to a group of states whose security concern is closely tied, or one's national security cannot be considered without others (Buzan, 1983). Securitization is all about putting national security as the uppermost cherished value, the combination of threats (external) and vulnerabilities (internal) that reflect the insecurity of the state (ibid). Thus, external and internal developments are intrinsically linked to the extent that they cannot be separated to convey meaningful national security (ibid). Various factors may account for the security complex of certain groups of states, including geographical proximity, strategic relations, political, historical, economic, and cultural ties, or conditions outside of the security complex for different reasons (ibid).

Regional security complex theory also aims to consider the role of non-state actors such as terrorist groups in one state in the securitization process in the other states and the contexts of regional security dynamics (Buzan & Weaver, 2004). The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) validates two instrumental values. First, it indicates the appropriate level of analysis in empirical security studies. Second, it facilitates systematic accounting of internal conditions in individual countries, their relations with outside developments in the region, and the interplay of individual states and global powers in regional contexts and dynamics (ibid).

RSCT relies on constructivist knowledge to understand regional security formation and dynamics like securitization theory. Accordingly, the relations and perceptions among the states in the same region constitute an essential factor in perceptions of security threats and, thereby, the process of securitization in different states of the same region (Williams, 2008). As argued by Buzan (1983), the entire international system comprises many security complexes that intersect, overlap, or coincide. Thus, securitization in one country is conducted within regional and global security contexts and vice-versa. While the regional level security analysis is the prime focus of RSCT, the purpose is to integrate international, interregional, and local levels developments to determine which of these levels appear to dominate the security dynamics in the particular circumstances of time and place (Buzan & Weaver, 2004).

Like securitization theory, RSCT believes that the security understanding of the states in a particular regional system depends on the perceptions and interpretations of actors' actions and thereby the patterns of peace and hostility among the states rather than measure objective developments (ibid). Whereas securitization theory focuses on how security is constructed, RSCT emphasizes the level of analysis where the securitized issue is primarily located. Is it at the domestic, regional, or system level? After all, how do these levels interplay with each other?

The nexus between the securitization theory and RSCT is anchored in the fact that while the former is about the process in which securitization takes place, the latter considers the contexts in which the securitization process is conducted. As a result, the process of securitization links the two theories. The method of threat framing in a specific unit exploits particular developments in another unit by interpreting as if developments in other states have domestic security implications for other units in the regional system. However, neither the issue in one unit nor the nexus of events in different units within the regional system is based on a factual assessment of facts. North-Eastern Africa, commonly called the Horn of Africa, constitutes a regional security complex with enduring fault lines and ensuing conflicts that make the region prone to external involvements and transnational conflicts. This study considers how regional security interactions and geopolitical dynamics security in the horn of Africa facilitate the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The focus is on regional geopolitical and security dynamics that have created a fertile environment for securitization discourses in Ethiopia around Islam and Muslims by the state and its elites.

2.3. Theoretical Shortcomings: Ways Forward

Initially developed in the 1980s-90s by Copenhagen school scholars Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, and Jaap de Wilde, securitization theory has evolved into a contemporary benchmark of approaches in security studies. Relying on the time frames and the contexts of the political culture in which the idea has originated and been practiced, i.e., liberal democracy, many considered it an infant theory. They questioned its plausibility in different political spheres and social setups. While it is recognized for its contribution to contemporary security studies, significantly challenging the conventional national and militaristic notion of security, securitization theory has been hosting a wide range of criticisms from scholars of various disciplines, including critical security theorists, constructivists, postmodernists, political sociologists, neo liberalists, feminists, and normative theorists who have contributed to further the rationales and explanations of securitization theory (Bourbeau, 2011). For instance, a year after Weaver invented the term securitization, Huntington (1996) employed the concept to frame the challenges Islamic civilization pose to Western civilization and values.

Securitization theory has hosted various criticisms, mainly for its initial exclusive emphasis on political agents and their speech acts and the allocation of less attention to the role of audiences and social and political contexts in which securitization takes place (McDonald, 2008; Walker, 2009). In this regard, Bourbeau (2011) argued that securitizing actors do not operate in a vacuum independently from the environments in which they frame, articulate, and speak about threats to their cherished values or referent objects. Still, they utilize different contextual factors like historical, socio-cultural, regional, and global spheres to create and support their security discourse. McDonald (2008) called these factors "facilitating conditions" or "contextual factors."

Domestically, securitizing actors possess decision-making power, state machinery like security apparatus and media, and historically and socio-culturally produced knowledge to construct threats and security discourses (Bourbeau, 2011). In addition to these domestic factors, securitization actors also refer to facilitating conditions in external dynamics, i.e., global developments and regional contexts, to justify their securitizing moves in domestic politics (Walker, 2009). The contextual factors don't exist objectively by the agent's practical assessments. Instead, the actors interpreted and presented these contexts as security implications against the referent object's ultimate right to exist (Bourbeau, 2011).

Generally, most critics of securitization insist that the theory should consider multiple contexts, actors, social forces, and audiences in the whole process of securitization rather than reducing the complex phenomena to political actors' speech acts (McDonald, 2008). Considering multiple factors and contexts helps security analysis minimize the danger of oversimplifications and evaluate which factors are more critical in the securitization process (Andzans, 2014). Because securitization is possible not only as a mere result of speech acts but also due to other factors, securitization analysis must take into accounts, such as the scope of securitizing actors and their diverse audiences simultaneously, as well as external factors that facilitate the securitization move to draw the complete pictures of the process (ibid). An analysis of a range of factors in securitization studies enables us to know the moments in which securitization attempts were made, whether they were made before or after major international events, and whether they were found in the collective memory and identity of a particular society, and whether domestic audiences relate to securitization with enthusiasm or reluctance (Bourbeau, 2011). Securitization theory has also been criticized for not considering the communication process and overlooking the role of physical apparatus, including media intelligence services, that securitization agents can manipulate to fabricate threats and spread fear among their audiences (Kaya, 2009; Walker, 2009).

By considering the political and social origin of securitization theory and its plausibility and applicability in Western democratic political culture, this study tests securitization theory in an authoritarian political system and multicultural social context in Ethiopia. Political culture is bounded because securitization is mainly a two-way communication between securitizing actors and the audience. Owing to its theoretical origin in the West, securitization has been successfully applied to a range of issues, including migration, Islam and Muslim societies, and the environment in the West, where there are relatively democratic political orientations. In this way, this study address whether securitization theory can be applied to study securitization in different contexts in its full-fledged CHS explanations or if there are other patterns of securitization in various political and cultural settings. For the Copenhagen School, the security-nature of an issue highly depends on the mutual interaction between securitizing actors and their audience in a particular context (Walker, 2009). Securitization, a process of transforming an issue from regular political agenda to a security one, is composed of securitizing claims made by the agents and legitimizing approvals by audiences so that the former can take extraordinary means to deal with the issue at hand (Ibid). In this regard, it is arguable that the basis of the system of authority or the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the regime and citizens' belief in it provides a crucial ground to consider the political culture in which the phenomena of securitization occur (Raymann, 2014). The legitimacy of the securitizing agent enhances the chances for the securitizing clam to be accepted by broader audiences, which ultimately upholds truth in open and democratic political culture (McDonald, 2008; Walker, 2009).

Most scholarly works on the securitization theory and process, including Waever, 1989, 1995, 1997; Wæver et al., 1993; Buzan et al., 1998; Huysmans, 1998a; Williams, 2003; Guzzini and Jung, 2004), have concentrated on more or less democratic political systems in the Western World. However, there is an increasing interest in applying the Copenhagen School’s theory of securitization studies outside of the Western world to examine the role of languages used by political actors in framing something as a security issue (Acharya and Buzan 2017). As a result, the theory's ability to effectively explain security dynamics in non-Western contexts has been scrutinized and tested by several scholars. Similarly, various suggestions have been made on how the theory might be improved or expanded for more accurate representations of the security sector in non-Western contexts, characterized by the undemocratic nature of politics and governance (Kapur & Mabon, 2018).

For instance, Claire Wilkinson (2007) uses the example of Kyrgyzstan to argue that the securitization theory as advanced by the Copenhagen School is inadequate to explain events outside of the West for two reasons: The approach, according to her, first assumes that "European concepts of society and state are universal." She sought theorists from the Copenhagen School to reconsider their normative notions of things like the state and society. Second, the emphasis on speech acts in the securitization theory might not be appropriate in non-Western situations. She further asserted that in an undemocratic political system, where communication is restricted, securitization might occur through alternative means, like institutional practices and bureaucratic procedures. She criticizes the liner construction of threats through two ways of communication between actors' speech act and audiences that results in an exceptional measure, arguing that in cases when speech is restricted, an extraordinary action may come first.

On the other hand, Juha Vuori (2008) uses illocutionary logic to reveal the plausibility of securitization theory in studying the security dynamics of non-democratic political orders. According to him, securitization theory as a theoretical tool of securitization studies must be applied to diverse instances and contexts to achieve universality and to convince the intellectual community by incorporating various circumstances; in his words; "If Securitization theory is to be serving as a yardstick standard of security studies, it should take into account security speech and politics in all types of political systems." Securitization as a social process of constructing threats through speech acts, argues Vuori, can be employed to security politics in non-democratic contexts in addition to the favored amine democratic system, where the majority of studies have been conducted so far. He relies on illocutionary logic to explain the plausibility of securitization theory in non-democratic political systems considering instances from China's political system based on linguistic and philosophical perspectives of securitization's speech acts. By doing so, he intended to expand the conceptual and theoretical map of securitization theory into non-democratic political systems within the framework presented by Copenhagen School and prevent theoretical straining. Vouri outlined that every society, whether in democratic or authoritarian political tradition, has core values, and their protection can be considered a particular type of politics. Securitization is a way of identifying and defining threats to these values and norms. In China's context, the securitization process has served the function of control, the ultimate authority to speak about security reserves at the disposal of the Communist Party's elders and the military, which in the end serves as a tool of self-legitimization.

According to Holbraad and Pedersen (2012), the instance of revolutionary Cuba offers a non-liberal or non-Western state where the underlying tenets of securitization theory are in sharp contrast. The liberal perspective considers revolutionary regimes to be in a constant form of securitization where extra-political measures are the norm. Still, securitization theory maintains that regular politics and emergency politics are distinctly separate from one another. Holbraad and Pedersen draw attention to the fact that a revolutionary ontology dissolves the liberal division between the state and society, with revolutionary governments claiming themselves to be the people. Because a revolutionary state is a society, norms, and exceptions no longer apply to it. This makes the Copenhagen School's presumption of a typical political situation that can be separated from exceptional actions challenging.

In contrast, Cuban revolutionary politics deliberately revoke this difference to establish a different, non-liberal political ontology. The Cuban situation is then used to develop an alternative securitization model that Holbraad and Pedersen (2012) call revolutionary. According to this concept, the shift toward securitization refers to an intentional ontological synthesis of the two, so that rule and exception also become coterminous, rather than transitioning from the arena of regular politics into one of emergency.

Greenwood and Ole (2013) tried to test the securitization theory in the context of Egypt during the Arab Spring. The Arab Uprisings toppled authoritarian governments in several states, including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. While combining local and regional, normative and geopolitical objectives, authorities in some nations presented protesting organizations as existential dangers, rewriting the structure of the political organization. According to Greenwood and Waever, the theory presupposes a fundamental degree of stability. It cannot, therefore, be applied to extraordinary circumstances when there is no such thing as typical politics. They contend that because Western governments no longer experience such unusual circumstances, the Egyptian revolution might be considered to constitute a Western bias in theory. The urge needs to provide context-specific explorations that are not solely based upon approaches predicated upon Western ontologies appears to be of utmost importance when state-society relations have frayed amid parabolic pressures from globalizing forces and indigenous resistance to such forces. Moreover, they express the need to recognize any theoretical underpinnings than tossing the baby out with the bathwater, even while the desire to go beyond Western approaches to International Relations is commendable.

In their article titled "Authoritarianism and the Securitization of Development in Africa," Jonathan Fisher and David Anderson (2015) address the controversies surrounding the "securitization" of assistance and international development in Africa in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. They outlined those two main arguments that have dominated international aid in Africa: that the practice has been driven and enforced by western governments and that this is entirely undesirable and detrimental for citizens in Africa and other developing countries. They disprove both of these presumptions by showing how many African leaders have manipulated and shaped international aid in this era to benefit their regime and even incorporated it into their militaristic state-building initiatives. They show that these trends have not been an unintended byproduct of the global "war on terror," drawing on the experiences of Chad, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda—four semi-authoritarian polities perpetuated by the securitization trend. Instead, they argue that they are the outcome of a planned set of decisions these African governments make as part of a larger "illiberal state-building" program. In defining this argument, they identify four main tactics these regimes use: “playing the proxy, simultaneous socialization of development policy and privatization of security affairs, making donors complicit in de facto regional security arrangements, and constructing regime ‘enemies’ as broader, international threats” (Fisher & Anderson, 2015:1). They outline that securitization actors can conduct securitization to convince external audiences than the general public within domestic political frameworks.

In his work "Securitization of Democracy: A Case Study of South Korea," Dongsoo Kim (2015) attempts to apply the securitization theory in non-democratic settings by examining the securitization of democracy in South Korea's politics before it transitioned to democracy in 1987. His research reveals that authoritarian leaders in South Korea, including Rhee Syngman, Park Chung-hee, and Chun Doo-hwan, all participated in securitizing democracy and related activities to cover up their lack of legitimacy and repress the opposing parties. In light of the North's danger, the South Korean authoritarian leaders successfully persuaded the public to unify behind its leaders and give up on the idea of democratic governance. Kim concludes that one of the most remarkable ways to comprehend and characterize South Korean politics before its democratic reform in 1987 is through the securitization of democracy.

Diego Lopez (2017) also applied securitization theory in his article, Securitization and its impact on human rights in Latin America. Securitization policies and their rhetoric, argue Lopez, have historically challenged the rule of law in Latin America and continue to a significant challenge current in a more complicated and new security discourse intended to combat complex crimes like terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and everyday crimes affecting public safety. According to Diego, the securitization policies and rules are exploited to stifle criticism and impair the accountability of state officials in Latin American states. The current interventionist strategies and their effect on respecting human rights are based on securitization. Securitization capitalizes on the friend/enemy divide and relates public safety to a language of war. The sense of terror interacts with and feeds into the discursive and practical instruments of securitization and the threat to (physical or moral) integrity it aims to address in the communal imagination. The National Security Doctrine's use during the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s and the prosecution of human rights advocates during the recent democratic era are typical securitization policies.

The notion of the indirect speech act is introduced by Clara Eroukhmanoff (2018) using the example of the securitization of Islam in the United States. A political problem gets prioritized, or "securitized," per the Copenhagen School when an audience accepts a speech act with a specific security grammar highlighting the seriousness of the threat and urging special security measures. In contrast, Eroukhmanoff considers the possibility that expressing "friend" instead of "security" also helps securitization. From the Bush administration through the start of the Trump administration, Islam was securitized in many ways in the United States. Eroukhmanoff examines this rationale and analyzes such trends of securitization of Islam. Citing John Searle's philosophy of language, Eroukhmanoff asserts that an indirect securitizing speech act accomplishes an indirect securitization, that is, utterances that contain both a direct and an indirect illocution, with the latter serving as the utterance's 'real' request. Elite speech can "deny plausibility" and say they are not securitizing (or "the least racist person," as Trump asserts) to "save face" by employing covert types of communication like indirect speech acts. Therefore, one of the essential strategic tools in the securitizing task of actors is the indirect securitizing speech act (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). By providing a contemporary analysis of how political leaders make security issues, Eroukhmanoff attempts to make sense of an American political atmosphere that appears to be ungoverned by traditional communication norms.

In her investigation of securitization's role in interacting with Islamist violence, Mona Kanwal Sheikh (2018) focuses on how securitization might be utilized to understand the narrative structure of such violence. Sheikh exposes the ontological issues caused by Western centrism concerning the theory's applicability and design by recounting practical instances. Saloni Kapur (2018) responds to Sheikh by highlighting the significance of political realities, which can enable a more vital and more accurate knowledge of context-specific securitization cases while simultaneously emphasizing that the mixing of religion and politics does not always lead to securitization.

Using the theoretical framework offered by securitization, Kapur (2018) seeks to examine India's security narrative surrounding the "surgical strikes" of September 2016. It tries to respond to two essential inquiries: Can securitization theory offer new empirical insights into India's dispute with Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir that more conventional security studies have missed? Second, how might this instance contribute to the growth of the theory and deepen our knowledge of securitization? He argued that India's securitization of the Pakistani threat took place in two different (speech) acts, much like a two-act drama. The first illocutionary action came before the unusual activity of Indian forces breaching the Line of Control dividing Jammu and Kashmir between the Indian and Pakistani administrations. Following this move, the Indian state delivered the phrase "surgical strikes" in the second speech act. This contradicts the temporal framework of securitization theory, which holds that the adoption of an extraordinary measure invariably follows a verbal action. Second, Kapur contends that the Copenhagen School's emphasis on the irrational character of the security and the moral value of de-securitization provides critical new perspectives on the Kashmir dispute, which is now in an empirical deadlock.

Simon Mabon (2018) examines how securitization initiatives are used in the Middle East, focusing on Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. In a complex and shared normative framework, securitization processes frequently cross state borders, according to Mabon, having both intentional and unexpected implications outside national borders. As a result, audience conceptions need further theorization. With an emphasis on the securitization of the Shi'a other, he brings the idea of securitization to the Middle East. Such dynamics defy the Westphalian shackles across time and space and outside national boundaries. As a result, to comprehend the traction that such maneuvers might find, one must consider building spatial and political structures throughout the region. It might seem that regimes have sacrificed long-term stability to retain their short-term viability. Yet, the effects of such actions go beyond the securitization processes' typical linear designed audiences (Simon, 2018). Simon's contribution entails thinking about how audiences in the Middle East, intentional and unplanned, go beyond the linear audiences seen in traditional securitization procedures. The study investigates the applicability of securitization to the Middle East using two case studies. Identifying the logic involved in the securitization process is vital to postulate an inclusive framework for the universal application of securitization theory to different scenarios.

In response, John Gledhill (2018) identifies specific elements of Mabon's liberal ontology while also emphasizing colonial legacies and how they affect the concept of "normality" in non-western political spheres using the cases of securitization in Latin America. Due to the elimination of aboriginal peoples and the transatlantic slave trade, Latin American elites have long expressed fear about mixed-race "dangerous classes" and have used violence to "hold them in their appropriate place" (Gledhill, 2018). Present-day securitization discourses linked to neoliberal capitalism everywhere in the world mimic representations of the poor and migrants as dangers to the rest of "society." Center-left administrations implementing public security measures that followed the same rationale, despite their pretenses to reduce social inequality and racism, is another way Latin America resembles much of the North Atlantic region(ibid). Reversals to the right amplify the inconsistencies: fiscal austerity, attacks on wages and social entitlements, and renunciation of national sovereignty over resources do not address economic issues; instead, they exacerbate inequality, driving unpopular regimes to criminalize social movements and militarize internal security. This essay also demonstrates how political mafias encourage the rise of criminal mafias in a securitized environment where public peacekeepers contribute to the escalation of violence but may also perceive themselves as victims of the system they uphold. Brazil and Mexico are used as examples, and border security, as well as internal security, are taken into consideration(ibid). Sheikh (2018) argues that while this is a traditional way of approaching securitization, it also allows for focusing on the audience and the significance of popularity.

Ezeokafor and Kaunert (2018) examine securitization's impact on Africa and the relationship between it and neo-patrimonialism. Ezeokafor and Kaunert argue that a deeper level of context and better synthesis between securitization and neo-patrimonialism are required to understand political life throughout Africa accurately. They use securitization better to understand relations between leaders (elites) and societies. They contend that with the nation-state acting as the primary player in the international system, securitization is likely the most compelling theoretical framework for analyzing security outside the military. Securitization has emerged as the gold standard among critics for examining new problems, including migration, terrorism, human security, intra-state and international problems, and environmental issues. The framework has also been criticized for having a Western bias because it is fundamentally based on a Western political environment and democratic governance system, despite its expanding purpose. In particular, the securitization-neopatrimonialism nexus in Africa is re-conceptualized in this paper to better fit a non-Western context and provide critical new insights into non-Western political situations. In a neo-patrimonial statehood, it analyzes the securitization processes among the political elites. It broadens the definition of securitization to include African statehood, characterized by a hazy distinction between the head of state and the state.

Beyond territorial and physical aspects, Lacy and Prince's (2018) article examines hyper-securitization and the development of cyber securitization. According to Lacy and Prince, the rapid pace of technology advancement and hyper-securitization necessitates a reconsideration of the spatial dynamics that influence policy and cause risk and unintended consequences to merge into planning. Juha Vuori (2018) responds by highlighting the significance of placing the topic of difference and intent at the center of political initiatives and hyper-securitization.

Lene Hansen and Helen Nissenbaum provide recommendations for how securitization theory might be used to understand the politics of cybersecurity and cyberwar in their 2009 article "Digital catastrophe, cyber security, and the Copenhagen school." What made Hansen and Nissenbaum's article noteworthy was its attempt to introduce fresh perspectives and issues to a subject that frequently occupied a niche in the often highly technical discourse of security, technology, and strategy, a lesson that permeated all facets of life in a society that was digitizing.

Chinese efforts "to avoid the securitization of China's ascent in the US" are examined by Vuori (2018). In doing so, Vuori uses concepts related to de-securitization in Chinese foreign policy toward significant powers, adding to discussions on (de)securitization and understanding of Chinese foreign policy. He describes how prior research on securitization in China has demonstrated how security discourses may serve various domestic political purposes and how China interacts with neighboring governments' securitization efforts. Despite this expanding body of scholarship, desecuritization as a component of Chinese foreign policy toward significant countries is not generally accepted. The current paper investigates desecuritization in post-Mao China's foreign policy to close this gap. The desecuritization of the Cold War is discussed first, followed by an analysis of China's attempts to stop the securitization of China's ascent in the US. By offering perspectives on Chinese foreign policy principles via the prism of desecuritization, this discussion adds to the study of those principles. In response to Vuori, Lacy (2018) examines the degree to which desecuritization can be seen as a deceitful tool. She suggests that to gain a more nuanced understanding of events, including Chinese foreign policy, we should concentrate more on infrastructural developments.

Gledhill (2018) examines how securitization might help to understand political life in Latin America, specifically focusing on Brazil and Mexico in the article "Securitization, mafias, and violence in Brazil and Mexico." Gledhill contends that the growth of "political mafias," which have simultaneously become both the keepers of order and victims of systems, has resulted in the securitization of political and social life under the neoliberal agenda. The elites of Latin American nations, established through the genocide of indigenous people and the transatlantic slave trade, consistently displayed fear of mixed-race "dangerous classes" and employed violence to "hold them in their appropriate place." The way migrants and the impoverished are portrayed in modern society as dangers to the rest of "society" is a replication of securitization discourses linked to neoliberal capitalism throughout the globe. Latin America resembles much of the North Atlantic region in how center-left administrations embraced public security measures that followed the same rationale, despite their claims to fight racism and socioeconomic injustice. Reversals to the right amplify the inconsistencies: fiscal austerity, attacks on wages and social entitlements, and renunciation of national sovereignty over resources do not address economic issues; instead, they exacerbate inequality, driving unpopular regimes to criminalize social movements and militarize internal security. This essay also demonstrates how political mafias encourage the rise of criminal mafias in a securitized environment where public peacekeepers contribute to the escalation of violence but may also perceive themselves as victims of the system they uphold. Brazil and Mexico are used as examples, and border security, as well as internal security, are taken into consideration (Gledhill, 2018). In response, Mabon (2018) contends that this strategy offers a potent tool for comprehending political and social life.

Nicola Pratt and Dina Rezk (2019) examine the securitization of the Muslim Brotherhood and ensuing state violence and authoritarianism in Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. They outline those scholars of critical security studies and Middle East politics have not adequately examined the unprecedented levels of state violence against the Muslim Brotherhood and the widespread acceptance of this violence by Egyptians in the wake of the military coup in July 2013. This is due to implicit presumptions that state violence is commonplace outside Europe (Pratt and Rezk, 2019). They investigate how such levels of violence were made possible by a securitization process where the Egyptian military successfully appropriated public opposition to Muslim Brotherhood rule, constructing the organization as an existential threat to Egypt and justifying special measures against it. They rely on previous critiques of the securitization theory's

Eurocentrism and Antonio Gramsci's works to improve its applicability to non-democratic settings. They indicate the role of securitization in re-establishing authoritarian rule in the wake of the 2011 uprising, exposing the exceptionality of state violence against the Muslim Brotherhood and highlighting the significant role of nominally non-state actors in framing the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to Egypt. They contend that securitization not only deviates from "normal politics" but may also be essential to its reconstruction during a period of change.

Beall and Clark (2021) use a post-Copenhagen perspective on securitization theory to evaluate the security measures used by the People's Republic of China (PRC) against the Uyghur people in the region of Xinjiang. They investigate the connection between the PRC leadership's use of the language of security and danger and how it has legitimized routine and extraordinary security measures against the Uyghur people from the early 1990s. They assert two key ideas. First, they contend that the securitization of the Uyghur has been unsuccessful, possibly posing the specific security risk that the process is meant to avert. Second, they demonstrate that different audiences, both local and foreign, play a significant part in the securitization process and the legitimization of the security measures that have been implemented against the Uyghur population, even in an authoritarian or illiberal state like China (Beall and Clark; 2021).

Ihsan Yilmaz, Erdoan Shipoli, and Mustafa Demir (2021) examine the problem of how Turkey's ruling Islamist populist Justice and Development Party (AKP) was able to enlist the secularist far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and secure the MHP's support in establishing an authoritarian regime, despite their prior adversarial relations and ideological opposition. We look into this mystery by combining the theories of securitization and authoritarian resilience/stability. They developed an empirically supported explanation of co-optation in Turkey. It demonstrates in a new way how the co-optation of the MHP by the ruling party was made possible by the ruling party's effective securitization of the MHP's opponents (the pro-Kurdish opposition). By bringing securitization theory to the literature, they contribute to the authoritarian stability theory. They also add to the research on co-optation by illuminating a new phenomenon: the ideological shift of a large incumbent party toward a minor target party. Their work contributes to the discussion of securitization theory's audiences and actors and the "right" of functional actors to securitize a problem even when they initially lacked authoritative power.

Ihsan Yilmaz and Ismail Albayrak (2021) attempted to demonstrate how a state-controlled religious institution used religion, fear, trauma, insecurity, grievances, and conspiracy theories to dehumanize a religious community and present it as an existential threat to the country and the communities of faith. They rely on Turkey’s Directorate of Religious Affairs or Diyanet's portrayal of the Gülen Movement (GM) as a catalyst for dissent (fitne), corruption (fesat), mischief, a societal ill, and ultimately as a traitor and the West's pawn in a never-ending plot against Turkey, Islam, and the Muslim World. The Diyanet legitimized the dictatorial and violent activities of the government against the purported movement participants by securitizing the movement.

Hara Abubakar and Azizah Nur (2022) use securitization theory to discuss Indonesia’s strategy to tackle terrorism, which is different from the global war on terrorism, which employs a war strategy and regular forces. The Indonesian approach is the outcome of a struggle between the government and civil parties, namely Islamic organizations and human rights organizations. To a certain extent, civil society organizations have been successful in stopping the deployment of military tactics that have adverse effects on human rights. They explain how the government, advocates for human rights, and Islamic institutions compete for influence in society using the securitization theory. Accordingly, civil society organizations de-securitize whenever the government securities with the language of human rights and constitutional law.

Securitization has been successfully applied to securitize Muslims and Islam in the West. Muslims are a minority of the society, and Islam is considered an alien value and culture. Contrary to this condition, this study tests how securitization of Islam is conducted in a country where Muslims constitute the majority and Islam is an integral part of its history. The study further evaluates how securitization of Islam can be measured and what outcomes it entails in Muslim-majority societies. Overall, this study examines how securitization is conducted in authoritarian political cultures where the majority of the audience is itself the target of securitization.

2.4. Islam as Security Issue

The study of securitization of religion requires addressing why and how religion Islam has been integrated into security sermons. As far as contemporary literature in the areas of peace, violent conflict, and security studies is concerned, "*terrorism*" is the top-listed topic that has been associated with Islam. For centuries, the world has experienced various violent conflicts that, in one or other ways, are explained in terms of "*terrorism*." These violent incidents have been perpetrated by groups or individuals who justify their actions through ideological, religious, political, cultural, or racial motives (Kilp, 2011). Traditionally, terrorism was associated with separatist movements, the leftist or correct ideological wings with political and social goals such as independence movements from colonial rule, resisting external influence and domination, or transforming societal consciousness (Laqueur, 1999). Although terrorism and counterterrorism have been prevailing topics in contemporary academic and policy discussions, what the term means is straightforward and has standard definitions. Ironically, despite several international resolutions and treaties that have been passed by the United Nations that address the need for counterterrorism efforts and measures, none of them has defined the term terrorism (Prinsloo, 2018).

After condemning the violent attacks and incidents in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September 2001 as the terrorist attacks, the U.N. Security Council, through its resolution 1, 373, enabled the international "war on terror" that authorized member states to fight terrorism in various ways, to cooperate in security information sharing among member states, and to report on the conditions of terrorism through their counterterrorism committees. However, this resolution didn't specify what terrorism refers to (Setty, 2011). Since then, "terrorism" has dominated global public discourse and popular culture led by the agencies of international organizations, national governments, media outlets, and their combined efforts (Lee, 2011). Moreover, many academic institutions in different countries have opened new departments like terrorism studies. They include courses like international security and fundamentalism, investigating terrorism as an emerging threat to the human community. Developed in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 violent attacks, the contemporary discourse of terrorism evolved into new global security discourse that raises public attention about terrorism and fundamentally transforms the content and meaning of terrorism in ways different from understandings in earlier periods.

Many contemporary writers have adopted the term "new terrorism" synonymously with Islamic fundamentalism, counting on Islam as the primary motivation for violence. This trend has been replaced by the rational goals of national independence and social changes associated with old and traditional notions of terrorism (Kilp, 2011). The contemporary global discourse of terrorism is dominated by 'Islamic extremism' to the extent that the term 'terrorism' has become the synonymous expression of 'Islamic extremism, 'Islamic fundamentalism' or 'political Islam' as a new form of terrorism portraying that Islamic theology promotes violence and acts of terror (Khan,2006). In such a way, countless analysts nexus terrorism to Islam through the framework of 'Islamic extremism' and demonize one of the great religions in the world. While contemporary political crises and violent incidences in many Muslim countries and the western societies altogether may occur due to other factors such as failed governance, population growth, and weak social services and economic development, most analysis and media elucidated these trends as a manifestation of political Islam and Islamic extremism (Cordesman, 2017). Thus, it is fruitful to shed light on these concepts while studying the securitization of Islam though it is not the primary concern of this study. In this regard, the focus is not on the current intellectual debates over whether these activities essentially tie with the religion or not but on how these activities and concepts lay a conducive framework for the securitization of Islam.

2.4.1. Islamic Extremism as a Framework for Securitization of Islam

Islam is a monotheistic belief based on the principles revealed through the Prophet Muhammad as the Messenger of God, currently professed by one-fourth of humanity who call themselves Muslims (Poole, 2002). Hosting different definitions by different actors, "extremism," on the other hand, is essentially a political term for activities that are deviant to norms of the state, entirely intolerant toward others, and reject the existing social and political order (Sotlar, 2004). Extremism can be an ideology or wish for power characterized by activities, beliefs, attitudes, and actions that are out of the mainstream norms of society and the existing political frameworks (Raychew, 2014). The official state authorities are always intolerant of the ideological interests and activities of extremist groups (ibid). According to Kilp (2011), what seems strange, deviant, negative, and extreme to some may regard, as usual, as authentic and courageous by others in real life. He further argued that the social definitions of "extremism" are dynamic, essentially subjective, and contested based on various individual and group experiences and different contexts. The contemporary Islamic scholar Yusuf Al Qardawi (1982:10) argued that "the degree of a person's piety and that of the society in which he lives affect his judgment of others as far as extremism, moderation, and laxity is concerned." In contemporary societies, liberals may regard devoted religious individuals as extremists, multiculturalists may regard nationalists as extremists, and conservatives may regard minorities as extremists (Klip, 2011).

Seemingly derived from the ontological fluidity of "extremism," the notion of "Islamic extremism" lacks common comprehension among different writers, scholars, and policymakers altogether though it has been widely used in public media, academics, research, and policy discussions across the world (Schmid, 2013). Beyond the absence of a shared understanding of what constitutes Islamic' extremism', the range of disagreements extended to the motives, the real perpetrators of violent incidents, and their attachment to Islamic theology. Regardless of the apparent lack of clarity and consensus on the notion of "Islamic extremism" as a new form of terrorism, the term, in one way or another, links the acts of violence and terrorism to Islamic theology (David, 2001).

Facing high ontological inconsistencies, most analyses of "Islamic extremism" as a new form of terrorism emphasize supernatural explanations of violent incidents though it drastically failed both to bring the issue to the level of shared understanding and forward plausible solutions over the past two decades. The lack of standard definitions and insights into so-called "Islamic extremism" makes the subject to manipulation by different political desires to weaken and oppress dissident voices, such as minority groups, religious communities, or opposition political forces (Yusuf, 1982). However, "Islamic extremism" has not emerged out of the blue. Still, the catastrophic violent attacks on humanity in various parts of the world have been explained in association with Islam by both the perpetrators and critics. The criminal attacks such as the 9/11 plane hijackings in New York, the bombings in Casablanca, Bali, Istanbul, Madrid, London (7/7), and the murder of Van Gogh in the Netherlands, the killing of thirty Christian Ethiopians by ISIS on the Mediterranean coast are presented as violent incidents in one way or another related to Islam both by the groups who perpetrate the violent attacks and consequent reactions (Silke, 2008). These shocking contemporary realities have dominated the security discourse of Islamic extremism, a narrative that embroils Islam in the realm of security (Schmid, 2013).

2.4.2. Contending Views on "Islamic Extremism" as a New Form of Terrorism

Plenty of literature and public discussions employ 'terrorism' and 'Islamic extremism' interchangeably, propagating the idea that Islamic theology preaches and justifies violence. Proponents of this view follow an essentialist approach to Islamic extremism, the belief that extremism, violence, and terrorism are inherently rooted in Islamic teachings (Khan, 2005). Being aware of the difficulty of attaching all Muslims in diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, essentialists refrain from advocating genetic views to "Muslim terrorists." Instead, the essentialists argue that "Muslim terrorists are the products of essentially violent Islamic teachings, culture, theology, and pathos" (ibid). They target Islam as a collective identity "an essentialist terrorist derives his addiction to violence primarily from Islam, and not necessarily from his genes or individual life experiences" (ibid). Though Islamic theology is endowed with a bundle of moral foundations against any form of violence, essentialists argue to the contrary. It is stated in Islamic Holy Scripture, Quran, that *"There should be no compulsion in religion"* (Quran, chapter 2:257). Indeed, "*Truly, we have honored the children of Adam"* (chapter 17:70), making human dignity the core value of Islam. Against these Islamic values, plenty of scholars, politicians, and individuals have associated hate, murder, and cruelty with Islam, mainly through misleading misinterpretations of the Islamic tradition of *Jihad* as a compulsory religious war to kill and assimilate non-Muslims or impose Islamic values.

Moreover, despite the immediate, public, and explicit condemnation of these criminal attacks and consequent atrocities in the name of Islam by Muslim populations, essentialists prefer to associate Islam with terrorism (Shore, 2006). For example, Bruce (1998) argued that the contemporary form of terrorism, 'Islamic terrorism is motivated by Islamic teachings of violence as the sacred mandate of Muslims to engage in cruel activities for a spiritual purpose. Similarly, Gabriel (2015) argued that to understand 'Islamic extremism, and its manifestation, and thereby 'Islamic terrorism, and the minds of its perpetrators, Muslim terrorists, we should accept that their motivation is in the Islamic faith. The final goal of 'Islamic extremism, according to these authors, is to restructure a political society under their vision of Islamic law through the use of violence to achieve their goals (Jhon, 2007).

Proponents of the essentialist view of Islamic extremism as a new form of terrorism propose extraordinary solutions over legal and political approaches to address the problem. They recommend politicians and policymakers to take exceptional responses, including war, extrajudicial killings, detention without trial, degrading treatments, and torture to combat essential "Muslim militants" whom they believe are addicts of violence derived from their Islamic faith (Khan, 2006). This view is thought to influence the U.S.' policies towards Muslims and Middle-East countries. In this regard, the U.S. government's Counterterrorism Bureau

> "*Divides the Muslim world into concentric circles, where the largest, outermost circle contains all of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims, who for the most part is absorbed in their daily lives, repelled by terror and extremism and the innermost circle consist of the hardened fanatics, a relatively small group Clarke estimates at between 50,000 and 100,000, who are the jihadists bent on the West's destruction, against whom force is the most common response*" (Shore, 2006:4).

Overall, these essentialist scholars whom Khan (2006) called "violent monsters" played the leading role to essentialize the notion of terrorism and Islam through their publications and public discussions.

The essentialist approach to Islamic terrorism has sparked countering voices and arguments from many intellectuals in conflict studies, cultural relativism, and Islamic theology. However, there is no single line of counter-arguments from all. Some contested that though Muslims experienced brutalities from extremists and deviants in the earlier periods of Islam, today's notion of "Islamic extremism" has nothing to do with Islam. During its inception, Islamic history witnessed the rise of extremist groups called the *Khawarij, or the Kharijites***,** that believed in fanatic and flimsy ideas to justify the murder of Muslims, who were rejected and fought by the Muslim intellectuals and communities so that their movement would not reappear again (Zafarul, 20015). The term "Islamic extremism" and its current usage have defaced the Muslims' legitimate anti-colonial movements during the colonial era and to suppress Muslim freedom fighters against colonial occupation, exploitation of resources, and imposition of alien culture on colonies in the Muslim world (ibid). The destructive effects of extremism and countermeasures against extremist activities have been the burdens of Islam and the Muslim community throughout its existence; Al Qardawi (1987:15) argues, "Muslims throughout the centuries have not escaped the venomous slander of the extremists." Indeed, "the whole history of the Muslim Ummah after the fourth century A.H., with its glorious legacy and unprecedented civilization, has been a target of unjustified criticism." According to a 2011 U.S. government's National Counter-Terrorism Center report, the suffering of Muslims accounted for 82 and 97 percent of today's extremist-related terrorism fatalities (Zafarul, 2015). Reports reveal that Muslims are the primary victims of terrorist assaults and backlashes ranging from the securitization of their identity to extraordinary counterterrorism activities.

Plenty of scholars maintain that the issue of 'Islamic terrorism' as a new form of terrorism is a multi-faceted phenomenon that merits consideration in a broader political, economic, social, identity, religious, cultural, and dynamics of global political contexts. Accordingly, no single explanatory factor led to a proper comprehension of the problem (Al Qardawi, 1987). The cause of violent incidents related to or narrated as Islamic extremism might be religious, political, social, economic, psychological, international developments, or all (ibid).

Yusuf Al Qardawi (1987:10), one of the prominent present-day scholars in Islamic *dawah*, argued that "religious society usually produces a person sensitively aversive to any deviation or negligence, however slight it may be." According to him, Islamic texts preach to Muslims to exercise "moderations and reject any kind of extremism in terms of "excessiveness, transgressing or meticulous religiosity and strictness or severity," all of which carry equivalent meanings to 'extremism.' He further argued that extremism is not a new phenomenon as far as Islamic theology and history are concerned; it existed even during the time of the prophet Muhammad. According to him, within the Islamic framework, the root cause of extremism, both in the past and present, is misunderstandings and interpretation of religious doctrines. Notably, Al Qardawi asserted that extremist individuals within the religious community and non-Muslim radical critics of Islam used to emphasize allegorical texts (those with implicated and unclear meanings) and disregard the categorical ones (those with precise definitions), which are either caused by a lack of knowledge and insight into the purposes, spirit, and essence of faith or deliberate manipulation of verses to defame Islam and its values. Extremists today do the same, using unclear meanings to determine important concepts that result in grave consequences when used as bases for judging individuals or groups and assessing their behavior. Qardawi argued that all the obscure and vague evidence on which the extremists tend to justify their behaviors are refuted by fundamental and categorical texts in both the Qur'an and *Sunnah.* The issue of extremism was settled by the Islamic framework centuries ago, and it is futile to try to revive and renew it. He further asserted that there is no place for violence and severity in Islamic teaching. Thus, the so-called Islamic terrorist organizations like *Al-Qaeda* and ISIS have neither Islamic grounds, nor support from mainstream Islam (Zafarul, 2015).

Besides the above inward reflections on 'extremism' within the framework of Islamic theology, Qardawi's view about the contemporary narratives on "Islamic extremism" or "terrorism" is quite different from the views of both proponents and their critics. He argued that "religious extremism" is currently in the "dock and a target of accusations and criticism by writers and orators who are ignorantly driven by ulterior motives and have no insight into the nature of the issue" (Qardawi, 1987:3). According to him, the majority of the participants are neither really affected by it, nor are cautious about looking for a remedy, but seek to distort and exploit it for political purposes. In his words, "those who do not live for Islam and its spreading and do not share the suffering and the hardships that beset the Ummah are self- cantered." He challenges these groups as "such people have no right to tell those who believe in Islam and live by it that they are wrong and should change; and if they seize that right by force, no one will ever listen to them" (ibid, 5). According to him, those who are aloof to the insurgency groups in the Islamic world cannot play a positive role by criticizing the groups and defaming Islam as they do not share the suffering and multi-dimensional grievances of people in the Muslim world.

Regarding the political crisis and Islamist movements in the Middle East, Qardawi associated multiple factors such as social justice, corruption, and tyranny contrary to western's exclusive narratives of extremist movement or political Islam. In this regard, Zafarul (2015) argued that the fundamental reason behind the proliferation of violent groups and young Muslims joining them is the dictatorial and undemocratic nature of the West-supported Arab regimes, which block every possible means for change and democracy. The prevalent injustice, inequality, absence of freedom of expression and freedom of religion caused by the long-reigning authoritarian regimes and their links to Western governments, whose proponents of democracy and human rights are silent with regards to the Middle East, make the young generation skeptical of the latter. Furthermore, the vague state and religious establishments in these countries where state institutions and religious leaders are attached to oppressive regimes generate resentment among the people (Hinnebusch, 2003). As young people become acquainted with modern secular knowledge and the history of fairness in Islamic traditions and systems of government, they start questioning the current theories of democracy and lack confidence in the western agenda of democracy, the religious establishments, or leadership in the Muslim world (Al-Qardawi, 1987).

Moreover, the young generation lost trust in secular democracy and its liberty partly as they have grown up in a bounded religious society and partly due to their reservations to the Western's agenda of democracy in their country, mainly due to the latter's continued political, intelligence and military support for all dictator Arab regimes (Zafarul, 2015). These local resentments against maladministration, corrupt governments, and their foreign backers sparked resistance and disobedience as any movement against injustice in many parts of the world (Ibid). These developments led young and oppressed Muslim populations to think about the revival of Islam and its historical glory of justice, which Al-Qardawi named the "*reawakening of Islam*." Though the young generations are aware that Islam does not support aggression and violence, the youth join violent groups and fight against oppressive regimes (Al-Qardawi, 1987).

Scholars often argue that religious extremism has psychological implications. Socially frustrated youth who have experienced discrimination tend to seek friendship, identity, and protection, leading them to fail in the trap of criminal and terrorist group recruitment projects (Schmid, 2013). Politically, terrorism may associate with the denial of political liberty groups struggling for the right to political liberty (Khan, 2006). Terrorism is the story of violence and the pathology of unresolved grievances, sufferings, and existential abuses (ibid). Plenty of scholars also attribute "religious extremism" to economic conditions such as unemployment, exploitation, and unfair distribution of resources. Despite these complicated facts, the dominant narrative has relied on a single factor, i.e., the "political Islam" brand name carrying different markers such as 'Islamic terrorism,' 'Islamic fundamentalism, and 'Islamic radicalism' as the sole factor for recent violent incidents (Schmid, 2013). All in all, the underline argument of the proponents of holistic approaches to "religious extremism" is that the issue of religious extremism is multi-faceted, so no single explanation can uncover the reality.

2.5. An Overview of Islam in Ethiopia

This chapter is devoted to locating the patterns of interactions between the state and religions in Ethiopian state formation to uncover the impact of history on the present day's state, religion, and societal relations because "legacies of the past always have their say to shape the future of all present developments" (Erlich, 2013:4). Thus, the proper understanding of the current patterns of relations between the state and religious groups in Ethiopia should start with an appropriate reading and knowledge of the role of religion throughout the Ethiopian state formation spectrum.

Located in Northeastern Africa or the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has a long history of statehood genealogy. The epicenter of the modern Ethiopian state was the ancient Axumite kingdom, which from the 2nd to the 10th-century thrived around the ancient city of Aksum in the Northern part of the present-day Tigray region and the Southeast coast of the Red Sea. The state evolved into its present form during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by incorporating many smaller feudal holdings (Saheed, 2007).

Unlike the contemporary political discourses and narratives that portray Ethiopia as a country with a long history of religious tolerance, the country's history recounts that the 'making' of the Ethiopian state essentially relied on the construction of Christianity as the state identity and the negative othering of Islam. Securitization or otherization of Islam as a threat or danger to the state is at the center of making the nation's identities, securing, and expanding geographic boundaries. Although Islam has always been intrinsically associated with Ethiopia and Ethiopians throughout its history, state-level othering of Islam has served as a tool of nation-building, legitimizing political violence, and defining its national interests and external relations.

State-building is a complex and multifaceted political and historical process whereby rulers institutionalize state structures to absorb and expand political mobilizations, expand and control territory, and configure an identity community (Hinnebusch, 2003). The history of Ethiopia has been read and illustrated as the Christian Kingdom that traces its roots back 3000 years to the time of King Solomon of Israel (Saheed, 2007). However, such historical representation of the state as a Christian polity hostile to Islam is neither based on historical facts, nor contributes to the harmonious existing interactions of state, religion, and society in Ethiopia. In this regard, Abbink (2011) argued that the contemporary controversies between Muslim communities and the government and horizontally between Muslims and Christians are nothing new but the continuations of the historical pattern of interactions of the state and religions. This chapter sheds light on the historical legacies of Ethiopian state formation that are relevant to the contemporary social and political realities.

2.5.1. Islam and Axumite Empire

The Kingdom of Axum was a trading empire that emerged on the African shore of the Red Sea in the first century A.D. and is often considered the embryo of the modern Ethiopian state. Axum had trade relations with Byzantine Empire, the Arabs, and Persian Empire and embraced Christianity in the mid-fourth century. The history of the Ethiopian state through its genealogical core, Axum, is intrinsically shaped by the developments in and its engagements with these nearby regions. The country is culturally, politically, and religiously connected to the Middle East across the Red Sea, one of the critical and strategic international trade routes in the modern era (Saheed, 2007). The rise of Islam in the 7th century resulted in the control of the Red Sea maritime trade by Muslim Arabs and the isolation of Axum from its trading networks (Nelson, & Kaplan, 1981). Ethiopia’s close location to the Red Sea makes the country's fate inseparable from the Middle East geopolitically and economically.

Moreover, it makes Ethiopia strategically important on the African coast of the Red Sea. The location of Axum in the trading networks between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, around The Red Sea, gave it a strategic value as a link between the global mercantile giants of the Roman-Byzantine, Persian and ancient Indian empires. Culturally, today's monotheist Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, arrived to the historic Ethiopian terrain from across the Red Sea earlier than anywhere else (Erlich, 2013). Christianity was introduced into the Kingdom of Axum at its earliest date due to its commercial and maritime relations with the strong Christian Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire, which dominated the Red Sea trade at the time (Marcus, 1994; Tirmingiham, 1952). Christianity championed the status of the official religion in the Kingdom when King Ezana embraced it in 340 AD (Erlich, 2006). Though the conversion among the masses was slow, the conversion of King Ezana to Christianity laid the ground for the religion to be the ideological and ethical basis of the Axumite Empire and to continuously shape the process of Ethiopian state formation till the last quarter of the 20th century (Marcus, 1994). The introduction of Christianity and King Ezana's conversion gave the Ethiopian state the insignia of a Christian state anchored in the "inexorable politico-religious marriage" of the Ethiopian state and Christianity from the 4th century till the 1974 secularist Marxist revolution (Ford, 2008: 52 cited in Muhamed, 2016: 4). Since the 4th century, Christianity, through its values and symbol, has played a significant role in determining the nature and functioning of state institutions, social patterns of interactions, and the country's future position in the regional and international system with profound contemporary implications (Abbink, 1998).

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was identified as the empire’s unifying symbol and provided the justification for the violent incorporation of people of different values in the course of state formation that enabled it to maintain a privileged position. This has left a long shadow over the present-day state, society and religion interactions in the country (Tesfahun, 1975). Christian values and objects of religious significance, such as the cross on the crown, the Star of the Trinity, and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, used to be the country's national symbols of political and cultural significance till the last quarter of twenty century (ibid). Overall, Christianity served as the emperor's and political elite's worldview that defined the country's national identity and foreign relations (Abbink, 1998).

Despite the above historical facts and official narrations and identification of Ethiopian state identity with Christianity, Islam also established itself as an essential element of Ethiopian society with its own legacy in state formation since the 7th century A.D. (Abbink, 2014; Dereje, 2011). The first contact between Islam and Ethiopia was during 615, when the first followers of the Prophet Muhammed, called the *Sahaba* in Arabic, arrived in the Abyssinian state seeking asylum from the Christian king when their fellow Quraish persecuted them in Mecca (Dereje, 2011; Erlich, 1994; Tirmingiham, 1952). The group came under the instruction of the Prophet Muhammed, who told them, "If you go to Abyssinia, you will find a king who oppresses no one" (Tirmingiham, 1952:44). This episode of Muslims' arrival is often recounted as the first *Hijra* or migration in Islamic history, recognizing Ethiopia as the first to hold foreign relations with Muslims, securing recognition for the religion at the state level (Erlich, 1994).

Furthermore, the Ethiopian state under its Christian Emperor symbolizes the earliest Muslim presence in Africa (Robinson, 2004). In this way, unlike the Western discourse of Jihad and violence as a means for spreading Islam, the religion entered the Horn of Africa peacefully. It was propagated to many parts of Africa peacefully through the agency of the migrant community, long-distance traders, and teachers (Hussien, 2002). The adaptation of Islam was initially in the trading centers following the coastal areas, which had been significantly occupied by Muslim Arab merchants (Tirmingiham, 1952). Though most Muslim settlements were in the lowlands and the eastern regions, several Muslim societies also appeared in the central, southern, and western parts of the Empire, representing the mercantile life of the Ethiopian community (Markus, 1994; Robinson, 2004). Ironically, the initial domestic and cordial linkages of Islam and the Christian Kingdom of Axum were not congruent with the regional geopolitical trends at the time. The rise of Islam and Muslim forces across the Red Sea, from the middle of the seventh century A.D., resulted in Muslims controlling the trade routes by Muslims previously dominated by Axum, which in turn triggered the decline of Axum Empire (Saheed, 2007). The heydays of the Kingdom of Axum lasted from the fourth to the sixth century, with the core area covering the highlands of what is today southern Eritrea, Tigray, Lasta, and Wollo and the important commercial and political centers Aksum and Adulis, and Yeha (Kaplan and Nelson, 1981). The kingdom controlled the important trading sites extending from the Red Sea coast from Sawakin in today's Sudan from the north to Berbera in present-day Somalia in the south and interior land as far as the Nile Valley in modern Sudan (ibid). Axumite rulers also had firm control over the coast and much of the inland of modern Yemen on the Arabian side of the Red Sea. In the sixth and seventh centuries, technically, during the rise of Islam, the Axumite kingdom lost control of southwest Arabia and its Red Sea trading coast, which led to a gradual southward shrink and shifting of political centers (Kaplan and Nelson, 1981). According to Markus (1994), the decline of Axumite Ethiopia was attributed to the rise of Islam as it facilitated the former's economic and cultural disconnection from its trading partner, mainly the Byzantine and Persian Empires, which were defeated by the newly emerged Muslim forces. Saheed (2007) agreed with Marcus when he asserted that the spread of Islam and consolidation of Muslim Arabs in the African coast of the Red Sea, today known as the Horn of Africa, during the eighth century contributed to the Axumite kingdom’s isolation from its trading partners of European and Middle Eastern Christendom and its eventual economic decline.

Tirmingiham (1952) attributed the decline of the Axumite kingdom mainly to internal factors, that is, the invasion of the nomadic pagan Beja tribe rather than the external influence of Islam. Regardless of such disputed views, the collapse of the Axumite Empire between the eighth to twelfth centuries was entangled with the rise of Islam and expansion of Muslim's power in the Arabian Peninsula and around Red Sea coasts (Saheed, 2007). While the northern part of the empire around The Red Sea shore fell under the control of Muslims, the Axumite Christendom was exposed to political, cultural, and commercial isolation from its partners in Europe and the Persian Gulf and forced to retreat into the southern mountainous highlands (ibid)

2.5.2. The Zagwe Dynasty and the Proliferation of Muslim Sultanates (12th- 13th)

The downfall of the Axumite Empire brought about a shift of the center of political power and the establishment of the Zagwe dynasty by the Agew people in the 10th century A.D., which led Ethiopia after the decline of the Axumite Kingdom (Mengistu, 2016; Saheed, 2007). While the Christian Axumite Kingdom declined in the mid of 7th Century A.D., organized Muslim communities were established and proliferated in the central and highlands of the Abyssinian empire stretching from the Red Sea (Robinson, 2004). During the 9th Century, Muslim sultanates emerged in Ethiopia (Hussein, 2006, cited in Dereje, 2011). A Muslim sultanate of the Makhzumi dynasty was founded in the late 9th century and ruled Eastern Shoa during the Zagwe period of Christian Abyssinia (Tirmingiham, 1952). There were seven Muslim kingdoms in Abyssinia: Ifat, Delaware, Arababni, Hadiya, Sharkaha, Bali, and Dara (Ibid). Many Muslim sultanates proliferated from the Red Sea to Shoa, covering much larger areas than the Christian Kingdom (Ibid). Various Muslim leaders of these sultanates aspired to create a powerful state to unite their power and control large terrain and trade routes during the 13th century (Markus, 1994). Overall, the period from the influx of Islam to Ethiopia to the end of the Zagwean period (From the 7th century to the end of the 13th century) appeared to be a gracious time in which Islam at least never entered in terms of conflict with the Christian Abyssinian state (Abbir, 1968).

The reason for that was that the Abyssinian state was preoccupied with internal problems of adopting the newly-integrated Agew peoples to its empire to revive itself from the ashes of Axumite Ethiopia (Tirmingiham, 1952). As Christianity slowly expanded to the northern and central highlands along with the state's southward expansion, Islam rapidly penetrated the north-eastern, eastern, central, and southern parts of present-day Ethiopia, stretching from the coast of the Red Sea over the Shoan plateau and the whole of southern Ethiopia (Ibid). The advent of Islam to the center and heartland of the Horn of Africa when the state institutions of kingship and Orthodox Christianity were exhausted dealing with the new Agew population and their culture. While the relations between the Zagwe dynasty and Muslim sultanates were marked by neither harmonious nor discord, Saheed (2007) argued that the swift influence and advancement of Islam to the hinterland of present-day Ethiopia triggered older rivalries and tensions between highlanders and lowlanders and agriculturalists and pastoralists that turned into a long-term feud between Christians and Muslims in the post-Zagwe period Solomonic dynasty and its Abyssinian Empire.

In the period before 1270, Christians under the realm of the Zagwe dynasty ruled in the Lasta area, north of what would become the center of the post--1270 Christian Abyssinian territory, while Muslims controlled the northeastern, eastern, and southeastern parts along the cliffs of the central highlands of today's Ethiopia (Ayda, 2014). While the state and its institution of kingship and Orthodox Christianity, rooted in the Axumite empire, extended southwards to engulf new territory and population, Islam consolidated its power in the eastern and southeastern parts in the form of a string of Muslim principalities that emerged from the ninth century onwards to pose a significant challenge to the imposition of the Abyssinian empire’s dominant institutions and culture (Saheed, 2007).

2.5.3. Islam in Abyssinian State (1270-1974)

The year 1270 marked the shift of political power from the Agew people of Lasta to the Shewan Amhara nobilities led by Yukunoamlak, who defeated the last king of the Zagwe dynasty (Markus, 1994; Tirmingiham, 1952). The Shawan elites accused the Zagwe dynasty and its leadership of not sufficiently Christianizing the state due to the Church’s declining role in the state's political life (Markus, 1994). In the political battle between the

Agew and Shewan elites, the Church supported Shewan rebels against the Zagwe rulers (ibid). The Shewan nobility, in turn, promised the Church to revive its full-fledged political engagements established during the Axumite era (ibid). The marriage between the two was renewed by the myth of the Solomonic dynasty in the Book called '*Kibre Negest*' or 'the Book of Glory' that narrates the Abyssinian rulers’ genealogical descent from King Solomon of Israel and Makeda or Queen Sheba of Ethiopia (Tirmingiham, 1952). This myth has been applauded by generations of Ethiopian adherents to Orthodox Christianity and served as a source of traditional legitimacy for Ethiopian emperors until the 1974 revolution (ibid; Markus, 1994: 16). The primary purpose of the myth was to restore the Solomonic dynasty that supposedly ruled the historic Axumite state under the auspicious marriage of church and state that vanished with the decline of the Axumite Empire in the seventh century (Ibid). The *Kebra Negest*, or Book of the Glory of Kings, narrated the coming of the Ark of the Covenant, the book God sent to Prophet Moses to Ethiopia, and the union of King Solomon of Israel and the ancient Queen of Ethiopia, who according to the story traveled to Jerusalem to see and learn from the wise and beneficent rule of King Solomon (Saheed, 2007). After returning, the queen gave birth to a baby boy called Menelik I, who grew up and traveled to Jerusalem to visit his father, who anointed him as the king of Ethiopia (ibid). Recounting these mythical events and the acceptance of Christianity, the Book asserted that Ethiopians are 'the chosen people' anchored in their ancestral lineage to King Solomon of Israel and Queen Sheba of Ethiopia through their son Menelik I, who supposedly founded the Aksumite civilization (Saheed, 2007). The book was produced and disseminated jointly by the clergy and Shewan nobilities, who were the proponents of the Solomonic dynasty to disparage the Zagwe rulers, claiming that the latter had no legitimate ground to rule Ethiopia as they lacked lineage to King Solomon of Israel (Ayda, 2014). Jack briefly describes the contents of Kibre Negest as follows:

> *"The heart of the work tells of the queen of Saba's visit to King Solomon, her infatuation with him, and his wisdom and wealth; her conversion to Judaism, her marriage to him; her return to Ethiopia the birth of their son, Mənilək, the subsequent visit of Mənilək to Solomon—his father, the removal of the Ark of the Covenant from Israel to Ethiopia, the African Zion*

> *and its enshrining in Axum-the new Jerusalem-the rule of king Mənilək I, the second David, over Ethiopia, and the establishment of a messianic dynasty"* (Jack., 1996, p. 192).

Under the new Solomonic dynastic banner, the Abyssinian state began to expand southwards, carrying the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity as the symbols and tools of state institutionalization (Robinson, 2004). From 1270 onwards, the Christian religion and the Amharic language served as an engine of the state's encroachments to the south and east. From its base in the highlands, the state engulfed vast Muslim and pagan populations residing in the southern and eastern regions, the central plateau. The autonomous and traditional rules of Muslim sultanates and other ethno-cultural communities in the eastern and southern parts of present-day Ethiopia were forcefully incorporated into the empire and its values and cultures (Saheed, 2007). The society and its territory merged with the emerging empire, commonly referred to as Abyssinian (Saheed, 2007).

The immediate focus of the Solomonic dynasty was to contain the rapidly advancing Muslim sultanates from the Shoan plateau to the southern and southeastern frontiers of the country (Tirmingiham, 1952). To that end, successive dynasty leaders conducted a series of military confrontations with the Muslim sultanates in the central, southern, and eastern parts of present-day Ethiopia. They have served as the points of contention in understanding the country's history and its contemporary ramifications (Saheed, 2007).

Seven independent Muslim sultanates were targeted and forcefully incorporated into the Abyssinian Christian Empire, namely, Ifat (the Predecessor of Shewan Sultanate under the Makhzumite dynasty), Delaware, Arababni, Hadya, Sharkaha, Bali, and Dara (Tirmingiham, 1952). The oldest political foothold of Islam in the horn of Africa is the history of the Shawa Sultanate and its Maxhumite dynasty (Braukämper, 1977). While Christianity was expanding southwards and struggling with new people and their culture, particularly during the Zagwe dynasty, Islamic civilization was not only established on the northeast African coast but also penetrated the hinterlands of the Horn of Africa and established well-organized political communities on the eastern escarpment of the

Ethiopian highlands, called Shewan Sultanate in 896/7 A.D. (ibid). The Shewan Sultanate was established and ruled by Makhzumi, derived from the well-known Mekkan clan. The Shawan Sultanate had a continuous existence for about 500 years till it was decayed by internal strife and by challenges from neighboring Muslim realms, which were struggling to avoid the sultanate's dominant status (ibid). The Shewan Sultanate existed from 896 until 1285, when the neighboring Sultanate Yîfât controlled it under 'Umar Walash' (Braukämper,1977).

The early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries marked the consolidation of the state and the expansion of its political and cultural influences led by Amhara kings. The Christian rulers forcefully imposed the Amharic language and Christianity on all Abyssinian empire's newly conquered regions. The people were compulsorily Amharized and forced to abandon their traditional beliefs and Islam and embrace Orthodox Christianity (Saheed, 2007). The process of territorial annexation and cultural imposition by the Christian Kingdom over Muslim Sultanates started when Yekunomlak marched to control Ifat, the successor of Shewan Sultanate, immediately to his coronation in 1270 (Markus, 1994). The policy of territorial expansion marked the first hostile interaction between the Christian Abyssinian state and Islamic sultanates. The episode followed by the development of antagonistic relations between the two faith communities in the Horn of Africa, where the Abyssinian state under its subsequent Emperors, with their Christian Solomonic ideology, expanded and engulfed a number of Muslim sultanates in the south and southeastern parts of present-day Ethiopia in the thirteen, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries thoroughly executing many Muslims and compulsory conversion of others (Robinson, 2004). All the Muslim principalities that had thrived during the medieval period of Ethiopia were gradually submerged by the highland Christian kingdoms (Dereje, 2011).

The Islamic Sultanate of Ifat was more politically potent and economically wealthy than its predecessor Shewan Sultanate, which geographically extended from the Shawan plateau to the East and the historic port of Zeila (Robinson, 2004). It played the leading role over other Muslim Sultanates like Adal, Hubat, Mora, and Hadiya. It controlled a vast territory extending from the Shawan plateau to the coast of Northern Somalia till its collapse in 1415 (Braukämper,1977). The troops of the Christian Kingdom occupied Zeila during the reign of Emperor Yeshaq (1414-29), which marked the demise of the Yifat sultanate as an autonomous political entity (ibid). When the Amhara Christian army destroyed it in 1415, the political center of the Islamic realm moved to one of its districts in the East to the Kingdom of Adal, which became the successor of the Yifat Sultanate and took up the position of leadership over the Muslim principalities of northeastern Africa (ibid). Birmingham (1965, p. 97) summarized these historical developments in the following words: "So ended the existence of the most powerful Muslim state in northeast Africa known first as Ifat with its seat in eastern Shoa, had passed into Adal with Zaila as the chief center, and finally, Harar, where it degenerated into nomadism in the Danakil desert."

During the end of the fifteenth century, the Christian Abyssinian kingdom controlled all the Muslim sultanates and imposed its culture and will over their populations (Saheed, 2007). Between his coronation and wars with Muslims in 1332, the Abyssinian king Amdatsiyon waged subsequent successful campaigns over all the Muslim principalities, which enabled him to fully control the Muslim territories and their trade routes (Tamrat, 1972). During his intrusion into the Muslim Sultanates, his most important request to Muslim communities was to acknowledge his lordship over their territories and hand over their lucrative commercial activities and trade routes and networks to the East (ibid). Moreover, slave-raiding was a vital motive and part of his campaigns towards Muslim principalities, including Hadiya, in today's southern Ethiopia, where "he killed many of the people of that land. And the rest he made captives with their king, great men and small men and women, old and young, and transported them into his kingdom" (Tamrat, 1972:87). The southward and eastward incursion continued till the death of Zara Yakob (1434-68), which is referred to as the first period of the Solomonid dynasty by historians. This period of the Abyssinian Empire was marked by a successful conquest of Muslim Sultanates and territorial expansion (Tirmingiham, 1952). After the death of Zarayakob, the Christian Kingdom lost its military upper hand, and the Adal Sultanate began a defensive phase (ibid).

2.5.4. Islam from 16th – The First Half of 19th Century Ethiopia

The dawn of the sixteenth century was characterized by a shift in the balance of power between the Christian Kingdoms and Muslim Sultanes. The Adal Sultanate grew into the most powerful Islamic state ever seen on the eastern edge of Africa after Muslims had been nearly completely subordinated to the Christian Abyssinian empire after the collapse of the state of Ifat under the leadership of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (1506-43), otherwise called Gragn (left-handed) by Christian historians, whom the present generation Ethiopian Muslims consider as their national hero (Braukämper,1977). The imam was destined to resurrect the Muslim power under Adilete's leadership in southeastern Ethiopia and launched a reaction to the subsequent attacks by Abyssinian forces, which enabled him to bring three-quarters of the Christian Empire under his rule, though for a short period. After almost three centuries of the Christian Kingdom and its army ruling over Muslims and newly incorporated people, starting in 1270, the Imam was able to unite different Muslim sultanates under the army of Adal sultanate (Robinson, 2004). Moreover, the confrontations between the Christian Kingdoms and Muslim Sultanate had been gained and reinforced by the 16th-century global geopolitical rivalry between the Portuguese and Ottomans. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Ottomans and Portuguese were in fierce competition for the mastery of the Arabian Sea and control of the strategic trade route, the Red Sea. These foreign powers forged alliances with their respective fellow religious forces in Ethiopia and gave military support to them (Markus, 1994). In 1557, the Turks took control of the Eritrean seaport of Massawa, and started to penetrate the frontiers of highlands in northern Ethiopia. Moreover, the Turks provided the Somali and Afar people in southeastern and northeastern Ethiopia with weapons to build their confrontations with the Abyssinian Christian kingdom in the central highlands (Saheed, 2007). The rulers of the Christian Kingdom requested military assistance from Portugal to deter the Muslim forces in the lowlands. The Portuguese positively responded and sent 400 Portuguese forces led by Christopher da Gama (the son of Vasco da Gama, who discovered the route to India around South Africa) (Saheed, 2007). Indeed, the Portuguese military assistance helped the Christian army win a decisive battle against the Sultan of Adal, Imam Ahmed, who had already established his political base in central Ethiopia (Tesfahun, 1975).

Considering his defeat by joint forces, the imam turned to the Ottomans to obtain their military support (Markus, 1994). The Ottoman sent him military personals and materials that highly exceeded the one sent by the Portuguese to the Christian Kingdom (Tirmingiham, 1952). Immediately with the arrival of the Ottomans' assistance, the imam defeated the joint forces of the Christian Kingdom and their Portuguese collaborators in the central parts of today's Amhara region. Thinking this the end of challenges from the Christian army, the Imam sent the Ottoman troops back to their service and demobilized his army, an underestimation that historians recognized as a fatal mistake made by the strong imam (Markus, 1994). To the contrary of his calculations, the Christian king of Gelawdos, the successor of Libne Dingle, attacked Imam Ahmed at the battle of Wayna Daga in 1543, where the Imam was killed (Bahru, 1991). The victory ended the threat of Muslim powers to the Christian kingdom (Tirmingiham, 1952). Regardless of such Muslim historical legacies and integration in the long history of Ethiopian state formation, the official narrative excludes these historical facts and misrepresents the country and its entire history as a Christian state besieged by the menace of Muslims (Owens, 2008). The confrontations between Muslims and the Christian Kingdom have been subject to different understandings among Ethiopians and foreign writers. In this regard, Robinson (2004) viewed the 16th century Adal sultanate and its leader Imam Ahmed as the campaign to respond to the earlier attacks of Christian emperors on Muslims in central, southern, and eastern parts of present-day Ethiopia. Others, including Erlich (1994), Abir (1968), Tirmingiham (1952) & Markus (1994), described the Imam's action as an external jihadist invasion with religious motives to Islamize the Christian Abyssinian state. However, the pro-Christian Abyssinia state narrated the Christian kingdom's invasions over Muslim sultanates in the earlier periods as a war for economic interest and territorial expansion. Ironically, this group of scholars considered the leader of Muslims, Imam Ahmed, as an external jihadist aggressor whose aim was to Islamize Ethiopia. This continues to be a point of disagreement among the present generation of Ethiopian Muslims and Christians. Many other writers viewed the conflicts between the Christian kingdoms and Muslim sultanates throughout the medieval period (1270-1555) as struggles basically for political power, territorial expansion, and control of trade routes between neighboring political units rather than wars of religious motives.

Despite such divergent explanations, the imam brought three-quarters of Abyssinia under his rule from 1527 to 1543 through successful wars against the Christian Kingdom until he was defeated by the combined forces of the Christian Kingdom and Portuguese army (Tirmingiham, 1952). Although Muslims were in control of vast territories and their vicinities to important trade routes, they lost the war in the end. According to Braukämper (1977), the defeat of Muslims can be attributed to climatic factors, unmanageable vast territory, poor cohesion between the inhabitants, ineffective communication, and jealousy among themselves, factors which barred them from establishing a well-united front against their common oppressors, the Christian Kingdom (Braukämper, 1977). Tirmingiham (1952) argued that the Christian Kingdom's upper hand on geographic and climatic conditions enabled them to trounce Muslims and take over the areas previously occupied by Muslims. According to him, the Muslim sultanates' location in the vast desert areas hampered their communication and mobilization of power of resistance against the Christian kingdom and its invasion.

Although Imam Ahmed's defeat enabled the Christian emperors to reassert their leadership over the Abyssinian territories, the Abyssinian state was immediately preoccupied with two other developments that challenged the Abyssinians and the essence of Orthodox Christianity, Amharic language (Tirmingiham, 1952). While the Christian Kingdom was exhausted from lengthy and devastating wars with the Muslims of the Adal Sultanate, new pressure came from the movement of the Oromo people. Starting from the mid-sixteenth century, Oromo expanded territorially from the valleys of the Web and Juba to central and northern Ethiopia, establishing Catholicism as an alternative religion to the Ethiopian state (Bahru, 199, Birmingham, 1952). The Oromo people from the southwest, who have their own distinct culture, religion, and political institutions, penetrated the hinterland of the Abyssinian empire as far North as Tigray and into Begemidir and Gojjam, most often utilizing warfare (Saheed, 2007). The Oromo, who constituted the largest national group and more than 40 percent of Ethiopia's population today, had a significant legacy over the long course of Ethiopian state formation by integrating into the royal family, nobility, and court system of the Abyssinian kingdom (Nelson and Kalplan, 1981). The Oromo's political influence coincided with religious and regional rivalries that weakened the

Abyssinian Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that reduced the empire to a mere collection of rival provincial warlords (ibid). The effect of the Oromo people's expansion to the hinterland of the Abyssinian Empire had two characteristics. In the case of Oromo's advancement on the Christian Kingdom, the interactions between the Oromo and Amhara peoples were not significant enough to create and form a new identity, except in the Wollo area, where people associated their identity with the mixture of Oromo and Amhara backgrounds. There were no such racial and cultural amalgamations in other regions due to the withdrawal of Amhara and the Christians from the territories that Oromo controlled to maintain the ″pride and purity of the Amharic ruling race" (Tirmingiham, 1952:94). The Amharas preferred to leave the areas occupied by the Oromo or live side by side, which resulted in continuous divisions and mutual hatred in the struggle to maintain their identities unmodified (ibid).

On the other hand, the Oromo's interactions with Muslim populations in the eastern, southeast, and central parts of Abyssinia were based on reciprocal cultural adoptions and assimilation either in the aftermath of conflicts or through socialization. While the Oromo’s culture of egalitarianism and its resemblance to non-hierarchical Islamic traditions led Oromo to accept Islam in masse, the incompatibilities between the Oromo’s egalitarianism and the hierarchical Solomonic practice restricted racial mixture between the Oromo and Amhara (ibid). During the second half of the sixteenth century, Oromo controlled most of the Southern territories of the Abyssinian regions when the northern hemisphere was troubled by feudal nobles' revolt against the center and allied with Turks in Massawa (ibid).

The second force of pressure on the Abyssinian state came from Jesuit missionaries, who had already established their presence in the Abyssinian kingdom through the Portuguese military. These missionaries pressured and influenced King Susneyos (1607-1632) to embrace Catholicism as the state religion instead of Orthodox Christianity (Bahru, 1991). As the fragile political conditions and exhausted military power didn't allow the kingdom to resist the Oromo’s rising influence and reject the missionaries' offer, Susneyos adopted strategic and favorable policies to deal with both while maintaining the core values of Solomonic traditions, i.e., Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity as the national symbol or essential identities of the Abyssinian state (Markus, 1994). Hoping to strengthen the declining monarchial power, Susneyos accepted and converted to Catholicism to maintain his good foreign ties with the Portuguese and secure their military assistance (Tirmingiham, 1952). Similarly, he adopted a policy of integrating Muslim Oromos into the Solomonic state, allowing them to engage in the kingdom's political life (Markus, 1994). However, against his expectations, these strategies did not bring stability to his kingdom as the nobilities, clergy, and peasants rose against him for his confession of Catholicism and betrayal of the Orthodox Church (Bahru, 199). These revolts from significant sections of the society forced the emperor to abandon his throne. He was replaced with his son Fasiledas (1632-1667), who immediately ordered the Jesuits to leave Ethiopia and adopted a foreign policy of delinking from the outside world that continued for the next two centuries (Markus,1994). As part of a strategy to halt foreigners' entry, especially the Portuguese, Fasiledas had normalized his government's relations with Muslims in coastal areas and abroad to secure their cooperation to persecute any alien entrance to the hinterland of the Horn of Africa (Tirmingiham, 1952). Fasiledas' position paved the way for Islam to progress to the center mainly through commercial activities and trade (Ibid). Despite the attempt of Fasiledas to stabilize the state's relations with the church deteriorated due to his father's conversion to Catholicism, the power of local nobles continued to grow at the expense of the monarchs. This development opens another phase of Ethiopian history (Bahru, 1991).

2.5.5. Islam during the Era of Princes (1769-1855)

The period from 1769 to 1855 in Ethiopian history is known as the 'Zemene Mesafint' or 'Era of Princes.' The name is taken from the political reality being characterized by relatively weaker emperors confined only to the capital city of Gondar, and stronger regional warlords (Bulcha, 2005). The territory of the Abyssinian kingdom, now known as Ethiopia, was divided between various rival Amhara, Oromo, and Tigrayan warlords. Besides the decline of imperial power, the period marked by the deterioration of the moral significance of Orthodox Christianity and the vigor of doctrinal divisions, a process which facilitated the conversion of a substantial number of highland populations to Islam (Tirmingiham, 1952). Despite the Christian kings’ attempts to integrate the Oromos into the Abyssinian imperial ethics through confession to Christianity and the Amharic language, Afan Oromo was the principal language of the court, and Muslim-Oromo leaders from Wollo were among the highest nobility of the Kingdom (Bruce, 1804). From the sixteenth century, the Muslims of Wollo and Yejju Oromos were influential in internal Abyssinian politics until the nineteenth century (Mekuria, 2005). In this regard, Tirmingiham (1952) asserted that during the 18th century a significant portion of Oromo people embraced Islam and established seven Muslim dynasties in various areas of present-day Wollo at the expense of the Solomonic dynast's role in the central politics of state. Oromo nobles often converted to Christianity nominally during the imperial crown, and Muslim regional lords competed for political supremacy over the highlands (Bruce, 1804).

Moreover, several Abyssinian kings, mainly Iyasu II (1730-55), used to rely upon Oromo's military components to wage wars against the nobility and campaign on Oromo territories (ibid). During the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, the Muslim Oromos of Wollo played a significant role in the political affairs of the Abyssinian state (Abir, 1968; Finessi, 2011; Markus, 1994). Though they were considered others and as an obstacle to the Solomonic dynasty’s imperial aspirations to create a state whose core values would be the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity, the Wollo and Yeju Oromos played an influential role in internal Abyssinian politics in various respects. In the first instance, as Wallo geographically separated the Abyssinian rulers in the northern and central parts (Gonder) from the rest, the Muslims of Wollo had leverage on the emperors who sought to negotiate with Wollo to access Shewan vassals. Secondly, the Abyssinian rulers relied on Oromo fighters for internal power competition (Mekuria, 2005). Men and women from Yejju Oromo were dominant in the Gonderian imperial court during the era of princes (ibid). However, most Muslim Wollo Oromos had to be Abysinianized, that is, convert to Orthodox Christianity and speak the Amharic language. Their Muslim and Oromo identities were not welcomed by the Abyssinians and their envisioned state (Bruce, 1805).

The concentration of political power in the hands of warlords turned the Abyssinian state into anarchy, where traditional nobilities and regional warlords struggled for political supremacy (Saheed, 2007). The civil war among various regional lords resulted in the further disintegration of the Abyssinian Empire. By the 1770s, the central institutions of the state, which were inherited from the Axumite Empire and passed through the Solomonic dynasty, had decayed (ibid). The institutions in this context refer to the united operation of the church and state elites.

Due to the political-military and socio-cultural developments, Ethiopia became a highly divided political entity in the nineteenth century. The traditional Abyssinian values, particularly politico-religious institutions, were threatened by these changes (Saheed, 2007). One of the significant changes was the spread of Islam, particularly in the areas dominantly occupied by the Oromo population. Externally, the expansionist movement of Egypt, mainly motivated by a hope to control the source of the Nile River, and European colonial powers starting from the 1820s, was among the grave challenges facing the Ethiopian state and its long-established values(ibid). Protestantism and Catholic missionaries also created linkages between Ethiopia and Europe from 1830 to 1990 (ibid).

Thus, the significant feature of Zemene Mesafint was the decline of central political leadership. As a result, the country failed at the hand of warlords. The parallel political empowerment of Muslims and Oromos makes the history of this period attractive to many observers. The Christian Palace of Gondar was dominated by the Wollo Oromo of the Warra Sheikh family (Hussein, 2006). Even though they were baptized to fit the Solomonic tradition of Christianity, the conversion was nominal, and they implicitly facilitated the spread of Islam in their provinces (Tirmingiham, 1952: 110-112). For instance, rulers Ras Ali I, Ras Ali II, and Ras Yimam were publicly Christians. However, these leaders were supportive, either openly or in secret, of the propagation of Islam and the appointment of Muslims to top government positions (ibid). In this regard, Bahru (1991) argued that most Oromo hereditary rulers of the Gonderian period and Zemene Mesafint belonged to the national church merely for political reasons. While conversion from Christianity to Islam was at its highest rate in the country's history, there was strong discontent among the Christians against the allegedly Muslim leaders in the Christian kingdom (ibid).

2.5.6. Islam in the Security Culture of Modern Ethiopian State (1855-1991)

It is against the above historical background that Islam has been portrayed as a challenge to the national security of the modern Ethiopian polity which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the previous history of the Abyssinian empire was based on othering Islam, alienating it from the state and its core values, the cruelest treatment of Islam in Ethiopian political history was recorded during the country's modern history, that is, the period from 1855 to the present. Almost all leaders who led Ethiopia between the late 19th century and the last quarter of the twentieth century considered Islam a challenge to the nation-building project and were very harsh towards the latter (Finessi, 2011). Moreover, they perceived Ethiopian Muslims as the fifth column of the state, a potential ally or external enemy to the Ethiopian state in any hostilities and confrontations with neighboring states, even for geopolitical and resource conflicts (Ahmedin, 2016). As a result, Ethiopian foreign policy was primarily influenced by religious elements more than any other considerations, which continue to be reflected in the country's present-day interactions with its neighbors and the external world (Tesfahun, 1975). In this regard, the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's foreign policy and national policy strategy document stated that the foreign policies of past governments were based on a "siege mentality," meaning that Ethiopia was encircled by enemies (FDRE, 2002:2). The phrase siege mentality refers to the sense of insecurity among Christian elites that Ethiopia is an island of Christianity surrounded by a menacing sea of Islam, referring to neighboring Muslim countries in East Africa. As a result, for the most part in history, the country's foreign and diplomatic ties have been oriented towards remote foreign powers, mainly Christian Europe, based on the principle of Christian brotherhood (Ahmedin, 2017).

In conducting their foreign relations, Ethiopian leaders presented the country as a Christian state with a common enemy of Islam and Muslims. They constantly sought to cooperate with Western powers against Muslims in the Horn of Africa region and secure military and political assistance from powerful western countries (ibid). The tradition of depicting "Ethiopia as a purely Christian State" was demonstrated in Emperor Haile Selassie’s official speech at the United States Congress, where he described the country as "an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam" (Markakis, 2003: 2). The narratives by successive emperors of the modern Ethiopian state proved the continuing significance of the ideology of the Solomonic dynasty and its project of making the Ethiopian state under the umbrella of the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity as national identity. They planned to erase Islam from Ethiopia and Ethiopians' religious and identity landscape. Towards that aim, successive leaders adopted repressive strategies that were anchored in their official request for Ethiopian Muslims to either convert to Christianity or to leave the country since the inception of the modern Ethiopian state under the so-called visionary Emperor Tewodros II in1855 (Finessi,2001). The following section discusses modern Ethiopian leaders' policies and approaches to Islam and Muslims, namely Tewodros II, Yohannes IV, Menelik II, Haile Selassie I, and the socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Tewodros II started his political task of restoring an Abyssinian empire and its cohesion that was believed to be weakened by the Muslims and Oromo political empowerment since the sixteenth century. To that end, he waged wars against different regional lords who were challenging and revolting against the central government in Gonder. Many Christians in present generations and their intelligentsia still recognize him as a national icon and the founding father of modern Ethiopia (Kaplan & Nelson, 1981). The animosity between the Ethiopian state and its Muslim population reached its climax during the reign of Emperor Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868). Tewodros tried to 'restore' the country's unity under the umbrella of two inseparable homogenizing elements: Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language (Abbink, 1998: 115). Emperor Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868) came to power as the Christian emperor, claiming to be a mythic messianic king by the name "Theodore" "who would appear to destroy Islam and reconquer Jerusalem" and under whose rule "Abyssinia would enjoy an "era of peace, joy, and piety" (Tirmingiham, 1952: 117; Levine, 1974:157 quoted in Mekuria, 2005). He bitterly resented the conditions of the Abyssinian kingdom during the era of princes, when Muslim men and women from a Yejju Oromo ruling family dominated the political scene of the Abyssinian court at Gonder (Mekuria, 2005). Tewodros blamed the Oromo and Islamic backgrounds (e.g., Ras Ali of Gondar) of many of the regional lords before his rise to power for the country's previously fragile conditions and the declining role of Christianity (Abbink, 1998).

In addition to the internal developments of Oromo's and Muslims' political empowerment, Tewodros's concern for Islam and Muslims was also augmented by external geopolitical consequences of the time, mainly Egyptian aggression to control the source of the Blue

Nile and Turks' increasing presence in the coastal areas of the Horn of Africa and their control of the Red Sea (ibid).

Although Tewodros II has been considered "a visionary man in many aspects, he was bigoted towards Muslims, particularly the Muslims of Wollo and Yejju Oromos," who were subjected to his "ethnic cleansing" measures (Bahru, 1991: 124; Mekuria, 2005: Birmingham, 1952). Upon his ascent to the Abyssinian throne, he vowed to punish and drive out the Muslim and Oromo “intruders" who were "the spearhead of a Muslim attempt to take over Ethiopia" (Crummey, 1971 quoted Mekurea, 2005). Out of this belief, Tewodros planned to unify the country under the umbrella of one religion and language: Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language, thereby identifying Ethiopian state identity through Christianity (Muhamed, 2016).

Calling himself a messiah Christian king, Tewodros designed the forceful conversion of the country's Muslim population to Christianity. He openly declared a 'war of crusade' on Muslims in his kingdom, mainly in today's northern and central Ethiopia (Erlich, 1994). He took several brutal actions, including cutting Muslims’ hands and legs and dispossessing them of their land, particularly in Wollo (Muhamed, 2016). Contrary to the country's official history that praises Emperor Tewodros as a pioneer in ending the system of slavery, he authorized his soldiers to enslave Muslim children in Wollo, who were considered ideological enemies of Christian Ethiopia (Mekurea, 2005). He prohibited Muslims from holding governmental offices, owning land for cultivation, and taking part in the military, considering them as a fifth column in his confrontation with the Egyptians and Turks.

Moreover, Tewodros officially prohibited Islamic propagation and observance and declared the mass conversion of Wollo Muslims (Oromos) to Orthodox Christianity (Bahru, 1991). Muslims fiercely confronted his plans and ambitions. As a result, his plan failed to make a religiously homogeneous state (Muhamed, 2016). Markakis (1974: 89) deciphered the emperor's attempt to forcefully impose Christianity on Wollo Muslims as "Tewodros issued a decree in 1864 outlawing Islam and declaring that all Muslims who resisted conversion would be treated as rebels." These measures were aimed to create a state with a national identity anchored in Christianity and the Amharic language (ibid).

Although Tewodros believed that religious and linguistic homogeneity could bring unity, peace, and stability to the state, most of the wars he fought, including those against Bezabih of Shewa, Goshu of Gojam, Ras Ali of Begemidir, were with his fellow Christian and Amharic speaking regional lords (Bahru, 2002). Tewodros' reign and his wars against Muslims reinforced his conviction that linguistic and religious homogeneity could be brought by force. Ultimately though, neither would bring unity and stability to the country (Muhamed, 2016). Domestically Christianity served as an ideological framework to create a nation or state with modern centralized bureaucracy and fixed societal identity. Likewise, Emperor Tewodros exploited religion to frame and conduct foreign and diplomatic relations with foreign powers, mainly to seek military technology from European countries. Emperor Tewodros initiated diplomatic relations with Queen Victoria of England by emphasizing Ethiopia's fellow Christianity to secure modern technology (Saheed, 2007). Although Ethiopian Christianity was Orthodox in orientation, the emperor requested Europeans to send Protestant proselytizers (ibid). The emperor's religionization of foreign relations was indicated in his letter written to the Queen Victoria of Great Britain as follows;

> *"My fathers, the emperors, having forgotten the Creator, he handed their Kingdom over to the Gallas and Turks. But God created me, lifted me out of the dust, and restored the Empire to my rule. He endowed me with power and enabled me to stand in the place of my fathers. By this, I drove away from the Gallas. But for the Turks, I have told them to leave the land of my ancestors. They refuse, I am now going to wrestle with them*" (Appleyard & Pankhurst, 1987:8).

However, his attempts to convince Queen Victoria for aid as fellow Christians and therefore, a natural ally against the common enemy of Muslim Turks, was not based on a proper reading of the realities of European politics at the time, as England was cooperating with the Turks against Christian Russia (Appleyard & Pankhurst, 1987). When England did not meet his request favorably and did not send the necessary expertise, Tewodros held the British consul, missionaries, and other Europeans in the country hostage. The British government sent armed forces under Robert Napier to free its imprisoned nationals in 1867. The emperor fled the British troops and ultimately took his life to avoid being captured. However, there was in fact another route of escape from the British troops through Wollo had he not alienated the Muslims of Wollo due to his cruel treatment and brutal measures against them (Tirmingiham, 1957).

However, Tewodros was neither able to secure his desired diplomatic support from his fellow Christians, nor bring religious uniformity through the forceful conversion of Muslims of Wollo. Regardless of the emperor's desire for religious sympathy, it was Kassa Mircha of Tigray (Future Emperor Yohannes) who was a 'committed' Orthodox Christian who collaborated with the British forces on their way towards Maqdala (Emperor Tewodros's Capital) to wrangle with Tewodros in 1968 (Muhamed, 2016). Despite such naked realities that religious uniformity was not a guarantee to build national loyalty or bring peace among different provincial lords, Tewodros thought of Islam as a fundamental threat to the country's unity and Muslims as a fifth column to the Ethiopian state (Mekuria, 2005). For him, the Christian insurgents of his time were 'lesser evils' than the Muslims of Wollo (Oromo), whom he regarded as "proxies for foreign Islamic powers intending to destroy a Christian nation" (ibid, 2005: 13).

Though his policy of assimilation drastically failed as religious and linguistic homogeneity was never achieved, it had a profound legacy on the nature of the modern Ethiopian state in various respects. First and foremost, his ambition to establish a centralized and bureaucratic state, with the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity as the exclusive core values of the state, had served as a model for other emperors to follow, which will be highlighted in the following sections. Second, a sizable portion of present Ethiopian society, especially the ruling and intellectual Orthodox elite, considers Emperor Tewodros as a visionary king and national hero, praising him through academia, art, and national discourse. This has generated counter-reactions and narratives among other religious and linguistic communities memorializing the atrocities and acts of violence perpetrated by emperor against their forefathers (Bulcha, 2005, Markakis, 1974). Thirdly, the notion of the Ethiopian state framed by Emperor Tewodros and subsequent assimilation projects of Christianization and Amharization sparked the struggle of Muslims and other ethnic and religious communities for their identity, dignity, rights, and freedoms. Overall, Tewodros's vision of uniting Ethiopia motivated him to destroy autonomous feudal lords' power, forcefully convert or demolish the Wollo and Yejju Oromo, and wipe out all other Muslims. To him, Abyssinian and Christian were synonyms. Thus, all other identity groups, including Oromos, Muslims, Jews, Wayito, and Agew, ought to be converted by force to ensure the unity and strength of the state, an ultimately unsuccessful mission (Tadesse, 1974).

If any of the legacies of Emperor Tewodros II continued with his successor, Emperor Yohannes IV (r. 1872-1889), it was his hostile attitude towards Muslims. Yohannes appeared more fanatic and intolerant of Islam (Tirmingiham, 1952). Like his predecessor, Yohannes IV believed in religious uniformity whereby all Ethiopians had to subscribe to Orthodox Christianity as a shared faith and national symbol (Markus, 1994). As a result, he adopted a policy of involuntary mass conversion to Christianity and total criminalization of the Islamic faith in Ethiopia, "being a Muslim was a crime to be punished by law" (Hussein, 2002:102). Mekuria Bulcha (2005:14) described Yohannes as "a Christian fundamentalist who was fanatically intolerant of Islam and who blessed the killing and exterminations of Muslims without any remorse.” Like his predecessor Tewodros II, he used brutality against the Muslims of Raya, Yeju, and Wollo, whom he considered as allies of Ethiopia's external enemies, mainly Egypt (Mekuria, 2005). Yohannes's policy otherized and foreignized the Muslims of his realm and religionized the country's foreign and diplomatic ties and geopolitical wars of his time.

Regional and global competitions and disputes that rose in 1869 over control of the Red Sea coast following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased the interests of foreign powers in Ethiopia (Saheed, 2007). Consequently, the Ottomans, the British, the Italians, and the Egyptians all claimed parts of the Abyssinian empire (ibid). Egyptian rulers had longstanding plans to control Ethiopia, which is the source of the Nile River. For that purpose, Egypt invaded Ethiopia several times from different directions. On 16 November 1875, Egypt conquered the Ethiopian coastal possessions in today's Eritrea (Bahru, 1991).

Yohannes mobilized hundreds of thousands of soldiers who defeated the Egyptians at the battle of Gundert (ibid). After a year from the defeat at Gundert, Egyptians invaded Ethiopia from the north with sophisticated weapons and a large number of soldiers. The two clashed at the decisive battle of Gura on March 7-9, 1876 (Erlich, 2013). Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes was once again victorious (ibid). However, at this juncture, despite Ethiopian Muslims fighting alongside Yohanes's army to defend their motherland, the emperor used the battle between Egypt and Ethiopia to depict a religious war between Christian Ethiopia and Muslim Egypt. When he mobilized combatant forces and marched in the fight with Egyptians, Yohannes IV "propagated the idea that the conflict between the two was a faith-inspired war between Christians and Muslims" (Markus, 1994: 74& 75). However, the historical allegation of Muslims as a fifth column was baseless. For example, when Egyptians were attacking Ethiopia from three directions in 1875, from the west through Mettema, east through Harer, and the northeast (Afar), they were successful in advancing from the east and west into the interior parts of the country (Bahru,1991). However, the one that had attempted to penetrate the country's hinterland from the northeast was confronted and disastrously defeated in 1975 by the Afar people of Awsa, who were entirely Muslims (Markus, 1994). Therefore, it can be argued that Yohanes IV's notion of Muslims as the partner of external enemies was used to justify his Christian fundamentalist stance and assimilate and exterminate Ethiopian Muslims (Mekuria, 2005).

In the 1878's Boru Meda Religious Council, the name derived after the conference was held in Wollo, Yohannes declared Orthodox Christianity as the official religion of Ethiopia (Muhamed, 2016). Meanwhile, he warily offered three options to all Muslims in his Kingdom: to convert to Christianity, leave his empire, or face grave persecution (Erlich, 1994). Muslims chose between these three options differently. based on their age, sex, level of individual strength and capacity, and family conditions. Those who were weak, poor, and had little knowledge of other areas to migrate out of Wollo preferred to convert to Christianity, at least nominally. Around half a million Oromo Muslims in Wollo and fifty thousand Muslim merchants in other areas were forced to convert to Christianity due to Yohannes's coercive assimilationist religious policy (Erlich (1994). Those physically capable preferred to emigrate to different regions, especially Sudan, Harar, and Jimma

(Ahmedin, 2016). Plenty of Muslims, mainly religious leaders and devoted individuals, opted to confront Yohannes's soldiers rather than abandon their religious identities and leave their country, which was eventually persecuted by the emperor's well-armed military (ibid). Despite their efforts to stamp out Islam from Ethiopia, both Yohanis and Tewodros died without achieving their goal, as Islam has survived as the religion of a significant portion of the Ethiopian population (Mekuria, 2005).

The ideology of Ethiopia as a Christian state and Muslims as strangers continued during the rule of emperor Menilik (1889-1913). Before he became the Emperor of Ethiopia in 1889, Menilik violently conquered extensive areas in the south, southwest, and southeast of his kingdom and integrated them into the present-day Ethiopian state. Unlike Tewodros and Yohanes, Menilik showed some degrees of political and religious tolerance to the people of newly conquered areas. The latter didn't threaten his throne and were willing to accept his emperorship. While Christianity had continued to serve as a core value of the state and ideological foundation of the emperor's worldview, the repression of Muslims during his reign were more systematic and hidden than His precursors (Abbink, 1998; Muhamed, 2016). Moreover, unlike his predecessors' official allegations of religious unity as a foundational base of Ethiopian polity, the primary concern of Menilik II was the territorial expansion of the state, which he believed eased the project of religious unity (Abbink, 1998). Menilik relaxed the ideology of religious unity as a foundation of nation-building. Instead, his focus was to acquire a wider territorial base and resources. For that purpose, he adopted flexible approaches toward religious communities, at least in principle. He reiterated "people to live in the faith of their fathers" (Ibid: 259; Mekuria, 2005). However, the flexibility of Menilik's religious policies towards Muslims was conditional as far as the Muslim provinces in the south, southeast, and southwest submitted to his empire peacefully (Muhamed, 2015). Those Muslims who submitted to Menilik's imperial leadership were entitled to a certain degree of autonomy and lesser repression than those who fought against Menilik's imperial aggression. For instance,

> "*The Moslem Oromo sultanate of Jimma, Sultan Aba Jiffar was able to reach an agreement with Menelik under which he not only remained on his*

> *throne but was able to prevent the imposition of such symbols of conquest as the erection of Christian churches in his kingdom*" (Clapham (2013: 20).

On the other hand, Menilik conducted brutal military attacks to subjugate Muslim provinces that hesitated to surrender to his imperial rule. For instance, the state of Harar, which was the most significant symbol and center of Islamic teaching in the Horn of Africa, was devastated by Menelik’s forces (ibid). To justify his imperial conquest of Muslim kingdoms and territories, Menilik constructed a myth that the Muslim and Pagan regions in the east, south, and west were previously under the realm of the Abyssinian Empire that had been lost due to Oromo invasions (Tirmingiham, 1952). Based on that narrative, Menilik’s soldiers converted a lot of mosques in the old Muslim city of Harar and its surroundings into Orthodox Churches (Clapham, 2013). While the narrative of Islam's expansion during Imam Ahmed’s 16th-century wars against the Christian kingdom has many supporters even today, Tesfahun (1975:18) contends that the Muslim sultanates and Pagan states in the south, southeast, and southwest of today's Ethiopia existed as a nation of themselves long before the "Amhara- Tigre" began to conquer them.

An essential indicator of Menilik's ideological orientation of "Christian Ethiopia" was manifested in the conflict over the coronation of his grandson, Lij Iyasu (1913 -1916), to rule Ethiopia after the death of Emperor Menilik (Markus,1994). Due to the absence of male children to take over the throne, Emperor Menelik II prearranged for his 13 years old grandson Lij Iyasu to be his inheritor (Markakis, 1974). Although he was nominated as the successor of the imperial throne, Iyasu was not interested in "the consecration of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as it was usual before him and never held a coronation ceremony" (Craig, 2010: 28). A young emperor Lij Eyasu was not ready to define and articulate his time's public and political policies, but was known for the most open-minded positions toward religious and ethnic groups ever in the country's history (Muhamed, 2016). Eyasu attempted to accommodate the Muslim population (Abbink, 1998: 116). He established close ties with Muslims in the peripheral parts of the country, Somali, Afar, and Harer, that helped him to build trust and friendship, engaged in marital relations with Muslim women, and permitted the building of mosques parallel to the construction of churches in a different part of the country (Muhamed, 2016). During Eyasu's short period of leadership, Ethiopian Muslims were approached by the state and its leadership in the most positive manner in the country's modern history (ibid). However, his rapprochement of Muslims made Lij Eyasu indifferent to Shewan's nobility loyal to his grandfather, Emperor Menelik. The nobilities accused Iyasu of converting to Islam, plotting to establish external relations with Muslim countries, mainly Turkey, and Islamizing the country. Moreover, the Shewan nobility were dissatisfied with Iyassu's coronation as emperor of Ethiopia because Iyasu came from a family of Islamic and Oromo background (Abbink, 1998). As Lij Eyasu's father was a Muslim aristocrat of Wollo who converted to Christianity during the reign of Yohanes, the Shewan nobility campaigned against him for his nonconformity of genealogical connections to the Solomonic dynasty through his father's racial and religious backgrounds (Abbink,1998; ibid: Markus,1994).

The cabinet that Menilik had set up mainly from the Shoan nobility in the capital conducted a coup and overthrew him from power when he was on vacation to Harar in 1916. The nobility’s decision reflected Emperor Menilik's fundamental ideological orientation towards the old Solomonic notion of Christianity and Amharic ethnicity as the essential and sole values to the structure of the modern Ethiopian state (Bahru, 1991). In the eyes of the nobility, Iyasu, who was favorable toward Muslims, was considered a challenge to the long-established hegemony of Orthodox Christianity due to his attempts to integrate and accommodate Islam and Muslim communities into Ethiopian polity (Jep, 2014). Moreover, Eyasu's approach to Ottoman Empire, which allied with Germany during WWI, was viewed as a threat by Britain and France to their colonial ambition in Northeast Africa. The Shewan Nobilities (Christian elite) exploited this fear of colonial powers and obtained the aid of Britain and France to remove Lij Eyasu from power (ibid). All in all, the Shawan aristocrats accused Iyasu of establishing an Islamic government to rule the country based on Sharia rule, converting to Islam and marrying Muslim women, the construction of mosques and his foreign contacts with the Islamic-oriented Ottoman Empire, as having positive views towards Muslims resulted in one's exclusion from political positions at the time (Abbink, 1998, Bahru, 1991; Tirmingiham, 1952).

In reality, however, Iyasu was also positive towards the Christian population and made positive contributions to the religious community, notably "he founded Church of Qachane

Medhane Alem, in the northern edge of Adiss Ababa and he donated to monasteries like the famous Dabra Libanos in the northern Shawa which the nobilities conveniently ignored" (Bahru, 1991: 124). Regarding the religious policy of Iyasu, Bahru (1991:124) argued that the young emperor's attempt to integrate Muslim communities could alternatively be interpreted as an effort to rectify the past exclusion and create a sense of belongingness among Muslims, to in turn contribute to the unity and harmony of the state. Conversely, Lij Iyasu was deposed from power in 1916 because of his Muslim ancestral lineages, positive relations with Muslims, and his inclination to Islam (Tesfahun, 1975).

One of the coup's plotters against Lij Eyasu, Teferi Mekonen, was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1930 (Markakis, 1974). He reined the country for more than a half-century. He continued the 'uniting Ethiopia' project under the umbrella of 'one religion, one language, one culture, Orthodox Christianity, and Amhara culture and language (Muhamed, 2016). The perspective of religious and linguistic diversity continued to be seen as the antitheses of the nation-building project during Emperor Haile Sellase. As a result, he systematically imposed the ruling class's religious, linguistic, and cultural values of Orthodox Christianity and Amharic language over non-Amharic speaking and non-Christian populations across the country (ibid). His rule presented double features, positive initial moves, and gradual oppression if one considers the state's position towards Muslims.

Initially, there was a sort of positive progress towards Muslims mainly manifested through the emperor allowing religious liberty. The profession of Islam gained official recognition in Ethiopia through the country's first constitution written in the 1930s (Tirmingiham, 1952). Unlike deep-rooted political traditions, the first constitution didn't include any religion as the official and state religion. Instead, it outlined equal civil rights for all Ethiopians regardless of religious inclinations (ibid). Moreover, some Muslims were allowed to possess a piece of land and engage in business activities against the century-old policy of denying Muslims agricultural land and property ownership. Despite the increasing role of Muslims in commercial activities, social prejudice continued to make the position of Muslims inferior to that of Christians as nationality and religion were intractably bound together (Marcus, 1994). Ethiopian nationalism has always referred to the Solomonic tradition of a dynastic political system and its entanglement with Orthodox Christianity (Tesfahun, 1975).

Emperor Haile Selassie's open oppression of Muslims began after the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935. The Italian colonial leaders approached the different religious communities during their attempt to colonize Ethiopia, expressing the Ethiopian state's fundamental nature, basic ideology, and stand to its Muslim population. The first task of the Italian colonial project in Ethiopia was to examine the ideological foundation of the state and identify the groups in favor of that ideology and the dissenting voices to that utopian setup. Italians found that Muslims were highly marginalized in Ethiopian society and decided to use that for their colonial ambitions. As a result, the Italians adopted the strategy of favoring Muslims at the expense of Christians to create an image that they would save Muslims against the bigoted state when they started their colonial operation in Ethiopia (Abbink, 1998). To secure welcome from the Muslim population, the Italians built many mosques in various parts of the country, including the Grand Anwar Mosque in the capital, and established an Islamic school system that allowed the learning of the Arabic language (Tirmingiham, 1952). Although the Italians’ activities vis-a-vis Muslim communities were against Ethiopia's discriminatory policies towards Muslims, they aimed to divide Ethiopian society and weaken the anti-colonial struggle among Ethiopians.

In this regard, Tirmingiham (1952) argued that the Italians' primary motive to privilege Muslims was not to encourage Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia, but to break the Ethiopian nationalist spirit that was symbolically attached to and represented by Orthodox Christianity. However, the Italians were not successful in buying legitimacy and loyalty from the Muslim communities though there were a few Muslims who considered them as their liberators from long-suffered oppression (Erlich, 2006). The majority of Ethiopian Muslims and their Christian compatriots resisted the invaders wiping out the colonial power from their homeland (Muhamed, 2016). Despite Muslims' fierce resistance to Italian colonial rule like any other Ethiopians, the Italian approach to Muslims created the ground for Emperor Haile Selassie to retaliate against Muslims after restoring his imperial throne (Muhamed, 2016). Haile Selassie treated Muslims in the aftermath of the Italian attempt to occupy Ethiopia was as if they had allied with the intruding force (ibid). Emperor Haile

Selassie's restored imperial regime after the brief Italian occupation marked a return to the oppression of Muslim populations. During the post-Italian occupation, the emperor took several discriminatory and marginalization practices against Muslims, regarded as an enemy (Italian) (Finessi, 2011). In that manner, he reaffirmed the traditional perceptions that "Muslims are threats" or the fifth column of the Ethiopian polity, which the imperial crown believed was an exclusively Christian nation (Muhamed, 2016:117). Accordingly, the emperor formalized the country's national politics to the 4th century's "Byzantine-Christian-inspired imperial ideology" in which Church and state were intrinsically connected (Abbink, 1998). Finally, the emperor declared Orthodox Christianity to be the country's official religion and Amharic language to be the national language under the 1955 constitution (articles 125 and 126) at the expense of other religious and linguistic identities in the country. The constitutional act of Haile Selassie's regime deprived Muslims of citizenship status in the Ethiopian state. However, some tend to defend the emperor's regime as he was accommodative to other identity groups citing his hypocritical axiom "the country belongs to all" (Finessi, 2011:19). Systematic exclusion of Muslims, mainly in bureaucratic positions and education sectors, was the hallmark of the last imperial regime of Ethiopia (Finessi, 2011:19). Selassie’s regime excluded Muslims from the country's public and political lives. Economically, they were not entitled to the land rights and bureaucratic and government jobs that Christians enjoyed (Abbink, 1998).

Furthermore, Muslims were discriminated against in services, including formal education. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was authorized to manage the country's education sector. The church’s religious teachings were included as part of formal education until 1974 (Gillespie, 2003). On the other hand, the state encouraged and facilitated the social, economic, and political domination of the Orthodox Church over other religious communities throughout the country. Emperor Haile Selassie encouraged the construction of Orthodox churches throughout the country. The schools included the Church's spiritual teaching and dogma and established state-run radio for religious teachings (Markakis, 1974: 405).

Overall, othering Islam and Muslims was the hallmark of Emperor Haile Selase's nation-building strategy through cultural subjugation. In his world view, the Ethiopian religion was Orthodox Christianity and the Ethiopian culture was Amhara culture. The Ethiopian language was Amharic against the natural fact that most Ethiopians followed different religions and spoke languages other than Amharic. Though it drastically failed to meet its goals, the emperor's notion of the Ethiopian state has broader implications for divergent understandings of the Ethiopian state and orientations towards it and its history among current generation Ethiopians. The emperor and his closed circle groupings, whose identities were privileged and took the lion's share of the nation’s political economy and dominant culture preferred to be named Ethiopian rather than through their ethnic identities, i.e., Amhara or Oromo, Christian as the hardware already compatibly built with their software (e.g., Orthodox Christianity, Amhara culture, Amharic language) (Muhamed, 2016). Likewise, the current generation of Orthodox Christians and ethnic Amhara prefers to consider themselves Ethiopian rather than be defined through their ethnic and religious identities. At the same time, other ethno-religious communities, including Muslims, are offended by the notion of Ethiopian identity that excludes their identities. Thus, the current controversy and dilemma over defining the national identity is rooted in the struggle between the Orthodox Christians and ethnic Amhara, who tend to defend the old narratives on the identity of the Ethiopian state, and Muslims and other ethnoreligious communities who strive to re-define the identity of Ethiopian state on more inclusive bases. In a country where Orthodox Christianity was declared as a single official state religion and Amharic was declared the only official language of the country, it is a natural resort for other religious and ethnolinguistic communities to emphasize, preserve, and defend their own identities against the Ethiopian as their national identity which does not include or reflect the nature of Ethiopian society (Muhamed, 2016).

The Ethiopian nationhood project was a narrow theological conception in which Ethiopianess and Orthodox Christianity were used interchangeably against the multi-religious composition of Ethiopians (Craig, 2010; Markakis, 1974). Such identification of the Ethiopian state created a sort of marginalization, deprivation, and otherness rather than belongingness and loyalty to the state or a total identity crisis in what Muhamed (2016: 107) referred to;

> "*Ethiopian nationhood along with exclusive one particular religion inevitably forces the other group to resort to their being Islam or any other religion of their own as a form of resistance to the assimilationist policy of the state*."

Moreover, like successive imperial regimes before him, Haile Selassie reiterated foreignization discourses vis-a-vis Islam and Muslims as a part of his nation-building project. The imperial rulers commonly shared the rhetoric that they maintain 'blood ties' with the king of Israel, Solomon. They claimed that it was their divine mandate' to rule Ethiopia and its people forever (Bahru, 2002). They fabricated a narrative that Ethiopia has had an eternal existence for more than three thousand years through the mythical discourse of the so-called Menelik I, who was believed to be the son of Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia and King Solomon of Jerusalem and to rule Ethiopia around 950 BC (Erlich, 1994). In reality, however, the current territorial shape of Ethiopia and its religious and ethnic compositions appeared at the close of the 19th and the dawn of the 20th century due to the violent expansionist policies of successive emperors.

2.5.7. Socialist Ethiopia and Islam: Towards Secularism

The imperial leadership was based on the unholy marriage of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and state, and the understanding of the emperor as divinely sovereign, or the 'Elect of God, Emperor of Ethiopia.' However, Emperor Haile Selassie was ousted from power by force following popular revolts in 1974 (Muhamed, 2016). The popular uprising opened a new chapter in the history of the Ethiopian state as the state and Church officially divorced, and Ethiopia became a secular state for the first time in its history (Dereje, 2011). The new military regime, popularly called *Derg*, replaced the Christian monarchy following the revolution. The military government, often called Derg, brought a radical change to the century-old establishment and ended the status of Orthodox Christianity as the official religion of state. While the ideological orientation of the military regime was based on a socialism opposed to all religions, it seems that the ideological change was in favor of Islam in the sense that it broke the status of an official state religion and gave all religions equal status. Thus, the revolution ushered in the total termination of the

Abyssinian theocratic empire, and "Christianity's role as the state religion and the source of normative political imagery of the nation and has not had a political role since then″ (Abbink, 2004: 348). The outstanding achievement of the socialist regime then was the restructuring of the state institutions along the secular ideological lines of socialism: the separation of state and religion and the equally legitimate status of all religions in the country that has been applauded by present generation of Muslims and other religious communities despite the regime's brutal and oppressive acts (Dereje, 2011; Gillespie, 2003; Muhamed, 2016). Despite its socialist view of ″religion as the opium of the society″ and its stance of discouraging religion in all its forms, the *Derg* gave Islam a new public status and granted partial rights to Muslims (Abbink, 1998). Moreover, the socio-political reforms of the socialist regime redressed the marginalization of Muslims within Ethiopian society to a certain extent (Hussein, 2006, cited in Dereje, 2011). With the establishment of religious liberty and equality based on legal grounds in the constitution, Muslims tried to improve their situation by raising more issues to the new government (Finessi, 2011).

The socialist government, on its part, partially addressed the issues of the Muslim community (Muhamed, 2016). Among the others, the government made the three Muslim holy days national holidays, adopted land reform, and officially adopted the term "Ethiopian Muslims" instead of the imperial notion of "Muslims living in Ethiopia" (Finessi, 2011:20; Gillespie, 2003). The Derg government rhetorically affirmed religious liberty to prevent popular dissidence in a highly religious Ethiopian society. However, the social bases of religious activities and practices were prohibited as per the regime's ideological doctrine of socialism (Abbink, 1998). In terms of change from the imperial past, the socialist government of Ethiopia dropped the ideological core and homogenizing element of the Ethiopian Empire that relied on Orthodox Christianity as a means of a nation-building project. However, the regime continued to use the Amharic language as an instrument to realize its goal of a 'united socialist Ethiopia' (Muhamed, 2016: 124). Despite recognizing the equality of all languages of different nations across the country, the officials of the socialist military regime promoted the use of the Amharic language above all others (ibid).

Nonetheless, the official recognition of religious identities, at least in principle, opened up ways for Muslims to raise more assertive questions to the socialist government. For instance, organized demonstrations were held by Muslims demanding "the official declaration of the three Islamic festivals as public holidays, financial support for the construction of mosques and permission to establish a national Islamic council" (Hussein, 2006: 10). The military government addressed Muslim's demands partially, like the inclusion of Islamic holidays in the national holidays, institutionalization of the Islamic Supreme Council, and free access to lands for the construction of mosques.

As always in history, there were indications that the Derg tended to view Islam and Ethiopian Muslims as a national security threat, especially concerning the conflict with neighboring Somalia in 1976 (Dereje, 2011). Finally, Derg was toppled by a coalition of rebel forces called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991. The political transformation opened a new chapter in the relationship of the Ethiopian state and its Muslim populations, covered and detailed in chapter four. Conclusively, there is continuity in the historical patterns of state and Muslim relations in which successive regimes considered Islam as Ethiopian national security in the long journey of Ethiopian state formation (Muhamed, 2016).

Like any other concept, security involves historical connotations that serve as a background to contemporary developments. As a result, securitization study evokes a historical trajectory of threat framing, state's defensive allocation, and security culture to discover historical factors in present security discourses. This chapter finds that threat framing along Islam and Muslim identities is a deeply-rooted phenomenon in the history of the Ethiopian state and its formation. Despite the country's intrinsic connection to the Muslim world and significant Muslim population, the core value of the ruling class was based on the othering of Muslims and securitization of Islamic identities. Generally, Ethiopian political and security culture is based on a siege mentality. Siege mentality refers to the perception of Ethiopian ruling elites that 'Ethiopia is an island of Christianity or surrounded by Muslim enemies. Muslims and other ethnoreligious minorities have developed a sense of otherness and estrangement from the state due to the state's political relationship with Christianity and the Amharic language, which goes against the very nature of plural and multicultural society of Ethiopia. This goes with what postmodernists enlisted as the problem of modern sovereign states which are founded based on a 'limited moral community that promotes marginalization, injustice, hostility, violent conflict, and insecurities by striking rigid frontiers between 'we' and 'them' (Linklater 1990: 28).

Moreover, the historical othering of Islam and Muslims and the security culture of the siege mentality of the Ethiopian state surrounded by Muslim neighbors fit what postmodernists assert that nation-building is accompanied by framing hostile others. A discourse of danger framing is crucial in state-making projects, creating identities, and safeguarding boundaries (Steans, Pettiford, Diez, & El-Anis, 2013). Thus, historically, Ethiopia's political and territorial cohesion had relied on the creation of an image of hostile Muslims. Othering and foreignizing Islam and Muslims served to justify aggressive territorial expansion and political violence during the imperial nation-building project of the Ethiopian state and efforts to forge a national identity. Thus, the history of Ethiopian state formation demonstrates that discourse of the Islamic threat by successive imperial regimes served as a tool to externalize Muslims and suppress them by creating outside enemies. In this regard, Saheed (2007: 87) argued that "the establishment of what became the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was critical in molding Ethiopian culture and identity." The security discourse that views Islam as a threat to the Ethiopian state of Islam was used to create a Christian political entity with legitimate rights of violence over its Muslim subjects. However, Islam has been an essential component and heritage of Ethiopian society. The next chapter discusses the impacts of such historical legacies on the current interactions between the Ethiopian state and the Muslim community.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A scholarly approach to socially sensitive issues like the securitization of religion must rely on appropriate research methods, data collection techniques, and proper theoretical tools to interpret and analyze the data and substantiate it with theoretical claims. This section provides insights on the research methods, specific data collection techniques and data sources, and theoretical approaches used in this dissertation with justifications for each method.

The study employs qualitative research methods to achieve the research objectives and address the research questions. The underlying reason to use the qualitative approach is that dealing with the securitization of religion necessitates addressing research questions by identifying human and societal experiences and inter-subjective understandings of different actors in the securitization process. The qualitative research approach enables to understand human conditions in varied contexts and perceived conditions (Bengtsson, 2016)

The Copenhagen School views security as an inter-subjective condition, meaning that security threats do not result from an objective assessment of the facts, but are socially constructed by securitizing actors (Waever, 1995). For an issue, as per securitization theory, to be a matter of security, it must score a significant level of agreement from the audiences of the securitization process. Qualitative methodology is best suited for research that addresses questions involving how people understand certain developments, narratives, practices, and identity matters (Hancock, Windridge, and Ockleford, 2007). Issues of social origin, like the securitization of religion, consider individuals and groups' psychological and social behaviors such as ideas, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, points of view, feelings, and motivations that best deserve qualitative approaches. While this study adopts the Copenhagen School's conceptualization of security as a socially constructed matter, it utilizes primarily qualitative research methods; content analysis, discourse analysis, document analysis, and theoretical and policy frameworks to address the research questions.

3.1. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method to study spoken or written language to understand how language creates meanings and realities in the social world (Luo, 2019). Discourse analysis examines speech acts, oral, written, and non-verbal aspects of communications to understand the functions of language in creating meanings in different social circumstances (ibid). According to securitization theory, security is an act of utterance that it is only by 'labeling something a security issue that it becomes one' (Wæver 2004: 13). Security can be fabricated, enabled, produced, reproduced, and maintained through language, thereby socially constructed discourse (Yavor, 2015). Security is artificially created by the social process called securitization. Securitization refers to producing threats, mainly through speech acts that aim to change the mode of thinking in a way that all political and societal concerns are primarily issues of security (Pautanen, 2015; Schmitt, 2005).

As securitization is an intersubjective construction of security meanings mainly through the acts of labeling and portraying of issues through the actions of speech, discourse analysis enables us to examine the role and influence of various forms of communications used to transport the matter from the realm of ordinary politics to a security issue through discourse that involves threat framing (Hanssen, 2016). The transfer of modes of thinking is conducted by the changes from everyday political discourse to security discourses as "Discourse infuses events with meaning, establishes widespread social understandings and constitutes social reality" (Yavor, 2015; 17). Thus, discourse analysis enables us to analyze securitization and how security discourse is created and disseminated to be a social reality.

Beyond semantic and communication aspects, critical discourse analysis is also essential to interpret the social part of language in particular contexts, including social status, power, identity, and legitimacy, as these elements are usually linked with multiple components of securitization such as security, religion, politics, and their interactions (ibid). In this regard, Halfordson (2012) pointed out that applying discourse analysis in a securitization study helps to have a clear picture of things and their representations and patterns of interactions generated by the process.

Discourse analysis is also suitable for analyzing materials such as spoken word, books, periodicals, formal written records, newspapers, official government documents, forums, websites, social media posts and comments, interviews, pictures, symbols, artifacts, transcripts of social interactions, including conversations, focus group discussions, and individual interviews, T.V. programs, magazines, novels (Bondarouk & Ruel, 2004). By analyzing such discourses, the researcher can easily understand how social groups communicate and perceive each other, discover the relationship between reality and lessons, navigate the past and the present, and understand the hidden meaning of things (ibid). I use discourse analysis in this study to focus on speech acts and communications, issues of power, historical domination, social inequalities, and the relevance of different social categories and their implications for the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

3.2. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a qualitative research method that provides an objective and systematic means to make compelling inferences from written, visual, or verbal data to understand certain developments (Downe-Wambolt, 1992). While discourse analysis is employed in securitizing speech acts and creating security discourse, qualitative content analysis is utilized to document securitizing moves (Hanssen, 2016). This study uses qualitative content analysis to analyze various types of data, including interview transcripts and textual and audiovisual materials, to explore the behaviors and attitudes of different actors in the securitization process and thereby address the research questions. Likewise, both discourse and content analysis aim to shed light on how actors utilize or maneuver symbols and advance communication with meaning (Moyser and Wagstaffe, 1987). Although both content and discourse analysis aim to draw sound conclusions from a set of texts, they retain a significant difference in that content analysis focuses on texts as independent entities. In contrast, discourse analysis concentrates on the text's social and contextual aspects that emerge as an intersubjective interplay between different actors or groups (ibid). Moreover, content analysis is important to select relevant themes and points in a given text to support discourse analysis to examine the reactions of a given audience to that particular text (ibid). Therefore, this study employs the method of content analysis to analyze the contents of several sources, including policy documents, mass media, institutional reports, speech acts, and interviews from the authorities, to identify how Islam and Muslims have been represented in the process of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The study utilizes the terms and expressions in public speeches and policy documents regarding Islam and Muslim activities in Ethiopia in particular contexts and developments and what they deem to refer.

3.3 Policy Frameworks and Institutional Practices as Indices of Securitization

In addition to the aforementioned qualitative methods, the study also relies on institutional or policy frameworks and security practices that serve as the indices of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Institutional or policy frameworks and practical security issues serve as important indicators to measure and understand the securitization process and the extent to which the subject is securitized (Bourbeau, 2011). Accordingly, I utilize it to examine the institutional indicators, such as legal regimes and provisions that link Islam and security in one or other ways. Using these indicators, the study address questions like how the Islam security nexus is articulated in policy documents. Are Muslims and their activities or religious practice like congregational prayers and dressing styles mentioned as threats to cherished values of the state like secularism, education, and multiculturalism?

Moreover, I investigate security practices like bombings around mosques and the encirclement of Muslims during Friday prayer time as if there are potential security threats from Muslims. In this regard, I examine the imprisonment of Muslim religious leaders and how security forces approach mosque gatherings. Thus, I scrutinize institutional or policy indicators, including official policy documents and reports that, in one or other ways, dictate Islam and Muslims in security terms and security practices, such as restrictive policies and imprisonment of Muslims, to explore their implications to the theory. Thus, policy frameworks such as anti-terrorism laws, school codes, foreign policy, and national and security documents systematically frame Islam and Muslims in security terms. Moreover, the actions and attitudes of the security sector, including the police and security officers and courts, were analyzed as indices of securitization to serve the purpose of this study.

While securitization theory primarily emphasizes speech acts and discourses to study the securitization process, scholars such as Bigo (2000) and Balzacq (2008) have suggested the possibility of studying securitization in terms of securitization practices. In this regard, Bigo (2000, 129) argues that it is feasible to "securitize certain problems without speech or discourse, and the military and the police have known that for a long time. The practical work, discipline, and expertise are as important as all forms of discourse." He further asserts that bureaucratic structures and their activities, such as risk assessment, population profiling, and articulation of security culture and national identity, play crucial roles in securitization.

According to Balzacq (2008, 79), securitization practices refer to an identifiable social and official rhetoric that signifies a specific image of threats that necessitate the reconfiguration of public actions in a way that allows addressing a security matter. Thus, the focus of direction in this regard is on securitizing practices that create the notion that Muslim communities in Ethiopia and their approach from religious observance to civil and political engagements are threats to the Ethiopian state and its cherished values. Securitization practices are mainly utilized during protracted and ongoing ethnic and religious strife in the country to examine the roles of social institutions like church and state institutions such as the military and other security forces in the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Institutional practices enable securitization studies to identify already established securitized views and perceptions without recurrent securitizing speech, as securitization is already an institutionalized issue (Neo, 2020). Considering social and institutional practices around the perceived threats reveals the "securitization process, underlying reasons, and the consequences" (ibid:207). Moreover, this method can expose how the official discourses and everyday social and institutional practices operate synergistically to portray a particular subject as a security threat. For this reason, this study interactively analyzes official securitization discourses and parallel social and institutional practices propagated by the government to construct Islam and Muslim activities as a national security threat in Ethiopia.

3.4 Theoretical Tools

Finally, the study relies on the Copenhagen school's twin theories of securitization theory and Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to understand how threats and security policies are socially constructed and as a tool to interpret the primary and secondary sources to address the research questions. Applying securitization theory mainly attributes to its instrumental values to objectively analyze how security is constructed through intersubjective understandings. As a theoretical tool of analysis, securitization theory enables the analyst to draw occurrences of securitization and facilitate practical security analysis and limit the researcher's positions and political statements (Rita, 2006). The application of this theoretical guideline boosts the academic quality of the study and diminishes the role of the researcher’s personal preferences while analyzing the phenomena. However, the study will not entirely rely on securitization theory in its original form as presented in Copenhagen school. When I began the study, I planned to rely on the principles of securitization theory as framed by Copenhagen School. In my research, I found it interesting to modify this theoretical tool to serve the purpose of this study, considering how Ethiopian political culture and social context differs from the political and social realities in which securitization theory has emerged and has been applied.

Securitization theory appeared as a theoretical tool at the end of the 20th century as scholars began to associate with the Copenhagen School for security studies in Europe. As a newly begun theory and the nature of the political cultures of theory's origin, it is an infant theory that has proven applicable in a particular political culture, i.e., western liberal democracy. In the case of political culture, as presented by CHS, securitization is a process of taking an issue from the realm of everyday political agenda to being a security issue through security discourses as securitization is composed of securitizing claims by the government and legitimate acceptance of the claim by the public. As such, securitization theory as a method of analysis relies on democratic political culture. Securitization as a process needs two-way communication between securitizing actors who make security claims and legitimatizing audiences to approve the former's allegations and justify extraordinary actions against the presumed threats (Walker, 2009). In this regard, it is arguable that securitization is a politically culture-bound activity because the nature of relationships, such as the degree of trust between the securitizing agent (government) and its audiences (people), matters. Securitization has been successfully applied to various issues such as the environment, migration, minority groups, ethnic identity, and religious revivalism (Islam) in Western countries where the political culture is highly participatory and peoples are the sources of authority (Kaya;2009: Poutanen,2015). However, this study examines how securitization is carried out in authoritarian political cultures where audiences are cynical about the securitizing claims of political agents or the government due to their lack of legitimacy. The subject of securitization constitutes a significant portion of society. Thus, this study partly applies securitization theory to discover the nature of securitization in non-democratic political cultures like Ethiopia, where the people do not trust the securitizing actor (government).

Securitization has been successful in terms of social setups to securitize Islam and migrant Muslims in the Western world, where Muslims constitute a minority section of society. However, the pattern of securitization of Islam in countries like Ethiopia, where Muslims are not a minority, is an essential point in the theoretical debate of this study. Since September 11, 2001, it is evident that Muslims of every type and their religion have been considered the enemies of the state, violent, threatening fanatics, and terrorists and have come under sharp scrutiny in Europe and the US alike (Crume, 2016: Kaya, 2009). In these countries, the people viewed Muslims as being a party, through their religious belief, to the perpetrators of the most horrible incidents as part of their religion, i.e., Islam (Bulliet, 2004) cited in Kaya,2009). According to Crume (2016), the crucial reason for this is the lack of interaction among most Western people with Muslims. Their picture of Muslims and their religion depends on the media narratives that link Islam and terrorism. Unlike this, the social realities in Ethiopia are highly blended in that various religious communities live together, having a shared history and kinship and experiences of mutual assistance. With due consideration of this fact, the study tests the method of securitization theory to determine how securitization is conducted in non-democratic political cultures and multicultural societies.

3.5 Sources of Data

This study relies on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include official speech acts and statements of politicians, interviews based on the researcher's purposeful sampling of crucial informants (mainly government officials and victims of securitization), reports, court cases, magazines, newspapers, documentary films, and audiovisual records. This research considers the views of sizable key informants, mainly from religious communities, prominent religious figures, security officers, and legal experts, guided by the principle of data saturation. While this is to support secondary analysis and theoretical principles, primary data collection and the sample size is not a vital issue in the study that uses discourse analysis as the focus is on the different ways language is used to create security discourse in the public sphere (Bondarouk & Ruel, 2004). The study also exploits secondary sources, including academic articles and research works, reports by international organizations, books, journals, articles, websites, and press releases that in one or other ways present Islam and Muslims in security terms, i.e., terrorism via the discourse of Islamic extremism. Interviews with some government officers and pertinent individuals to the case and document review were utilized to collect the data needed to address the objectives of this study.

Furthermore, emphasis was also given to documenting review. Documentary analysis involves analytical reading and a review of written materials that help to obtain documentary evidence to support and validate facts and theoretical implications (Bowen, 2009). Accordingly, the study employs this method to analyze secondary sources such as public records, private newspapers, the media, reports and blueprints, audio and visual documents, official documents, strategic plans, websites, and journals. Furthermore, the study will review secondary analyses, including previous research, books, articles, journals, and internet sources about Islam in Ethiopia.

3.6. Justifications of the Study, Theory, and Methods

Research is a scientific effort that aims to shed light on problems of various origins, including socio-cultural and political plights, and communicate the result systematically to the research community or political community. In addition to understanding the problem and systematically shedding new light on the topic, theory-informed research or academic activities adopt theoretical guidelines to inquire about that particular topic and contribute to developing existing theories (Bilgin, 2011).

The condition of the securitization of Islam and Muslims through the security discourse of 'Islamic Extremism' in Ethiopia deserves scholarly research. Studying this social phenomenon and its multi-faceted implications using theoretical principles has much significance. In the first instance, to discover why Islam and Muslims have been presented in security terms in Ethiopian politics. Second, to comprehensively explain the phenomena and identify the rules that regularize it in historical and contemporary periods. The third advantage is to draw facts from the regular conditions of Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia and their multifaceted interactions with other religious communities and the state and its institutions. The fourth advantage of studying this topic is to predict feature scenarios regarding the exchange of the state and religious community, the relations of various religious communities, and suggest possible ways toward de-securitization of Islam and Muslim identity for a better future for Ethiopian society. Shortly, the study of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia through the theoretical lens of securitization theory seeks to understand the condition correctly, elucidate why and how Islam has been securitized, draw sound conclusions from the combination of theoretical premises and practical developments, and predict possible consequences in the future.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF SECURITIZATION OF ISLAM IN ETHIOPIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS

Contemporary Ethiopia roughly signifies three decades of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF hereafter), later reformed as a prosperity party, rule. EPRDF was a coalition of four ethnic-based parties that overthrew the Ethiopian socialist regime in 1991. The initial periods of EPRDF's reign were marked by the liberalization of the country's political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres (Van, 2016). As part of this development, the EPRDF government introduced religious freedom by avoiding the restrictive religious and cultural policies of the Ethiopian socialist regime (1974-1991). These political reforms brought by the EPRDF government created enabling fields for religious communities in Ethiopia that have contributed to a revival of religious activities and observance among all religious communities (Tronvol &Vaughan, 2002).

Remarkably, the trend paved the way for historically marginalized Ethiopian Muslims to enjoy greater religious freedoms and political and economic engagement than ever before (International Crisis Group, 2016; Østebø and Wallelign, 2015). Notably, the new political climate allowed the institutionalization of Islam at the national level through the "de-jure establishment of Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) in 1991" with newly elected leadership after a year (Haustein and Østebø 2011:10). Remarkably, the policies of the new administration ended the restriction on pilgrimages to Mecca, allowed the importation of religious texts and the construction of more mosques, and established

Islamic organizations, magazines, and newspapers, modification of Friday office hours, and the increasing endorsement of the legal status of Sharia courts in the country (Abbink, 1998; Hussein 1994 cited in Otsego, 2007). Among others, the Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association, the Da'wa & Knowledge Association, and the Ethiopian Muslim Unity Association were crucial Islamic organizations established in the early 1990s (Haustein and Østebø, 2011; Otsebo, 2007).

The main concern of institutional involvement of these organizations was described as the "revival of Islam" through the dissemination of religious literature, the construction of mosques and Islamic learning centers, and facilitating various forms of Islamic teachings (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:10**)**. In addition to the opening political spheres, Ethiopian Muslims' social and economic conditions have improved due to the regime change in 1991. The EPRDF government introduced wider opportunities to Muslims, such as access to education, relatively fair employment, and enabling economic policies (Dereje, 2011). Moreover, the government institutionalized religious freedoms and equal access to public jobs and other economic sectors regardless of religious orientations and ethnic belonging in the 1995 constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Under secular political order, the new constitution underlines the legal grounds to govern the relationship between the state and religious communities (Abbink, 2011). Particularly, Articles 11, 27, and 33 of the constitution explicitly declare the separation of state and religion where each cannot interfere in the affairs of the other, the right of religious freedom, and the right for religious communities to form and lead associational life, respectively. These developments pleased the Ethiopian Muslim population (Dereje, 2011). In its earlier periods, the religious community's relations with the new government were characterized by a grateful attitude and affirmative outlook towards the regime(ibid). However, the positive relations between the two existed only for the first half of the 1990s (ibid). The period from 1991 to 1995 was referred to as "the golden age" of Ethiopian Muslims' observance by Østebø and Wallelign (2015) to indicate the hospitable political environment created for Muslims by the new administration. For the first time in history, Muslims could organize and institutionally carry out their religious life. However, the developments that enabled Muslims to practice their religion in a more organized and visible manner were sustained unimpeded only for the first half of the 1990s. Most of the enabling measures taken by the EPRDF government were lost when the government developed securitized views toward Muslims in 1995(Østebø, 2007).

4.1. From Transitory Accommodation to Repressive Securitization: A Shift in Government Policy towards Islam, 1995

Securitization is when a particular political issue is turned into a security matter mainly by changing people's mode of thinking through security discourses (Poutanen, 2015). The process starts when political elites view a particular social phenomenon through a national security lens and try to mold the state institutions to treat the issues in the same way. The political elites articulate a national security threat vis-a-vis subjects they want to securitize. According to securitization theory, securitization is conducted primarily through the elite's public speech acts that aim to convince the general public that a threat to the state's national security is in the making unless it is dealt with earlier by every possible means (Buzan and Waever, 2004). When the general public agrees and starts to view the issue in security terms, the case is transferred from everyday politics to a security matter. Securitization theory primarily considers securitization a phenomenon of speech acts and public discourses and debates. However, this study adopts a broader conception of securitization beyond speech acts.

In addition to elites' speech acts and public discourses, the study examines how local, regional, and global factors have contributed to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Moreover, the study triangulates the speech of the elite acts with institutional and policy frameworks’ practices of security governance. The reason for this is that while adopting social constructivist approaches of securitization theory, the study does not nullify the actor's perceptions as a mere invention. Instead, the study considers occasions that facilitate actors' perceptions and securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. At the same time, the analysis upholds that the actual occurrences that contributed to the securitization of Islam are subject to different interpretations and memorization by various agents and sections of the society in multiple contexts.

Securitization often involves policy and institutional practices that transgress mainstream politics and system of government (Cesari, 2009). For that reason, this study is dedicating to explaining and analyzing the actions and measures of government against Muslims that, in one or other ways, refute constitutional norms in normal political circumstances. Accordingly, the analysis of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia in this study considers the changes in the behavior of the Ethiopian government and policies towards Muslims and Islam that are often justified by the logic of national security. The emphasis is also given to public presentations of the Islamic identity and Muslims as a national security threat through the security discourse of Islamic extremism.

In any successful study of securitization, it is crucial to consider the overall contexts of the place and time in which security issues were discussed and debated (Rychovská, 2014). As noted above, various contributors refer to the mid-1990s as an essential turning point to study the condition of Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia under the reign of EPRDF and its extension the new Prosperity Party. During the second half of the 1990s, the government's initial accommodative attitude towards Muslims changed (Dereje, 2011; Østebø and Wallelign, 2015). The year 1995 and onwards marked a watershed moment in the Ethiopian government's interactions with its Muslim population. David H. Shin (2002:1), the US ambassador to Ethiopia from 1996 to 1999, stated that the late Ethiopian Prime Minister, Melese Zenawi, informed him in the mid-1990s that "the most significant long-term threat to Ethiopia's security is "Islamic fundamentalism." The late Prime Minister's concern demonstrates the introduction of the security discourse of "Islamic fundamentalism" into Ethiopia's national security scene and understanding. His claim consists of an important component of securitization theory. According to securitization theory, the securitizing actor is the one who speaks (in this case, the late Prime Minister) about the existential threat ("Islamic fundamentalism") and Ethiopia's security (referent object). The condition holds in what Wæver (1995: 54) described as: "by definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it so." The late Prime Minister's expression established a framework for the securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia. Some writers like Zekarias (2014) argued that the Premier's expression is not Islam but Islamic fundamentalism. This argument comes from an inappropriate understanding of the central tenets of securitization theory which relies on the magical power of language in constructing security discourse. For those people, Larzillire (2012:19) elucidated the condition as: "the use of a security semantic tends to produce frames of reference and categories that concentrate on the "threatening" aspect of the societies in question and thus format the analysis of these societies.” Poutanen (2015) further argued that securitization takes place through security discourse that is integrally tied to the securitization of society and its institutions. However, the departure of the Premier's securitization of Islam from that of securitization, as demonstrated by securitization theory, is regarding the targets of the utterances. While the late Prime Minister's speech was supposed to target the general public, his discussion with Ambassador Shinn departs from securitization theory’s presuppositions. According to securitization theory, the elite's speech act is mainly to convince domestic constituencies and audience and get the public's permission to take extraordinary actions against the perceived sources of threat.

Regardless of the intended recipient, the late Prime Minister employed the security semantic of 'Islamic fundamentalism' to establish a security framework that scrutinizes the Muslim population as a long-term national security threat. The referent object of the Premier's securitization is "Ethiopia's security," or national security. Moreover, he categorically framed 'Islamic Fundamentalism' as a "threatening aspect" of Islam that laid the framework to scrutinize the Muslim segment of Ethiopian society. In this sense, the securitization of Islam in the form of a speech act appeared even before the emergence of the global discourse of Islamic fundamentalism that dominated the scene of international terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. Dereje (2011:17) expressly affirmed that the security semantic of 'Islamic fundamentalism' in Ethiopia was introduced in the mid-1990s citing the above discussion of the late Prime Minister with Ambassador Shinn. However, the late Premier’s speech did not address the broader Ethiopian general public, departing from securitization theory's thesis that securitization is primarily the act of speech acts delivered to the broader public. The following sub-sections discuss the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia based on discourse analysis as "discourse caused events with social meaning through widespread social understandings derived from some social realities" (Yavore, 2015:17). In this sense, social reality refers to contextual factors in which securitizing moves were made and progressed.

4.1.1. Construction of Security Discourse on Islam Through Domestic Contextual Factors

Security discourses are not created *ex nihilo*, but need contextual factors to securitize actors' links and justify their claims. Contextual factors facilitate conditions that securitizing actors interpret as security implications to their designated referent object's unchallenged or ultimate right to survive (McDonald, 2008). In this regard, facilitating conditions refer to contextual factors presented to explain the shift in the Ethiopian government's attitude towards Muslim communities and their institutional life in a securitized direction. The focus of this study is not on securitization as a single and one-time phenomenon of speech acts, but rather how a combination of different contextual factors (historical, domestic developments, regional and global trends in different periods) contributed to EPRDF's facilitating the process of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Thus, besides the elite's securitizing speech acts, the study also pays attention to specific events, contexts, policy frameworks, and institutional practices because the policy documents and institutional practices that, in one or other ways, present Muslims and Islam in security terms.

As noted above, political developments since 1991 have significantly impacted a whole generation of Ethiopians in general and Ethiopian Muslims in particular (Otsebo, 2007). The introduction of liberalized political environments and its accommodative socio-cultural measures since EPRDF came to power have brought transformative effects on Ethiopian Muslims (Abbink, 2011; Jawar, 2012). The enabling institutional frameworks and supporting policies and the growing religious activities contributed to the renaissance of religious activities and reassertion of affiliations within Ethiopian Muslims and other religious communities altogether (Tronvol &Vaughan, 2002). The immediate changes were observed among the Muslim population with increasing interest towards their religious identity and subsequent rise of religious activities suppressed during the imperial past and socialist Ethiopia (Dereje, 2011). The active involvement of Ethiopian Muslims in the life of their religious community using constitutionally guaranteed religious freedoms ushered in the reawaking of Islam in Ethiopia, particularly during the first half of the 1990s (ibid; Jawar, 2012). Islamic revivalism or reawaking in Ethiopia manifested through the growth of spiritual interest and renewal of religious teachings due to interactions with Muslims in neighboring and Middle Eastern Muslim countries. Thus, the EPRDF's initial democratization attempts resulted in the demand for and supply of religious teachings (Jawar, 2012). As a result of the regime's open policy towards religion, relaxation of press freedom, rapid improvement in literacy and communication technologies, and most recently, social media, the post-1991 period saw the proliferation of religious institutions, intellectual movements, the production of religious materials, massive and intensive communications that contributed to Islamic revivalism in Ethiopia (ibid; Mukerem, 2015). As a result of these developments, Ethiopian Muslims were more apparent in the Ethiopian public sphere than ever before (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:10). The public visibility of Muslims in Ethiopia was demonstrated through the rapid expansion of mosques across the country, the increase of "Muslim clothing" such as hijab among women and skullcaps and white robes among males, and the performance of religious rituals in public space (ibid). However, the increasing religious observance and Muslims' increased presence in the public sphere created tensions among the religious elite and followers of Orthodox Christians in government circles.

4.1.2. Islamic Awakening as a Manifestation of Political Islam

However, the sharp visibility of Muslims and the symbolic representation of Islam in the Ethiopian public sphere within a short period immediately after EPRDF's control of political power created new tensions shaped by the country’s long history of religious conflict. While constitutional changes and political reforms exposed Ethiopia's religious diversity, "feelings of hope and expectations have emerged and discomfort and fear" (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:10). The tension came from the post-1991 social dynamism within the Muslim community that came from parallel Muslim socio-economic progress and religious revivalism as the phenomena of political Islam or radicalization (Jawar, 2012). The historical harmonic relationships between the two religious communities were "micro-level." Yet, relations on the macro-level between the state and Muslims have, in contrast, been more antagonistic (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:10). Thus, Muslims' increasing engagement in economic and political spheres revived the old tensions among Orthodox elites as if it is a form of struggle to control the social and political life of the state.

Similarly, religious revivalism also created rivalries within the Muslim community between traditionalists and reformists. While the former advocates a more politically and socially passive form of Islam restricted only to religious and spiritual activities, reformists promote solid and active engagement of Muslim communities in the state's social, economic, and political life. Reformist Muslims' progressive and assertive actions created a fertile ground for the government and religious elites of Orthodox Christianity to propagate divisive discourses against Muslims as 'bad versus good Muslims' or 'indigenous versus new version of Islam.' Despite some degree of success in creating distrust among Muslims, such narratives created a victim mentality among the majority of Ethiopian Muslims who have been striving to build unity in the community through which "the religion is gaining ground as a point of identification" (ibid:20-21). The government, on the other hand, continues to exacerbate the traditional versus reformist dichotomy to reduce the pressures and demands from the religious community as they are not the questions of the mainstream Muslim community but of minority reformist Muslims whose final aim is to establish an Islamic government (Jawar, 2012).

Similarly, Christians have become anxious about the increasingly visible role of Islam in public places, particularly "about the growth in the number of mosques all over the country and the increasing number of Muslims holding governmental and public positions" (Otsebo, 2007:11). In this light, Dereje (2011:16) further argued that recounting the historical status of Orthodox Christianity as the state religion until the 1974 revolution and the perception of 'being a demographic majority with a stronger political clout, EOC viewed Islamic revivalism in Ethiopia with consternation." Generally, Christians have viewed Muslims' growing engagement in the socio-economic and political life of the state, rapid growth of mosques, and Muslim representation in public offices as part of a long-term strategy to Islamize the country (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:19-20). Christians' attitude toward Islam as a threat is reflected through their "discursive resistance towards

Ethiopian Muslims," labeling all aspects of their religious or Islamic activities as if they were a manifestation of the global "Islamic fundamentalism" whose 'command center' is supposed to be Saudi Arabia" (Dereje, 2011:16). The Christians' resistance to Muslims' activities of asserting their religious identity manifested in the former's grievances and attempts to curtail the construction of mosques across the country, mainly in the capital Addis Ababa. For instance, based on the orders of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Addis Ababa city administration in 2020 granted 30,000 square meters of land for Muslims to build mosques and Islamic teaching centers. The place is in front of the African Union Hall. The Premier sought for Muslims to build a large Mosque that partly can serve the diplomatic community in addition to its symbolic significance as a prominent Islamic teaching center. Muslims appreciated the decision of the Prime Minister and city administration. Muslims named the prospective mosque and Islamic center "Al Nejashi International," after the historic Ethiopian king who gave refuge to the followers of the Prophet Muhamed when their fellow Arabs persecuted them in Mecca in the early days of Islam. The plan met the grievances of religious activists and leaders of the Orthodox Church institution, Mahibere Kidman. They disseminated the idea that the Premier’s decision to grant land to Muslims in front of the African Union was an ill-intended move to change the longstanding notion of the Ethiopian state as a Christian country. They thereby mobilized their fellow Christians to prevent the construction of the mosque. The complaint is not limited to the mosque’s location in front of the African Union (AU), but also extends to its naming as 'Al Nejashi International.' The controversy between Muslims and Christians over king Al-Nejashi will be discussed in later sections.

According to Hussein (2006: 12) cited in Dereje (2011, 19), "the construction of almost all the major mosques in Addis Ababa (and those elsewhere in the country) was invariably preceded by opposition from the Christian residents and Churches of the areas in which the mosques were intended to be built," and by a protracted legal battle with the government departments responsible for granting the plots of land, issuing the necessary title and the permission for construction. Another notable controversy was in 2003 when a mob of Christians tore down the unfinished mosque buildings in Axum in the Tigray region (ICG, 2016). Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds and areas reacted to the episode in large-scale public protests and social media campaigns. The grievance among Muslims has been triggered by the federal government's subsequent denial and silence to Muslims' requests for land to build a mosque in Axum (ibid). The controversy of building a mosque in the city of Axum derives from the belief among Orthodox Church and Christians that Axum is the sacred city and symbol of Ethiopian Christianity, akin to Mecca and Medina for Islam. They argued that 'Mosques will be constructed in Axum if we build churches in Mecca and Medina." Muslims contest this claim that Saudi Arabia belongs to Saudi citizens, while the Ethiopian state is for all Ethiopians who can exercise religious freedom anywhere. There is a long tradition among Orthodox Church that Ethiopia is exclusively a Christian state, and Muslims are others or outsiders. However, more than half of the country's population today are followers of Islam. Likewise, the government has depicted the expansion of religious activism among Muslims and their demands for more rights as a trend of politicization of Islam (Haustein and Østebø, 2011). While higher representations of Muslims in public life and an increased number of mosques could hardly qualify as proof of the politicization of Islam in Ethiopia, it has been common to equate the demands of the Muslim community for better representation with the politicization of Islam (Østebø 2007). The Muslim community, on the other hand, has continued to present several questions to the government, including the need for the government to refrain from internal affairs of the Muslim community, the need for additional land for the construction of mosques, allowance of Islamic dress for female students in public schools, and for including some elements of Sharia law in the country's legal system, and the need to build a mosque in Axum (ibid; Otsebo, 2007). However, Muslims' needs and aspirations have always been viewed and interpreted as a long-term political ambition to change the nature of the Ethiopian state. Both Christians and government officials have depicted Muslims' quest for more civil rights as part of more comprehensive political aspirations, often referred to as the Islamization of the state (Haustein and Østebø, 2011).

The government's concern from the developments within the Muslim community as a trend of politicization of Islam augmented in November 1994, when Muslims in the capital, Addis Ababa, held large scale public demonstrations and presented their demands, mainly land for the construction of mosques, allowance of Islamic dress for female students in public school, and inclusion of Sharia law to the country's legal framework (Østebø, 2007). The EPRDF government's perception of Ethiopian Muslim's demand for additional rights, even within the bounds of secularism and constitutional rights as revealed in the speech of Dr. Shiferaw Teklemariam, the Minister of Federal Affairs at the time, when he was discussing with Ethiopian diaspora communities in the USA, on October 12, 2014. In a conference coordinated by the American Muslim show, the question was raised by one attendee of the conference as "What do Muslims ask from the government, and why does the government fail to address the Muslim slogan in public protest "let our voices be heard," plus who are these people and what do they want?" In addressing these questions, the Minister said:

> *"We should look at things from their roots. While our constitution has corrected historical religious discrimination and clearly outlined the separation of state and religion under Article 11", these extremist Muslims want to establish a religious-based government retreat crying on historical injustices and claiming "*now is our turn.*"*

Haustein and Østebø (2011:15) contended the Minister's interpretation of the voices of Muslims as: "While developments since 1991 have contributed to Islamic revivalism in Ethiopia as elsewhere in the world, it needs to be noted, though, that Muslims' views on politics have taken a different form than the often-portrayed notion of seeking power based on Islamic political preferences."

One Muslim informant in Addis Ababa argued that "the problem comes from the misperception that government officials and our Christian countrymen have developed about us, "They didn't understand us," they don't understand our cause." She further asserted that "in earlier times, Muslims were merchants. Now that the condition has changed, we become educated, making them suspicious of us as if we might claim political power."

The point to be made here is that in Dr. Shiferaw, history serves as a contextual factor to securitize the contemporary Muslim civil rights movements. In the minister's speech, "secularism" served as a referent object. At the same time, the “extremist groups of Muslims" who aspire to a religious-based government in Ethiopia were perceived as an existential threat. The events that contribute to the above discussions and conversations between the minister and the diaspora community are discussed in detail in the coming sections.

Although Muslims' demands were expressed using constitutional terms such as secularism and religious freedom, government officials have always interpreted the former as a political movement to control the state and establish Islamic political order over the long term. The growth of religious activism and revival of Islam in post-1991", and Muslims increasing movements were in the direction of claiming their citizenship rights and has never been in political forms (Dereje, 2011). However, "an image of radicalization" has been created by the government officials, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, and some Protestant adherents" to depict Muslims’ activities and religious observances (Abbink, 2014:356; 1998). In the closed circles of the government, "there is a myth that an overall radicalization of all Ethiopian Muslims is ongoing, even inevitable, and that it is a danger" (Abbink; 2014:356). Erlich (2013) attributed such a perception among the government officials and Christian elites based on historical memories, "*Ahmed Gragn syndrome*." Gragn syndrome refers to the victory of Muslim leaders over the Christian Kingdom after the devastating war conducted between the two in the 16th century. The Ottoman soldiers supported the Imam, while Portuguese forces supported the Christian highlanders. The historical antagonisms (refer to Chapter Three) between Muslims and Christians to be the champion of Ethiopian state formation and mold the state according to their values and identities have been reinterpreted to construct national security threats around Islam and Muslims by the government officials and Christian elites.

Regarding this, Buzan (1983:226) argued that the logical problem in security policies is that they are always "accompanied by perceptions reinforced by problems inherent in the national security policy processes" in the past.

The new societal dynamics and developments within Muslim communities due to the opening of socio-cultural spaces as part of the post-1991 political transformations were interpreted as the politicization of Islam by many figures of Orthodox Christianity and EPRDF officials alike. Most studies on the contemporary interactions of the Ethiopian state and its Muslim population revealed that developments within the Muslim community, such as increasing religious observance and public visibility, resulted in the deterioration of relations between the current regime and the religious community. The government viewed the growing observance of Muslims and visibility in the public sphere as trends of political Islam (Dereje, 2011). Soon after, the behaviors and approaches of the government toward Muslims shifted in securitized directions Østebø and Wallelign, 2015).

Such perceptions that Muslims might seek political power with Islamic orientations, not based on an objective assessment of the facts, changed the government's attitude towards Muslims. The trend matches Buzan’s statement (1983:226) that: "the perceptual problem is fundamental because it affects the entire information base on which the decision-making process rests." Although changes within the Muslim community were typical products of the opening of political space that enabled religious revivalism among all religious communities, the government singled out developments within Muslims to securitize Islam and scrutinize the Muslim community. The government tended to articulate normal socio-political and cultural activities of the religious communities, including artistic expressions of religious identities among Muslims, the proliferation of mosques and other Islamic NGOs, and increasing competition among different religious communities (though practiced by all religious groups), mainly in the form of comparative religious debates to securitize Islam through the security semantics of "Islamic fundamentalism."

In general, the developments within the Muslim community, such as increasing religious inclinations and activities, public visibility, and the demands for more rights in the post-1991 period, were interpreted as developments in the politicization of Islam or using Islam for political mobilization (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:13; Vaughan and Tronvoll,2002). As a result, the government started scrutinizing Muslim communities seriously in the second half of 1995, what Østebø and Wallelign (2015:3) referred to the moment as "the period in which regime control and cooption of the Muslim community was introduced." The late Prime Minister's views, discussed above, coincided with the regime's decision to control the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC or Mejilis hereafter). Dereje

(2011:14) described the condition as "the concern of the Prime Minister, presented to Ambassador Shinn interpreted as the introduction of repressive and tighter control of Islamic organizations mainly EIASC (Mejilis) in 1995."

4.1.3. Violent Incidents as Indicators of Muslim Radicalization

In addition to increasing religious observances and activism among Muslims, the government and elites of other religious communities have relied on various violent incidents of local inter-ethnic and religious skirmishes to justify their claims of the inevitability of radicalization among Ethiopian Muslims. From 1995/96 until today, the conflictual incidents and disputes have been deliberately linked to Muslims without proper investigation. Below are some of the violent incidents and conflicts that the government and other functional actors have utilized to securitize Muslims and their identities.

The first incident happened on February 21, 1995, in Addis Ababa, in Al-Anwar Mosque, when worshipers in the compound of the Mosque clashed with police and the latter "instantly used their fire-arms," "leaving nine people killed and 129 wounded" (Abbink, 1998:118). While "the circumstances of the incident were very unclear," hundreds of Muslims were imprisoned (ibid). The Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association offices were surrounded by armed police, who finally detained all people in the office and shut down the offices over the following days (Abbink, 1998; 118: Haustein and Østebø, 2011). Although there was never an independent judicial inquiry regarding the Anwar incident, the government ultimately utilized the incident to install regime loyalists in EIASC (Mejilis) leadership (Abbink, 1998). A 76 years old Muslim informant, Abdulaziz, who was around Anwar Mosque during the violence, memorized the then conditions as "while there were minor disagreements among Muslims in and around the mosque, the occasion opened an opportunity for the government to intervene in our internal affairs." Since then, the government has taken several measures against Muslims."

Regarding the Anwar incident, Abbink (1998:118) argued that “while the conflict may have happened due to inevitable internal disagreements within the religious community, the government's quick intervention and use of excess force revealed cooptation around Islamic institutions. Its organized life continues under the current political regime."

Following this incident, the government closed nearly all Muslim organizations and NGOs in Ethiopia, leaving the Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council (Mejilis) as the only representative institution of Ethiopian Muslims (Jep, 2014). Although the late Prime Minister presented Islamic fundamentalism as a long-term threat to the Ethiopian state in 1995, the issue had not appeared in public till 2011. The ways that the Ethiopian Herald publicized the Anwar incident without even mentioning labels like "*fundamentalism," "extremism," or "terrorism"* shows the relevance of the global security discourse that links Islam and terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11.

The second violent incident that the regime used to justify its actions to its scrutinization of Muslims and their religious and institutional life occurred on June 26, 1995, when an unsuccessful assassination attempt was made against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarek in Bole international airport, Addis Ababa, when he was on his way to attend an Organization of African Union's (OAU) leaders' summit that was being held in Ethiopia (Medhane, 2004). The attempt was reportedly made by Egyptians affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood with the support of the government of Sudan (ibid). The attempt to kill President Mubarak was made by foreigners (Egyptians and Sudanese). The assassins were able to recruit Ethiopian collaborators, who were Christians (Muhamed, 2016). Against these facts, the government announced that it caught Muslim Brotherhood cells operating among Ethiopian Muslims after the assassination attempt. Since then, affiliations or links to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has become one of the grounds by which the regime has jailed many Muslims, particularly university students and educated Muslims.

The third incident that facilitated the regime's coercive stance toward Muslims and Islam were various bomb attacks and blasts in 1995 and 96 onwards in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in Ethiopian territories, which according to government sources, were perpetrated by the *Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya or Al Shabab* (Jep, 2014). Al-Shabab is an Islamic movement in neighboring Somalia that started in 2006, intending to unite the people of the Somali population in different countries of the Horn of Africa, i.e., Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, and Somaliland, and reconstitute the state of Somalia from its total collapse since 1992. Moreover, the movement has an irredentist claim to integrate a territory, Ogden province in Ethiopia, as part of its policy to build greater Somalia. The Ethiopian government uses the Islamic movement in Somalia to justify its increasing suppression of Muslim activities domestically. Several Ethiopian Muslims have been victims of arbitrary imprisonment and harassment by security forces based on suspicion of affiliation to Islamists in Somalia or Al-Shabab. Whether the movement poses a real security threat to Ethiopia or not is not the concern of this study but instead how the Ethiopian government utilizes the existence of the Islamic movement and its operations in nearby Somalia to frame Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia in security terms. These were some conflictual incidents that occurred in the second half of the 1990s in the contexts in which the Ethiopian government engaged in the institutional life of Muslim communities and its leadership (Abbink, 1998; 118; Haustein and Østebø, 2011:10; ICG: 2016). Chapter Six provides the accounts for recent and ongoing inter-ethnic-religious conflicts those different actors have utilized to securitize Islam and Muslim identity in Ethiopia.

4.2. Institutional Indexes of Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia

As discussed in chapter two, securitization usually involves security discourse that facilitates the securitization of society and its institutions. Similarly, securitization actors need and rely on institutions devoted to producing, circulating, and upholding security narratives around the subjects of securitization (Poutanen, 2015). In addition to speech acts and public rhetoric that labels something as an existential threat, a securitization study can be conducted by examining policy frameworks and institutional practices that, in one or other ways, discuss the subject in security terms (Bourbeau, 2011). Moreover, policy directions and institutional practices, emphasized by Bourbeau, provide the standards to measure, evaluate, and understand securitization and its extent. Evaluating security policy frameworks and practical security activities helps explain power structures and how dominant subjectivities affect security policies.

Moreover, as securitization, by its very nature, involves infringements of democratic and human rights values that citizens are entitled to under normal political circumstances, it always creates dissidents. Subjects of securitization, those who (in this context, Muslims) maintain relations of various kinds with securitized issues (Islam), contest the very fundamentals of the securitizing concept (Islamic extremism) (Cesari, 2009; Hanssen, 2016: 6). In this regard, Buzan (1983) pointed out that modern bureaucratic states exercise a large scale of institutional and legal powers against their people to safeguard the common good, by which he refers to national security. Therefore, it is valuable to pay attention to how the state security apparatus conducts their security practices to support security discourses articulated by securitizing actors or elites and other functional actors of securitization. To that end, it is relevant to examine and discuss the relevant policy frameworks and institutional practices that in one way or another relate to Muslims and their identity, Islam, to security threats of whatever referent objects in Ethiopia.

4.2.1. Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (2002).

In its simplest expression, security, according to securitization theory, is an ultimate prioritization of national or state security above all other political considerations. The foreign affairs and national security strategy policy document of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) outlines that national security is the supreme yardstick notion of the country's security policies and understandings. It is stated in the policy document (FDRE, 2002: 5) as:

> *“In a fundamental sense, security policy is a matter of ensuring national survival*. "Indeed, it underlines the supremacy of national security as *"unless the overall policy direction pursued by the government takes this basic reality (national security*) *into account, our national existence and security will face grave danger*."

The document reveals that the state is the priority and at the center of attention in the Ethiopian security culture. While the focus of security policy and strategies direction toward national security, not human security, is a crucial point to be considered in securitization studies in Ethiopia, this study devotes itself to the policy statements and directions that are relevant to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia or to those points in the policy document that consider Islam and Muslims concerning national security or as a source of national insecurity. The policy document addresses Islam in security terms regarding Ethiopian national security mainly based on the latter's geopolitical contexts of its neighborhood of Horn of African and Middle Eastern states, especially Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, which are predominantly inhabited by Muslim populations. The policy document emphasizes the potential threats to Ethiopia in its relations with these countries. The policy document discusses these countries as potential sources of danger to the Ethiopian state as follows;

> *"While there are no positive roles that Ethiopia expected from its neighbors to meet its national interest which, according to the document are democratization and economic development, their role in negative direction should not be underestimated*" (FDRE, 2002: 60).

More explicitly, the document reiterates that: *"*By promoting religious extremism or providing the territory for religious extremists, they could sorely test our young democracy which is based on the separation of state and religion and religious tolerance" (ibid: 60).

Without providing empirical evidence or grounds on which the countries of predominantly Muslim populations around Ethiopia can endanger Ethiopian national security, democracy, and economic developments, the document emphasizes the potential danger of religious extremism imported from neighboring Ethiopian states. Points in the policy paper are based on anticipations of Muslims' future conditions rather than tangible references to historical realities or current developments that indicate Muslims' activities of harboring extreme ideologies from Islamist political forces in neighboring countries.

Moreover, the document institutionalizes the securitization of Islam in the part that elaborates on Ethiopia's relationship with Middle Eastern countries. Although the policy document recognizes the country's longstanding cultural, economic, and political ties with the Islamic world or the Middle East, it stresses the negative aspects of the country's contemporary relationships based on a vague interpretation of Islamic history. It is stated in the policy document (FDRE, 2002: 113) that "while religion is not free of casting negative influences," "Islamic extremism, and Ethiopia's susceptibility to danger" as the primary sources of Ethiopia's deleterious relations with the Islamic world. An indicator of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia and its institutional manifestation outlined in the country's national security strategy and policy document worth mentioning is the way the document portrays Islamic traditions about the ancient Abyssinian (Ethiopian) King called "Najaashi" and his conversion to Islam that link Islam and Muslims history to security matters. Ethiopia has an important reminiscence in Islamic history for various reasons. Among the others, the country's positive contributions to Islam and Muslims in the earliest days of Islam, particularly the benevolence of the Christian Abyssinian king towards Islam and Muslims and his conversion to Islam. These are historical facts that have been widely memorized by Muslims and circulated in Islamic texts and traditions. The Ethiopian national security strategy document interprets the king "*Al-Nejashi*," the Ethiopian king, in a manner is not acceptable to mainstream Muslims. Muslims believe that the Christian Abyssinian king gave asylum to the first followers of Islam when they were persecuted by their compatriots in Mecca and accepted the message of Islam through them. Against this, the national security strategy document criminalized Muslims from reading their history and the role and status of their country in Islamic traditions as follows;

> *"One of the differences between Muslim extremists and moderate Muslims concerns their differences on the subject of Ethiopia. The moderate Muslim believes that Ethiopia is a country that received the first followers of the Prophet, the first hijra (pilgrimage) country, a respected country that a believer should not touch if it does not touch him. As a result of this, he prefers to consider it a special place different from other countries. On the other hand, the extremist preaches that it was the Ethiopian king who gave refuge to the followers of the Prophet and that he had been converted to Islam, though he did not make it public for fear of the people. So, the people are the enemy. Ethiopia should be categorized as the first "Andalusia," the land which betrayed Islam"* (FDRE, 2002, 113-14).

According to the policy document, a Muslim who believes and preaches that the Abyssinian king converted to Islam qualifies as an extremist. However, Muslims of every generation worldwide believe in Islamic history that narrates the Ethiopian King’s conversion to Islam. Moreover, while Islam preaches about the Prophet's positive instruction, *"Leave the Abyssinians in peace, so long as they do not take the offensive,"* the document distortedly interprets Islamic history. It creates a negative narrative about the relationship between Ethiopians and Islam, saying, *"the people are the enemy of Islam,"* which does not have even a single reference from texts in the Islamic tradition. In this regard, the companion Jaafer, who came to Abyssinia and returned to Makkah, later reported telling the Prophet that "*Najaashi has testified that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that you are Allah's messenger"* (Hayatu Sahaba, n.d). Accordingly, Ethiopia is a unique country for "*the Muslims of the world in general and the Ethiopian Muslims in particular*" (ibid). Nejashi has a special place in Islamic accounts, not only as of the first king abroad. He recognized and converted to Islam but also "due to the prophet's issuing of Islam's first special funeral prayer in absentia (salat al-ghaib) for the king" when the king died (Dereje, 2011: 27). King Al-Nejashi and his historical conversion is an integral part of broader Islamic history known to all Muslims worldwide. Ethiopian Muslims' sense of pride in the role of their country's historical king as a shelter to Muslims and conversion to Islam could have been positively viewed to cultivate national belongingness and inclusion among historically marginalized sections of Ethiopian society, i.e., Muslims(ibid). The policy document furthermore negatively interpreted Muslims' memorization and conception of Ethiopia as Darul Hijra by associating it with extremist sentiments. Negating the historical interaction between Islam and the Ethiopian state reveals the influence of religion on Ethiopian foreign policy and national security culture. Historically, Ethiopia's foreign policy and national security strategies primarily reflected the siege mentality of Christian elites that Ethiopia is a Christian state surrounded by Muslim enemies.

The views in the national security policy document toward Muslims reflects influences from three dimensions. In the first instance, the policy document demonstrates the influence of the historical legacy of Ethiopia as an exclusive Christian state, often reiterated among Christian elites as "an island of Christianity in the sea of Islam." The Muslim narratives about the historical Ethiopian King Al-Najashi faced radical critics from the adherents, leaders, and prominent personalities of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The latter counter narrates that the Muslim's memory of King Al-Nejashi is an attempt by extremist Muslims to Islamize Ethiopian history and claim political power based on Islamic orientations (Dereje, 2011). They accused Muslims of being agents of Islamic political forces in the Muslim world (ibid). Secondly, the policy document reflects the influences of intellectuals who have adopted the post 9/11 western discourses of 'good' and 'bad' Muslims to explain Ethiopian Muslims and their agencies and interactions with the Ethiopian state and broader society. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the self-proclaimed Zionist Israeli professor Haggai Erlich. Erlich's primary area of expertise is Ethiopia and Islam, one which he has made enormous contributions. He is the architect of the negative connotations of the *al-Nejashi* tradition of Islam among government officials and Mahibere Kidman. In his work, Ethiopia and the Middle East, published in 1994, Erlich presented a narrative that Muslims of the Middle East perceive Ethiopia as the historical enemy of Islam. He manipulated Muslims' narratives about King Al Nejashi and the Christians" perception of the state as a Christian entity. He asserted that Muslims do not like Ethiopia because they believe that it remaining a Christian state is a betrayal of its leader, who embraced Islam as his faith. Erlich, however, didn't substantiate his claims with any Islamic sources.

Erlich gave many training and consultation sessions to government officials and institutions, mainly on Islamic extremism and counter-radicalization strategies. Erlich (2007:17) alarmingly argued that the "Salafi or Wahabi Muslims" are operating for the "political victory of Islam" in Ethiopia. After close examinations of the works of Erlich and his focus on Islam, Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa, Jep (2014) cautiously advised the need to consider the stance of an Israeli professor, his intentions to specialize in Islam in Ethiopia, and his emphasis on the Salafi/Wahhabi-Sufi dichotomization of Muslims, and his narratives that associate Ethiopian Muslims with international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida. More explicitly, Jep (2014:104-105) stated that "the works of Erlich and various lectures he gave to many government officials have significantly influenced the policies of the government towards Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia" (ibid). In much of his works, Erlich has reflected on the complex politics in the Middle East with the formation of the state of Israel and its confrontation with the Palestinian authority and the position of surrounding Muslims of the Arab world. Thus, the Israeli professor’s works mainly aim to contain a politically active Muslim population that may challenge their government's relation with Israel as the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia have been considered as a stepping zone against insecurities in the Middle East. Whatever his intentions, Erlich’s works continually emphasized conflict between Ethiopian Muslims and Christians by adopting narrations such as "*Ahmed Gragn syndrome*" to describe the views of Ethiopian Christians towards their Muslim countrymen, "the enmity of Ethiopian state to Islam" contrary to the country's position in Islamic traditions. A demonstration of his political motives in Ethiopia can be seen in the following quotes:

> *"A major aspect of Ethiopian Christianity is a sense of closeness and full identification with "Israel" as a religious and historical notion."* (Erlich, 2013:10). *"The Jewish state, working to find allies and friends in what was defined as the "periphery" of the Middle East and the Arab world, invested in Ethiopia's development more than in any other country. The Ethiopians, for their part, trusted the Israelis and asked them to help and guide in nearly everything. These special relations ended due to Arab pressure on Ethiopia which proved more effective around the 1973 war in the Middle East" (ibid,* 2-3).

On the other hand, Erlich’s intellectual works and activities with the regime in Ethiopia have created suspicions among Muslims, particularly, the educated and politically conscious, who developed negative attitudes towards him. Meanwhile Christian religious leaders and government officials have often appreciated his work and shown sympathy to him in social media polemics with Muslims. Erlich’s influence on government policy has explicitly manifested in the acrimonious controversies between Muslim communities and the government since 2011. Erlich was the one who proposed to the government the need to introduce a moderate version of Islam called 'Ahbashism' to be followed and practiced by Ethiopian Muslims as a counter-radicalization strategy. The prominent Muslim activist and commentator Muhamed Ali Alula Hashmi (2013: 2) described the relationship between the Ethiopian government and the Israeli professor vis-a-vis the government's plan and program to reform the religious doctrine of Ethiopian Muslims in 2011 based on the wishes of Erlich as:

> *"The government is showing complete contempt for Ethiopian Muslims by inviting an Israeli Zionist to help in its nefarious project. As Muslims the world over know, the Zionists of Israel have been involved in the systematic ethnic cleansing, indeed the uninhibited genocide, of the predominately Muslim people of Palestine for more than half a century"*

Another influential Ethiopian writer in the area is Dr. Medhane Tadesse. Like Erlich, Medhane frequently alarmed the Ethiopian government about the potential rise of Islamic extremism in Ethiopia. In a conference jointly organized by the Ministry of Federal Affairs (now named Ministry of Peace) and German Development Agency (GDA) at Addis Ababa University, Institute for Peace and Security Studies on federalism, conflict, and peacebuilding, Medhane adamantly argued that "the religious equilibrium [in Ethiopia was] collapsing very quickly" and that the religious status quo in the country was being "dramatically eroded, incubating violent confrontations" (quoted in Joao, 2013: 22).

Medhane’s claim had dual targets, "the enormously successful proselytizing efforts of the Pentecostal Churches in Southern Ethiopia and the growth of Sunni fundamentalism in Somalia" (ibid). Seemingly regretful, Medhane blamed both the Ethiopian government and the Orthodox Church as they "were failing the country in offering at least mitigating solutions to the social and economic ills of the poorest quarters of society, thus giving way to other religions" (Joao, 2013: 23). Although he referred to both Protestantism and Islam, the content of his speech heavily focused on Islam and Muslims via the so-called "Wahhabism," to which he said "the hour of the miracle worker "religion [had] finally come," and that "the contemporary religious militancy should be seen as a wholly new phenomenon and a threat to the peace, stability, and independence of the country" (quoted in Ibid). Much like the "Clash of Civilizations" discourse had self-fulfilling effects on the securitization of Islam in the Western world, the ideas of Medhane and Erlich have played the same role in Ethiopia. In this light, an officer in the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs replied to the question asked; “Did the government conduct research or an assessment that enabled it to identify the threat of "Islamic extremism" in Ethiopia?":

> "*ጉዳዩን በተመለከተ የተለያዩ ሙህራኖች ለመንግስት አስተያየት ሲሰጡ ቆይተዋል ፤ በተለይ ደግሞ ዶክተር መድህነ ታዯሰ የሚባል የአድስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ሙህር በ2002 አካባቢ በሚገረም ሁነታ ነበር ስለ ችግሩ የተነበየዉ*".
>
> Translated as
>
> "*We, as the government institution did not need to conduct a survey or research on this issue as many researchers including Dr. Medhane Tadesse have been warning the government through their various studies*."

In such ways, scholarship has contributed to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia and the deterioration of relations between the government and the Muslim community. Securitization, by its very nature, is a state-centric activity, as it is primarily the mandate and responsibility of government institutions to articulate, frame, and declare national security threats. Although the state plays a leading role in the securitization process, Buzan (1983) recognized other non-state or non-government actors, such as civil society organizations, that endorse and support the government's security discourse and agenda and work hand in hand with the government in the overall securitization process. He called these agencies "functional securitization actors." Accordingly, in the case of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, it is the religious discourse of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and its exclusivist religious discourse, and so-called researchers, both foreign and domestic, who have served as functional securitization actors.

Thirdly, policy documents emphasize Islamic extremism as a likely national security threat to Ethiopia, demonstrating the Ethiopian government's willingness to join the post 9/11 West's divisive discourses on Muslims as 'moderate' versus 'extremist Muslims.' The Ethiopian government has been one of the critical alliances to the US-led 'War on Terror' in the Horn of Africa. In this regard, Jep (2014:78) asserted that the Ethiopian government openly engaged in the post 9/11 global discourse of "the good" and "the bad" Muslim through its dividing narration of Muslims in Ethiopia as 'Sufi' (moderate) and "Salafi" (extremist). Accordingly, the 'Sufi' represents "the good or a moderate Muslim." On the other hand, the 'Salafi' refers to "the bad or a radical or an extremist Muslim" invariably associated with violence and terrorism.

The government's divisive narratives of Muslims came into effect in January 2004, when the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (Mejilis) held a meeting with representatives from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and passed a sudden decision to remove all executive members of the Supreme Council and to replace them with the so-called "anti –Salafi" Muslims (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:12). Yunus (2013) asserted that the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Mejilis decision was due to Ethiopia's partnership with the US government's 'Global War on Terror" and its aim to prevent Muslims from having strong and independent institutions. The overall joint mission of the US and Ethiopian governments in three decades of bilateral relations has been to fight Islamic extremism or 'Wahabism' in the Horn of Africa. A "Thank you" letter, S/C/1883/60/2008, written from the Ethiopian Supreme Islamic Council to the American Embassy in Addis Ababa in January 2008, revealed the Ethiopian Supreme Islamic Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US government's coordinated plans regarding Ethiopian Muslim community issues. The letter read as:

> *"It is to be recalled that, the sole representative organization of Muslims, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and the Embassy are working together to eradicate Wahhabis from Ethiopia and strengthening the visit of Islamic shrines, which were neglected by Muslims due to the influence of Wahhabist teachings. So far, what we have done for Dire Sheikh Hussein [in Oromia] and […] al-Nejashi Mosque [in Tigray] are major witnesses to our close cooperation. Recently, we are in progress to do the same for Jamma Nigus, Qatibarie, and Albuko [mosques]. The promise of the Honorable Ambassador [Donald Yamamoto] to open a Sufi Islamic college in Addis Ababa and Tigray is historic and always to be remembered. The historic support, both in advice and financial aid, which the Embassy is providing for me and my colleagues to enhance our acceptance [as a leader] and the legitimacy of Mejlis in the eyes of the Ethiopian Muslim community, is so immense. Assuring our commitment in*

> *the fight against religious extremism once again, we request the Embassy to keep up your support in the future"* (as translated by and quoted in Muhamed, 2016:74).

The letter disclosed the council's loyalist position to implement the joint interests of the Ethiopian government and its global partner, the US. The US and Ethiopian governments have identified "Wahabism" as an extremist version of Islam that poses regional and international security challenges. In this regard**,** Haustein and Østebø (2011:12) argued that the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) has served as "a loyal instrument to inspect developments within Muslim community, in particular, the Salafi movements or the Wahhabism." For that purpose, the Council has been formally recognized as the only institution that can deal with the overall affairs of the Muslim community. The government has prohibited any forms of alternative organizations for the Muslim community, including small-scale charity associations in villages and mosques. The prohibition of institutional engagements forced Muslims to rely on informal networking and associations to conduct their religious affairs and organize protests against the government (Haustein and Østebø, 2011). Mainly Muslims have been using non-religious social activities, economic or trading centers, and higher educational institutions as valuable spaces to discuss and interact with religious matters with fellow Muslims (ibid).

4.2.2. Ministry of Education Dressing Code: A Ban on Public Manifestation of Islamic Identities, 2008.

While securitization transforms a particular development from a matter of everyday politics to the subject of security, its ultimate aim is to bring about a policy change that is justifiable through security discourse (Poutanen, 2015). Otsego and Haustein (2001:12) asserted that one of the measures of the Ethiopian government against the Muslim community is the restriction of public spaces. One crucial indicator of this is the policy directive adopted by The Ethiopian Ministry of Education to regulate religious practices in educational institutions. The policy directive is an essential indicator of the institutionalization of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia that negatively affects the life and interactions of Ethiopian Muslims. Though not officially targeting Muslim students separately, the policy is one of the first visible moves of institutional practices of securitization that have been taken against Ethiopian Muslims. Public manifestation of religious identity and observance is granted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (FDRE) constitution under article 27(1) as;

> *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion that include the freedom to hold or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and the freedom, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching."*

Though the country's constitution assured the freedom of public expression of religion in the forms of worship, observance, practice, and teaching, the policy directive compromises the supreme law of the land by prohibiting Muslim female students of public schools from wearing *niqab or jilbab* and communal worship for both male and female students in and around the school (Muhamed, 2016). Furthermore, the constitution under Article 27/5 stated as:

> *"Freedom to express or manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, peace, health, education, public morality or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and to ensure the independence of the state from religion."*

According to the national dress code, the prohibition of Muslim female students wearing the niqab and congressional prayers for Muslim students in higher education was intended to protect the cherished value of secularism. According to the Ethiopian constitution, the values associated with secularism include public safety, peace, health, education, public morality, the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, or the country's secular order. The government's decision to adopt a policy that restricts the public manifestation of religious values in public places (universities) implies the institutionalization of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. As other results of securitization, the Ministry’s policy faced swift and serious resistance from Muslim communities across the country, who contested the directive on the grounds of constitutionality, and questioned its compatibility with Ethiopian social realities (Dereje, 2011; ibid). The government's policy decision has been viewed by members of the Muslim community as a violation of their constitutional rights to religious freedom and secularism (ICG, 2016; Muhamed, 2016).

The government, on its part, reacted to Muslims' grievance about the policy directive by arguing that the measures and restrictions did not only apply to Muslim students, but are equally applicable to students of all religious groups. Muslims, however, considered the actions of the government as a discriminatory measure against them. Although the government officials claimed that the policy did not solely target Muslims, the directive neither has prohibited non-Muslim students of public schools from wearing ostentatious religious symbols nor faced protests from Muslims. Moreover, the law discusses Muslims mentioning their religious orientations as, "Muslim female students should not wear Niqab" (Art 6 sub art 6.3) without saying about students of other religions and prohibitions towards them. As the securitization policies always produced discontent voices (Cesari, 2009), the directive led to protests from Muslim students in colleges and universities both in the capital and beyond (ICG, 2016).

Figure 2, Addis Ababa University Muslim students" demonstration against the directive of the Ministry of Education to regulate religious dress codes and prayers in educational institutions, April 2009(source: Dereje, 2011:20)

On January 23, 2013, Bahir Dar University started to take measures against Muslim female students wearing niqab and hijab by forcing many to change their dressing style or stop their education (Abbink, 2014: 352). As a result, more than 1,500 female Muslim students stopped their education. In doing so, the directive refutes the constitutional right of religious freedom and the notion of Ethiopian multiculturalism (Muhamed, 2016). Considering the constitutional framework of religious liberty and Ethiopia's multicultural society, the directive signified the institutional practices of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Multicultural society needs the flexibility of rules and regulations to fit with pluralistic society's various norms, cultures, and values. Applying a uniform school dress code in organizations that host students with different styles and cultures resulted in ethical dilemmas from diverse cultural values. Multicultural society needs differential treatment for various socio-cultural groups to accommodate all citizens' needs and aspirations based on the constitutional principle of equality. Overall, the Ministry's dressing code is evidence of the securitization of Islam and its institutionalization beyond speech acts.

4.2.3. Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and the New Ethiopian Civil Societies Law, 2009.

Vigorous institutionalization of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia appeared in 2009 when the Ethiopian government officially proclaimed its anti-terrorism policy and thereby officially joined the post 9/11 global discourse of international terrorism anchored in fighting the so-called 'Islamic fundamentalism.' The Federal Negarit Gazeta (national magazine) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, under Article 3, stated that Ethiopia's survival was at stake due to the inevitable risk of terrorism that comes from global trends and the spread of radicalization among a particular section of the society. As the national security strategy, the center of attention in the anti-terrorism proclamation is state security.

The proclamation outlined multiple reasons for adopting and implementing anti-terrorism laws as an integral part of global and regional insecurity formations. Accordingly, the forefront reason is the emerging danger of "terrorism as the serious threat for the country's peace, security, and development" and "the peace and security of the world." As pointed out in Chapter Two, the contemporary and western discourse of terrorism by default refers to those violent and terror activities supported by 'Islamic fundamentalism,' which has been considered a new form of terrorism. In a parliamentary debate to pass the anti-terrorism law, most parliamentarians supported the initiatives for the declaration by reiterating that the security problems that religious 'fundamentalism' or "Islamic terrorism" posed were not unique to Ethiopia, but a common problem to all countries and societies across the world to which we could not exclude themselves. The second justification the proclamation mentioned for a new legal framework or anti-terror law was that the country's existing legal regime or regulations were not sufficient to effectively address the complex problem of terrorism. This goes with the very tenet of securitization, which is, by definition, the process of taking a specific issue out of everyday politics so that the matter can only be dealt with through extraordinary approaches.

As asserted in the document, the third and fourth reasons for adopting the proclamation are to enhance investigations and information on suspected individuals and cooperate with other governments' anti-terrorism efforts. Many commentators and human rights organizations have condemned the anti-terror proclamation because it serves as an instrument for the regime to suppress political opponents. Moreover, the declaration serves the regime as a foreign policy instrument to convince Western-based rights advocacy groups to tolerate human rights violations. However, the ultimate effect of the anti-terror proclamation has been on Ethiopia’s Muslim community as the proclamation has justified the enormous challenges the religious community has faced from the government's actions (Jep, 2014). The anti-terror law in Ethiopia serves to justify the government's scrutinizing activities of Muslims as it "not only facilitates intervention from the government but also contributes to a negative image of Islam in Ethiopian society which results in more difficulties for Ethiopian Muslims in daily life" (ibid:90)

Although the definition of terrorism in the proclamation is vague, developments immediate to the issuance of the law proved to be in the direction of Islam and Muslim communities. On January 20 of the same year, the government arrested 18 Muslims in Addis Ababa, publicly reporting that they were found to undertake armed training to take terrorist actions, overthrow the secular order, and establish an Islamic theocratic state in Ethiopia (USCIRF; 2013). On February 23, 2009, the government issued a ban on "all Muslim religious activities" without the prior approval of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) (Haustein and Østebø, 2011: 13). In the same month, the government issued a decree that all mosques and their overall activities should be recorded and reported to the government through the Supreme Council. The government prepared "a registration form to the country's mosques and ordered them to submit information on how they run, sources for income, and whether the mosques have linkages to any outside donor" (ibid: 12-13). The primary controlling mechanism of the government over the activities of Muslim communities has been by appointing dedicated personnel in the leadership of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC). The government's motive to control Muslim national institutions by installing even people indifferent to mainstream Muslims is to eliminate what is perceived as extremist elements within the Muslim community (Abbink, 2014). The introduction of the Ethiopian anti-terror law has been one of the sources of contention and growing hostilities between the regime and Muslims in Ethiopia (Jep, 2014). Using the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation issued in 2009, the Ethiopian government has imposed several measures on Muslim communities, mainly the cooption of the religious community's institutional life at the national level through the regime's affiliates (BTI, 2016).

While securitization is always accompanied by laws and policies that result in violations of rights granted to the people by constitutional and legal frameworks to citizens under normal political circumstances, it encounters resistance from victims of right violations who resonate their dissident voice through the fundamentals of everyday politics (Cesari, 2009). The securitization of Islam and ensuing changes in government policies and actions towards Muslims has created dissident voices from Muslim communities, not from other religious communities. The letter was written by Ethiopian Muslims Solution Finding Committee members, who were elected by Muslims to present the demands of the religious community to the government in 2011 and who were accused and jailed by the government's accusation of them as terrorists in 2012 as revealed in a letter the members wrote to the then President of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama. The letter sent to President Obama on October 22, 2014, reads as:

> *"We are 19 Ethiopian Muslims writing to you from within the Ethiopian gulags. Since we were arrested and detained on fabricated charges under the country's notorious anti-terrorism laws more than two years ago, we have been going through a Stalinist political show trial designed to intimidate and silence us into submission in the face of the government's audacious and grotesque program of re-indoctrinating Ethiopian Muslim. We categorically reject the ridiculous allegations against us".*

The point to make at this juncture is that the message of the letter is that the Ethiopian anti-terrorism law was partly produced in the government's effort to please Western powers, particularly the US government, by joining the post 9/11 global security formation anchored on the securitization of Islam and the ensuing 'Global War on Terror campaign,' the dissident voices of Muslims and their representatives grieved against both the domestic actor of securitization (the regime) and its external ally, the US and its enabling role of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. This implies that securitization of a particular phenomenon in one country might appear by combined domestic and foreign actors. In this regard, Buzan and Waever (2004) argued that the securitization process in one state might be influenced by the interests of another state, even if the latter is out of the regional security complex. Regarding the influences of external actors, particularly the US involvement in the relationship between the Ethiopian government and the Muslim community, one Muslim informant told me that whatever measures and policies the US government applies to Muslims within the US and abroad will be domesticated by the Ethiopian government.

Another policy indicator of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia adopted in the same year as the anti-terror proclamation is the Ethiopian Civil Society Proclamation, often called the New Civil Society Law issued in 2009. Although the new law restrains the growth and autonomy of civil societies in the country, which other religious groups have also resented the government's violation of their civil liberties, the law has disproportionally affected the

Muslim community, for whom a key concern has been legitimate institutional representation in its search for a national Islamic identity (Dereje, 2011). With the new civil society law in 2009, the Ethiopian government required Muslim religious organizations to "register and periodically renew their licenses" (ICG, 2016: 10). The discriminatory effects of the civil society law come from the fact that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is exempt from the registration and renewal of its licenses as established by law during Imperial Ethiopia (ibid). The unequal treatment of religious institutions shows the continuing legacies of state-religion interactions in the past. As in the past, the differential treatment of the Orthodox Church created a sense of otherness and marginalization among Muslims. Reacting to the legal status of the Orthodox Church, Muslims demand equal legal treatment of religious institutions based on the country's constitutional notion of equality of religions.

In general, the parallel issuance of anti-terror laws and Ethiopian civil societies laws in 2009 provided the government a ground to discourage organized Islamic activities in Ethiopia to what Jep (2014:135) referred to as the "rule by law" effects which allowed the government to crack down Islamic organizations. Consequently, many Islamic schools were closed down based on government's accusation of them as incubators for future terrorists (Abbink, 2014). Moreover, the government closed almost all Islamic civil associations in the country using the above laws. In this regard, Finessi (2011) argued that Islamic civil society organizations in Ethiopia have been dying out in the aftermath of 9/11 and subsequent developments due to the government's suspicion that these organizations might tie with global terrorist networks. Similarly, the government closed down all Islamic periodicals in the country, which had contributed to Islam's presence in the Ethiopian public sphere (Jep, 2014: 135). Between 2000 to 2010, the government shut down all popular locally distributed weekly Islamic newspapers, including *Salafia, Hikma,* and *Yemuslimoch Guday*, playing significant roles mainly among the young generation of Ethiopian Muslims (Mukerem, 2015). Although none of these Islamic periodicals were reported to spread terrorism or violate constitutional norms, the government banned all Islamic journals. The government often justified its measures by countering radicalization and extremism among Muslims (Jep, 2014). As securitization policies always compromise constitutional standards, these government actions appeared to violate the country's law on the freedom of expression and mass media issued in 2008, which hold that "Freedom of mass media is constitutionally guaranteed." and "Censorship in any form is prohibited."

While some people have tried to reduce the obstructive impacts of these policies upon the Muslim community by claiming that these laws are just part and parcel of the regime's authoritarian interests to control every aspect of social institutions and political agencies, these policy frameworks have never imposed these restrictive measures on other religious communities, nor faced resistance other than from the Muslim community. In this regard, Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, and Yihenew (2021:12) insisted that;

> "*The 2009 Antiterrorism Law, which was levied against Muslims protesting government interference in matters of the Islamic faith, and the 2009 Civil Society Proclamation, which erected a wall of separation between religious advocacy and charitable works that proved problematic in some respects. Muslims, in particular, was the target of restrictions that gradually curbed the space they had cut out for themselves*."

4.3. Securitization of Islam in the Context of the 2011 Arab Spring

During the parliamentary session on April 17, 2012, the late Prime Minister, Melese Zenawi, said that:

> "*Unless the government takes timely and appropriate measures over these Muslim extremist groups, the danger is clear and imminent from what they are doing in Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Tunisia." "Some of these extremist groups are creating trouble in such countries and are trying to bring the Arab Spring in Ethiopia"* (Quoted in Muhamed, 2016: 259)**.**

According to securitization theory, securitization is primarily an act of speech that securitizing actors make while articulating security problems around the subject of securitization. Security is a social construction of actors who seek to manufacture imaginary threats or irrational fear by labeling something as an imminent national security threat. "Security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; rather, the utterance itself is the act" (Wæver, 1995: 54). However, actors do not make their securitizing claim out of thin air. There must be some developments around the subjects of securitization that actors maneuver to create a security discourse. According to McDonald (2008), these enabling developments are contextual factors.

Although the securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia was introduced in 1995, as indicated at the beginning of this chapter, it predominantly became a public issue in 2011. Abbink (2014:353) quoted the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's saying: "Muslim radicalization and activism might grow out of hand and needed a state response." Specific reasons reiterated by the late Premier, argued Abbink (2014), were the violent incidents and inter-religious skirmishes in the town of Jimma, Oromia region in 2011 and the increasing public and social media polemics between Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Protestant preachers, and religious intellectuals who engaged in frequent criticism of each other's faith.

Even though interreligious conflicts in Ethiopia have resulted from diverse factors and have been subject to different explanations, the Prime Minister's expression tilted to equate these conflicts with religious conflict. Moreover, although all religious groups engage in religious polemic, the late Prime Minister exclusively emphasized Muslims when he said, "Muslim radicalization and activism might grow out of hand and needed state response." Regarding interfaith conflicts in Jimma, ICG (2016) reported that the clashes were rooted in the country's historical and complex ethno-linguistic, political, and economic dominations rather than the religious nature of contemporary animosities. Otsebo (2007), on the other hand, contends that faith-based violence in Ethiopia is mainly attributed to competition over the ownership claims and allocation of land to build religious institutions rather than motives of religious extremism. Differently from the above two positions, Jep (2014) argued that inter-religious group violence in Ethiopia reflects the post 9/11 global discourse "War on Terror," as the latter has been considered the worldwide confrontation between Muslims and Christians. He further noted that the position of the Ethiopian government is in line with western insecurities towards the perceived threat of Islam, thereby lessening the confidence of Ethiopian Muslims in their government. Abbink (1998) associated inter and intra-religious polemics among different religious communities with the post-1991 political liberalization in Ethiopia that contributed to the extensive circulation of spiritual knowledge and consequent religious revival. As discussed earlier, the relations between the Ethiopian government and its Muslim community had already deteriorated starting in 1995. The late prime minister's rhetoric was only further securitization of Islam using interfaith conflicts and religious polemic as contextual factors to facilitate securitization.

Moreover, the late premier utilized new developments in the Arab world called the "Arab Spring" in 2011 to reinforce the government's already securitized approaches to Muslims anchored in increasing domestic religious revivalism. However, this revivalism that was observable among all religious communities in Ethiopia was read in the context of the emergence of Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Somalia and Sudan, and the post 9/11 global security formation based on the perceived threat of Islam. The late Prime Minister and his party were suspicious of popular mobilizations due to the regime's repressive stance towards opposition and change-seeking political groups. Socioeconomic problems and political maladministration mainly derived from the popular uprisings in the Muslim Arab world. As the issues of inequality, unemployment, and political repression were also grieving Ethiopians, tensions and fears of a potential rise of the same kinds of protests spread among the regime's top leadership circles (Lyons, 2015; Nicolas, 2015). The Prime Minister, in his parliamentary speech, linked the popular uprisings in the Arab world with 'Islamic extremism' when he said; "Extremist Islamic groups are creating trouble in Libya, Yemen, and Egypt and are trying to bring the Arab Spring in Ethiopia" (Quoted in Muhamed, 2016: 259).

4.4. Extraordinary Intervention; Compulsory Ahbashism Training

Although the government has controlled the activities of the Muslim community through loyal *Mejilis* officials and the removal of alternative Islamic organizations since 1995, it has never interfered in the spiritual affairs of the religious communities till 2011(Muhamed, 2016). In the summer of 2011, in collaboration with the Islamic Affairs council, the Ethiopian regime organized a compulsory training of Muslims that forced Ethiopian Muslims to embrace and confess a foreign sect/version of Islam called Ahbash as a moderate or peaceful version of Islam that Ethiopian Muslims should practice. Østebø (2013:23) referred to such a shift in the government’s policy and activities "from containment to the production of a governmental Islam." The government expressed the need to introduce Ahbashism to Ethiopian Muslims as a preventive and counter-radicalization strategy to the trends of extremism within the Muslim community. Abbink (2020: 2009) illustrated the position of the government as follows;

> "*The perception was that the growing 'reformist', revivalist-scriptural Islam, that had profited from the constitutional right to religious freedom, was radicalizing people and that the common Ethiopian Muslim masses were in danger of being hijacking by radicals and 'fundamentalists'*"

The Mejlis and Ministry of Federal Affairs (now Ministry of Peace) officially invited the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects (popularly called Ahbash) from Lebanon to teach moderate Islam to Ethiopian Muslims to counter extremism from "Salafi/Wahhabi" Islam (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:12). The Al-Ahbash ("the Ethiopians") movement, also known as the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects, is a Lebanese-based organization that was “ironically founded by an Ethiopian shaykh named 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Harari al-Shi'bi al-Abdari, also known as al-Habashi” (Alula, 2012: 14). It is a movement that fervently adheres to the teachings of the late shaykh, who departed Ethiopia in the 1970s to Syria and later to Lebanon due to religious differences with his contemporaries in Ethiopia (Muhamed, 2016). Al-Ahbash has grown to become one of Lebanon's major Islamic movements by the late 1980s. Al-Ahbash became a major participant in Lebanese politics by supporting pluralism and tolerance, earning a large following among the Sunni urban middle class. However, based on the Ethiopian government's accusation of being Muslim, this organization is known for espousing teachings that are out of the basic preaching of Islam, the remarkable one which is their policy calling the so-called "Salafi" or "Wahhabi" Muslims apostates (Alula, 2012). Al-Ahbash is preaching something that is not Islamic. Indeed, every Muslim understands that calling a Muslim a kafir is forbidden if he or she testifies that there is no deity/authority other than Allah (SWT) and that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is Allah's Messenger, prays the five daily prayers, pays the zakah, fasts during Ramadan, and makes a pilgrimage to Makkah if depending his/her financial capability (ibid). In this regard, the so-called 'Salafi-Wahhabi' are no different from other Muslims(ibid). Furthermore, the founder's pro-Israel views and assaults on "well-respected" Islamic scholars sparked outrage among Ethiopia's mainstream Muslims (Jawar, 2012). The forceful training continued from July to December of 2011, as reported by USCIRF (2013:1) as;

> "*The Ethiopian Ministry of Federal Affairs and the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) held mandatory "religious tolerance" training for all imams and Islamic school teachers and administrators in the Addis Ababa and the Amhara, Harar, and Oromia regions*."

The training was compulsory for Muslims recruited by the government from all parts of the country to learn and spread the al-Abash Islamic teachings to their fellow Muslims (Østebø and Wallelign, 2015). This strategy of the regime to impose the so-called "moderate Islamic sects" or "Ahbash" proved the former's securitization of Islam and ensuing extraordinary approach towards Muslims, forceful indoctrinations of an alien sect or *Ahbashism* (Jep, 2014). Haustein and Østebø (2011:16-17) referred to such a policy and activities of the government towards Muslims as: "A total breach of Muslims' constitutional rights, "deprivation of the religious community's religious autonomy," and dividing them as a community."

The government's forcefully imposition of the perceived moderate Islamic sect on Ethiopian Muslims demonstrates the former's securitization move towards Islam beyond speech acts and policy frameworks through extraordinary action against Muslims. In this regard, Haustein and Otsebo (2011:12) argued that the government's forceful indoctrination of Ahbashism to Ethiopian Muslims proved a dramatic shift in its previous repressive stands to Muslims to security practices, in their words, "from repressive policies to interferences in the internal affairs of the religious community."

The decision of the government to forcefully indoctrinate Muslims is considered an extraordinary approach. In the first instance, the act violates the country's legal framework, particularly the FDRE constitution, particularly Article 11 of the Ethiopian Constitution, which prohibits the interference of the state in religious affairs as:

1. *"State and religion are separate."*
2. *"There shall be no state religion."*
3. *"The state shall not interfere in religious matters, and religion shall not interfere in state affairs*."

The government's action to dictate Muslim religious orientations violated the religious liberty of the religious community granted by the constitution of the state as the freedom to believe and exercise religious conscience and to maintain an autonomous religious institution from unnecessary interference by the government.

The government tried to justify its actions of inviting religious scholars from Lebanon and thereby importing their religious doctrines by claiming that it had arrived to such a decision due to the need to teach Muslims what it calls 'moderate or tolerant Islam' and protect them from extremist ideologies. The government's aim from inviting Islamic teachers from Lebanon was to "warm Muslims about the alleged rise of Islamic extremism and instruct them to adhere to a more moderate version of Islam" (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:16-17). By doing so, the government further securitizes Islam and Muslims by dividing narratives about the religious community. As securitization by its very nature involves security framing that constitutes the "domains of political interaction by distributing and administering fear and trust among human interactions" (Huysman, 2006:51), the government's 'extremists' versus 'moderate' or 'Sufi- Salafi’ dividing narrative was clearly a securitization move. This is because, in any socio-political system, human relations are arranged by differentiating elements of the society that "can be trusted" from those that "should be feared" (ibid). Accordingly, the government's alarm to the Muslim community about the rising threat of "Salafism/Wahabism" during the Ahbashism training and the need to adopt the moderate doctrine of the "Ahbash" sect of Islam was to spread and administer "fear and trust" among Ethiopian Muslims. By dividing Muslims as "Wahhabist/Salafist" and "Sufis," the government arranged the relationships that tie with the security discourse of "fundamentalist" and "moderate," respectively, and distinguished those who can be trusted from those who should be feared.

In addressing the questions from Muslims over the training, the late Prime Minister argued that the government’s presence during the training session was to teach them about the constitutional value of tolerance for Muslims and warn them from becoming the subjects of global 'Salafist' recruitment projects. He further argued that it was due to the government’s strong belief that if they taught Muslims about their constitutional duties and rights, and the constitutional principle of secularism on the separation of state and religion, they would not follow the wrong path of extremists. Here, the late Premier claimed disciplinary power to teach Muslims about their constitutional rights and duties and the wickedness of adhering oneself to extremist Muslims which he objectified as "Wahabis or Salafists." The disciplinary training, as claimed by the government, was devoted to a particular section of Muslims while excluding those whom the former called 'extremist' or 'Salafi' Muslims, who mostly resisted the government's 'Ahbashism' indoctrination program. Nonetheless, the government relied on dividing narratives in the whole process of the training. Disciplinary power "trains the moving, confused, useless multitude of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements, small, separate cells, organic autonomies, genetic identities and continuities, combinatory segments″ than selective and exclusionary orders (Foucault, 1995:132).

An extensive apparatus of the Supreme council or Mejlis and its strong link with the government eased the way for the latter to control the religious community (Haustein and Østebø, 2011). In this manner, the government managed the role of Mejilis to support the securitization process than representative and symbolic roles to the Muslims. As securitization is dependent on institutions devoted to maintaining security discourses, the Mejilis have supported the government's security discourse and scrutiny of Muslims (Poutanen, 2015). The government's suppression of other Islamic organizations made EIASC the only representative of the Muslim population and gave it control over every aspect of the religious community's life (Jep, 2014). However, a close examination of the activities which the institution sought involvement in has made it appear indifferent to its role to represent the Muslim community and increased the latter's suspicions towards the organization (ibid).

Although Muslims were granted more rights under the EPRD rule relative to earlier periods, at the same time, the latter never addressed the multifaceted problems of a multi-religious society inherited from previous discriminatory policies (Abbink, 1998). Moreover, the promising start of the government quickly declined when its approach to Muslims shifted from accommodative to securitized in 1995, contributing to the disadvantages of the latter, who lost benefits in the first half of the 1990s. These conditions also produced a negative attitude of Muslims toward the regime (Østebø, 2007). In this regard, Abbink (2014: 316) argued that developments in 1995/96 created "mutual perceptions and attitudes" between the EPRDF government and the Ethiopian Muslim community. Mutual perceptions and attitudes have played a role in shaping security policies in what Buzan (1983: 226) referred "positional perspectives" of both individuals and the state affects the state's security policies. He also asserted that state and individual positional perspectives "vary in time and space" based on particular developments and the viewers' position in these developments. However, all the violent incidents were not presented publicly, relating them to Islam and Muslims. Even frequent violent attacks from the Somali-based self-proclaimed Islamic political force, Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya or Al-Shabaab, were not publicly portrayed as 'Islamic extremist' or "Islamic terrorism" either by politicians or media outlets in Ethiopia the way they have been presented in the post 9/11 period. Instead, they were expressed as "Somalia Militants" without associating them with Islam or describing them as Jihad or "Islamic extremism." Thus, the period between 1995-2000 marked the silent securitization of Islam in Ethiopia in the context of domestic public visibility of Muslims and the rise of Al-Shabab in Somalia and Islamic forces in Sudan and Eritrea as contextual factors. During this period, the ultimate effect of securitization was the introduction of institutional control and regulations of Islam in Ethiopia that laid the ground for securitization through policy frameworks and institutional practices in subsequent years (Haustein and Østebø, 2011: 13; Vaughan and Tronvol, 2002).

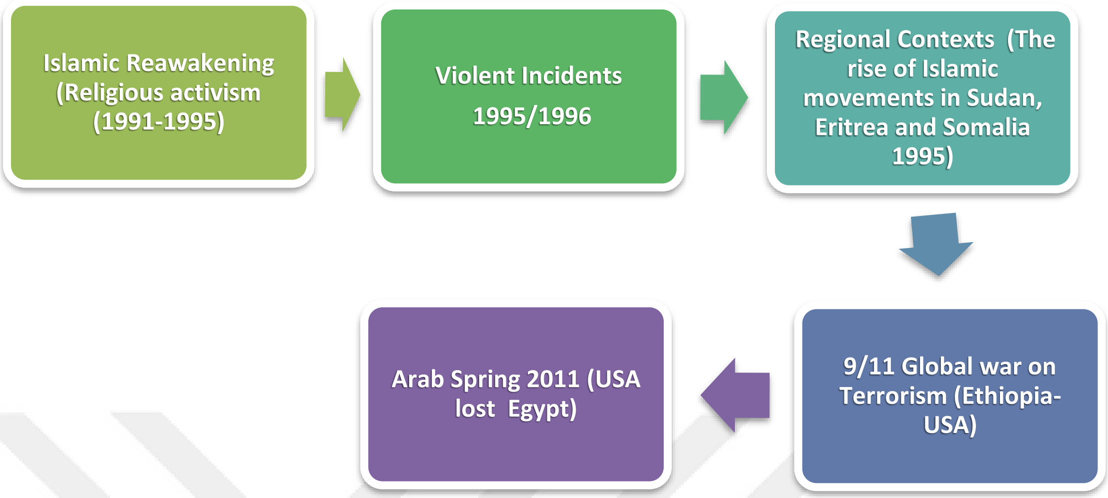

Islamic Reawakening (Religious activism (1991-1995)
Violent Incidents
1995/1996
Regional Contexts (The rise of Islamic movements in Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia 1995)
9/11 Global war on Terrorism (Ethiopia-USA)
Arab Spring 2011 (USA lost Egypt)

Figure 3; Contextual factors for securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia.

Conclusion

According to securitization theory, securitization is a political actor's speech acts made to convince the broader audience about an existential threat to the particular referent object, i.e., the territorial integrity of the state and society's cherished values and identity. Security is created by intersubjective agreements among the predominant section of the general public. The security discourses are created to legitimize the securitizing actor's interest in adopting extraordinary measures toward the subjects of the securitized issue. The securitization of Islam as a phenomenon of speech acts has appeared in Ethiopia's security discourse since 1995, which resulted in behavioral and policy changes by the government toward Muslims.

The primary actor in the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has been the minority authoritarian regime supplemented by functional actors from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church institution mainly that of Mahibere Kidusan and externally the US and Israeli agencies that indirectly influence the regime's policies towards Muslim communities. Unlike securitization theory's view of securitization as a two-way communication process between securitizing actors and the audience, Muslims were securitized in Ethiopia without supportive security discourses bought by at least a significant portion of the Ethiopian general public. In other words, the role of the audience to approve the securitizing claims of the elite was irrelevant. Thus, the moment elites developed a securitized attitude about Islam and Muslims, it resulted in changes in policies and practical security approaches that negatively affected the life and relations of Muslims individually and as a community. The irrelevancy of the audience in this context may be attributed to the general authoritarian political culture in Ethiopia. The addition of this study to the theoretical debate of securitization theory is that in nondemocratic political systems, the causal relationships between actors' speech acts and parallel policy changes serve as a measure of securitization. Thus, securitization, the transfer of an issue from everyday politics to security politics through actor-audience intersubjective agreement, appear as a one-way, top-down process in non-democratic political settings as securitizing actors do not need the audience's legitimizing effects to take extraordinary measures against their subjects of securitization. In the context of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, 'Islamic extremism has been identified as the topmost existential threat to the referent object, i.e., state security or the survival of Ethiopian state and its secular order. As pointed out in the theoretical formwork, one of the major criticisms against securitization theory has been its emphasis on speech acts with little attention to the context in which securitizing actors conduct their securitizing speech acts. Against this criticism, this study examines the contextual factors of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the speech acts about the 'Islamic fundamentalism' as a threat to the Ethiopian state were made in conjunction with various domestic developments, regional dynamics, and global security environments or international contexts in different periods. Accordingly, the contextual factors or facilitating conditions for securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia chronologically were the increasing religious revival following the 1991 political transformation, violent conflicts mainly in 1995/96, the political rise of Islamists in the Horn of Africa (mainly in Sudan in 1987, Somalia in 2006), the post 9/11 global discourse of the 'War on Terror’, and the events of the Arab Spring in 2011. The Ethiopian government has expressed concern about the potential threat of 'Islamic fundamentalism' in Ethiopia using various local, regional, and global contextual factors.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

GEOPOLITICS OF THE HORN OF AFRICA; IMPLICATIONS TO SECURITIZATION OF ISLAM IN ETHIOPIA.

Securitization in Ethiopia cannot be fully comprehended without understanding the fundamental structure of geopolitics in the Horn of Africa region. The Horn of Africa is the northeastern section of the African continent, facing the Red Sea to the east, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Nile Valley to the west. The region comprises the states of Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Eritrea. This part of Africa has always been the strategic concern of great powers due to the Red Sea shipping lanes and the strait of Bab al-Mandeb, which are the most important international trade routes between Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (Woodward, 2006). Moreover, the region's vicinity to the source of much Middle Eastern oil in the Gulf and the need to secure safe transportation and protect that source makes the area one of the geo-strategic sites globally attractive to global and emerging powers (ibid). Another geostrategic significance of the region comes from its being the source of the Nile River, the longest river in the world, rising from Ethiopian highlands, which contributes 86% of the river's water. The Nile River stretches across twelve countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.), and Egypt; on its way to the Mediterranean Sea. The abundant water resources of the Nile valley connect the region with Middle Eastern geopolitics.

Geopolitics in this study refers to the behaviors and relations between international, regional, and local political powers and actors deterministically influenced by the geostrategic position and significance of the Horn of Africa. The traditional study of international relations emphasized the importance of material factors such as the sea, ports, natural resources, and military capabilities as the ultimate factors in influencing states' behaviors while conducting their relations with other states.

The realism school of international relations and geopolitics emphasizes the balance of power and alliance formations as determining factors in studying and understanding states' behavior in international relations, such as safeguarding their interests, conducting war, and deterring potential adversaries or developments that challenge their security. Accordingly, states rely on the balance of power and alliance formation to ensure their ultimate purpose of survival. Balance of power as a theory explains states' foreign policy behaviors of allying with foes of its adversaries to influence outcomes in the system or sub-system (Paul, 2004). Balancing is a foreign policy strategy states use to prevent other states from becoming powerful by threatening the interest of other states. On the other hand, the balance of power refers to the equilibrium of power among crucial states in the system and sub-system (ibid). States achieve balancing by forging alliances with foes of their adversaries or sources of threat or allying the principal threat itself (Walt, 1985). According to this premise, states forge alliances to ensure their national interests and to not be threatened by states or a coalition of nations capable of mobilizing considerable resources to pose threats (ibid).

Realists emphasize states' materially defined interests, fear, and opportunity in their theorization of international relations. For this reason, they have been subjected to criticism by other theories, such as constructivists and post-modernists, on the grounds that it disregards the roles of values and ideational structures in shaping the relations between and among states. The leading theory in this regard is social constructivism, which believes that values systems or ideational structures are more important in determining the nature and patterns of interaction among actors in global politics (Wendt, 1999). Proponents of this view assert that ideas, identities, cultures, and world views influence the behavior of state and non-state actors in international relations more than material interests.

The dichotomization of international relations between the material and ideational world hinders a comprehensive understanding of international politics as the two factors are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This study adopts Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) as a geopolitical analysis tool to fill this gap. The reason to assume RSCT is to examine how material and ideational factors interplay in influencing the behaviors of the states in international relations. The study adopts security as a holistic concept with material and identity dimensions. In this context, security means both economic and material and perceptions of amity and enmity in defining and articulating the national security threats. Thus, securitization is based on the geopolitical ramifications of security complexes where states frame internal security through their perceptions of other countries in the same region and the developments there. Regional security complex theory examines the patterns of amities and hostilities in the interaction states in the same regional security complex (Buzan and Weaver, 2004).

Moreover, RSCT shows the intersections between local, regional, and global contexts and actors in a particular regional complex setting. The Horn of Africa is a regional security complex in this study as the countries in the Horn of Africa, namely, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti, have interdependent security and political fates. Similarly, states in this region have security perceptions of each other. Thus, it is relevant to examine the security dynamics in the area and its contribution to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa region encompasses countries with a varied history of state formation, socio-cultural compositions, ecology, and geographic features. Some of them (Ethiopia) have a long account of statehood, centralized administrations, and independent existence. In contrast, others emerged from European colonial powers' scramble for Africa and the ensuing struggles for decolonization (Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti). Few others were created by secession from the former states (Eretria from Ethiopia, South Sudan from Sudan, and Somaliland from Somalia). The Horn of Africa is an excellent geopolitical and strategic location that attracts global and regional powers. The Horn is a vital getaway to Africa and is surrounded by bodies of water, the Red Sea to the east, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Nile Valley to the west. The region's strategic location that enables it to penetrate and control Africa, watch over the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, the oil resources in Middle East Asia, and the Suez Canal (1869) has made it the focus of global powers' attention throughout history.

The geographic location of the region, particularly its vicinity from the most crucial international trade roots, the Red Sea and the strait of Bab al-Mandeb, which connects international trade between Asia, Europe, America, Africa, and the Middle East through the Suez Canal make the region geo-strategically valuable from the perspectives of great powers (Woodward, 2006). The Red Sea connects the commercial transports over the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean through the Suez Canal and the straits of Bab al Mandab, respectively. The Sea is a vital artery of the global economy, the international trade route between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia through which oil is transported from the Persian Gulf to consumers in North America, Europe, and Asia (De Waal, 2020). More than 10 % of international cargo by sea passes through The Red Sea, including most trade between Asia and Africa (ibid). The Red Sea is a crucial chokepoint for any great power and ambitious global or regional hegemon, as evidenced by China's decision to establish its first overseas naval facility in Djibouti (ibid). As a result, the region has been the geopolitical concern of global, regional, and emerging powers throughout history, from the Romans to the Ottoman empire, from the colonial powers of Britain, France, and Italy to the Cold War US-USSR, all the way down to contemporary US-China competition for global domination.

Moreover, the location of the Horn of Africa on the African coast and parallel to the Arabian side of the Red Sea make the region's politics an integral part of Middle Eastern politics, including the Arab-Israeli areas of conflict. Another geopolitical value of the Horn comes from the Nile River, which represents the primary water system in the region from which Egypt and Sudan get more than 98% of their water demands, and Israel holds a long-term plan to use the water from the river as a solution for its water insecurity (Woodward, 1996: 11). The region's geographic location, resources in the area, and its closeness to the critical international trade routes are the material motives that underpin external actors' interests to involve in the region. However, the geopolitical competition of regional and global actors is not only inspired by the need to protect national interests in terms of material objects or physical features, but also by values and norms that the country wants to uphold and spread to other corners of the world, especially when that country is aspiring and robust enough to project power or influence over the world or particular region (Chatterjee, 2020).

While some International Relations theories, such as Realism, emphasize the material determinants of states' behavior in international systems, others like Constructivism prioritize identities and values to understand and explain the behaviors of the state and the structure of the system. This study prefers the regional security complex (RSCT) theory to develop a more comprehensive vision of regional politics and its relation to the topic of this study. This theory has two critical analytical values; securitization theory's multi-sector approach to security enables it to integrate different elements of security like economic, environmental, societal, regime, and human aspects as well as to examine the role of ideational factors and values in actor's interpretation of security in different contexts. As a result, the study can fill in the gap between overly material and idealistic explanations and develop a more comprehensive outlook of the complex geopolitical and security dynamics in the Horn of Africa.

5.1. The Security Dynamics in the Horn of Africa during the Cold War

In the 1970s, the rivalry for the geopolitical sphere of influence between the U.S. and USSR reached the Horn Africa. The two were mainly motivated by the strategic position of the region to project military power over the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, and the Middle Eastern region (Woodward, 2006). From the standpoint of the great powers, the Horn has been a strategic region not only because of Red Sea shipping lanes and the strait of Bab al-Mandeb, but also to exploit intensive natural resources in the area and as a shelterbelt to protect Middle Eastern oil resources (ibid). During much of the Cold War, the Horn offered great powers with base facilities to preserve the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea and potential use for the Gulf, where great power bases were limited until the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Both the U.S.A. and USSR were playing a game of checkers in the region as each aligned with Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia at different periods. According to Woodward (2006; 106), this is "a unique record in international politics." As a result, regimes in the region could manipulate the ideological inclinations of superpowers against each other to secure military and economic support for their government's survival.

The United States established its first strategic partnership in the region with Ethiopia in 1943 with the army and surveillance installation at Kagnew Station near Asmara, now Eritrea. The United States supported Ethiopia, except for a brief interruption during the Ethiopian socialist regime (1974-1991) (Baissa, 1989). In the early 1960s, the USSR entered the Horn and established military and strategic relations with Sudan and Somalia. The Soviets were able to build military infrastructure at the port of Berbera on the Gulf of Aden (Yordanov, 2016). The Soviets' engagement in the Horn's geopolitics was underpinned not only by the region's geostrategic location, but also to divert the attention and resources of its Western adversaries from Europe, where it was more vulnerable to military threats (ibid). Throughout the Cold War, the priority of superpowers was to maximize client states and regimes based on their respective ideological convictions rather than stabilize the region. Due to the excessive weapon supplies from the U.S. and USSR, governments resorted to military and violent solutions to most of the socioeconomic and political problems in the Horn of African states.

In addition to making client states in the region, the two powers were competing to create a supranational political organization in the Horn of Africa that would control the Red Sea and the all-important entries to the Suez Canal and serve their interests in the area (Schwab, 1978). In the 1970s, USSR using the diplomatic service of Cuban revolutionary President

Fidel Castor, launched a project to unite Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, and Djibouti to form a socialist regional block that would enable the Soviets to control the world's crucial trade routes and the Horn of Africa (Mohhamed, 2020). However, Castro's diplomacy was unsuccessful due to the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977 over the Ogden region in Ethiopia inhabited by the Somali ethnic population. Despite the end of the Cold War and the ensuing superpowers' geopolitical rivalry in the area, the aspiration for an integrated Horn of Africa under a single ideological umbrella never died (ibid). In the aftermath of the Cold War, the Horn of Africa has been continued to be strategically significant to global and regional powers, mainly as military bases as a shelterbelt to protect the smooth operation of the Red Sea and oil reserves in the Middle East, as a source of water and different economic resources and foreign direct investment (Woodward, 2006). However, the Horn's excellent geostrategic value never contributed positively to regional peace, stability, security, and development. Instead, the region has always been volatile and full of threats to the safe functioning of international trades over the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

5.2. Post-Cold War Security Formation and Regional Security Complex in the Horn of Africa

As Buzan (1983) argued, the international security system and formation are the byproducts of many securities complex regional units or sub-system security formations that overlap and correspond. Accordingly, securitization in one country is conducted within a regional security context at the nexus of global and local circumstances and developments (Buzan & Waever, 2004). Despite its location in East Africa, the Horn of Africa cannot be thought solely as African as its history is equally linked to Arabia, including the influence and the spread of Islam (Woodward, 2006). Thus, it is relevant to consider the global contexts and parallel regional dynamics and developments to examine the Ethiopian government's discourses on Islamic fundamentalism as a threat to the country and its secular order. The study addresses how the changing global environment in the post-Cold War period and the geopolitical context have contributed to the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The focus here is on the developments in the countries of the Horn of Africa, mainly Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Egypt, that the Ethiopian regime has utilized to facilitate its securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, claiming the logic of regional security and complex theory.

Despite the death of communism as a competing or ideological threat to the U.S.'s global vision in the Horn of Africa with the end of the Cold War and American triumphalism, the U.S. remains concerned with the region due to the political rise 'of Islamist political forces, with Islamic political orientations' (ibid). Although the U.S.'s most significant threats from Islamist political forces have appeared in the Middle East, particularly following the Iranian revolution of 1979, there was a fear that it would spread across Muslim Africa (ibid). This was confirmed by political developments in Sudan in the 1990s and subsequent efforts and policies of the Sudanese government in Horn and East Africa. The first challenge the U.S. faced in the region in the aftermath of the Cold War was how to redefine its post-Cold War policies vis-a-vis the rise of Islamic political forces in the area. Islamists took control of political power in Sudan in 1989 and then started to embark on an Islamic agenda in the region and Middle East (ibid). This was considered a challenge to U.S. interests and friends in the area, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and regimes in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda (ibid). In this regard, Vadala (2003) argued that the rise of Islam as an alternative means of governance and political mobilization in the Horn of African countries, mainly Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, made the United States re-engage in its regional politics in the post-Cold war period. In addition to the post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy of fighting '*Islamic extremism*,' the Horn's proximity to the Middle East makes the region part of the U.S. policies vis-à-vis Middle Eastern developments, including Israeli security and the Arab-Israeli disputes, and Egyptian water dependence on the Nile River (ibid). The need to ensure the safety of strategic waterways and international trade routes, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the strait of Bab al-Mandeb, and Middle Eastern oil resources make the region an integral part of the U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East. The U.S.'s vision for the area has been to create a multilateral, regional organization based on the liberal value of regional integration through economic and trade relations and political cooperation to prevent Islamic political groups in any country of the Horn of Africa (Mohhamed, 2020). To that end, the U.S. and its E.U. partners initiated and supported the idea of establishing a regional partner organization as part of their peace and security strategies in the Horn of Africa with the founding of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 1996, which facilitates cooperation among the region’s countries in the areas of development and governance, Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorism in the region. However, the regional organization is ineffective as Western countries wish to satisfy their interests of peace and security in the region, and the threats of fundamentalism remain on their agenda today.

The fear among Western governments that Islamist (perceived anti-western) forces pose a potential threat to the safety of international trade through the Red Sea through which their oil tankers pass to the Suez Canal persists to this today. Moreover, the need among western powers to establish an institutional organization security framework is challenged by the contentions over the ownership security environment and organizations in the region (De Waal, 2020). A New Red Sea alliance for multilateral security organization for the Red Sea region called the Council of Arab and African coastal States of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden was launched by Saudi Arabia in 2020 that comprises all eight coastal states of the Red Sea, namely Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia itself, but not Israel (American security alliance in the region) which possess the port of Eilat on the Red Sea (ibid). The problem is whether states that have no coastlines on either side of the Red Sea but have historical, economic and security interests in the sea should be part of Red Sea governance or not. In this regard, the African Union framed the regional security environment as 'The *Red Sea Arena'* and included Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan, which depend on Red Sea ports for their commerce and international trade and have security concerns shared in the region. The Red Sea arena would include Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, which have invested in Red Sea ports, Oman, which has historic ties down the Swahili coast as far as Zanzibar, and Qatar and Iran, which retain links to the Sea (ibid). The region's geostrategic position is also valuable in the eyes of global actors in Europe, Asia, the U.S., and Russia. Currently, the Horn is the destination of key international and regional actors, including the U.S., China, France, Italy, Japan, U.A.E., Turkey, Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia military bases with many local political ramifications (Shahzad, 2021).

The United States Institute of Peace, 2020 broadened The Red Sea arena to cover the Arabian and African coasts of the Red Sea as a shared economic, political, and security ecosystem that incorporates the eight states of the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda) and the Middle Eastern states of Egypt, Israel, the Gulf states, and Turkey who have been considerably involved in and affecting the regional conditions. Moreover, the institute views the geopolitical and geo-economical order and dynamics of the Horn of Africa as part and parcel of the Middle East, the Indio-Pacific, and the Mediterranean regions with its geographic vicinity to the strategically important trade route, Red Sea, and oil-rich states of Arabian Peninsula that border and depend on the Sea for their international trade and transits. Thus, developments in the African Horn have direct or indirect political, economic, and security effects on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean regions. This forms the foreground factor for the solid geopolitical interests of global powers in the Horn of Africa.

The post-cold war U.S.'s vision of peace and security for the Middle East has brought Israel and Egypt, the U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia together to officially form the American–led alliance in the region (De Waal, 2020). While this coalition is primarily to deter state and non-state Islamist political forces, including Iran, Al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, and now possibly against Turkey, Qatar, China, and Russia, the U.S.'s message for African states of the Horn is that ambitious members of the club should reach Washington through Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Cairo, and Tel Aviv (ibid). For the Emiratis and Saudis, the priority is to preserve the Red Sea as a strategic alternative for oil exports if the Persian Gulf fails in crisis and to prevent Islamists from seizing power anywhere in the region (ibid). While all countries around the Red Sea region have to rearrange their interests according to U.S. policies, the African Union has recognized the need for strategies to ensure peace and security in the Red Sea arena that goes beyond the wills of great powers and toward practical engagements based on the principles of Africa's peace and security governance (ibid).

Water is another addition to the Horn's geostrategic significance that increases the concern of global powers and their regional configuration, mainly the U.S. and its regional ally Egypt and Israel. Egypt, the key U.S. security partner in the Middle East and North Africa, relies on the Nile River for almost its water demands. Israel has long-term interests and dealings with Egypt to utilize the water resources of the Nile and mitigate its national water insecurity. There have always been tensions and mutual suspicion between Egypt and Ethiopia (another U.S. security ally in the Horn of Africa), where most of the river's water resources originate from. Specifically, the tension between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Ethiopian hydroelectric dam project called Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River in Ethiopia after Ethiopia's determination to dam up the Nile to increase electricity production has raised the concerns of the U.S. and in the region. The GERD is a geopolitical spinoff of global and regional power configurations and resistances, mainly during Arab Spring. Using the logic of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), this chapter explores the interplay of the ideational and material factors in determining the security dynamics and geopolitics in the Horn of Africa and its implications for the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. In this regard, emphasis is given to relations between regional and global contexts and actors in security construction around Islam and towards Muslims. Post-Cold War geopolitical developments such as the rising to power of an Islamist regime in Sudan, the Arab Spring, the launching of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance (GERD), and Trump's deal of the century are the focus of analysis.

5.3. The Global War on Terrorism and Implications to Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S. appeared to be the only powerful player in the Horn of Africa. After the withdrawal of the USSR from the region and the ensuing removal of socialism as a competitive ideological framework for regimes in the countries of the Horn of Africa, the U.S. government has identified Islam as a formidable social and political force that could serve as an ideological means of political mobilization in countries of the Horn region (mainly in Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia) in the early 1990s and would challenge its vision for the region. The post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy towards the region has been reoriented from containing socialism to containing any Islamist forces controlling power. The rising insecurities in the Middle East, especially after the Iranian revolution, Africa's domestic instabilities, the rise of Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa, and ensuing regional insecurities such as providing a haven for terrorist groups, especially the al-Qaeda network, brought the region to U.S. attention in the post-cold war period (Woodward, 2006).

The first Islamist challenges to U.S. strategic interest in the region came from Sudan in 1989, when self-proclaimed Islamist groups controlled the state by military means (Woodward, 2006). Since then, the U.S. government has been implementing several strategies to counter the regime in Sudan for almost three decades; "from cutting development aid to listing Sudan for its support of international terrorism- shutting down the export of oil through sanctions and inflaming national and regional antagonisms" (ibid, 2006: 156). The most considerable success of the U.S. in this regard was, in collaboration with its regional allies Israel and Ethiopia, the secession of South Sudan, where most of the country's oil resources are found, after a long and bloody civil war that exhausted the capacity of the Sudanese government (ibid).

Another Islamist threat that the U.S. perceived in the region has been from Somalia. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union provided the government of Somalia with arms and funds while the U.S. was sending arms to clan chiefs, which changed several regions, cities, and harbors into self-declared autonomous areas after the collapse of the US-backed central authority (Shahzad, 2021). While Cold War rivalries left Somalia divided among warring groups and autonomous regions, Al Shabab, an armed group, splintered off from the Islamic Courts Union (I.C.U.), a coalition of Somali Islamic courts in 2003 and an affiliate of Al Qaeda. The U.S. involvement in Somalia started in 1992 when the U.S. sent its humanitarian services and troops after the extended civil war that resulted in state failure in Somalia (Woodward, 2006). However, military intervention in Somalia brought unexpected outcomes with the disastrous defeat of the U.S. army on the African coast of the Indian Ocean, an event recorded as "one of the worst ever U.S. interventions" (ibid; 162). Although there were no Islamist political activities at the beginning of Somalia's crisis that claimed victory over the defeat of the U.S. Army in Somalia, various Islamist forces appeared to evolve during the prolonged conflict and collapse of state institutions (Dewaal, 2015). After the reprehensible defeat, the U.S. withdrew all its troops in Somalia in 1994, giving Islamist groups a sense of victory and capability of protecting the Muslim World from U.S. imperialism and military occupations (Woodward, 2006).

With disastrous military defeat in Somalia and a robust Islamist regime in Sudan, the U.S. has reshuffled its foreign policy directions towards these countries and the broader Horn in general, from direct military engagements to working with allies in the region to protect America's geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa (ibid). The U.S. government and its agencies groomed the then-new regimes in Ethiopia and Eritrea to curtail the Islamist regime in Sudan and political forces in Somalia and prevent any Islamist groups in Ethiopia and Eritrea from having a role in politics or coming to power.

The process started in 1960 "when America was alerted that her position in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa was facing danger when it realized that a guerrilla organization called Jebha (E.L.F., Eritrean Liberation Front) founded by Eritrean Muslims, led by Idris Mohammed Adam, and supported by closely allied Arab countries were gaining fame through its military campaigns in the Eritrean low lands, while the Government of Haile Selassie battered from various angles was shaking unable to stand on its feet. The United States Government was worried that if the situation continued in this way, Eritrea and the Red Sea would fall under the control of extremist Muslim/Arab countries" (Tesfa Mikael Giorgio (the then governor of a district in Eritrea, who participated in the negotiations at Qagnew between the C.I.A. and Issayas Afework (the current president of Eritrea) told to Senai magazine, Addis Ababa, February 1985). As a result, in 1969, the C.I.A. launched a secret project called the "seed planting project" at Qagnew military station near Asmara, now the capital of Eritrea, to prepare alternative mechanisms to protect American interests in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa as the United States completely lost confidence in Haile Selassie's government (ibid). Moreover, the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 and the ensuing rise of a Marxist regime in Ethiopia dramatically altered the traditional approaches of the U.S. government towards Ethiopia. To implement the project, the C.I.A. officials in Qagnew started recruiting and grooming individuals to infiltrate, plot, and overthrow the Ethiopian socialist regime and the Muslim guerrilla organization in Eritrea (E.L.F.), which was mainly active in the Eritrean lowlands. It was easy for the U.S. to pick out future agents from the Eritrean groups opposing the E.L.F. They recruited Isaias Afework to follow Eritrean (the current president of Eritrea) conditions and report to them (ibid). He and his teams were selected based on his religion, as indicated by the words of one of the then

C.I.A.'s staff in Eritrea; "Our spies were largely Christians as the Christian highlanders in Eritrea were afraid of being overwhelmed by the Muslims" (ibid: 6).

He was precisely trained and sent to join and infiltrate the E.L.F. In consultation with C.I.A.'s staff, Esayas formed a splinter organization called *'Selfi Netsanet*,' which later became a powerful organization, that aimed to break Eritrea away from the mainland of Ethiopia as an independent state (ibid). Similarly, the U.S. created the rebel group Tigran People Liberation Front (TPLF), and used it to overthrow the Ethiopian socialist regime in 1974. Later, TPLF emerged as a solid ally for US-led' War on Terror' in the Horn of Africa and served as a tool to contain, neutralize and destabilize Islamist politics within Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia (Woodward, 2006). Ethiopia and Eritrea's governments welcomed the U.S.' mission to tackle Islamist threats in their respective countries and Sudan and Somalia, which requested the U.S. to provide extensive financial, military, and diplomatic support for these regimes (ibid).

In addition to preventing Muslims from having significant political power and influence in any of the region’s countries, the U.S. government also expected some moves towards democratization and the promotion of the rule of law. This promotion however did not include dissidents from oppressed sections of these countries’ societies against the regional order and its global partnership. America's long-term aim in the area was to remove the Islamist regime in Sudan and Islamic groups in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia and establish regional order based on liberal principles of economic interdependence (Mohamud, 2020). However, instead of working towards democratization and opening political spaces for participatory politics, the regimes in Ethiopia and Eritrea have prioritized the consolidation of their power through every possible means. Moreover, the U.S. policy to stabilize the region through proxy or regional allies was challenged by the outbreak of unanticipated war between Eritrea and Ethiopia in the early 1990s (Woodward, 2006).

The most considerable success for the U.S. regarding Islamist regimes was that it effectively isolated Sudan and its Islamist regime from its neighbors and the international community, ignited civil war by manipulating domestic discord between South Sudan and the Sudanese government that culminated with South Sudan’s secession from Sudan in

2011. Moreover, the three decades of U.S. policies to destabilize Sudan concluded in a military coup that led to the political transition in 2018 by a faction of the military associated with the US-designs to oust the Sudanese Islamist regime. The change in Sudan accompanied the late U.S. president Donald Trump's administration's plan to normalize Sudan's relations with Israel (Bergman and Walsh, 2020). Sudan was the focus of the U.S.' campaign to normalize relations with Israel with the Muslim World (ibid). The U.S. administration recognized Israel as a precondition to removing Sudan from terrorism-sponsoring states in the negotiation process and terms. This strategy has prevented Sudan from receiving financial aid, debt relief, and foreign direct investment for the past three decades (ibid). Sudan received hundreds of millions of dollars of financial assistance and investment packages from the U.A.E., the United States, and Israel (ibid). However, the recognition of Israel is a politically sensitive issue among Sudan's public. However, the normalization efforts by the transitional government to recognize the state of Israel have ignited political mobilization and resistance among the Sudanese people, who have expressed their sympathy for Palestinians through large-scale public demonstrations. America's efforts and pressure on Sudan's transitional government demonstrate clear evidence of the Horn of Africa's intrinsic connection and Middle Eastern politics.

On the other hand, Washington's policy towards Somalia has been more of a 'wait and see' policy, while containing Somalia from becoming a sanctuary for Islamists through direct military forces stationed in Djibouti and offshore and indirect collaboration with neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya for the past three decades (Woodward, 2006). In line with the U.S. interest in forging liberal regional order in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has embarked on the regional integration project since he came to power in 2018. He has pursued rapprochement with Somalia and Eritrea that culminated in the signing of tripartite agreements for political, economic, and security cooperation among the three countries. While the initiative's long-term plan has been reported to be to create a single and united economic and security community in the Horn of Africa, Mohamed (2020) argues that such efforts will be limited on the ground as political integration will compromise the national sovereignty of countries in the region and provoke conflict and regional instabilities. He further asserted that neither Somalia, nor Ethiopia can afford deeper regional integration in present circumstances. Ethiopia is already in turmoil derived from ethnic unrest and political deadlock with Egypt and Sudan due to its dam project. At the same time, Somalia, for its part, is so fragile and politically fragmented with international network Islamist operations. Thus, as argued by Mohamed, despite the great significance of the economic integration-free movement of people, goods, and services, such activities in the current contexts of Somalia and Ethiopia would create fertile ground for the Al-Shabab Islamist group to expand their base in the region. Supporters of Mohamed's views suggest international peace efforts, including the deployment of military forces, and warned against the idea of withdrawing foreign troops from Somalia. The question at this juncture is how such global threat construction around Islam in parallel to the geopolitical interests of the U.S. and its regional ally contributed to domestic state, society, and religious interactions in Ethiopia?

The process of post-Cold War global security formation on the perceived threat of organized political agents based on Islamic worldviews, fundamentalism or Islamism, regardless of the name used to express the trend, created similar regional contexts in the Horn of Africa where various agents, including the Ethiopian government, used the circumstances to frame their national security policies vis-a-vis Islam. In Ethiopia, the government recognized the Islamist regime in neighboring Sudan and movements in Somalia as a potential security problem, as it feared Ethiopian Muslims would collaborate with these Islamists in neighboring countries to import the former's ideology and erode the Ethiopian secular constitutional order. Even though relations between the Ethiopian government and its Muslim community had already deteriorated long before the global discourse of Islamic fundamentalism as a new form of terrorism, the post 9/11 security discourse in the West and Ethiopia's geopolitical location enabled the Ethiopian Government to exercise extraordinary scrutiny against Ethiopian Muslims. In this regard, Vaughan and Tronvol (2003: 62) argued that;

> "*The Muslim community in Ethiopia has been put under a stronger political focus in recent years, due to armed political resistance from various Islamic organizations, most notably Al-Ittihad Al Islamiya*."

Relations between the religious community and the government due to the discomfort of the government and functional actors (*Mahibere Kidusan*) over the Muslim community's increasing assertive public visibility and socioeconomic and political participation due to the political transition in the country in 1991 that opened space for all of the country's many religious communities. The historical controversies between Muslims and Christians over the role of their respective district, the political and public affairs of the state, and contemporary frictions among these religious communities formed the bases of the government's changing attitudes towards Muslims, the influence of the post 9/11 Western security formation and understanding anchored in a perceived threat of Islam created an environment that enabled the government to further its intrusion in the lives of Ethiopian Muslims(Bah, 2009; Dereje, 2011; Hussen 2006; Medhane, 2004; Muhamed, 2016). In this regard, Østebø (2013) argued that the 9/11 violent incident and ensuing global discourse of 'Islamic Terrorism' and the global 'War on Terror' brought an order that blessed the Ethiopian regime and its already morbid positions towards its Muslim populations. Joao (2013: 11) further argued that "the global War on Terror has brought legitimizing effects instead of an explanatory power" to the Ethiopian government's maltreatment of the country's Muslim population. Similarly, Dereje (2011:17) argued that "while the discourse on Islamic fundamentalism in Ethiopia started in the mid-1990s", it essentially became a public issue after the 9/11 period when the "Ethiopian government enthusiastically joined Bush's "coalition of the willing" to assert itself as a strategic partner in the "US-led post-cold war global order."

Domestically, the Ethiopian regime has utilized the global and regional context to oppress the country's Muslim population. The government's justification of its repressive policies and approaches toward Muslims has been rationalized based on regional security complex theory. Accordingly, the regime has reiterated that the rise of 'Islamist groups' in Sudan and Somalia has security implications for Ethiopia because countries in the same region have shared security fates. In this way, the post 9/11 global security formation based on the perceived threats of Islam, subsequent global security narratives around Islam, and the ensuing 'global War on Terror have served the Ethiopian government to justify its domestic policies to regulate state and religious community relations. The global contexts and national or local patterns of security understandings have interacted in the regional context of the Horn of Africa, where Islamic political groups gained strong bases in Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia. The global discourse on Islam as a security threat and regional geopolitical tensions in the Horn of Africa has provided the ruling elites in Ethiopia with opportunities to scrutinize Ethiopian Muslims and publicly accuse the latter of "aspiring political power based on radical religious ideas" (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:12). Thus, the geostrategic position of the Horn of Africa and its geopolitical values to the global powers and their regional configuration provides a more complete picture of the securitization trends of Islam in Ethiopia.

5.4. The Role of Regional Contexts in the Creation of Security Discourses in Ethiopia

Numerous studies have underlined the links between the activities and policies of the Ethiopian Government, U.S. organizations, and Israeli agencies regarding the conditions and changes among Ethiopia's Muslim inhabitants and the Horn of Africa. The region-level context of the Horn of Africa connects local and global security formations and understandings. While the Horn of Africa was one of the battlefields for superpower ideological and geopolitical rivalries during the Cold War period, the changing global security circumstances in the post-Cold War environment have the logic and patterns of interactions between a global hegemon and local actors in the region. The foreground consideration of the U.S. as a leading international actor in the area has appeared in 'Islamic movements' in the Horn. The policy of the Ethiopian government toward the country's Muslim population is the derivate of this global trend.

In 1989, the rise of an Islamist party called the National Islamic Front (N.I.F.) to power in Sudan turned the country into an Islamic republic, and embarked on a foreign policy of supporting Islamists in the region and abroad (De Wal, 2015). The new regime's policy directions of supporting Islamic movements in neighboring states, such as Islamist insurgents in Eritrea, were viewed by the U.S. government as a potential threat to their geopolitical interests in the region. These beliefs of the U.S. government and its regional allies coincided with the long-held suspicion among Ethiopian elites who feared that the regime in Sudan might target Ethiopian Muslims to harbor its extremist ideologies in

Ethiopia (Medhane, 2004). This, according to many studies, formed the basis for the shift of policies and attitudes of the Ethiopian government toward the country's Muslim communities towards securitization (Abbink, 2011; Tronvol &Vaughan, 2002; De Waal, 2004, cited in Dereje, 2011). Given developments in Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia, the U.S. government has reformulated its policy orientations towards the region from the Cold War containing socialism to Islamic political movements, groups, and regimes, mainly using Ethiopia and Eritrea as regional proxies (Woodward, 2006).

The U.S.' wanted the Ethiopian incumbent elite's cooperation to implement its policies in destabilizing Sudan and the self-proclaimed Islamist regime led by Omar Al-Bashir and his party National Islamic Front (N.I.F.). Al-Bashir's regime was overthrown in April 2018 by a military intervention followed a popular uprising and the collapse of the Sudanese economy. The U.S. and its vital security partner in the region, Israel, played a crucial role in Sudan's political crisis that resulted in South Sudan’s secession in 2011 with more than 70% of Sudanese oil resources. With its Islamic-oriented politics, hostilities with Israel, and sympathy towards Palestinian causes, Omar Al-Bashir's government enlisted the former in the U.S. list of terrorist regimes and threats to its strategic interests in the region.

Although many have recognized the role of the hegemonic force (U.S.) in weakening and destabilizing Sudan, Israel's involvement and systematic destabilization of the country have been highly ignored (Colmáin, 2018). Israel has played a significant role in the turmoil and conflictual developments in Darfur and South Sudan by supplying insurgents and secessionists in these regions to weaken the Sudanese central government. However, the elite media in the West mainly gave coverage to the Sudanese government's reactions to rebels in terms of the accusation of war crimes and genocide which the Sudanese ex-president has been accused of since 2003 (ibid). The Western giant media houses represented the crisis in Sudan as an ethnic conflict between Arabs and Black Africans, overlooking the complex geopolitical motivations that underpin this conflict zone (ibid). The U.S., which has been involved in arming and training rebel groups from neighboring Ethiopia, and Israel greatly facilitated the breakaway of Southern Sudan and the ensuing Sudanese crisis. Israel's involvement in Sudan demonstrates how its policy of destabilization extends throughout the African continent (ibid).

Ethiopia has also allied with the U.S. in its 'War on Terror operation' in Somalia. Ethiopians had already engaged in military confrontations with Somalia-based Al-Ittihad Al Islamiya, a movement created in 1984 to establish an Islamic republic by uniting Somalia territories in different countries, including Ethiopia. Driven mainly by the movement's irredentist agenda over the Ogden region of Ethiopia, the campaign waged several attacks in Ethiopian territories in 1995/96 (Otsebo, 2007). In 2006, the United Islamic Courts (U.I.C.) seized political power in Somalia. This again raised the fear of the Ethiopian government that the movement might subversively influence Ethiopian Somalis to break away from Ethiopia (Haustein and Østebø, 2011). Despite the fact that unification with the Ogaden territory of Ethiopian Somaliland has been on the agenda of every Somalian political force, be they socialists, Islamists, or secularists, the Ethiopian government interpreted the activities of Somalian forces as a religiously-motivated agenda to impose its ideology over Ethiopia mainly by using Ethiopian Muslims to harbor the doctrine of 'extremism′ (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:12, ibid; AFPC, 2013). This has served as the basis of cooperation between the Ethiopian government and the U.S. for three decades. In this regard, the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC) (2013:4) stated that;

> "*Although the Islamist threat for Ethiopia for a moment is external, from Somalia and Sudan is external, it cannot be entirely separated from the internal threat to Ethiopian national security posed by Muslim dissidents within who align themselves with the country's foreign enemies*."

The Ethiopian Government joined the US-led Global war on terrorism by sending its soldiers to Somalia to fight with the Union of Islamic Courts' force in 2006, and the Ethiopian military was deployed in the country until 2009 (Jep, 2014). While the government justified its military intervention in Somalia as being to deal with changing global trends and new forms of terrorism caused by 'Islamic extremism,' many argued that the regime was instead exploiting the so-called 'Global War on Terror' campaign, not to combat genuine Islamic treats, but in order to secure strategic partnership with the West as a source of financial, economic, and diplomatic support (Belachew, n.d; Jawar, 2012; Kłosowicz, 2015). As the Islamic Court Union in Somalia grew in strength in 2006, the U.S.A. encouraged Ethiopia to militarily intervene against the union. It supported the operation financially and militarily (Slavin, 2007, cited Kłosowicz, 2015). The global gospel of 'War on Terror' found Ethiopia a strategic partner for its operation in the Horn of Africa (Jep, 2014). The U.S.A. government has been offering Ethiopia financial assistance of 700 million dollars each year and has offered it political and diplomatic support (Kłosowicz, 2015). The U.S.A.'s aid to Ethiopia has increased four folds over the past decade (ibid).

Domestically, the Ethiopian government adopted several restrictive measures against the country's Muslim communities that have been justified by external trends of Islamist regimes and insurgents in neighboring countries, mainly Sudan and Somalia (Haustein and Østebø, 2011: Smith, 2007). The government has been employing the global discourse of "terrorism" to justify its repressive policies and actions against Muslim religious actors and their activities (Jep, 2014). In this regard, Belachew (n.d: 4) argued that the rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism' in Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea shaped security understandings in Ethiopia and the government's security policies toward Muslim communities in the country. However, till now, no real evidence has emerged of connections between these developments in Sudan, Somalia, or Eritrea and the Ethiopian Muslim community. Regarding the contributions of regional factors in relations between the Ethiopian government and the Muslim population, an informant who was the Director of the Conflict Resolution Department in the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Affairs Development, now changed to the Ministry of Peace, addressed the question if there were pieces of evidence that indicated the cooperation of Ethiopian Muslims with so-called external terrorist organizations like Al-Ittihad AL-Islamiya or Al-Shabab as;

> *"We are unlucky in this part of the world. As you know, our country Ethiopia is surrounded by the world's most* turmoil *environment of the Horn of Africa, the condition which increases the Ethiopian vulnerability from potential Islamic extremist groups".*

Based on such security logic, the Ethiopian government took control over the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (Mejilis) by installing leadership loyal to the regime since 1995 and cracked down on all other Islamic organizations in subsequent years (I.C.G., 2016; Haustein and Østebø, 2011: 11). Since then, the EIASC (Mejilis) became "under the effective control of the government" and has been providing institutional support for the regime's security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' by spreading divisive religious interpretations among the religious community to justify the government's discourse of 'bad' and 'good Muslims' (ibid).

The main point here is that the rise of Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa, coupled with the region’s geostrategic importance to the global powers, and the post-Cold War western security formation based on the perceived threat of Islam have facilitated and contributed to the process of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. Whether Islamist political forces in Somalia or Sudan have posed tangible security implications to Ethiopia is not the concern of this study, which is rather how these regional contexts have been utilized to securitize Islam in Ethiopia via the security discourse of extremism and terrorism by the Ethiopian regime. Regionally, Ethiopia's amalgamation into Western's post-Cold War security formation contributed to the region's destabilization, while domestically, it resulted in the disadvantageous move of Muslims and their organizational life (ibid).

Considering all these, it is arguable that the historical conditions of Ethiopian emperors who aimed to build a nation-state with the national identity of Christianity and who treated Muslims as a fifth column, associating them with their perceived external enemies such as Egypt, continued in the country's security culture to contemporary times when the government officially adopted secularism as a political and constitutional order. Moreover, considering the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia as a mere post 9/11 global security discourse is misleading as it ignores the country's historical experience with its Muslim populations. Thus, although the post 9/11 global developments enabled the Ethiopian regime to institutionalize securitization of Islam and repressive policies towards Muslims, in Ethiopia's history of state formation the Christian elites have always viewed Muslims have always viewed Muslims as a fifth column. Underground institutional scrutiny, control, and discouragement of Muslim activities began before even the global discourse of Islamic terrorism. The Ethiopian government has taken measures since 1995 that deprived Muslims of religious freedoms. Most of the privileges and rights that the Muslim community gained during political transitions in 1991 and the liberalization of the country's socio-cultural spaces were lost in the second half of the 1990s (Jep, 2014). The ultimate aim of the U.S. government to extensively support the Ethiopian minority authoritarian regime was to ensure the stability of the Horn of Africa as part of its efforts to ensure the security of international trades over the Red Sea and Indian Ocean and protect oil resources in the Persian Gulf. However, three decades of this policy have proved the opposite. In fact, the Horn of Africa nullifies the hegemonic stability theory of international relations, which believes that the operation and existence of superpowers or hegemony as a global policeman stabilizes the global system or sub-system/regions. The repression of majorities by minority regimes has produced dissidents and disobedience that toppled the minority regime in 2018. Given the minimal progress towards democratization and institutional development to excellent and stable governance, the country remains without a roadmap to guide the transition. Ethiopia has once more fallen into political upheavals that might lead to the total collapse of the state. This scenario is examined in detail in Chapter Six.

5.5. The Arab Spring and Geopolitics of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Bottlenecking Islamist's Egypt and Nationalization of Islam in Ethiopia.

When it comes to the events of the Arab Spring and its geopolitics, Ethiopia and Egypt have shared many things in common, mainly; "both had been long-serving authoritarian systems" and "important ties to the U.S. security interests" in their respective regions (Kłosowicz, 2015). The Arab Spring was a series of revolutionary protests and uprisings against governments in the Arab world that resulted in the removal of dictators in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. They even have substantial geopolitical ramifications to the interests of the U.S. region and its Middle Eastern vision as the popular uprising in Egypt resulted in the loss of one of its long time and key security partners in the region, Hosni Mubarak (Egyptian ex-president), and replaced with the perceived anti-US and Israel Muslim Brotherhood through popular elections (ibid).

This unexpected political development in Egypt created insecurities within the American establishment, mainly the ideological challenge that the Islamists in Egypt would pose to the U.S. liberal order in the region, the security of Israel, and international trade routes over the Red Sea and Suez Canal. Consequently, the U.S. was forced to look for an alternative partner in the region that could play Egypt's role, if not replace it. Ethiopia appeared at the top of the U.S. list of preferences that could balance unpleasant events in Egypt and serve as a security partner. The U.S. government was compensated for its loss in North Africa with a new partner in Ethiopia's Horn of Africa. The conditions of Arab Spring increased Ethiopia’s value to the U.S.A., which had already been in the club of the US-led 'War on Terror' campaign in the Horn of Africa. The Arab Spring has served as an engine to reinforce US-Ethiopian bilateral relations and cooperation over security and intelligence matters. Three critical indicators of this post-Arab Spring rapprochements and security formation between Ethiopia and the U.S.A., as identified by Kłosowicz; (2015: 92), were;

> "*The American embassy in Ethiopia was opened in a new, impressive building, which is currently the biggest U.S. diplomatic mission in Sub-Saharan Africa, military assistance was radically stepped up by 256% compared to the previous years, and a base for American drones was opened in Arba Minch in southern Ethiopia in 2011.*"

In the meantime, the U.S. and Israeli governments proposed to the Ethiopian government to import and preaching Ethiopian Muslims. They called the moderate version of Islam the earliest strategy to fight radicalization (Muhamed, 2016). While the proposal was presented by Israeli professor Hagai Erlich, whose area of expertise is Islam and Ethiopia, the process was facilitated by the U.S. embassy in Addis Ababa (ibid). As a result, in 2011, the government launched a training program for many Muslim religious leaders to reform their and the religious communities' religious convictions towards what the government perceived as 'a moderate Islam' or Ahbashism (Abbink, 2014). The government’s strategy was "to impose what it considers "moderate" Islam to counter what it opposes to "radical Islam" (i.e., "Salafism," "Wahhabism," often taken publicly as synonymous with "terrorism") and the will to control Islamic institutions" (Nicolas, 2015:4). The training officially started in the summer of 2011, with the government's compulsory training or indoctrination of Muslims to the foreign sect called Ahbashism. Muslims alternatively called the actions of the Government the 'Ahbashism campaign.' Abbink (2014: 353) summarized the occasion as:

> *"The "Ahbashism" campaign was started in the summer of 2011 when teachers from the Lebanese Al-Ahbash organization (officially the 'Association of Islamic Charitable Projects), founded in 1930 in Lebanon and led by Ethiopian-born Sheikh Abdullah al Harari, 1910–2008), were invited to head an outreach training program to counter perceived radicalization tendencies among Muslims. The campaign was prepared with the EIASC, formally the instigator and implementer. Whatever its intrinsic nature, Al-Ahbash was perceived as a moderate, non-radical Muslim group without a formula of political Islam and thus superficially seen as suitable to 'teach' the Government's preferred form of Islam. Affiliated religious instructors were mobilized for this campaign, to be rolled out via religious schools and mosques. Some 16,000–18,000 Muslim community leaders underwent training.*"

The Ahbashism campaign is part and parcel of global powers' strategies to fight radicalization. One of the counter-terrorism mechanisms that the U.S.A. and Israel used in cooperation with regimes in the Horn of African states was to "identify mainstream and moderate Muslim sectors and help them propagate moderate interpretations of Islam and delegitimize terrorism" (Rand Corporation Report, 2009: xi-xii). However, the strategy of mass indoctrination of Ethiopian Muslims and creating a nationally dictated version of Islam perceived by US-Israeli agents and the Ethiopian government backfired with the outbreak of national disobedience and objections of Muslims against the regime and its partners. It was Muslims' resistance to the policy of Ahbashism that paved the way for the resistance politics that led to the national political crisis. This is detailed in chapter six of this study.

While the Ahbashism campaign was launched to prevent any Islamist threats in Ethiopia, which would substitute Egypt's role as a regional ally to U.S. security interests in Northeast Africa, Ethiopia has another value to US-Israeli decision-makers that enables it to wage war against the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Ethiopia is the source of most waters of the Nile Valley on which Egypt entirely depends on for survival. The Nile Valley is the world’s most comprehensive water system, originating from the Ethiopian Highlands and stretching across ten Northeast African countries, before reaching the Mediterranean. The Nile Basin is the site of the early beginning of human civilizations and the source of ecological and human diversity along its banks. The Nile begins in Ethiopia, which contributes 86% of its total water, while the primary utilizers of the river have been Egypt and Sudan. As a result, there has always been trepidation and tensions over the utilization of Nile River water for decades among the riparian states of the Nile River, mainly between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

In July 2011, the Ethiopian government inaugurated the construction of a grand dam project on the Nile River called the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) while Egypt was racked by political turmoil and uprisings that ousted a long-standing dictator. The sudden and unilateral declaration of the dam project on the Nile River, which is the source of Egypt's water and needed for the healthy operations of the county's socioeconomic and political lives, was not by any means a random coincidence with the developments in Egypt, given the US-Israeli role as mentioned earlier. The decision and determination of the Ethiopian Government to build the dam and utilize the water resources of the Nile River have ignited tensions among the riparian countries, mainly; Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. The incident only activates the centuries-old latent tensions and conflicts of interest over the Nile River. While most explanations for this development revolve around issues like the distribution of water resources of transboundary or international rivers, population growth and climate changes, national economic and development projects, international law, and sovereignty, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is also a result of the larger global and regional geopolitical fall-out from the Arab Spring. The GERD is anchored in international and regional geopolitical configurations and ramifications of the Arab Spring, as demonstrated by the behavioral dynamics of different regional and global actors towards Ethiopia and its dam project on the Nile River. The finding of this study reveals that GERD, from its launching to negotiation deadlocks among the riparian states, has been deeply embedded in the Middle East political developments, mainly the events of the Arab Spring and Trump's Deal of the Century. These developments are often explained through regional security complex theories logic that regions and sub-regions are part and parcel of global security formation. This is in the context of the social origin of security as intersubjective phenomena within the post-cold war, and post-9/11 perceived threats of Islam to international insecurity among Western powers.

Viewed domestically, the project represents the Ethiopian determination to use the Nile River's water resources within its territory to meet the demands of its rapidly growing population and achieve development. However, other actors' geopolitical motives and interests that encouraged Ethiopia to launch the dam project cannot be ruled out as motivations for the project’s launching, and especially its timing. For Ethiopians, the project is a national, sovereign, economic, and motivated investment that will break the long-time remorse of Ethiopians’ poverty despite being endowed with the rich water resources of the Nile. For people in downstream countries, particularly Egyptians and Sudanese, the Ethiopian project represents an existential threat to their national survival, given the significant reduction in the amount of water they receive from the Nile River. Since the launching of the operation, numerous diplomatic efforts and negotiations have been conducted between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan regarding guidelines for the filling and operation and safety rules since the start of construction. However, none of them have been fruitful in deescalating the tensions between them.

Historically, the relations of the Nile basin countries over the utilization of the river's water were governed by a set of agreements signed during the colonial times (in 1902, 1929, and 1959), which gave the downstream states (Egypt and Sudan) veto power over any projects or construction plans that tend to affect their share of the water and require the upstream riparian states (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia) to respect the rights of the downstream countries’ water demands (Al-Anani, 2020). According to these treaties, the upstream countries need the goodwill and approval of the downstream countries, particularly Egypt, to build dams or any infrastructural projects on the river Nile. However, the upstream countries have always contested these treaties as unjust and hindering their right to utilize their water resources for development purposes. They further argue that they are not bound by treaties as they were signed by colonial powers (Al-Anani, 2020).

In May 2010, five of the upstream states, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda, signed the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (C.F.A.), which according to signatories, would establish guidelines for the fair and rational use of the Nile waters. The Ethiopian parliament ratified the framework agreement and integrated it into the country's domestic law, though the other four parties to the deal have not yet approved it. On the other hand, Sudan and Egypt have refused to sign a comprehensive agreement and insisted that the 1929 Anglo-Egyptian treaty 1929 and the 1959 bilateral treaty between Sudan and Egypt represent the only legal framework for allocating Nile water resources. In 2015, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan agreed on a declaration of principles that outlined an "equitable and reasonable" use of the Nile water without any "significant harm" to other riparian states. This article examines the geopolitical contexts in which the project has launched, the negotiations were conducted, and actors' interest and involvement in the whole process of the scheme.

5.5.1. Geography of the Nile Basin

The Nile River is the most extensive river basin in the world. The Nile stretches 6,850 kilometers across twelve countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.), and Egypt (Mutua, & Bauwens, 2005). More than 85% of the river's total water originates from the Ethiopian highlands. The rest, 15%, comes from another tributary of the Nile called the White Nile, which starts from Lake Victoria in Tanzania. A total volume of 84 billion cubic meters of water flows annually in the Nile basin. In climatic terms, the Nile Basin signifies ecological varieties ranging from tropical rainforests in East and Central Africa and parts of Ethiopia to high aridity in North Africa and the downstream countries (mainly in Egypt and Sudan). On the Ethiopian highlands, the key Nile flows, and the summer rains contribute significantly to the June to November floods. Almost all of the river's water emanates from the area covering only 20% of the basin.

In contrast, the rest of the basin is arid and semi-arid, with little water supply to the river. A significant portion of the Nile's water is lost due to evaporation because the river flows through the Sahara Desert to Egypt (Karyabwite, 2000). Through its annual flooding, the Nile is the source of fertile soil due to the silt it deposits in the downstream countries. One of the earliest civilizations of humanity, the ancient Egyptian civilization, primarily thrived along the Nile River. Paradoxically, the affluent Nile's evergreen basin doesn't save people in the riparian states from droughts and famine. Most Nile basin countries, including Ethiopia, where most of the river's water and fertile soil comes from, are under the poverty line (Mutua & Bauwens, 2005).

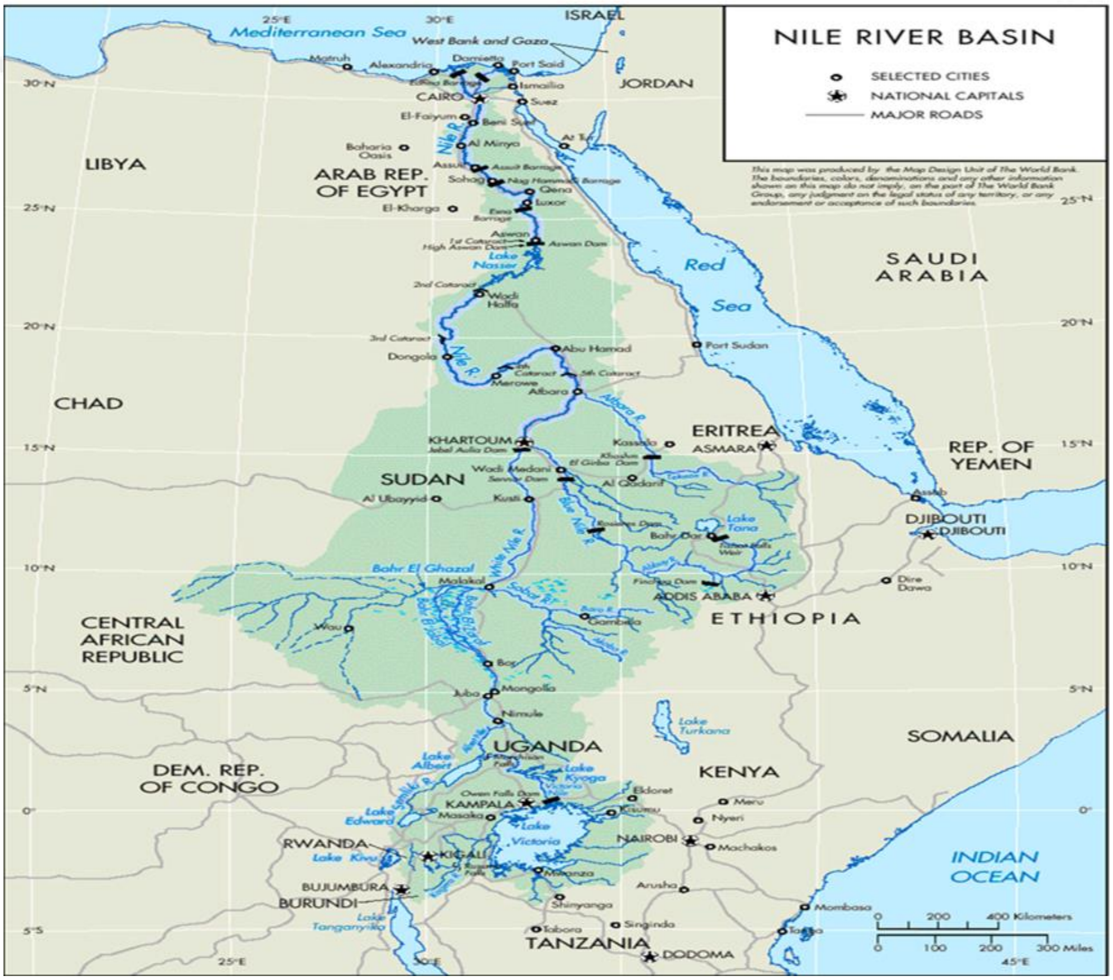

NILE RIVER BASIN
SELECTED CITIES
NATIONAL CAPITALS
MAJOR ROADS
This map was produced by the Map Design Unit of The World Bank. The boundaries, colors, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of The World Bank Group, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.
Mediterranean Sea
ISRAEL
West Bank and Gaza
JORDAN
LIBYA
ARAB REP. OF EGYPT
Alexandria
Matruh
Damietta
Port Said
Ismailia
Suez
CAIRO
El-Faiyum
Beni Suef
Al Minya
Bahariya Oasis
Assiut
Assiut Barrage
Sohag
Nag Hammadi Barrage
Qena
Luxor
Esna Barrage
El-Kharga
Aswan
Aswan Dam
1st Cataract
High Aswan Dam
Lake Nasser
2nd Cataract
Wadi Halfa
3rd Cataract
Dongola
Nile R.
Abu Hamad
4th Cataract
5th Cataract
Merowe
Atbara
Atbara R.
Port Sudan
Red Sea
SAUDI ARABIA
CHAD
SUDAN
KHARTOUM
Jebel Aulia Dam
Wad Medani
Sennar Dam
Kassala
Khashm el Girba Dam
Al Gedaref
Kusti
Al Ubayyid
Blue Nile R.
White Nile R.
Roseires Dam
ERITREA
ASMARA
REP. OF YEMEN
Assab
DJIBOUTI
DJIBOUTI
Lake Tana
Bahir Dar
Tis Abay Falls Weir
Finchaa Dam
ADDIS ABABA
Dire Dawa
ETHIOPIA
Gambela
Sobat R.
Bahr El Ghazal
Malakal
Wau
Bahr El Jebel
Bor
Juba
Mongalla
Nimule
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Lake Turkana
SOMALIA
UGANDA
Lake Albert
Murchison Falls
Lake Kyoga
Victoria Nile
DEM. REP. OF CONGO
KENYA
Eldoret
Meru
Nyeri
Owen Falls Dam
KAMPALA
Masaka
Kisumu
Lake Edward
Semliki R.
Lake Victoria
NAIROBI
Machakos
RWANDA
Lake Kivu
KIGALI
Rusumo Falls
Mwanza
Arusha
BUJUMBURA
BURUNDI
Lake Tanganyika
Shinyanga
Tabora
Singinda
TANZANIA
DODOMA
Mombasa
Tanga
INDIAN OCEAN
0 200 400 Kilometers
0 100 200 300 Miles
25°E
30°E
45°E
30°N
25°N
20°N
15°N
10°N
5°N
0°
5°S

Figure 4; The Nile River Basin

Source: The World Bank. 2000, Nile River Basin.

The water resources of the Nile basin are underused mainly due to the technological inabilities of the riparian states. Nile basin countries have been vulnerable to impoverishment and extreme drought hazards (FAO,1997). The inhabitants in these countries primarily rely on subsistence and rain-fed agriculture.

Beyond technological and economic constraints, upstream countries' ambitions to utilize the Nile water resources have been challenged by downstream countries' exclusive interests and claims over the Nile rivers water. In 1959, Egypt and Sudan signed a treaty that allocates the entire annual Nile River flow, 84 billion cubic meters, to Egypt's Aswan dam (Waterbury, 1979). The agreement gave Egypt exclusive rights and ownership of the Nile water. It has served as a legal ground for Egyptians to defend their water interests against attempts to use the Nile water resources by any upstream countries. However, the treaty between the two downstream countries and their privileged positions over the Nile water has been challenged by upper riparian countries, especially Ethiopia (Mutua & Bauwens, 2005). The growing population and other environmental pressures forced the upstream countries, mainly Ethiopia, to utilize the Nile water resources under its territorial jurisdiction to meet the demands of its people and achieve economic development. To that end, Ethiopia launched a hydraulic infrastructure project in the Blue Nile basin called the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD hereafter) early in 2011. The Ethiopian government has asserted that the grand project is a national, sovereign, and development scheme that aims to fulfill Ethiopians’ development aspirations.

On the other hand, the downstream countries, mainly Egypt and Sudan, consider the Ethiopian hydraulic project an existential threat to their national security. Egypt and Sudan have expressed their fear that the dam will prevent or significantly reduce the amount of water they receive annually from the river. While the dam flames hope among Ethiopians that it will generate the hydroelectricity their country needs for its economic development and industrialization, it has created a sense of insecurity among Egyptian society and government.

The construction is reported to be in its last phases. Similarly, tensions and distrust between the three countries have reached the point to exchanging words about potential military actions (Anani, 2020). The three states have conducted several diplomatic efforts and discussions regarding the dam's filling, operation, and safety rules to minimize or control its potential impacts on the downstream countries. However, none of these diplomatic efforts have reached a consensus.

While tensions and mutual suspicion have always been the features of relations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan, the ongoing conflicts of interests over the GERD project have more geopolitical motives embedded in broader Middle Eastern politics and the involvement of extra-regional actors. Most explanations about the Ethiopian project revolve around water resource allocation, ecology and population growth, food security, development, international law, and sovereignty. Such considerations, however, ignore the bigger geopolitical context that better explains the real politics around the Ethiopian grand project. This article argues that the political moments of GERD and the terms and process of negotiations around it is a reflection of the broader geopolitical theater that links global and regional developments and contexts. Through the realist logic of balance of power, this article explores the geopolitics of GERD and the interests and behaviors of various regional and extra-regional actors towards the Ethiopian project. The leading hypothesis is that the GERD is another manifestation of the geopolitics that links the Middle East and Horn of Africa. It, however, does not exclude the natural pressures of population growth, water security, and needs for industrialization and development that drive actors' interests in the Nile valley and its water resources. However, these matters are not absolute explanations for understanding the Nile valley's political theatres. Geopolitics is a foreground explanatory factor to comprehend the real politics in the Nile valley and GERD comprehensively. The geopolitics of the Nile River refers to the overall influences of physical features such as geographic locations and water resources in shaping the interests' interactions of multiple actors, conflicts of interests, and attitudes towards the GERD.

5.5.2. Interested Actors, Positions, and Contexts in the Nile River and Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

The Nile valley is considered a system where actors cooperate to promote their interests and compete and collaborate with foes and friends. The system of Nile Valley as a structure constitutes states from the source country Ethiopia to Israel across the Mediterranean Sea. A system is a structure or sub-structure in which units or states behave according to their preferences to determine the structural or sub-structural outcomes in ways that promote their respective interests (Paul & Fortmann, 2004).

The real politics of GERD intrinsically connects the Middle East and the Horn of Africa regions. The Horn of Africa is the easternmost coast of Africa at the crossroads of important international waterways, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal. The region's strategic location has always made it among the topmost geopolitical interests of great powers, from the Romans to the Ottoman empires, from the colonial powers of Britain, France, and Italy to US-USSR cold war geopolitical rivalry, all aimed to control the Horn of Africa as control of it means control of the vital international shipping routes of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Suez Canal (Woodward, 2006). So too in its latest iteration, the US and China are competing over the Horn of Africa.

Moreover, several competing regional players, such as Saudi and Iran, Saudi/Emirates/Israel versus Turkey/Qatar, Egypt's struggle to preserve regional dominance and its competition with Ethiopia's rising regional role, and Saudi competition with the UAE have been vying for economic and military influence in the region (Feierstein, 2020). The hydro-politics around the Nile River and the Ethiopian GERD are integral to such geopolitical ambitions. Below are important regional actors that pursue interests in the water resource of the Nile water and their geopolitical interactions in different contexts.

5.5.2.1. Israel

A slogan etched on the wall of the Israeli parliamentary building, "*From the Nile to the Euphrates*," signifies the terrestrial dream of a 'Greater Israel' between the great river valleys and the longstanding interests of the Jewish state to use the rivers' water resources. Diverting the water resources from the Nile River across the Sinai desert was the plan of the first-generation of Zionists to supply water to the state of Israel (Bleier, 1997). In 1974, Israeli expert Elisha Kally proposed a project to divert the Nile’s water to the North Sinai desert east of the Suez Canal in order to solve the long-term threat of water deficiency to the state of Israel (ibid). The construction of the underground canal, called Al-Salam or the peace canal, was started within a few years (ibid). Although the ultimate goal of building the channel was to transfer the Nile water to Israel, Egyptian officials claimed that the purpose was the reclamation and irrigation of 6,000,000 acres of land in the North Sinai desert. To hide the project from the Egyptian public, who view the Nile as Egypt's sacred gift, and to prevent mass reactions against the plans to give water to the state of Israel, which Egyptians often view as the enemies of Muslims and Arabs, Israeli engineers recommended that the Egyptian government could appeal that the diverted waters from the Nile were to supply water to the Arabs of Gaza**,** the Negev and the West Bank (ibid).

According to the 1990's Madrid framework on water and economic cooperation between Arabs and Israel, water was one of the five fundamental issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict, along with Jerusalem, borders, settlements, and refugees (Alan, 1999). While the project of transferring water to Israel through the so-called Peace Canal was pronounced as part of efforts to bring peace by the Egyptian President in 1996, the plan was eventually dropped due to critics, the Egyptian government’s environmental and security concerns and Israel's fear that the passage of the canal through Gaza might make it hostage to Egypt (Bleier, 1997; Walsh, 2018). Ethiopia and Sudan vigorously criticized the plan to divert the Nile’s water to Israel, grieving that if there is extra water from the Nile to be sent across the Mediterranean, they should benefit from the Nile to bring about their socio-economic developments (Deng, 2007).

This reveals the status of water as a significant component in the Israeli's rapprochement with the Nile Basin countries in general and Ethiopia and Egypt. Given the fact that Israel represents the regional powerhouse and sub-system of post-cold war global power configuration, it’s longing for water resources from the river Nile, and its perception of Islamists as a source of national security threats, the Ethiopian controversial dam project should be viewed in the broader context of the geopolitical ramifications of the Arab Spring. Controlling regional water resources mainly through diverting main rivers was an essential part of the Zionist movement to establish the state of Israel. This condition has been intensified by Israel's acute shortage of water resources to accommodate its growing population in arid lands (ibid).

However, the ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood to power through popular elections in 2012 after the ouster of Egypt's authoritarian regime shattered Israeli's positive relations with Egypt and thereby its economic, security, water, and other benefits it was obtaining from the Egyptian establishment (Porat, 2014). The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Egypt heralded big geopolitical shocks to both U.S. and its regional ally, Israel.

The US and Israel jointly designed two strategies to disrupt their Islamist threat in Egypt. The first strategy was to bottleneck Egypt by working with Ethiopia, from where more than 85% of the water resources of the Nile River originate. Sidelining its long-term aspirations to divert and use the waters of the Nile River, the state of Israel turned to use the Nile River, including the Ethiopian dam project, to strategically destabilize its Egyptian adversaries, the Muslim Brotherhood (M.B. hereafter), in the wake of the Arab Spring and its potential geopolitical ramifications (Abd al-Hay, 2020). The Israeli policy shifted from securing the much-needed waters of the Nile River from Egypt to weakening the Arab/Muslim state and society's economy by using Ethiopia’s dam project to endanger Egypt's advantages from the Nile water. The Israeli leaders believe that weakening Arab or Muslim states and societies is a valuable strategy for the Jewish state's long-term security. In case of the sudden replacement of non-hostile Arab regimes by anti-Israel or anti-Western forces in a weak state, it will be easier re-impose or reinstall friendly governments without significant security challenges to the Jewish state (ibid).

The Nile River has been designed as a tool to pressure Egypt, a key Arab and Muslim country that relies on the Nile River for almost all its water and agricultural demands. There is a belief within Israelite leadership and its Western security partners that economic, technological, military, or societal progress in Arab states or Muslim societies can serve the Islamist's proposal of anti-Israeli political and military campaigns. Thus, the ultimate security of the state of Israel lies in ensuring the Arab states remain weak. Egypt's central status in the regional system of the Arab world put it on the frontier of U.S./Israel's foreign policies towards the region. These powers have always prevented Egypt from becoming politically independent or an economic and military giant to prevent any anti-Israel or anti-Western regime from challenging Israeli security. One of the strategies that the U.S./Israel have employed is intimidating Egypt by depriving the water resources of the Nile River by allying and cooperating with Ethiopia, from where 86 % of the Nile's water originates. Despite being denounced by the Ethiopian government, many commentators maintain the belief that the U.S. and Israel were behind the Ethiopian GERD project to balance what was perceived as anti-Israeli and anti-Western political development in Egypt in 2011 (Abd al-Hay, 2020). In his visit to the Ethiopian parliament in 2016, Israeli ex-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pronounced that: "Ethiopia is moving in the right direction, and we will support it by enforcing its development projects" and "Israel will support Ethiopia to develop its water resources by enhancing its agriculture systems" (Yasii, 2016). Appreciating and encouraging Ethiopia's mega project on the Nile River was utilized to create tensions and instabilities in the new Muslim Brotherhood administration by mobilizing the Egyptian public against the latter.

In addition to external pressures using Ethiopia and its colossal dam project on the Nile River, the U.S. and Israel infiltrated the Egyptian security apparatus to oust the anti-Israel and anti-US Muslim Brotherhood. They finally overthrew Mursi's government through military intervention under their covert supervision (Turan, 2018). The U.S./Israel installed a military regime under Abdelfattah Al-Sisi which has resumed Egypt's traditional foreign policy based on the U.S./Israel security partnership and Middle Eastern establishment. Sisi's government has continued his predecessors' deal with Israel to provide the Nile water to the latter across the Sinai. Over the last eight years, Egypt has been designing, building, and opening channels that pass under the Suez Canal to transfer Nile water to the Negev Desert in southern Israel across the Sinai (Walsh, 2018). The government-to-government or bilateral relations between the two countries is often reported to be at its "highest level" ever in history. That is highly attributed to the deal over the Nile water resources despite the Egyptian public's hostilities with Israel (ibid).

Similarly, Israel has deep security and economic relations with Ethiopia. Economically, Israel has been involved in agricultural and trade investment in Ethiopia. Moreover, Ethiopia's location in the Horn of Africa puts the country at the top of Israel's security interest in the region, mainly as a strategic position to encircle its Arab/Muslim states in case of military coronations. The strategic values that the state of Israel can get from both Egypt and Ethiopia put the former under challenging conditions of prioritization, particularly in disputes between the two over the Nile River. Tsukerman (2020) pronounced Israel's deadlock as;

> "*On the one hand, it values its strong links, trade, and energy opportunities with Ethiopia, which Israel backed militarily during conflicts with Eritrea and which was an ally during the period of the periphery policy against hostile Sunni Muslims states. But on the other hand, Israel places great stock in its increasingly warm alliance with Egypt, which recently invited Israel to join the East Med Gas Forum and with whom Jerusalem has upgraded its gas trade ties*."

5.5.2.2. Egypt

The Greek historian Herodotus famously stated that the "Egypt is the gift of the Nile," to underscore the inherent contributions of the Nile River to the ancient Egyptian civilization. Everything from ancient Egypt's traditions and belief systems to its calendar system were based on the river and its flows. Likewise, the modern-day Arab Republic of Egypt is dependent on the Nile River for its survival as a nation. The Nile is a matter of existence and survival for Egyptians who entirely depend on the river's water for activities needed for their sustenance, from irrigation to electricity to transportation and fishing. As a result, Egyptian leaders, notably Khedive Ismail (1863-1879), aspired and made several attempts to control the source of the Blue Nile in the Ethiopian highlands. Successive generations of modern Egyptian leadership have considered the Nile not as a river but as the foremost and an uncompromisable issue of national security. Claiming the historical right to use the Nile and colonial time agreements that favored Egypt in water distribution, Egyptian governments have always securitized the river Nile as a unilateral matter of survival to be dealt with in military and security terms (Abdulrahman, 2019).

Despite Egypt's nearly exclusive historical usage of the river's water, the contemporary dynamics of nature, i.e., alarming population growth and the need for development among upstream countries, including Ethiopia, poses questions over Egypt's historical share of the Nile waters. While the river is hosting immense pressure from natural climatic changes and expanding population growth of the riparian states, the ongoing construction of the

Ethiopian Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) has raised fears in the downstream countries, particularly Egypt, that the project may reduce the volume of Nile waters flow to Egypt allotted in the past treaties (ibid). As a result, Egypt has presented Ethiopia's project as a national security threat. At the same time, Ethiopia claimed the project on the Nile River as a sovereign, national developmental, and infrastructural project within its territory.

So far, Egyptian regimes have employed different strategies to prevent Ethiopia from implementing any infrastructural projects on the Nile River that would affect the river's regular flow to Egypt. These strategies include; establishing a standing military force for timely response to any threatening activities; working to influence the political developments in the riparian states, particularly in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, forging political alliances with superpowers during the Cold War era and today with the U.S. and other powerful states in the world including the state of Israel, influencing international financial and lending institutions, especially the World Bank and the African Development Bank not to fund any infrastructural activities in the upstream countries mainly Ethiopia and exerting pressure on rich Arab countries not to invest in upstream countries using its leverage in Arab League (Deng, 2007).

5.5.2.3. Sudan

Sudan is where the Blue Nile from the Lake Tana of Ethiopia and the White Nile from the Lake Victoria in Tanzania confluence on its capital, Khartoum, to form the main watercourse that flows northwards through Egypt as the River Nile. Given that the vast majority of Sudan's land is either arid or semi-arid, the relevance of the Nile River to Sudan is equally important as that of Egypt (Deng, 2007). Historically Sudan's approach to the Nile oscillated between Egypt’s stand and upper riparian states' utilization of the river's water. Though there have been tensions and disagreements between Egypt and Sudan concerning potential projects in the upstream countries, Egypt and Sudan stand together around the theory of prior use and historical rights to deter upstream countries' motives to use the Nile water (ibid). Sudan often cites its harsh climatic conditions and drylands compared to the fertile soils and rainy seasons of upstream countries, mainly Ethiopia, which receive heavy rainfall that supports their agriculture (ibid).

Despite its initial hesitation about the project's effects, Sudan officially expressed its support to Ethiopia in constructing GERD on the Nile River in 2014. Sudan's support for Ethiopia was based on economic considerations rather than political motives. The ex-president of Sudan, Omar Al-Beshir, once explained that his country would support Ethiopia's dam project citing the potential hydroelectric power linkages between the two countries, the establishment of joint trade zones, development and infrastructure projects, communications, and railways projects (Sudan Tribune, 2013). Moreover, Sudan expected that GERD would help regulate the river, prevent seasonal floods, and extend the life span of Sudanese dams by avoiding unnecessary deposits (Chen & Swain, 2014). The ex-president also once mentioned the 200 megawatts of free electricity for Sudan promised by Ethiopia and the availability of hydropower to Sudan at a much lower price to justify his country's bid to support the GERD (ibid).

Meanwhile, Al-Beshir was deposed from military intervention following a brief popular protest in April 2018. For the last three decades, Sudan has been identified as a geopolitical challenge by western powers and their regional ally, Israel mainly due to the regime’s Islamic political orientation. They played a crucial role in Sudan's political crisis, including the secession of South Sudan and the political mess in Darfur (Gearóid, 2018). Israel's had significant involvement in Sudan’s systematic destabilization. However, the mainstream western media misrepresented the developments as mere ethnic conflicts between Arabs and Blacks or Muslims and Christians by ignoring the role of other actors and complex geopolitical motivations that underpin this conflict zone (ibid).

As a result of the American government, particularly the Trump's administration increasing diplomatic efforts to normalize relations between Arab states and the Jewish state of Israel, the Sudanese transitional government officially announced its recognition of the state of Israel, following the UAE and Bahrain (Ronen and Walsh, 2020). Although the recognition of Israel by the transitional government remains a sensitive issue in the country, for the time being, Sudan has joined the U.S. security order and its vision in the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and the Red Sea region that constitutes Egypt, Saudi, Emirate, and Israeli as a critical regional ally to the U.S. This resulted in a shift in Sudan's traditional position regarding Ethiopia as the transitional government sidelined Al-Bashir's positive stance on

Ethiopia's mega project on the Nile River by allying with Egypt and its resistance to Ethiopia's efforts to use the Nile water resources. Sudan's recognition of Israel and shifting the alliance towards the U.S. regional security system coincided with Ethiopia's political crisis anchored in political controversies between the Tigrayan People Liberation Front (TPLF). This party has dominated Ethiopian politics for the past three decades and rules the Northern Autonomous State of Tigray, which the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, turned to civil war in November 2020. The war had started when the TPLF attempted to forcefully control the military bases, personnel, hardware, and equipment of the national defense force's Northern Command, stationed in the Tigray region. While the war started due to domestic power competition and ideological disputes between Abiy and the TPLF old guard, more stakeholders, including Sudan and Egypt, will determine the outcomes of the ongoing war in Ethiopia (Nizar and Mohamed, 2020). Despite Sudan's official support for the Ethiopian government, mainly by the closure of its borders with the Tigray region to block the Tigran rebels' access to logistics, the former has strategic reasons to support the rebels in the northern region of Tigray against Abiy Ahmed's government (ibid). Sudan's borders to the Tigray region of Ethiopia through its states of Kassala and Gadaref are the only ways that Tigran rebels can access ammunition, fuel, and food from the outside world, thus giving it leverage against Abiy Ahmed. Sudan has tried to use this leverage to influence the Ethiopian government to obtained the contested Fashqa triangle, an approximately 100-square-mile agricultural land along the Ethiopia-Sudan border, which according to Sudan, is part of Sudan based on the 1902 agreement between the United Kingdom and the then Ethiopian Emperor (ibid). Sudan deployed its soldiers against the Ethiopian government and Tigran forces in northern Ethiopia. It occupied the fertile al-Fashaqa area that Ethiopian farmers cultivated for the last two decades. The Sudanese foreign minister has said, "The armed forces have now fully recovered all Sudanese territory" (Khartoum news conference cited by Aljazeera, December 31, 2020).

While maintaining a military presence in the al-Fashqa area, Sudan has threatened the Ethiopian central government to enter into binding legal agreements about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and thereby ensure the regular annual flow of the Blue Nile water. Should Abiy Ahmed reject Sudanese interests, Sudan and Egypt will support TPLF to defeat Abiy's government and meet their interests in exchange. Hitherto, Ethiopia urged diplomatic ways to address the border controversies with Sudan, perhaps because it has been preoccupied with internal war with TPLF in northern Ethiopia. Sudan's actions deteriorated its relationship with Ethiopia and Eritrea. While Sudan will undoubtedly obtain the support of Egypt, both Ethiopia and Eritrea might retaliate against the former by supporting anti-government elements and groups in Sudan's states along their respective borders, which could swiftly turn the region into a state of proxy war and destabilization (Nizar and Mohamed, 2020).

5.5.2.4. Ethiopia

Known as the African water tower and paradoxically the victim of recurrent droughts, Ethiopia has been mourned its inability to use its water resources, compared to the flourishing gardens in Sudan and Egypt through the waters and fertile soils that the Nile carries from Ethiopian heartlands. Although more than 85% of the Nile river's water comes from Ethiopia, the country utilizes almost nothing of the Nile, except for the waterfall panorama on the Ethiopian currency, Birr. Like Egyptians, the Nile has been embedded in Ethiopians' traditions, culture, and beliefs and has been at the center of the political and economic aspirations of generations of Ethiopians. As the origin of the Nile and the Red Sea region's powerhouse, Ethiopia has been at the center of global and regional attention throughout history. Travelers as early as the Roman times, empires from Roman to Ottoman, and colonial powers as late as the twentieth century all aspired to the great valley of Nile for gold, gum, coffee, enslaved people, and missionary purposes (Tefla, 2000).

However, Ethiopian hopes were raised when the Ethiopian government launched a mega project (GERD) on the Blue Nile River in 2011 and mobilized the country's population to that end. Although most modern Ethiopian rulers had longed to use the Nile River's water resources for economic development, none could realize that dream, mainly due to the Egyptian government's international involvement (Irina, 2020). The unilateral Ethiopian hydroelectric project, GERD, on River Nile in Ethiopia ignited tensions and crisis among Nile basin countries, mainly Egypt and Sudan, due to the latter’s fear that the decision of the Ethiopian government would reduce the amount of water each received from the river, and thereby pose an existential threat to them (Concordia Journal, 2020). Against their suspicion, Ethiopia has asserted that the GERD is a sovereign and national development project that will generate highly needed hydroelectric power for its industrial development without affecting the water supplies of downstream countries.

Moreover, the dam would boost the Ethiopian economy by generating international power sales to neighboring Middle Eastern states (Al-Anani, 2020). Though Ethiopia repeatedly asserts that it has no intention to harm any downstream countries on the ground that the dam project is only for hydroelectric power generation, not for irrigation, and that the project will not prevent the flow of water to downstream countries, most Egyptians have viewed Ethiopia's project as an obstacle to the stable flow of the Nile’s waters to Egypt. The coincidence of timing in which Ethiopia unilaterally launched the project with the Egyptian political crisis and turmoil in 2011 complicated the politics of the dam and created doubts among many observers.

While the construction of the grand project is near completion, Ethiopia entered into a civil war in November 2020, with the outbreak of military confrontations between the central government and the Tigray region in Northern Ethiopia, which is led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). This party dominated Ethiopian politics over the last three decades. The conflicts between the two had started when the Tigray region conducted its regional elections on September 4, 2020, against the central government and electoral board's decision to postpone all national polls for an uncertain period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the war has not yet concluded, many commentaries have noted that this war may lead to the disintegration of the Ethiopian state and the greater East African region (Desta, 2020). Although Prime Minister Abiy, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize laureate for his bid to maintain peace with neighboring Eritrea, has frequently asserted that Ethiopia will never fall apart and has expressed his confidence that he can keep the unity and territorial integrity of Africa's second-most populous state, he failed to maintain the country's peace and stability. The war in Tigray is viewed by many as a move towards secession. At the same time, the country has been shocked by widespread ethnic nationalism, political, ethnic, and religious violence, and many political arrests by the government that threatens the Ethiopian state's unity. The Ethiopian government believes that Egypt and Sudan are behind the war in Ethiopia in order to destabilize and weaken Ethiopia and force it to accept the deal over the GERD.

Though Egypt, Israel, Sudan, and Ethiopia represent states hitherto at the forefront of the Nile water politics, other riparian countries, such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan too, will demand to share the river's water in the future due to expanding urbanization, industrialization, growing population and resulting climatic imbalance and shortage of rain waters (Mutua, & Bauwens, 2005). In this case, many other projects are expected to be built on the Nile River in different countries, which would expand water demand beyond the river's annual flow, 84 billion cubic meters, and widen the scope of already flamed water politics among the riparian states and their global and regional strategic partners.

5.6. Counter-Revolution and Trump's Deal of the Century; Hesitating between Egypt and Ethiopia

The geopolitical developments of the Arab Spring were perceived as presenting a high level of danger to the security of the state of Israel and U.S. interests in the Middle East as it resulted in the demise of the Hussein Mubarak regime, their most significant security collaborator in North Africa and the Arab World. Counter-revolution in this context refers to the actions of the Egyptian army that overthrew the country's first popularly elected President, Mohamed, on July 3, 2013. The coup orchestrated and facilitated by Israel aborted the revolution that many Egyptians, as well as Arabs in general, had hoped would lead to a promising future. The Middle East Monitor quoted Israeli army Brigadier General Aryeh Eldad's inscription that the Israel security assessment about Mohamed Mursi's intention to cancel the peace agreement with Israel and send soldiers to the Sinai Peninsula that;

> "*At that stage, Israel was quick and willing to activate its diplomatic tools, and perhaps even greater means, to bring Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to power in Egypt, and convince the then U.S. administration under President Barack Obama not to oppose this move.*"

The U.S. government and its E.U. partners failed to adhere to their political rhetoric of promoting democracy, good governance, and enabling political reforms and processes in Egypt as the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood would negatively affect their interests in the region and serve as a success story or model for Islamists in the Muslim World (Erdogan, 2020). Abdel Fattah Al Sisi's coming to power in Egypt represented the return to old-time friendly relationships between Egypt and Israel and its global patron US after the temporary disruption of Brotherhood rule. For Israel, Egypt is important in its vanguard and symbolic role in the Arab/ Muslim world and economically in commercial and trade terms (Bleier, 1997). Irrespective of the colder public attitudes toward each other, the government-to-government relationship between Egypt and Israel has reached its climax under the current regime (Walsh, 2018). The two countries have been working together in several sectors, including joint military training and operations against ISIS in Northern Sinai as well as strong economic relations. In 2018, for instance, Egypt signed a deal with an Israeli natural gas company to sell gas to Egypt (ibid). Moreover, Egypt has built canals that pass under the Suez Canal into Northern Sinai to transfer the Nile water across the Sinai to the Negev Desert in southern Israel as part of the resurrection of the Israel-Egypt bilateral relationship under the current leadership (ibid).

At this juncture, the tension between Ethiopia and Egypt increased when the former announced a 70% completion of the dam project on the Nile River and its readiness to test the first round of filling up the dam in July 2020. Despite years of negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan since the project's launching, there was little progress in technical issues concerning the filling and operation of the dam (Adissu, 2020). Egypt and Sudan want a formal agreement that requires and binds Ethiopia to release a fixed and stable amount of water from the river's annual flow and the process for monitoring obedience to maintain its reservoir at Aswan. At the same time, Ethiopia rejects the binding commitment to send a fixed amount of water and extend the period to fill the dam (ibid). The distrust between Egypt and Ethiopia ran deep, and they began to exchange threats of potential military action. This comes from the discrepancy between the two countries' attitudes to the Nile River. For Ethiopia, the river is part of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, while Egypt considers it as the international watercourse on which Egyptian civilization flourished (Al-Anani, 2020).

Amid the escalating tensions, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi invited U.S. President Donald Trump to mediate and facilitate agreements between the two parties in November 2019 (Adissu, 2020). Afterward, the water and foreign ministers of Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan held meetings with Donald Trump from December 2020 to reach positive and balanced solutions. However, they failed due to Ethiopia's withdrawal from the negotiations after it claimed that Washington had taken the side of Egypt (Al-Anani, 2020). Most people are still confused as to what the U.S. wanted to achieve through its involvement in the deal. The U.S. involvement was motivated by two purposes.

First and foremost, the U.S. has immense security interests in both Egypt and Ethiopia. They are the powerhouses of their respective regions, North Africa and East Africa. Thus, harmonious relations and cooperation are vital for the peace and stability of the Red Sea region. The second motive is Israel's enduring interest in the Nile River. The Nile River was designed to provide water resources in the earliest period of Zionist movements to create a Jewish state. The current water scarcities and insecurities that Israel faces compounded this dream. Although such matters usually fall under the State Department, meditation between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan was given to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The U.S. government and its treasury department, the International Monetary Fund, and World Bank had provided substantial resources to the new leadership of Abiy Ahmed to support reforms. The treasury's involvement in the deal between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt over the GERD was in order to influence it in ways that serve the interests of Egypt and Israel through its financial incentives (Adissu, 2020). Ethiopia officially rejected to sign an agreement proposed by the Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in February 2020 as the proposal was seen as highly tilted towards Egypt. Ethiopia's decision disappointed the Trump administration, which responded by cutting 130 million dollars of aid that had been reserved to assist Ethiopia's defense and anti-terrorism efforts (ibid).

The symbiotic US-Israel involvement in the deal over the controversial Ethiopian dam has an extraordinary dimension that takes the dam to the heart of Middle East politics. While the project's launching was linked to or motivated by the Arab Spring and the ensuing ascension to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the negotiations over the dam's technical and operational matters were linked to the so-called ‘Deal of the Century.' On January 28, 2020, the ex-US President Donald J. Trump announced 'Trump's *Middle East Peace Plan*' to solve decades of 'Israeli–Palestinian' conflicts. The peace plan's idea was to grant a semi-state entity to Palestinians under Israel's territorial jurisdiction without complete sovereign existence as an independent state (Asseburg, 2019).

The former Israeli ambassador to South Africa from 1992 to 1994 and director-general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2000 to 2001, Alon Liel, argued that 'Trump's plan for "Palestine looks a lot like apartheid' and is nothing new, but a copy of a 40-Year-Old Israeli initiative to the South African Apartheid regime. South Africa's apartheid white minority government had planned to create ten supposed homelands called Bantustans for black South Africans to live secluded from the cities occupied by white settlers. The project was called "separate development”. The purpose of this project was to mitigate the international community's pressures against racial oppression by creating an impression that black people have an independent existence and are free from any form of white domination. However, the attempts to conceal a discriminatory and oppressive regime by creating semi-autonomous states inhabited by subjects with no fundamental political rights did not work in South Africa.

This policy, the ex-ambassador argued, is now being tested in Israel under Trump's Deal of the Century. Israel's plan is the new millennium's version of old South Africa's apartheid policy with active support from the United States government. The deal is a means to justify Israel's entrenchment and control of the West Bank by giving its residents secluded territory deprived of fundamental political rights and absolute freedom, which exactly resembles the goal of the old South African government's Bantustan policy. The map indicated in Trump's plan is an emulation of the Bantustan model with fragmented Palestinian wreckages surrounded by territory entirely under the control of the Israeli state. The Trump administration attempted to approve the permanent domination of one ethnic or religious group. Similar to the move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, Trump continues to signal that international law and the international community are impotent before his dictates (Liel, 2020).

Trump's peace plan brought broader implications to the relations and interactions of other countries in the region, from the neighboring states of Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt to countries in the middle and upstream Nile valley, Sudan and Ethiopia. The proposed peace plan was accompanied by the rewards of investments worth 50 billion U.S. Dollars in the region, out of which Egypt would receive 9 billion USD for its supportive role in implementing the plan (Alula, 2020). The more special reward that Egypt sought from the Trump administration was to pressure Ethiopia to consider and respect Egypt’s water demands and to accept the terms proposed by the treasury department amid the 70% completion of the latter's $5 billion grand projects on the Nile River (ibid). Despite repeated efforts from the U.S. government to settle the quarrels between the two, the Ethiopian government sidelined all the U.S. proposals and completed the dam's first-round filling unilaterally in the summer of 2020 (Yasir, 2020). As the U.S. government’s attempt to mediate the two countries for positive and balanced solutions failed, two of its security allies and its most important allies in Northeastern Africa, Ethiopia and Egypt, remain in a deadlock that threatens the stability of this entire strategic region.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia has entered into a more profound political crisis with the outbreak of war between the central government and the Tigray regional administration. While the domestic and historical controversies between different groups in the country's economic and political fragilities have contributed to the country's political decay, the role of external actors is undisputable given Ethiopia's geopolitical position in one of the strategic locations in the world, the Horn of Africa. Competing superpowers and states aspiring for regional hegemony have always pursued geopolitical, military, strategic, and economic interests in the region (Feierstein, 2020). The competition among regional and extra-regional actors resulted in the militarization of the Red Sea region and a nexus of superpower competition, particularly between China and the United States. Saudi Arabia, Israel, the UAE, Qatar, Iran, and Egypt have sought to spread their conflicts to the Horn of Africa (ibid). These rival actors create and import tensions and instabilities in Eastern Africa. They are constantly involved with national and subnational patrons to setback their adversaries and promote their interests.

Despite a solid security partnership between Ethiopia and the U.S. in the post-9/11 global security environment and Ethiopia's role as an anchor state in the US-led 'Global war on Terrorism’ in the Horn of Africa, the relationship between the two has deteriorated over the last decade mainly due to the Ethiopian government orienting itself towards China's economic and ideological orientations of the developmental state. At the same time, the U.S. was displeased with China's increasing involvement in the Horn of African region, particularly in Ethiopia as an emerging geopolitical and ideological rivalry with the U.S., the unprecedented political upheavals of Arab Spring and its perceived geopolitical ramifications in North Africa, where the U.S. has a topmost security interest. All of this forced the hegemon to be patient over Ethiopian rapprochement with China for a while. Political uprisings in the Arab World challenged the status quo by eroding Western (U.S./Israeli) allied establishments in Egypt and affected deep-seated alliances that forced the U.S. and Israel to look for new counterbalancing forces (Amour, 2017). Ethiopia was the top emerging counterbalance force available to Israel and the USA in the Horn of the Africa region. Concerning the events of the Arab Spring, Ethiopia resembled Egypt as both were ruled by long-served authoritarian systems that have served the U.S. security interests in their respective regions (Lyons, 2015:2). The Arab Spring resulted in the toppling of America's key security ally and the political rise of the Muslim brotherhood in the North African country (Kłosowicz, 2015). This development raised Ethiopia’s value for the USA to compensate for its loss in North Africa by forging partnerships in the Horn of Africa. Kłosowicz (2015) argued that three crucial indicators that showed the new security formation and alliances between Ethiopia and the U.S. following the evens of Arab Spring were:

> *"In 2011, the American embassy in Addis Ababa was opened in a new, impressive building, which is currently the biggest U.S. diplomatic mission in Sub-Saharan Africa, military assistance was radically stepped up by 256% compared to the previous years, and a base for American drones was opened in Arba Minch in southern Ethiopia"* (Kłosowicz, 2015: 86).

American concerns over the North and Horn of Africa are partly driven by Israel's security and the safety of international trade over the Red Sea and Suez Canal. In this regard, the political developments in North Africa following the Arab spring represented a possible reconfiguration of the regional order and geopolitical ramifications that threatened Israel and its global ally, the U.S., with the demise of their strategic client regime in Egypt and with the coming to power of the supposed anti-Israeli or anti-Western Muslim Brotherhood through popular elections (Amour, 2017). The extraordinary sense of siege mentality and geostrategic insecurities of Israel and its global custodian, the U.S., resulted in the substitution of Ethiopia as a strategic security partner in the region. This corresponded with the realist logic that security can be achieved or preserved by shifting alliances among states to prevent any other from becoming one's security threat (Steans, Pettiford, Diez, & El-Anis, 2013). Cairo's preoccupation with political instabilities and declining diplomatic leverages following the ousting of Mubarak from power in 2011, U.S. and Israeli's rapprochement to Ethiopia to counterbalance unfriendly political developments in Egypt, and China's increasing economic and business interests heightened Ethiopia's confidence to unilaterally launch the GERD project (Chen & Swain, 2014, Khorrami, 2020). Given these contextual factors, it is impossible to rule out the speculations that the Ethiopian project over the Nile River is part and parcel of Middle Eastern geopolitics and external financial and technical involvements. However, the Ethiopian government has reiterated that the dam is a domestic developmental aspiration.

5.7. The Return of Great Power Politics in the Horn of Africa; Changes and Continuities

The great powers always define the contexts in which states interact in the international system or sub-systems to achieve their national interests (Waltz, 1985). Accordingly, any effort to understand transnational politics must consider the politics of the great powers. The northeastern edge of the African continent, often called the Horn of Africa, has been the geopolitical concern of global, regional, and emerging powers throughout history; from Roman to Ottoman empires, from the colonial powers of Britain, France, and Italy to Cold War. All forces were vying for geopolitical and strategic interests of controlling the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal, vital international shipping routes, and the natural resources in the Nile Valley. Currently, the U.S. and China are brawling over the Horn of Africa.

Taking the Nile Basin as a continuum, the source and destination countries, Egypt and Ethiopia, represent the two most strategically important countries to the U.S.'s security interests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region) and Sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. These countries have been critical security partners for the U.S. in the 9/11 global security environment in their respective zones. Like Egypt’s role in MENA, Ethiopia is a core state in the Horn of Africa due to its strong statehood foundations, successful history of defeating European colonial powers, and ensuing symbolic value of the country in anticolonial struggles, with its capital Addis Ababa serving as the headquarters for the continental organization African Union, its large geography and population size, and its location at the hub of the region. The Ethiopian governments have had strong bilateral relations and security cooperation, mainly in the US-led 'Global War on Terror’ in the Horn of Africa (Jeffrey, 2018). The Ethiopian regime has been serving the U.S. as a watchdog to monitor the activities of Islamists in Sudan, Somalia, and within the country.

Despite the endless cooperation between the Ethiopian regime and the U.S. in the security sector, mainly in subverting Islamist groups in the Horn of Africa, they were not on good terms in human rights and democracy. Moreover, the Ethiopian government's ideological shift in its political economy orientation towards newly emerging eastern powers, mainly China, brought the former into hostile relations with the U.S. The EPRDF regime officially subscribed to state-led economic development over political rights and market forces of the Western model of liberalism by adopting a state-led developmental state model. While such a combination of Eastern political-economic orientations and Western security partnerships (China and U.S.) have enabled Ethiopia to attain the fastest growing economy in Africa over the past two decades, the country's ideological rapprochement towards China has displeased the U.S. Despite the Ethiopian regime's profound security cooperation with the U.S., particularly in deterring Islamists in the region in the post 9/11 global security context, the latter has been concerned by China’s intensive reach in Africa in general and the Horn of Africa and Nile Valley in particular.

China's involvement in Ethiopia, the core state in the region, has resulted in significant changes in power relations in the Nile Valley. The Chinese financial and technical support enabled Sudan and Ethiopia to start development projects over the Nile River in their respective territories, questioning and challenging Egypt's hydro-hegemony in the Nile valley (Chen & Swain, 2014). Such large-scale Chinese involvement in Africa in general and in the strategic Horn of African region, in particular, increased U.S.'s apprehensions, particularly that Ethiopian economic success may serve as an exemplar to other African states to sideline the West's liberal political-economic prescriptions and accept China as development partner and model. China has supported the Ethiopian mega project (GERD) on the Nile River and has encouraged the construction of many more dams in Ethiopia through covert money and material assistance as part of its hydro-diplomacy to challenge the diplomatic leverage of Western countries, mainly the U.S., and increase the power supply for its investments in Horn of African states and broader Africa (Obengo, 2016).

Similarly, the U.S. has longstanding interests in the Nile Valley, including balancing the interests of two of its critical geopolitical and security partners at the origin and destination of the world's longest river, the Nile, Ethiopia, and Egypt, respectively. Studies reveal that the feasibility of a dam on the Blue Nile River of Ethiopia and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) location was discovered by geological surveys conducted by the United States' Bureau of Reclamation between 1956 and 1964 (Deressa, & Mbaku, 2013). The U.S. approach surveying the potential dam project over the Nile River was driven by the Cold War-era geopolitical motive of moving against its global adversary, the USSR, and its anti-western and anti-Israel client regime in Egypt led by Gamal Abdel Nassir by allying with Ethiopia, the source of River Nile (ibid). Similarly, Israel had a plan to assist Ethiopia in building the dam on the Blue Nile to retaliate against Egypt during the Suez crisis in 1956, following Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal and prevent Israeli ships from passing through the canal.

The hostilities between Egypt under Nasir's socialist government and the U.S. and the Zionist state of Israel on the other hand ceased in 1978 with the signing of the US-led Camp David peace treaty between Egypt and Israel (Congressional Research Service, 2020). Since then, Egypt has been a critical partner for the United States in the region (Chen &

Swain, 2014). Egypt has secured unwavering diplomatic support and military assistance from successive U.S. governments, enabling the former to maintain its hydro-hegemony in the Nile Valley (ibid). In exchange, successive Egyptian governments have collaborated with the U.S./Israel in the Middle East, the Gaza strip, and the Sinai Peninsula against so-called 'Islamist Political forces' (ibid).

As a result of this rapprochement, the U.S. and Israel abandoned their plan to assist Ethiopia in initiating and launching any dam projects on the river Nile. While the regime in Egypt appears to be U.S./Israel friendly, the latter downplays Ethiopia's interest in utilizing the Nile River's water resources, which will affect the volume of the Nile River waters that Israel has always desired to use. The post-Camp David Middle East security establishments, and rapprochements between the US, Israel, and Egypt negatively impacted Ethiopia's aspiration to use the water resources of the Nile River. Despite the U.S.–Israeli syndicated studies on the feasibility of a dam on Ethiopia's Blue Nile being conducted half a century ago, Egypt's partnership with U.S. and Israel and ensuing diplomatic leverages, ability to lobby international donor institutions to not provide Ethiopia with necessary financial assistance for infrastructural projects on the Nile River, the attempts by successive Ethiopian governments to build a dam on the river did not go forward till 2011 (Deressa, & Mbaku, 2013).

The emergence of China as an alternative power and source of enormous investments, loans, and financial support in recent times has changed the traditional geopolitical matrices in the Nile Valley. According to a 2019 U.N. report, Ethiopia is the largest receiver of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the East Africa region and the fourth most prominent destination. Ethiopia was able to complete the Tana Beles dam project. It built a massive hydropower dam on one of the tributaries of the Nile River, the Tekeze River, through Chinese financial assistance (Chen & Swain, 2014). Chinese financial support has helped Ethiopia utilize its hydropower potential and challenge Egypt's historical hydro-hegemony in the Nile Valley by launching the grand project on the River Nile in Ethiopia (ibid). Despite Ethiopia's security partnership with the West in the post-9/11 global security order and environment, U.S./ Israel and their affiliated international financial institutions, mainly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have been unwilling to provide financial assistance, funds, or loans to Ethiopia necessary for the construction of mega-dams on the Blue Nile River (Deressa, & Mbaku, 2013). This has been mainly due to Egypt's superior strategic and geopolitical significance to the U.S. security order in the Middle East and North Africa and Israel's interests in the regular flow of the river to transfer the water to its territories across the Sinai.

Considering this context, it is arguable that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) represents a polygonal politics that integrates geopolitical, ideological, security, and identity matters rather than a merely national issue, whether for development or water security, for Egypt and Ethiopia. Regional security complex theory provides an analytical framework to explain the dynamics of interstate threat interpretations and coordination of responses to the perceived insecurities (Legrenzi, & Lawson, 2018). Security in this regard is not only about the countries or groups of countries' material capabilities to defend themselves or attack their adversaries, but also socially constructed multi-sectored notions with economic, environmental, and identity considerations at various scales. In this regard, the Ethiopian project, from its inception to the ongoing negations among the riparian states and the involvement of external actors in the process, has been the byproduct of various factors in specific periods, including the events of the Arab Spring and the ensuing rise of an Islamist regime in Egypt, the heightening US-China economic and ideological competition in Africa, extensive economic relations and business interests between China and Ethiopia, the interests of Israel to use the water resources of the River Nile for its domestic water and the military partnership between the U.S. and Egypt (Obengo, 2016).

The question is whether the US-China competition in the region leads the three decades' modus of operandi or framework to US-Ethiopian symbiotic relations to end or continue to impact the regional order of the Horn of Africa. The U.S. recently dropped its rhetoric of extremism or countering Islamist terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The Ethiopian regime has utilized the suppression of Muslims in Ethiopia and the broader region to obtain legitimacy and diplomatic support from Western governments. The U.S.'s prioritization of economic and trade competition with the emerging power, China, including pressuring Ethiopia to enter into a binding agreement with Egypt over the GERD dam, good governance, and human rights issues, have turned Ethiopia to play the China card, which played an essential role in financing the project to counterbalance Western powers' influence in Africa. The trend relieves the Muslim population in Ethiopia, at least from the harassment and labels of extremism and radicalization from external entities and agencies.

Superpower politics is not the only determinant of regional politics. Many more issues affect religious society and state patterns in the Horn of African states, including Ethiopia. There are many more emerging trends that immensely shape regional politics. Firstly, the Middle Eastern governments, mainly Egypt, Saudi, UAE, Qatar, and Turkey, have increasingly vied for political, economic, and security influence. The main consequences of this have been the militarization of the region with the proliferation of military bases belonging to these countries in different Horn of African states. The establishment of military bases by these regional powers and extra-regional actors such as the U.S., China, Russia, Turkey, France, and the U.K. has been subject to different local interpretations based on ethno-linguistic and religious motives.

Secondly, Ethiopia and Sudan have been in a fragile political transition since the Cold War. While Ethiopia's regime was a vital alliance of the US-led 'Global War on Terrorism' in the Horn of Africa, Sudan's government was considered an US-Israeli adversary for its Islamic political orientation. If the transitions in these countries fail, civil war and state failure will destabilize the already volatile region of the Horn of Africa with catastrophic consequences to the stability of the Red Sea region needed by both global and regional powers. Thirdly, the area has witnessed a high population growth rate that resulted in a political explosion. A new generation of people became politically active and conscious of questioning and challenging the status quo in the region. The recent political changes and upheavals in Sudan and Ethiopia have derived from alarming population growth. Western governments believe that such popular revolts and mayhems will create a vacuum and give the opportunity for Islamist political forces and groups to spread in the region. This fear resulted in extensive support for minority groups to control the state and politics in Ethiopia and serve their security interests. These factors increase global, regional, and extra-regional actors' complex involvement in the region. The motives of several powers' military, economic, security, strategic, and geopolitical involvements in the area are basically to protect the Red Sea from threats of Islamist groups and ensure the safety of international trades between the Indian and Mediterranean oceans and the network of businesses between Europe, Asia/North America, and Africa (United States Institute of Peace, 2020).

Conclusion

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) of CHS postulates that international security formation has regional dimensions that are influenced and wedged by the relations between states in the same geographical cluster. While concentrating on the regional level as an arena of interactions for global and regional actors, RSCT examines the link between domestic conditions of states in the region, the nature and patterns of relations between the units in the same area and other areas, as well as the roles the global dynamics and actors play in the regional setting security construction. RSCT allows us to understand the interplay of the materialistic approach of realism by considering territoriality, distribution of power, and alliance formation on the one hand and the constructivist approach of social construction in the field of securitization and patterns of amity and enmity relationships among various actors in different contexts (Buzan & Waever, 2003). This theory also enables us to understand the natures and patterns of conflict formation in terms of enmity and amity in regional and global powers' politics of security.

Because of its geopolitical importance at the mouth of the Red Sea, which connects international trade over the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal, its vicinity to the world's leading oil and gas supplier Arabian Gulf as well as its strategic location to supervise developments in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Asia, the Horn of Africa has always attracted the attention of great and regional powers. During the Cold War, extraordinary powers vied for geopolitical, military, and strategic control of the region, using the states and elites in the region to check and balance each other's presence and advance in the area. Since the end of the Cold War, greater emphasis has been given to the perceived threats to international security in the Western hemisphere, 'Islamic extremism or fundamentalism,' and the activities of Islamic-oriented armed groups and their political mobilizations in the region. The post-Cold War regional order in the Horn of Africa represents the combination of Western powers' perception and policies toward Islam and Africa in the post 9/11 global security formation anchored in the perceived threats of

Islam and neoliberal and neocolonial resource exploitation of the African continent. Thus, the post-Cold War modus operandi in the interaction between global powers in the West and their client regimes in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Ethiopia, has been to contain Islamists and scrutinize developments within Muslim societies in Ethiopia and the region. This development resulted in the extensive securitization of Islam in Ethiopia and destabilization of the broader region. The Ethiopian regime intentionally utilized Westerners' fear to suppress dissent in the country and produce regional mayhem to preserve the status quo. Many issues in the region, including ethnic and sectarian violence, regional instability and fragile state structures, domestic economic and social problems, and conflicts for resources in the Horn of African states, are the byproducts of the so-called global campaign to fight Islamists.

Even one of the most burning issues in the region, the animosity between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Ethiopian dam project on the Nile River is, in one manner or another, a geopolitical ramification of the post 9/11 or post-Cold War global or Western security formation anchored in the perceived threats of Islam to the Westerners and their values. The Nile River rises from the Ethiopian highlands and flows down to the Mediterranean Sea through Egypt and nine other riparian states, including Sudan.

The Ethiopian Grand Project (GERD) on the Nile River is integral to Middle East politics and ensues global actors' geopolitical interests in the Middle East and African regions. Concerned with the security of Israel and relying on both Egypt and Ethiopia at the source and destination of the Nile valley, the U.S. has been playing a game of checkers between the two countries using their controversies over the Nile River and the GERD project. While the region's future is not certain, for the time being, the USA and Israel have been playing the realist logic of counterbalancing, using Egypt and Ethiopia against each other to influence the domestic policies in each and maintain the status quo. They have utilized their regional partnership, military and security establishments, and economic and trade penetration to win and convince one state against the other based on the circumstances and strategic priorities.

The Nile connects the Middle Eastern and Horn of Africa regions' political dynamics as a matter of urgency for the balance of power, the priority of strategic partnership, and maintaining the status quo for global and regional actors such as the U.S. and Israel, respectively. The ongoing tensions between the lower (Sudan and Egypt) and upper stream (Ethiopia) countries, which might scale up to a full-fledged war in the future, are anchored in the geopolitical and destabilization policies of superpowers and their regional ally following the political developments of the Arab Spring. The river and potential projects in the upstream countries, mainly Ethiopia, have been subject to international manipulation to weaken what is perceived as Islamic political developments in Egypt and Sudan.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

INFRA-POLITICS SECURITY SUBJECTIVITIES, DE-SECURITIZATION MOVEMENTS AND OTHER OUTCOMES OF SECURITIZATION

One of the criticisms against the securitization theory has been its overemphasis on elites' speech acts and rhetoric, paying lesser attention to dissenting and counter-securitization voices from affected subjects of securitization policies (Baysal, 2020). The critical application of securitization theory needs to consider ″the dissenting voices within the securitizing process and acts that counter securitization attempts occurring in everyday politics and social interactions" (Charrett, 2009:29). As securitization always involves security discourses of "who says what, for whom, why, and under what circumstance," it covers the power relationships among various actors in securitization (Mukerem, 2015:74. Similarly, power relations essentially generate resistance, as "if there were no possibilities of resistance, there would be no power relations at all″ (Campbell 1998: 51 cited in Charette, 2008:29).

This chapter devotes itself to discussing alternative security interpretations and understandings from the subjects and broader audiences of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. In other words, the chapter examines how the government's security discourses of 'Islamic extremism' as an imminent national security threat have been perceived by infra political community, including members of other religious communities and civil society organizations, and the reactions from the Muslim community. Buzan (1983) emphasized the need to integrate societal security into the notion of security while examining the various forms of relations and interactions between the state and other actors in the area of security. In his analysis, Buzan refuted the traditional realist view that the state is the principal actor in security policy rather than its correlation with groups, individuals, other states, and international settings. Unlike the previous chapter's state and sub-system analysis of securitization, this chapter emphasizes the patterns of securitization and de-securitization of Islam in the ongoing protracted conflicts in Ethiopia. Special attention is paid to protracted inter-ethnic conflicts and recent violent incidents in the country and their roles in the ongoing securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

6.1. Muslims' Counter-securitization Movements

Muslims are the primary subjects of the securitization of Islam. Securitization of Islam in this context refers to framing national security threats around Islam and Muslims. The security discourse of Islamic extremism has served as a framework to securitize Muslim societies by labeling Muslims and their institutions as a looming existential security threat, politicians and security elites justify themselves and enable institutions at their disposal to take extraordinary measures against subjects of securitizations (Cesari, 2009). The issue of securitization in this context refers to Muslims and their institutions. Extraordinary measures mean the actions and approach politicians and state institutions take against Muslims, which are not justifiable by routine constitutional procedures, but by emergency politics that transgress political and legal processes under normal circumstances. The Ethiopian government's attitude towards Muslims turned in a negative direction starting from 1995/96, mainly due to the reawaking of Muslims' religious observance and assertive sociopolitical activities that the government viewed as a politicization of Islam (Dereje, 2011). The shift in government attitude resulted in the state apparatus changing its approach towards the religious community, including subsequent denial of access to public spaces, banning of Islamic NGOs, schools, periodicals, and coopting loyal regime leadership to Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, the only institution that represents Muslim community at national level (Haustein and Østebø, 2011).

Against these government measures, the Muslim community has adopted a more assertive approach mainly by presenting the demands of the religious community in a more organized manner to the regime using different agencies and mechanisms (Dereje, 2011). The Muslim community and its agencies have mainly utilized the enabling constitutional principles and framework established following the 1991 political transition to frame the religious community's agenda and demands to the government and present Muslims' aspirations for an inclusive notion of the Ethiopian state (ibid). While the primary focus of Muslims in post-socialist Ethiopia has been rediscovering and asserting their religious identity mainly through the exchange of spiritual knowledge, regular gatherings and congressional prayers in mosques, the proliferation of Islamic associations, audacious expressions and manifestations of Islamic culture and manners in the public place, and establishing scholarship and commercial networks with the broader Muslim world (Abbink, 2011; Dereje,2011; Tronvol &Vaughan, 2002). According to Haustein and Østebø (2011), these activities were clear signs of Islamic revivalism with no political motives, contrasting the global security discourse and Ethiopian government articulation of radicalization among Ethiopian Muslims.

Islamic revivalism in Ethiopia, in many respects, takes the form of reform and renewal of religious activities based on religious texts rather than a movement with political and power aspirations based on Islamic ideological preferences (Abbink, 1998; Otsebo, 2007). As is the nature of social reformist movements, religious revivalism and reform in Ethiopia have been led by influential reformers and personalities of mainly younger generations that shape the much-diversified Islamic traditions and Muslim communities in Ethiopia (Otsebo, 2007). In addition to the growing religious consciousness, observance, and motivations, Muslims' exposure to modern secular education has increased their aspirations as full-fledged citizens and inclusion in the national scene of the state (Dereje, 2011). Such new developments among Muslims have posed a paradigmatic challenge to the century-old mentality and culture of Christian elites and Orthodox Church institutions which always have sought to define the country as a Christian state. Through various mechanisms and agencies, the Muslim community's practical struggle against the discriminatory notion of the state started in the form of presenting demands for more rights to the government within the post-1991 political and constitutional frameworks (ibid). Two Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organizations, the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe and US-based Badr-Ethiopia, articulated an organized list of the community's priorities. These organizations have served as a vanguard for Muslim de-securitization struggles. The missions of *Bedr* and Network are stated as follows:

> *"Improving the social and economic status Ethiopian Muslims in Ethiopia"* and *"to facilitate cooperation with other organized communities, institutions, and individuals for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Ethiopia as long as they respect the rights, culture, belief and general identity of Ethiopian Muslims as Muslims and Ethiopians" (*ibid: 22-23).

The two organizations jointly articulated Muslim questions in consultation with various segments of the religious community, including the diaspora community, and presented the community's demands to the government in 2007 (Abbink, 20174). The questions raised by these diaspora organizations have formed the basis of Ethiopian Muslim civil rights movements in contemporary Ethiopia (ibid). This dialogue between the Muslim representatives and the government established the framework for the Muslim community's legitimate demands from the Ethiopian government (ibid). The Muslim delegation articulated and defined the interests of the religious community after conducting an intensive survey entitled "comprehensive investigation and surveys conducted to establish the prominent Muslim issues in contemporary Ethiopia" (Dereje, 2011: 23). The survey's findings collected from Muslims in various parts of the country and abroad were articulated and documented under the title "Questions Raised by the Ethiopian Muslims" and submitted to the office of the Prime Minister and the late Premier, Meles Zenawi, in hand (ibid).

The following are the primary demands of the religious community as outlined in the document: independence for EIASC (Mejilis) free from any form of government intervention; proper implementation of constitutionally granted religious equality between Muslims and other religious communities; recognition of the Islamic heritage of Ethiopia as an integral part of the country's defining elements, i.e. history and national identity, particularly Ethiopia's unique status in Islamic traditions and history (as the first foreign state to recognize and host early Islam and Muslims when they were persecuted in Mecca, the birth place of Islam); unrestricted functioning of Islamic NGOs and associations; to be treated equally with other religious associations and NGOs; the opening of Islamic banks and financial institutions; to reinforce and abide by the principle of secularism as prescribed under the country's law of the land, particularly to correct exclusive ownership of the city of Axum in Northern Ethiopia by the Orthodox church; balanced representation of Muslims in the country's institutional set up; the ceasing of unnecessary and baseless association of Muslims through the issue of national security threat; to revise the 2007 federal censuses that has been thought to have purposefully reduced the number of the Muslim population in comparison to previous censuses; and lastly to redefine the state's national identity on a more inclusive basis(ibid).

However, the above demands of the Muslim community were considered and interpreted as a politicization of Islam or potential political mobilization based on and for Islamic political orientations. For instance, the Muslim reservations on the 2007 national census's report on the number of the Muslim population were interpreted by the late prime minister Melese Zenawi in his parliamentary speech while he was addressing the questions raised by the parliamentarians regarding conditions between the Muslim community and the governments, on April 17, 2012, as:

> *"The government is aware of the extremist Muslims called Salafist or Wahhabism's assertions that there must be an Islamic government in Ethiopia claiming that the majority of Ethiopian populations are Muslims by rejecting the data presented by the Central Statics Agency (CSA) as false).*" (Transcribed and cited in Muhamed, 2016: 207).

Akmal Negash (2014:4), one of the leading activists in the Muslim rights' community, contended the views of the Prime Minister as an intentional slander that aims to distort the legitimate questions of the religious community as:

> "ጠቅላይ ሚኒስትሩ ሠለፊዮች *‹‹መንግሥት ቁጥራችንን አሳነሰብን››* የሚል ዘመቻ እንዯሚያዯርጉ ተናግረዋል ። ይህ ምኑ ከወንጀል ጋር እንዯሚገናኝ አይገባኝም። ከጥቂት ዓመታት በፊትየ አማራ ሕዝብ ቁጥር ከተጠበቀው በላይ ማነሱን ተከትሎ አንድ የገዢው ፓርቲየ ፓርላ ማአባል በምክርቤቱውስጥ *‹‹ቁጥራችንን አሳነሳችሁብን››* በሚል ሙግት አስነስተው እንዯነበር ትዝይለኛል ። የሕዝብ ቁጥር በብዙ መልኩ ብዙ ትርጉም በሚያሰጥበት አገር የቁጥር ማነስ አለማነስ ጥያቄ ለምን ከእስላማዊ *መንግሥት ምሥረታ ጋር ይያያዛል?"*

Translated as;

> *"How could Muslim's reservation on the national census report of the number of the religious community possibly be associated with extremism or with the agenda of 'Salafi', or 'Wahabi' Muslims, whatever name you use? What is wrong with raising proper numerical representation of Muslims in the national census in a country where the number has a lot of political meaning? Muslims are not the only section of society that expressed reservations over the accuracy of the national census. Like a year before an ethnic Amhara representative in the parliament questioned the government about the downsizing of the number of their ethnic members by the central statics' agency? I don't understand why numbers becomes an issue of extremism when it comes to Muslims".*

The context in which the premier accused Muslims of reservation and suspicion of deliberate downsizing of the number of the religious community coincided with public protests and demonstrations of Muslims against alleged government interference in the community's internal religious affairs. Similarly, Habtamu Alebachew (2012: 22) refuted the premier's accusation of Muslims as plotting an Islamic state in Ethiopia as;

> *"There has never been any historical phenomenon where Ethiopian Muslims, one way or another, demanded an Islamic Republic. There were*

> *both localized interreligious incidences of violence since 1991 but none of them led to any prolonged or officially proclaimed the state of emergency*."

6.2. Muslims' Reactions to Ahbashism and the Quest for Institutional Autonomy

As discussed in chapter three, the relationship between the Muslim community and government has declined since 1995. Since then, the government has scrutinized Muslims at individual and community level, producing frustrations and grievances among the religious community. A more open confrontation between the two sparked in 2011 when the government imported Islamic scholars from abroad to teach a specific interpretation of Islam, called '*Ahbashism,*' to the whole Muslim population (Abbink, 2013). The government's imposition of *"Ahbashism"* provoked nationwide peaceful demonstrations and protests of Muslims against the government's interference in religious matters (Mukerem, 2015). Although the government's plan and strategy to introduce Ahbashism was driven by global discourses and actors in the “Global War on Terrorism,” domestically, it backfired as it spoiled the already deteriorating relations between the regime and the Muslim community. While it was motivated by many factors to impose a foreign sect on the Muslim population, including the US and Israeli's joint mission to curtail political activities and movements with Islamic ambitions in the Horn of African countries, especially in the context of post-Cold War and Arab Spring security environment to prevent the perceived trend of radicalization among Ethiopian Muslims, the way the government attempted to address the issue backfired. Abbink (2014: 353) expressed the condition as:

> *"The medicine was questionable. Privileging one Muslim movement and a small and largely foreign one at that, above others was done without prior consultation with Muslim representatives in Ethiopia, except the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC). Muslims saw this as patronizing and 'political.*"

The compulsory training of Muslims about the constitutional values and elements of moderation and alarming the community about the rising danger of extreme Islamic elements called 'Wahabism' or Salafism, as claimed by the government, was considered by Muslims as a forceful indoctrination of the sect on the majority of Ethiopian Muslims. In this regard, one of the prominent religious figures, Ustaz Abubakr Ahmed, who was a member of the Muslim Solution Finding Committee and sentenced to 24 years of imprisonment for conspiring to establish an Islamic state in Ethiopia in 2012, expressed the government's action in comparison with historical assimilation of Muslims by the Christian emperor as:

> "*The government's action of forcefully imposing Ahbashism on Muslim populations is even far worse than the historical forced conversion of Wollo Muslims to Christianity by Emperor Yohanis IV, Yohanis was forcing Wollo Muslims to accept the faith which at least he believed in, while the current government forced us to accept Ahbashism, an Islamic sect the government officials themselves neither know nor believe in*"

Not long after the beginning of the training, most Muslim attendees left the training halls in repulsion of the proposal presented to them by officials from the then Ministry of Federal Affairs and leaders of Mejlis (Muhamed, 2013). Muslims' leaving the session on 'fighting Islamic extremism' and 'moderate version of Islam' was used to signify the former's disagreement and disapproval of the government's narrative on the radicalization of Muslims and counter-radicalization strategies designed by the government. Security forces around the training hall reacted by collecting and arresting all Muslims not interested in attaining the training sessions and leaving the training centers (Abbink, 2014). The moment marked the start of open and large-scale confrontation and hostility between the Muslim population and the government security apparatus, and the two still view each other suspiciously (Jeb, 2014: 142).

The Muslim community's reaction to the government's Ahbashism campaign rose to a public level protest in December 2011, when students of Awolia Islamic College in Addis Ababa protested against the Islamic affairs' supreme council/Mejilis decisions to dismiss all teachers of Arabic language in the school and terminate the Arabic curriculum (Østebø and Wallelign, 2015). The students' protest obtained the attention of Muslims across the country and various non-government actors who viewed the development in multiple ways. The decision to fire Arabic teachers and close the program passed by Islamic Affairs

Supreme Council or *Mejilis* reached the school administration through the letter with the signature and stamp of the council's peace and security branch officer Mr. Jemal Mohammed Salih, on December 30, 2011 (Muhamed, 2016).

The student's protest in the Awolia Islamic school ignited a large-scale nationwide protest among Muslims throughout the country, mainly every week after Friday prayer that, sustained till 2015 (ibid). Over the following few days, the student's protest gained the attention of the Muslim community both in the capital and other parts of the country. After a week of the student demonstration, many Muslim populations gathered at the college. They held an extensive deliberation that culminated through the election of the committee called "Muslim's Solution Finding Committee" with duties to represent Muslims and present their issues to the government. Since then, the committee has taken the role of leadership and representation of Muslims in issues between the religious community and the government. The committee firmly directed the Muslim protesters to be disciplined and peaceful while conducting public demonstrations (Abbink, 2013). The committee has articulated three questions and demands of the religious community and presented them to the government as follows:

> *"Stop the state-enforced al-Ahbash campaign, permit free and fair elections to the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and return the Awolia College to the Muslim community"* (Østebø and Wallelign, 2015: 6).

The Solution Finding Committee submitted letters carrying the above questions to different organs of the government, including the Ministry of Federal Affairs and the office of the Prime Minister. However, most government institutions showed little interest in hearing from committee members and dealing with issues presented by them (Muhamed, 2016). Meanwhile, the government and Mejlis leaders continued forcing people to attend the training and embrace Ahbashism as a sect of Islam practiced by Ethiopian Muslims. The religious community continued to protest the government's actions and condemned the regime's political intrusion into EIASC (Mejilis) through public demonstrations held across the country. The protests targeted the government and its institutions for imposing an alien sect on Ethiopian Muslims without any religious animosities concerning other religious groupings (Nicolas, 2015). The message that Muslims conveyed through slogans during the public demonstrations were: "We want our rights!" "Stop Ahbashism campaign!", "People want the leaders of Majlis to step down!" and "Allah Akbar! (God is great)!" (Yunus, 2002:1).

Within a few months, the Muslim resistance started by students at Awolia Islamic College in Addis Ababa spread to many regions and cities of the country beyond the capital, including Jimma, Adama, Gonder, Dessie, Dire Dawa, Assella, Harar, Shahemene, Assassa, Baddessa, Chagni, Woldia, Alaba, Mersa, Degan, and Gerba (ibid). Far from dealing politically within constitutional frameworks to address Muslim questions, the government labeled and portrayed the protests of the religious community as: ″A manifestation and further expression of radical Islam and publicly accused the demonstrators of attempting to take political power and convert Ethiopia into an Islamic state″ (Østebø and Wallelign, 2015:6).

As discussed in chapter three, the late Prime Minister reiterated that 'Islamic fundamentalism' is a long-term threat to the Ethiopian state and its political orders as a secular and multicultural federal entity starting in the mid-1990s (Dereje, 2011). However, 'Islamic extremism and radicalization of Muslims′ appeared in the national security publicly after the post-Cold War global security discourse of Islamic terrorism (Østebø, 2007).

The public portrayal of 'Islamic extremism’ as a national security threat targeting a wider audience or general public occurred in 2012 when the Muslim's public protest against the government's actions in the affairs of the religious community reached its climax. In a parliamentary session on April 17, 2012, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, for the first time, underlined the risk of 'Islamic Extremism' over Muslim public protest when he addressed parliamentarians, stating that "a few extremist Muslims are working to erode the age-old tradition of tolerance between traditional Sufi Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia" (Quoted in IRIN, 2012). The Premier stressed that the government would not tolerate such extremist Muslims in his speech.

In his speech, the latte Prime Minister targeted the "Salafist Muslim "as an extremist and "Mahibere Kidusan" as a Christian extremist as two conflicting extremist religious movements in the country. His accusation of the *Mahibere Kidusan* for conspiring to restore the imperial time theocratic Ethiopia where the Orthodox Church was the kingmaker of the empire was to strike a balance. *Mahbere Kidusan* was accused of the slogan saying "*one country, one religion"* carried by Orthodox Christians during the celebration of the 2012 Timket (epiphany) holiday in Addis Ababa. However, looking at the then context of altercations between the government and the Muslim community and the contents of his speech reveals that the leader's intention to mention *Mahibere Kidusan* was motivated to convince the public about the government's balanced position in treating all religious groups in the country. His main focus was on labeling and accusations of Muslims' civil rights movement seeking religious liberty and freedom as 'extremist or Salafist' Muslims. In the same meeting, the Prime Minister expressed that these groups are very few and can be corrected by corrective teachings of religious leaders and the government's instruction on the constitutional principle of secularism. However, regarding what he called Muslim extremists, he said, "More dangerous, even than that of Mahbere Kidusan is the threat from some extremist Muslims called Salafi" indeed "all members of Al-Qaeda are Salafist." Moreover, the Prime Minister created a discourse that associates what he called 'Salafi Muslims in Ethiopia with 'international terrorist' groups such as Al-Qaida and Al Shabab in the following way;

> *"The allegation [from the Salafis] that the government brought Ahbash to Ethiopia, for me, I don't think is appropriate. Because, firstly; Ahbash is not a foreign religion as such. It was a Sufi belief taught by the Ethiopian Sheikh called Abdullah al-Harari in Lebanon (since he was unable to teach and preach in his own country Ethiopia). Secondly, Mejlis's leadership brought Ahbash believing that it has a similar belief system with the Ethiopian Muslim population. [Therefore], can we (as a government) stop them? Even, if Ahbash is alien or newcomer, can we prohibit those [Mejilis] from bringing it? If we can, why don't we prohibit the Salafis themselves since they are newcomers? Then, if one asks who is the source of the trouble? It*

> *is not government intervention in religious affairs but originates from few [extremist] Salafis connected with the global networks of extremism and those around our neighbors"* (Translated by and quoted in Muhamed, 2016:259).

The above speech of the late prime minister aimed to criminalize Muslim public protest, putting all the protesters under the single basket of 'extremist Muslims' called 'Salafists' who aimed to establish an Islamic state in Ethiopia. He utilized the political developments in the Arab world to objectify his accusation of Ethiopian Muslims' protests against the violation of their constitutional rights as:

> "*Unless the government takes timely and appropriate measure over these extremist groups, the danger is clear and imminent from what they are doing in Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Tunisia. Some of these extremist groups are creating trouble in such countries and are trying to bring "the Arab Spring"* (ibid).

Moreover, the Prime Minister took Muslim issues and questions that were presented to the government through various means, including through formal dialogue and peaceful public demonstrations, out of the range of everyday politics when he said;

> "*The government has to take an appropriate measure against this "dangerous group" at its early stage in order* for *Ethiopia not to be Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen or Tunisia*."

Securitization means putting national security as a yardstick of all political considerations (Buzan, 1983). Similarly, the Premier put Ethiopian national security above all political considerations. He further asserted that his government would never allow Ethiopia to be like Libya and Yemen by accusing radical Muslims or Islamists of creating political chaos in these countries. In such a way, the PM distanced Muslim's quest for religious liberty and institutional autonomy from political considerations. Without supporting his arguments with empirical evidence that indicates the real security threats posed by Muslims, he associated Ethiopian Muslims and their activities with what he called 'extremists' or

'Salafists.' Moreover, he mentioned the Al-Nur Party in Egypt portrayed as the "Salafi" Muslims political party when he said "we know what this party is doing in Egypt" to make a resemblance between the Arab spring in Egypt and Muslims protest in Ethiopia (ibid; 16-17). Ironically, this same party would actually ally with the Al-Sisi regime and was a huge part of why Morsi was overthrown.

After ten days of the parliamentary session and criminalization of the Muslim protests as a "Salafi extremist" movement, the government security forces killed seven Muslim protestors on April 27, 2012, in Assassa town in the Oromia regional state (Abbink, 2014). The Assassa incident marked a new pattern in the interaction between the religious community and the government. Though the Muslim protests were peaceful for the most part, the security personnel employed violent force to silence the religious community's voice (ibid). The prime minister's labeling of Muslim public protest and the quest for institutional autonomy as a manifestation of radicalization gave the green light to security sectors, including federal and public police forces and anti-terror special forces to use extraordinary measures to deal with the religious community's activities. On July 13, 2012, the mass security forces raided Awolia Islamic college, where Muslims usually gather to discuss the issues between the government and the religious community and arbitrarily arrested 70 religious' figures of the Muslim community, including the mosque's central organizing committee members and the elected Muslim Solution Finding Committee (Østebø and Wallelign, 2015).

In October 2012, the authorities accused all seventeen members of the Muslims Solution Finding Committee and 12 additional Muslims of "plotting acts of terrorism" after months in prison (Ibid: 6). The government's act of arresting the members of the Solution Finding Committee and its accusation of them as 'terrorists' amplified Muslims' discontent and grievances who continued protesting in a more organized fashion. In the prolonged demonstrations that lasted for three years, from 2011 to 2014, the religious community expressed its support and solidarity for the imprisoned Muslims accused by the government of being terrorists, including publicly showing banners with the photos of the committee members.

In sharp opposition to the government's claim of fighting "Islamic extremism," the Muslim community, through various public protests, proclaimed that their resistance was against the government's repression and interference in the internal affairs of the religious community, not against any other religious groups and sects in the country (Stockmans and Büscher, 2017). The Muslim protestors framed and presented their demands in the Ethiopian constitutional and legal framework stressing that they neither sought political power, nor adhered to partisan politics (Lyons, 2015). For that purpose, the leaders of the religious community distanced themselves from any external motives and actors, including opposition leaders in diaspora (Dereje, 2011; ibid). This is against the government's claim of a security complex that associated the internal questions of Ethiopian Muslims with what the former called 'the global and regional terrorist networks.'

On the other hand, the government employed the narrative that Muslim protests across the country were motivated by the radicalization projects of extremist Muslims and deployed extensive security forces around places, mainly mosques and public squares, to forcefully crackdown on Muslim protests and demonstrations. Abbink (2014:354) witnessed the government's extraordinary reactions to Muslims' quests as the "police and security services assaulted and arrested hundreds of Muslims." In August 2013, security forces, primarily federal police and anti-terror military units, killed eleven Muslims in the town of Kofale in the Oromia region, located 250 kilometers south of the capital city (Lyons, 2015: 8). Expecting large-scale protests by Muslims after the Id al-Fitr, the federal Police forcefully cracked down on Muslims gathering for the Eid Al-Adha holiday in Addis Ababa on August 21, 2013. Østebø (2012:174) observed the condition as "a highly organized operation attacked Muslims returning from prayers at the capital's stadium, randomly beating people, and arresting thousands." The Id al-Fitr violent measures ushered in the government's success of effectively discontinuing the Muslim's organized protests sustained from the summer of 2011 (ibid).

The parliamentary speech of the late Prime Minister and subsequent practices of the security apparatus prove that securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is a phenomenon of speech acts and a matter of institutionalized security practices and policy implementations and thereby contributed to the infringement of the religious community’s civil liberties. The securitization of Islam in Ethiopia today is the byproduct of various contextual factors and the interplay of different actors, both internal and external actors' interests, that influence the security articulations of the Ethiopian government. In summary, the historical patterns of the state-religion relationship and tensions between religious groups, mainly Muslims and Orthodox Christians, post-1991 political developments, and ensuing socio-economic dynamics within the Muslim community, post-Cold War global security discourse anchored in the regional and international system of security formations facilitated the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia.

6.3. The Discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism in Ethiopian Public Sphere; Assessment of the Broader Audience’s Reactions to Securitization.

Securitization functions out of the usual political sphere to react to an existential threat to particular referent objects (i.e., state, society, political order) (Weaver, Buzan, and de Vilde, 1998). It involves the interactions between actors who consider Islam and Muslims as an existential threat to the political community and its values, thereby justifying extraordinary measures to curb it and the broader general public that empowers the government to act and implement policies that would not be permitted in normal political conditions (Cesari, 2009). Thus, successful securitization depends on the securitization actor's (mainly government officials and other functional actors such as different cultural communities and media actors) capacity to frame and to 'speak security' in a way that presents a specific issue as an existential threat to the survival of the general public and convinces a significant portion of the audience (ibid). Put another way, securitization is attentive to the way broader political communities understand and respond to threats.

According to the securitization theory's conception of securitization, all sections of the general public or society, as the audience of the securitization process, are entitled to their understanding of securitizing actors' security articulations and narratives. However, due to the power relationships and structural advantages in security sector governance, the political elite's notion of security prevails over the security understandings of other actors who are not power holders. At the same time, CHS's securitization theory emphasizes agreement from the general audience as a standard in security formation. Thus, it is relevant to integrate the views and interpretations of different sections of the audience towards the government's security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' as an existential threat to the Ethiopian state and political community. One reason to include such views and interpretations is to evaluate the role of the audience in the securitization process, the success and extent of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia through the security formation of 'Islamic fundamentalism.' In addition to the voice of the direct subject of securitization, i.e., Muslim communities, this chapter considers the security understandings of other sections of the society and its agencies vis-a-vis the altercations of the government and Muslims. Addressing the views of the broader sections of the organization enables us to evaluate the extent and success of securitization and the implications of securitization on the horizontal relations of various religious communities and national peace and harmony. Evaluation mainly assesses the public representation of the security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' and the general public's reactions. As has already been discussed in chapter three, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia in the form of speech acts started in the mid-1990s. However, the security semantic of 'Islamic fundamentalism' mainly appeared in public discourse after 2011. According to Mequanent (2012:1), public discourse refers to: "Written and spoken communication "in public domains, like national conferences, parliamentary sessions, literature, media, networks, organizations, and any other "public space used to transmit knowledge and information."

The year 2011 was a watershed moment in examining the relations and interactions between the Ethiopian government and its Muslim population, as securitization in terms of speech acts and public rhetoric widely appeared to manufacture and circulate security meanings vis-a-vis Muslims to convince the general public. The government has already developed a securitized view of Muslims since the second half of the 1990s. However, securitization had not happened publicly. After 9/11, with the new global security discourse of 'Islamic terrorism, the Ethiopian government could securitize Islam in the public sphere because Ethiopia's partnership with the US-led 'global war on terrorism' boosted the confidence of the government to make the radicalization of Muslims a matter of public agenda (Dereje, 2011). In this regard, the late Prime Minister reported saying that the post 9/11 global security paradigm, particularly that of the Bush-initiated "war on terror, is something god-sent" to the security concern of the Ethiopian government (Otsebo, 2013:12). Correspondently, the terror narratives of Ethiopian Media increased, and the focuses of these media outlets were on the global nature of 'Islamic terrorism' (sometimes used the term 'Jihad') and its horrors along with local developments and activities of Ethiopian Muslims (Jep, 2014).

The more comprehensive media coverage of disseminating the threat of ″Islamic fundamentalism″ as domestic developments of radicalization among Ethiopian Muslims spread following the government's project of indoctrinating Muslims with Ahbashism in 2011 (Yunus, 2013). The mainstream national media, including Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), Ethiopian Television, and local publishing houses, began circulating narratives of indications of an imminent 'Jihadist terrorist' in Ethiopia. In the summer of 2011, the weekly published Amharic newspaper called the Reporter interviewed Dr. Shiferaw Teklemariam, the Minister of Federal Affairs, now Minister of Education, regarding the controversies between the government and Muslim community, citing him: "The government has officially declared "Wahhabiya" to be an extremist sect that strives to topple the constitutional order and install an Islamic state″ (quoted in ibid, 2013:11). The minister's rhetoric was part of the government's securitization of Islam by spreading divisive elements as the followers of the so-called 'bad' and 'good' version of Islam among the religious community. His ministry was the one that was in charge of facilitating compulsory mass indoctrination of Muslims to a foreign sect in the name of countering radicalization among Muslims.

According to securitization theory, securitizing speech acts are primarily made to create a substantial security discourse acceptable to a significant portion of the general public within a certain period. However, the Ethiopian experience of securitization of Islam through the security discourse of 'fundamentalism' or 'Wahabism' demonstrates that the government's security narrations and reactions to the assumed threat appeared simultaneously in 2011. In other words, the government did take the time to convince the public or the audience and get its approval to take extraordinary actions against the so-called existential threat. This is attributed to the general Ethiopian political culture where the securitizing actor (the government) and the audience do not trust each other. The people have no popular sovereignty to approve the securitizing claims and condemn extrajudicial activities of the government. Based on this, it is arguable that securitization in the case of non-democratic political culture is conducted without the role of the audience. In such contexts, the government does not need the people's approval to take extraordinary measures against the subjects of securitization. However, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia in its totality and essence shares elements of securitization, framed by securitization theory. Securitizing elites, both in democratic and non-democratic political cultures, employ the same mechanisms to create public fear and panic and justify their extraordinary actions against what they consider an existential threat.

Both democratic and authoritarian actors securitizing actors use the advantage of institutional and bureaucratic powers to create and disseminate fears, tensions, and suspicion among the general public (Kiya, 2009). Irrational fear towards a particular subject and phenomenon can be produced politically by bureaucrats who seek to legitimize their actions in the logic of security. Likewise, the Ethiopian government has attempted to create security threats and public fear by manipulating state institutions to support the security discourses of 'Islamic extremism' vis-à-vis Islam and Muslim activities in Ethiopia. The regime has utilized state institutions, mainly the security and communication sectors, to construct and distribute fears among Ethiopians by spreading terror narratives in the public that portray Muslims as violent and anti-secular and constitutional orders. The state-run media, press, and radio programs covered the altercations between the government and Muslim communities with loaded security labels such as 'Islamic terrorism, '*Jihad*,' and other expressions (Yunus, 2013).

The documentary film titled "*Jihadawi Harekat,"* released by national television in 2013, revealed the government's threat fabrication to spread and administer fear within Ethiopian society. For this study, the documentary film is used to assess the reactions and perceptions of various sections of the community or audience of the securitization process to the government's security narratives of 'Jihadawi Harekat,' or Jihadi Movements that presented Muslims as a national security threat. The documentary film "*Jihadawi Harekat"* exclusively covers the government's terror activities of 'extremist' Muslims in Ethiopia. Muhamed (2016:317) described the documentary as follows; "On February 5, 2013, the

Ethiopian government released a documentary film that describes the terror intentions and acts of members of the Muslims" Solution Finding Committee through the state television (ETV) entitled: "Jihadawi Harekat" and subtitled; Boko Haram Be Etiyopiya? (Is Boko Haram in Ethiopia?) Ansardin Be Etiyopiya? (Is Ansar Din in Ethiopia?)*"*. In the documentary film, the Muslim solution finding committee who were charged for the plot to convert the republic to an "Islamic state" in 2012 are presented as if they were caught conducting military training and preparing for nationwide terror activities in cooperation with regional and global terrorist groups.

The aim of the documentary film was expressed in its introduction as; "to raise the people's awareness about the imminent danger to the national security, 'Islamic extremism," the trends of radicalization within the Muslim community, and the subversive activities of external terrorist groups." The documentary linked the Muslim solution finding committee with international terrorist networks as;

> *"Al-Qaeda and al-Shaba*b *terrorist groups posed a serious threat to Ethiopian national security and connect the activities of the members of the Committee with such terrorist organizations."* (Muhamed, 2016: 317).

While the trial of Muslims accused of plotting Jihad or terror as presented in the documentary film was not completed, the government continued to circulate narratives that the government had proved the existence of operations among extremist Muslims, controlled and took measures against these groups and individuals. All the rhetoric and actions taken by the government against the so-called 'extremist Muslims' were conducted and justified by security, the logic of national security that is not bound to regular political and constitutional orders. In this regard, the documentary film of '*Jahadawi Harekat*' or 'Jihadi Movement' was broadcast via national television in violation of "the court's order by the Federal High Court of the 4th Criminal Bench not to broadcast the documentary while the case is being pending" (Muhamed, 2016).

The particular significance of the documentary '*Jahadawi Harakat'* to this study is in evaluating the success of securitization by considering the role of the audience in the process of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. This is mainly by assessing the reactions of different sections of the Ethiopian general public towards the film streamed by the national television to spread fear and distrust within the Muslim community and between Muslims and other religious groups in the country. According to securitization theory, securitization is successful if a substantial part of the audience accepts that the issue is a security issue and allows the government to behave out of everyday political and constitutional manners. The public reaction to the documentary is assessed by interviewing people about the documentary and then secondary analysis of the general public's response to the government's narratives about the threat of 'Islamic extremism.’

Overall, the Muslim community saw the documentary as deliberate defamation of the religious community, its leaders, and the future of relations with other religious groups in the country. Research conducted by Henoke Niguesse, department of Journalism and Communication, Adiss Ababa University on "Audience Reception Analysis on 'Jihadawi Harakat' Documentary Film among Addis Ababa Communities" in 2013 revealed that the film was ineffective in convincing the audience based on data taken from research participants composed of all religious groups, Muslims, Orthodox and Protestant Christians from the capital and other parts of the country. The film's target audience was the Ethiopian general public, not a specific religious group. The final finding of Henok's study revealed that most of the documentary’s audience was not convinced by the messages that the government intended to convey about imminent threats and terror activities plotted by radicalized elements within the Muslim population. Henok (2013: 82) summarized his study as follows;

> *"The study has revealed that audiences are not mere passive viewers, accepting what they see on screen "indeed "their responses as the whole imply that they doubt the credibility of the contents of the documentary film.*"

Many individuals have questioned the documentary's reliability since it gave "untidy proof and skewed material" regarding the actions of Muslims depicted in the film as "terrorists or fundamentalists" (Abbink (2014:256). However, the film’s failure to convince its audience does not also guarantee the absence of intra-and inter-religious group/s tensions, whether as a result of historical conflicts or of contemporary discourses about the radicalization of Muslims. Plenty of informants in this study informed that while the documentary film '*Jahadawi Harekat*' was mainly government propaganda meant to divert multiple questions, they could not view Muslims and their activities as entirely apolitical. For instance, Mahibere Kidusan (Association of Saints), one of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church's institutions formed by the networks of Orthodox Christian youths and educated professionals in the religious community, has been known for its resistance to Muslim demands in the country, including the construction of mosques, opening of Islamic universities and an Islamic banking system in Ethiopia. The leader of the institution, Deacon Daniel Kibret, the social affairs advisor of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who flagrantly grieves about the separation of the Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian state, is known for his securitizing narratives of Muslims' activities (Makonnen, 2020). He and his institution have been the functional actors of securitizations as they, in one or another, contributed to the government's position towards Muslims. Although securitization is a state-centric activity conducted mainly by political and security elites and state institutions that support the elite's security discourse, functional actors such as cultural associations also play roles in the securitization process behind state actors.

Abbink (2014) further elucidated that the documentary film entirely lost credibility in the eyes of the Muslim community due to the imprecise evidence presented in it, the timing of broadcasting amid confrontations between the religious community and the government, and the social status of the arrested religious leaders who were depicted as an ‘Islamic extremists' and 'Jihadist or terrorists*'* in the film. Most Muslim informants have viewed the documentary as the government's ill-intentioned plan and attempt to defame Muslims' civil rights activism. Most informants cited how the good personalities of Muslim individuals, who are often considered a model of good Muslims, were presented in the documentary as terrorists. Notably, the young Muslims not only refuted the government's dehumanization and association of the Muslim's solution-finding committee members with terrorism and terrorist networks but were also offended by the latter's narratives. The majority of Muslim informants used the unedited portion of the documentary film that was accidentally broadcast at the show's end to express their displeasure with the government's treatment of Muslims, as depicted in the movie. Jep (2014: 92) states the documentary and its leaked parts as: "when the unedited scripts of the film broadcasted showing the interrogator coercing one of the representatives into admitting these things revealed to the public that the interviews were used out of the contexts for to convoy messages that the government wanted people to hear."

Similarly, According to Henoke (2013: 82), "most participants have referred to the 16 minutes leaked video that showed Abubeker Ahmed while his hands were in a chain and being investigated by government security officials." Abubakr is the chair of the committee accused of terror plots and converting the Ethiopian state into an Islamic republic. Henock's research demonstrates that most of the targeted audiences of the film suspected the intentions of "the government as it has a clear motive behind broadcasting the documentary film" to create and administer public fear and societal tensions and distrust.

Figure 5, A picture taken from the leaked video from a documentary film, "Jihadawi Harrekat," that showed Muslim leaders forced and hand shackled to give wrong testimonies about themselves. The
Ethiopian Government Propaganda Film about Ethiopian Muslims Terrorism activities (Source: video, YouTube, January 2017 http://bit.ly/1Sldpj4)

Following the documentary's broadcast, Muslim protestors in various regions in the country used the symbol of crossing hands. Muslim Solution Finding Committee president Abubaker Ahmed's hands were chained during the interrogation to express solidarity with Muslim detainees. The sign serves as an icon of resistance politics to this day.

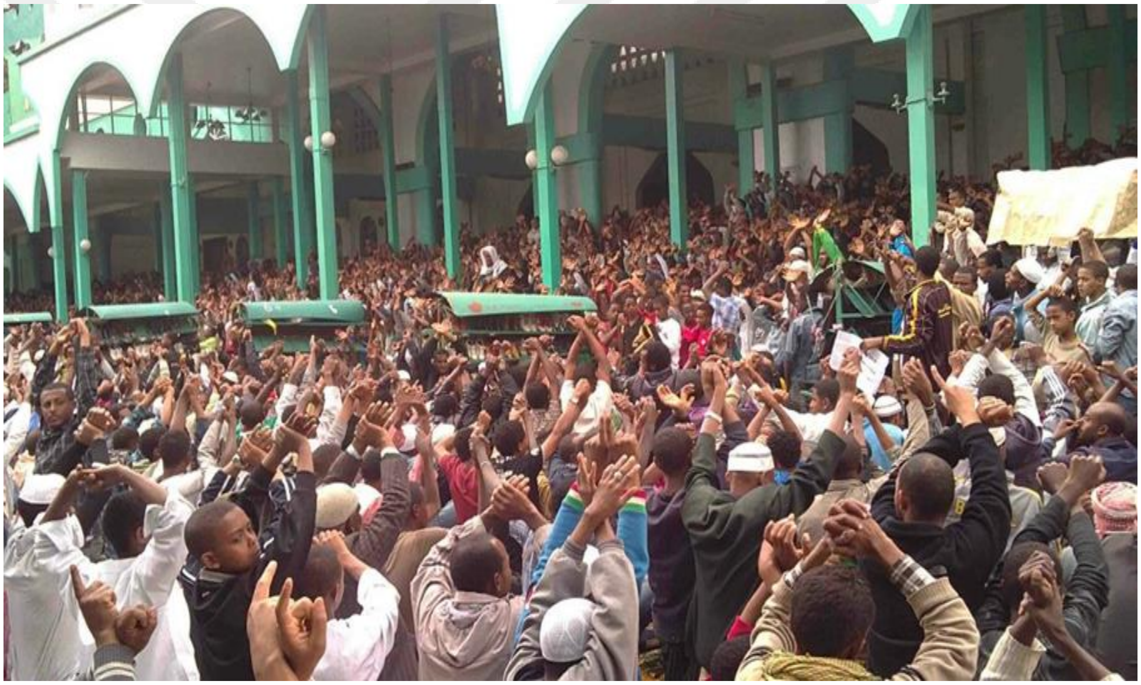


Figure 6; Muslim Protestors at Anwar Mosque in 2013.

As per securitization theory, for the government to be successful in its securitization of Islam, a significant part of the public, including Muslims, ought to agree on the former's security narratives and discourses that radicalize elements within the Muslim community or depict *'Islamic extremism*" as an existential threat to peace, security, and stability in Ethiopia. However, the condition of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia proves that the securitizing discourses of the government around Islam and Muslims failed to secure confirmation from the public. Instead, the securitization narratives generated swift resistance against the government's activities and facilitated unity among the religious community. Muslims have been expressing their indifferences to the securitized rhetoric and government measures towards them and their religious identity using various mechanisms, mainly large-scale public protests, carrying the slogan "we are not terrorists." The Ethiopian government's attempt to securitize Islam through the security discourses of 'fundamentalism and extremism' have, for the most part, been motivated by three factors: the influence of the Orthodox Church institution, Mahibere Kidusan, and its deep state operations; and the regime's crisis manufacturing to divert public attention from raising legitimate civil, political, and socioeconomic questions, and to obtain Western governments' material and financial support in the name of countering radicalization in the country and the broader Horn of Africa. However, domestically securitization of Islam has generated bitter animosity and suspicion among Muslims. The Muslims' resistance against the government, mainly since 2011, has paved the way for nationwide anti-government confrontations from multiple identity groups suppressed by the regime.

6.4. Non-Muslim Security Subjectivities to the Discourse of Fundamentalism.

Although securitization is a state-centric activity, meaning only political elites and state institutions have the authority to articulate and frame national security matters and set security discourses, the security articulation is subject to different interpretations by various sections of the society. In other words, the diverse parts of the general public or audiences of securitization have their understandings and interpretations of the elites' notion of security. In this regard, Buzan et al. (1998: 31-32) outlined that "no one is excluded from attempts to articulate alternative interpretations of security." However, due to the power structures within the security field, state actors always have advantageous positions over other understandings and views in security construction.

Several scholars have maintained the need to include alternative voices or security interpretations in the securitization analysis. In this regard, Charrett (2009) argued that the inclusion of various simultaneous security interpretations beyond securitizing actors' notions and narratives of security enables securitization analysis to overcome the normative dilemmas in writing security by exposing the rhetorical control over security. Larzillire (2012) further argued that securitization involves the production of security norms and policies through articulating nonpolitical and political issues in security terms. As those terms are not univocal, it merits considering different views regarding the subjects of securitization. For this reason, it is relevant to reflect on obtainable alternative security interpretations and the government's securitization narratives of Islam via the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism as a threat to the survival of the Ethiopian state. Various sources revealed divergent understandings and interpretations of the Ethiopian government's articulation of 'Islamic extremism' as a security threat in Ethiopia. Actors both in the domestic and international sphere have viewed the altercations between the government and Muslim community and the issue of 'Islamic extremism,' notably political parties, experts and think-tanks groups, non-government organizations, private media outlets, and ordinary individuals, as part of the audience of the securitization process.

According to Jep (2014), almost all political parties have "spoken out against" the government's assertion of 'Islamic extremism' as part of the overall repressive nature of the government and as a pretext to suppress legitimate questions raised by Ethiopian Muslims. Moreover, several leaders of ethnic-based and national political parties of Oromo and Somali and the *Semayawi* (Blue), respectively, viewed the nationwide Muslim protests and struggle against the government as a civil rights movement that can serve as ″a potential vehicle to advance pan-Ethiopian ideas″ (Lyons, 2015:8). However, some political parties and non-Muslim prominent figures that used to support Muslim cases have changed their positions after the sidelining of the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), a minority party that dominated the country's politics for the past three decades, the coalition government, at the federal level in 2018. The details of this are elaborated on in the later sections of this chapter.

Similarly, various scholars and researchers have approached different methods to study the animosities between the Ethiopian government and its Muslim population, including; Abbink (1995, 1998, 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2020), Otsego (2007, 2013), Gorg, and Otsebo (2011), Dereje (2011, 2013), Muhamed, (2015, 2016), Mukerem, (2011), Jeb, (2014). For the most part, these studies emphasized the apolitical nature of Muslim movements and made demands completely unrelated to political aspirations based on Islamic political orientations and ideology. As demonstrated in chapter three, an exception to this intellectual pattern is an Ethiopian professor of security studies, Medihane Tadesse, and an Israeli Professor, Hagai Erlich, who specializes on Islam in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa. These writers had been positively and actively engaging with the Ethiopian government's anti-terror policies against what they extensively covered in their works as 'political Islam.'

In general, how various independent domestic and international media outlets reported and narrated the developments between the Muslim community and the Ethiopian government departed from the government's articulation of 'Islamic terrorism' and media narratives. For instance, Life magazine, under the title "*Beselamawi tekawumo lay yetesenezerew Yemengst betre" (government's stick against peaceful demonstrations)* published in August 2013, *Konjo* Magazine "*Yemuslimoch guday….? Islamawi akrarinet ways Tarikawi yemebt tgl" (Muslims' questions; Islamic extremism or momentous fight for religious freedom)* published in August, 2013 and "*Yemejilis ena ye Islmna tekarno*" (The controversy between Islamic Affairs Supreme Council and Muslims) published on March 2014, and many others reported the contentions between the government and the Muslim community as vertical contradictions between the two without any element of violent extremism or fundamentalist movements and horizontal provocations and implications to other religious communities. Most of these media outlets recognized and reported on the government's interferences in the internal affairs of the religious community while emphasizing the peaceful and non-violent aspect of Muslim protestors and the personal integrity of the Muslim Solution Finding Committee members that had been charged for being Jihadi terrorists.

Some prominent individuals warned the government about unnecessary interference in religious communities as they worried the government's approach and security discourse of labeling Muslims terrorists would create horizontal hostilities and tensions among the multi-cultural and multi-religious Ethiopian society. Among the others, Prof Mesfin W/Mariam commented in *Jano* magazine published in April 2014 that while the problem of the Muslim community is with the government policies and officials, this might pave the way for those who want to politicize ethnic and religious factors and lead to conflicts without winners and loser. The professor suggested that the government should resolve the problems of the religious community before it broadens its scope into inter-religious tensions.

In the domestic political sphere, there has not been significantly open and noticeable pro-government claims of associating Ethiopian Muslim movements with activities of "extremism" and 'terrorism" since 2011. Moreover, several people and public figures of other religious backgrounds expressed their sympathy and solidarity with Muslims during the open confrontations between the government and the religious community from 2011 to 2015. In this regard, Abbink (2014: 355) pointed out that "Christians and some opposition groups have supported Muslims in different country provinces." Outside of domestic politics, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the bipartisan United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the State Department's Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights, and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights reported and documented the activities of the government as violations of civil and religious rights. In the same manner, several international media outlets, including BBC and Al- Jazeera, exposed the then government's interests and efforts to import a foreign Islamic sect called *Al-Ahbash* onto the Muslim community.

An exceptional case concerning external observations of hostile and conflictual developments between the Ethiopian government and the Muslim population was the United States Bureau of Counter-Terrorism, 2012, which asserted that the drive behind the government's compulsory training of Muslims was the need to respond to the growing trends of the radicalization within the Ethiopian Muslim community. The claims of the Counter Terrorism Bureau contradicted other agencies, such as the State Department's Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which pronounced the government's activities toward Muslims as violations of civil rights and religious freedom. This revealed that despite the disagreements between the US and Ethiopian governments in human rights and democracy, the two have maintained mutual stands in Islam and the Muslim population in Ethiopia and the broader Horn of Africa under the counter-terrorism policy of their partisanship. For the past three decades, the relationship between the two has been based on this mutual interest to deter any form of Islamic movements or political aspirations of

Muslim communities in the Horn of Africa. As outlined in chapter three, this partisan relationship has been justified by the logic of security complexity, where security conditions in one part of the world are intrinsically connected to global security and stability. As the logic of the security complex against what they call 'political Islam' has served as a locus of cooperation between the US and Ethiopian governments, dissident voices have been targeting the rapprochement between the two as outrageous cooperation that nullified the values and principles the US government reiterates. On October 22/2014, 19 members of the Muslim Solution Finding Committee arrested sent a letter to then US President, Barack Hussein Obama. The letter reads as;

> *"Mr. President, what goes on in the name of fighting terrorism in this part of the world is a stain on your conscience and the conscience of all those who value freedom and justice. The war against terrorism provided the normative language and the ethical framework for oppressive and silencing Anti-terrorism legislation being used to silence journalists, politicians, activists, and all those opposed to the policies of the state. Mr. President, the legal system in Ethiopia is being used as a weapon against innocent citizens whose only crime is to protest against the government's outrageous imposition of a little-known sect of Islam on the more than 35 million Ethiopian Muslims… "Ethiopians want the same rights and freedoms that "the free world" take for granted. As prisoners of conscience, we ask that you show some care to the millions of faceless and nameless victims of legalized violence in which you may have a direct or indirect part".*

While securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is a byproduct and interaction of domestic and international context and actors' involvement in the 'global anti-terrorism campaign,' such a partisan partnership between the USA and Ethiopia has far-reaching consequences in the democratization process in Ethiopia.

6.5. Outcomes of Securitization.

6.5.1. The Dilemmas on Muslims Societal Security.

Buzan et al. (1998) argued that the outcomes of securitization are security dilemmas resulting from excessive securitization policy. Securitization policies of the state have intermittent risks and costs that come out from the paradoxes ″when the state becomes a source of social threat against the individuals and their collectivities" (Buzan, 1983:20). Buzan (1983:239) further asserts that the menaces of the state's security policies might result in further problems or even "pose even graver questions."

While securitization or otherization of Islam was the hallmark of the Ethiopian nation-building project historically, a similar pattern of treatment has been manifesting in today's interactions of the Ethiopian state with its Muslim population. For the most part, the present Ethiopian security structure and culture is dominated by the national security paradigm. Notably, as it has been throughout history, the current national security discourse is articulated vis-à-vis and in cooperation with the regional sense of hostility towards the neighboring states of the Horn of Africa embedded in Islamic societies and that of the Global War on Terror. In this regard, Belachew (n.d:24) argued that Ethiopia's national security understanding comes from the nature of states and societies in the Horn of Africa, the country's role as an anchor state in the US-led 'global war in terrorism in the region, and that "often contradict the different components of human security." The securitization of Islam and scrutinization of Muslims both at the individual and community level through the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism’ has been an integral part of the Ethiopian current national security understanding that resulted in significant changes in the government's policies and approaches toward Ethiopian Muslims.

The securitization of Islam has entailed various implications of political, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions on the life of religious community members, interactions of the greater society, and the national peace and stability at large in the Ethiopian polity. At first, the security policies of the Ethiopian government on Islam and Muslims have influenced "the basic structure of political society," which in turn led to the "militarization of the subject of securitization" (Buzan, 1983:240). It is not unusual to look at mosques in

Ethiopia, mainly in Addis Ababa and other big cities and towns, particularly during Friday Muslims prayer, surrounded by many security forces, which implies the regime's militarization of Muslims and their institutions, i.e., Mosques. Militarization of the society is a gateway for "the blatant willingness to use force" and thereby "infringement of civil liberties by the requirements of domestic security, and about the self-perpetuating logic of security demands on society" (ibid).

The combination of policies and executive actions of the Ethiopian government derived from the securitization of Islam has produced a sense of insecurity among the religious community in the country (Haustein and Østebø, 2011:13). Buzan (1983) identified four threats that endangered society's security under national security pretexts. Accordingly, the first one is physical threats, including torture, pain, injury, and death, to which all Ethiopian Muslims have been subjected and suffering, under EPRDF's rule, on various occasions, often justified by the national security on the part of the government (Jep, 2014). In this respect, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom/ USCIR (2013: 2) expressed its concern "We are deeply concerned that Ethiopia's government is seeking to silence peaceful religious freedom proponents by detaining and trying them in secret under trumped-up terrorism charges." In particular, during the Muslims Public demonstration held from 2011 to 2014, Muslims were subject to physical assaults, including the disproportional use of tear gas and live ammunition against protestors and arbitrary arrests. However, the religious communities' activities were peaceful and non-violent for the most part (Habtamu, 2012).

Buzan's second threats are economic threats such as seizures, property destruction, and denial of access to work and resources. According to Jep (2014:139), Ethiopian Muslims have been subject to different systematic discrimination and marginalization in the economic and trade areas, including the imposition of high taxes, recruitment for public jobs, and bureaucratic positions based on their religious identities and ostensible religious symbols, particularly the beard for men and veil for women. Moreover, the regime has targeted Muslim businesses and firms, accusing them of obtaining financial and material resources from external Islamist networks, mainly from Arab countries, which have been blamed for importing and spreading Islamist ideology within the Muslim community (Lyons, 2015).

The third category of societal insecurity caused by the state's national security policy, Buzan (1983:240) identified, is "threats to rights." The Ethiopian government's securitization of Islam and following procedures towards the religious community have been followed by adverse impeachments of civil rights of the religious community. In this regard, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) (2016:1) reported that "the Muslim community suffered greatly from state interventions into its religious affairs." National security has always been the means to justify the state's intrusion in the Muslim community's civil life, including ritual gatherings, socioeconomic associations, and mosque constructions.

The fourth category of threats to societal security is "threats to position or status (demotion, public humiliation)" (Buzan, 1983:19). In the post 9/11 global discourse of terrorism, Muslims of every walk of life, both individuals and communities, have been subject to intensive dehumanization sermons, scrutiny, and securitized approaches by states and their agencies worldwide (Shore, 2006). This has been done by systematically associating their religious identities with violence, extremism, and terrorism under 'Islamic fundamentalism' (ibid). Likewise, the Ethiopian government's accusation of its Muslim population for the spread of radicalization and elements of fundamentalism has distorted the image of the religious community and their social value or religion in the public sphere. In this regard, Jep (2014) pointed out that Ethiopian media, particularly government-controlled and affiliated media, portrayed Islam as a danger to the Ethiopian state, its political order, and social fabric via the security discourse of 'violent extremism, 'Islamic Jihad, and terrorism. As discussed in the previous chapters, the government's accusation of Muslims has resulted in defamation and dehumanization narratives in the public sphere and extended to extraordinary actions of choosing the good sect of faith for Muslim communities, often referred to by Muslims as governmental Islam or Ahbashism. This all posed a threat to the societal insecurity of Muslims as a collective being.

Societal security of the religious community is about preserving, with acceptable evolution of changes, traditional patterns of culture, identity, and doctrines of the religion, and "threats to these values come much more frequently from within the state than outside it" (Buzan, 1991: 123). The securitization policies of the government have produced societal insecurities among Muslims that other religious communities or cultural groups have never felt and been threatened in the same manner. Societal security is all about the collective security of groups concerning other identity groups or state institutions, including the legal system and security sector governance (Thiel, 2007:5). The government's actions towards Muslim communities, in turn, have created feelings of resentment and deprivation and questions of national identity, especially among the younger Muslim generations. Such a total and national identity crisis among Muslims has broader implications for national harmony, societal stability, and the healthy functioning of the whole Ethiopian political community.

One of the particular significances of this study is the securitization of identity through national security discourses. As demonstrated above, securitization of identity groups or Muslims in this context reproduces identity insecurity among the religious community. Defining or viewing a particular section of the society or developments within that group as a threat to a specific referent object, be it state or other groups, and ensuing extraordinary policies and practices resulted in insecurities to religious or social identity group's survival as a distinct identity community (McSweeney, 1996). While securitization is rooted in the idea that treating and managing something as a security matter does not necessarily need objective or factual conditions or developments, securitizing actors associate the subject of their securitization with the psychological feelings, perceptions, and aspirations of more significant audiences or particular sections of the public (Floyd 2015). In this regard, the Ethiopian discourses of Islamic extremism as a national security issue have been systematically linked with the perception and aspirations of Christian Ethiopians by different actors, mainly the government and Orthodox Church leaders and institutions. Significantly, the historical association of the state to a particular identity of Orthodox Christianity and Amharic language and culture and othering of other religious and ethnic identities, mainly Muslims and Oromos, which constitute more than half of Ethiopians, as an outsider to the Ethiopian social fabric, has produced securitized identity groups in the country. The social identity that gained the status of referent identities or hegemonic culture or symbol to the state's identity in the social sector has been revitalized by leaders who mobilize the society through their devotion and loyalties to that core identity group by creating a security discourse that the historic symbol of the state or the identity of a particular group is threatened by threatening developments (Neo, 2020). In this case, Orthodox Christianity and Amhara's culture are presented as the essential or core values of the Ethiopian state, while Islam and Muslim activities are portrayed as threatening values.

6.5.2. National Mayhem and Instability

Securitization's ultimate end is to enable extrajudicial measures and actions against the subjects of securitization rather than the political process to resolve conflicts of interest around a particular issue. The extraordinary steps that the government takes are justified by the logic of protecting national security (Roychoudhury, 2016). However, state-led violence and repressions to maintain national security, in most cases, juxtapose with the very essence of human and societal security (ibid). Securitization's antithetical nature to democracy, human freedom, and dignity emanates from labeling or dehumanizing subjects of securitization criminals, terrorists, irrational, and violent extremists (Marsh & Keating, 2006). Securitization is all about stereotypically defining social categories to scrutinize subjects of securitization (ibid). Functional interaction theorists believe that people tend to behave towards each other in modern society based on the labels they get from each other. Likewise, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia through the security framework of "Islamic extremism" and subsequent policy changes that infringe the civil liberties of Muslims have spread societal distrust and unnecessary labeling among different religious and ethnic groups that imply far-reaching consequences to national peace and harmony in Ethiopia.

The regime's securitization of Islam via the semantics of 'Islamic extremism' has jeopardized the peace, stability, and the survival of the Ethiopian state. Although the regime's rhetoric of radicalizing Muslims and securitization of their activities as counter-radicalization aimed to ensure national peace and security, securitization policies have the opposite effect. In other words, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia and ensuing repressive measures against Muslims have affected the country's peace and stability as "the overall system of oppression and obedience had the character of a vast monumental self-fulfilling prophecy" (Vaughan and Tronvol, 2002:29). Even though Ethiopian society has a long history of religious tolerance, at least at the micro-level of inter and intra-religious interactions and the constitutional provisions of religious freedom based on the principle of secularism, the recent efforts of the government "to impose a particular Islamic interpretation on the country's Muslim community has created tension among the religious community″ (US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF, 2013:1). Notably, the government's divisive discourse of Muslim societies as 'Sufi and Salafi Islam,' the name used to express the so-called 'bad' and 'good' Muslims, respectively, has sowed hatred and suspicion between the younger generations who have been accused of gaining radical doctrines from abroad. The narratives and actions of the government vis-à-vis the activities of the Muslim community juxtaposed "an inclusive national narrative where both religious traditions would find accommodation″ for the sustainable stability of Muslim society and its interactions with other religious communities and the government (Abbink, 2014: 356). Remarkably, the government's attempt to forcefully indoctrinate a foreign sect, the "Ahbashism" campaign under cover of schooling constitutional values and tolerance to Muslims, has backfired and "harmed both the Al-Ahbash movement as a legitimate form of Muslim identity as well as the government's political standing and legitimacy" (ibid:360).

Besides vertical acrimony between the religious community and the government, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopian public discourse has contributed to social polarization among various religious communities and the development of negative attitudes among members of other religious communities towards Muslims and their activities (Jep, 2014). Many have expressed their fear that the use of terms such as 'terrorists' and 'extremists' to Muslims may result in self-fulfillment impacts as 'humans tend to act toward things based on the meanings they ascribe to those things′ (Little, McGivern, & Kerins, 2016: 28). In this regard, Jep (2014) argued that the dehumanizing labeling of Muslims as 'terrorists' and following exclusion and repression from state and other religious groups, mainly the

Ethiopian Orthodox Church institution called '*Mahibere Kidusan,'* or 'Association of Saints', may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy by generating new waves of violent reactions from Muslims across the country. In light of this, Otsebo (2013:23) argued that:

> *"My contention at this stage is that there is a risk that the policy may backfire on the regime itself, and that it is likely to create increased tensions between the Muslims and the state and possibly worsen relations between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia."*

Developments within Muslim communities have partly proved the social polarization effects of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia during the peak of confrontations between the government and the religious community. Islamic tradition in Ethiopia, for a long time, had been characterized by interpretational varieties entwined with geography and ethnic elements and traditional and reformist rivalries (Abbink, 1998). However, the unleashed interference of the government in the internal religious affairs of the Muslim community, especially in 2011 and onwards, made the latter focus on unity leaving aside all sorts of internal minor divisive elements (Jawar, 2011). This is mainly due to the spread of frustration, suspicion, and a sense of victimhood among Muslims following the government's publicized intrusions into the internal affairs of the religious community in the form of compulsory training on religious orientations (Jep, 2014). In this way, the sentiment of the government as the common enemy has been developing among Muslims, regardless of individual, group, and generational convictions. In this regard, Jeb; (2014: 138) argued that the confrontations with the government resulted in "more unity" among Ethiopian Muslims than ever in history. Accordingly, Muslims prioritized external threats to their social security (the government) despite differences in religious interpretations and understandings.

Initially, the vertical controversies between Muslims and the government had no horizontal implications on the country's inter-societal relations of different religious groups. However, in the long run, the security discourse of Islamic extremism was accepted by a sizable number of Christians. The government's policies and actions produced a sense of oppression among Muslims. Victimhood mentalities, in turn, led to increased adherence of

Muslims to their religious identity and cooperation and solidarities in social and economic interactions through spiritual bonds and networks (ibid). The ever-strong bond among Muslims in economic activities ranging from shopping to employment has been interpreted as bigotry, intolerance, and narrow-mindedness against the centuries-old culture of tolerance and cosmopolitanism of diverse Ethiopian society. Christians reacted to Muslims' emerging social behavior in the same way by conducting their socioeconomic relations and interactions based on religious considerations among their fellow Christians. Securitizing outside threats enhances and facilitates "the formation of internal coherence and unity" within the society (Vaughan-Williams 2014, 82). Thus, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has reinforced social cohesion within Muslims that resulted from victim mentalities due to the government's repression of the religious community and polarization among the different religious communities as other religious groups, i.e., Orthodox Christians and Protestants view Muslims as in-groups' solidarities in suspicion.

The government on its side, the ever-closer solidarity, and interactions among Muslims are considered as a manifestation of further radicalization and spread of extremist ideologies. In this regard, one of my informants, an officer in the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs, now the Ministry of Peace, informed me that there are many symptoms of extremism within Muslim society as:

> "*To your surprise against our long-aged culture of religious tolerance, some extremist Muslims in some parts of the country such as Wollo has started to organize Idir (mini societal association in Ethiopia based on shared villages to discharge social responsibilities during death and marriage ceremony) based on religious category"* in addressing my question "*what are the manifestations of Islamic extremism in Ethiopia?"*

Furthermore, he cited those extremists also teach against interreligious marriages across different religious communities. Additionally, he argued that some wealthy extremist Muslims who are importers and exporters' merchants only distributed their trading goods to Muslim retailers, and are not interested in spreading their imported goods to Christian retailers. According to him, the reorganization of the social association, *Idir*, based on religious memberships, favoring one's co religion in trade, and the discouraging interreligious marriages are the manifestation and spread of 'Islamic extremism' in Ethiopia. While the government did not address Muslims' grievances and questions, another popular uprising called the Oromo Protest shocked the country that, in one way or another, has shared and reflected elements of the Muslim community's de-securitization struggles. Many have argued about the continuations and Muslim protests in ethnic-based protests and anti-regime mobilizations and movements that started in 2015/16 and grew up into the full-scale national political crisis the country is experiencing nowadays. As the formal political space was closed entirely to consider and address the interests and questions of the Muslim community, the latter has been forced into the informal political process and struggles against the regime (Lyons, 2015). As securitization policies consistently transgress usual political standards of citizens' rights and duties, at the same time, it invites informal reactions that are difficult to handle by routine political procedures. This fact has been supported by the reflections of expressions of religious grievances of Ethiopian Muslims in ethnic-based protest that has extended to the current national political crisis.

6.5.3. Muslim's Resistance as Externalities to Ethnic Protests, 2014/15-2018

The Ethiopian official political order has welcomed ethnic-based political mobilization since 1991 regime change in the country, while religious-based political aspirations are forbidden constitutionally. However, religious and ethnic identities are intrinsically connected in Ethiopian identity politics and do not have mutually exclusive destinies. After six months of stopping Muslim protests and activities of disobedience by the government's security force, other waves of sweeping protests, called the Oromo Protests, started to swamp the country in April 2014. Numerous and long-standing complaints of the Oromo people, the country's largest ethnic group and religiously Muslim, erupted when the government announced a new master plan called "Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Integrated Development," which would force several Oromo settlements in the capital city to give up their land (Amnesty International, 2017). The Oromo protest quickly swept across the Oromia area, notably significant cities and universities in the regional state, led by notable Oromo activists living abroad, particularly Jawar Mohamed and his crew. The demonstrations were coordinated and conducted by youths who called their resistance the *Qeerroo* movement. This Oromo word denotes youth, a bachelor between the ages of 20 and 36. The decentralized and informal movement played a crucial role in bringing the country's recent political reforms and transition (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021).

While various socio-economic and political issues have inspired the ethnic group's resistance activities, the movement has become linked with Muslim communities' religious grievances in recent years. Many experts and pundits have pointed to the persistence of Muslim hatred and anti-governmental sentiments as part of the ethnic-based protests that have resulted in Ethiopia's ongoing political chaos. However, proponents of pure ethnic nationalism prefer ethnicity to be the only core and umbrella identity for all Oromos. They have always tended to reduce, if not remove, religious motivations among the causes of Oromos' struggle for justice in Ethiopia. Oromo activists and intellectuals interviewed for this study recognized the intersection between ethnic and religious identities in the centuries-old efforts of the Oromo nation. However, they do not welcome and celebrate religious elements in the Oromo people's struggle because they believe that loyalty to religious identity may jeopardize the unity of the Oromo nation. Oromo is the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, and the majority are Muslims by religion. While non-Muslim Oromo nationalists have argued that Oromo questions should be neutral from any religious element, Muslim Oromo intellectuals and activists believe that the Oromo's and Muslim's grievances go hand in hand. The Oromo protest cannot be seen separately from the Muslim's antipathy against the government, as thousands of Oromos were arrested, killed, and tortured regarding a series of demonstrations carried out by the Muslim community in 2011-2014/15 against the alleged government interference in Islamic affairs (Amnesty International, 2017).

The intensity of Oromo protests in Muslim-dominated districts of the Oromia regional state have been one indication of symbiotic links between religious and ethnic crossings in the Oromo uprisings. In this regard, a Muslim Oromo community leader, activist, and mentor in Dire-Dawa stated, "We know for what we are fighting, but this is the only right way to our ends," referring to the role of religious frustrations in ethnic resistance and the role of ethnicity as a conducive framework to struggle against the regime and its policies to the Muslim community. Using ethnicity as a means of mobilization and symbol of resistance has enabled Muslim Oromo to maintain unity with non-Muslim Oromos, reverse the Western government's attitude that linked Muslim protest with the so-called Al Shabab terrorist networks, and conduct organized actions against the government, which resulted in a political transformation that Ethiopia has experienced since 2018. At this juncture, the point to be forwarded is that ethnicity serves as a conduit of religious grievances in ethnic-driven resistance politics that has led to the ongoing national turmoil.

Ethnic and religious identities are elastic and can be mobilized and politicized by various societal divisions as transitional identities in political conflicts (Eriksen, 2001, Ric, 2020). Different researches, commentaries, and reports revealed the intersection of religious and ethnic identities in Ethiopian political landscapes, both in historical and contemporary terms. For instance, Lyons (2017: 7) argued that the Oromo's spontaneous and violent demonstrations that forced the government to declare a state of emergency several times from 2016 to 2019 were sustained by "non-violent mobilization by Ethiopian Muslims." Similarly, Abbink (2014:14) said that religious and ethnic identity markers had forged new partnerships: "the boundary between ethnic and religious identities is not always mutually exclusive" in the country. The leading US-based Oromo activist, Jawar Muhamed (2013), jailed by the government in 2020, asserted that "in the long history of Ethiopia, the Oromo and Islam have common historical experiences; the victory of Oromo is the victory of Islam and vice versa." He further argued that "the Oromo and Muslim protests are interrelated in various respects" regarding the correlations between religious and ethnic identities in the unsettled resistance politics from 2011 to the present. Given the government's unwillingness to solve and address the Muslim community's grievances that had been presented through non-violent public protests in the period from 2011 to 2014/15, the Muslim dissidents have not been without transitional effects in the ethnically based protests that shocked the country for the past half-decade. In this regard, Lyons (2017:3-4) argued that;

> *"While the discontents with the Muslim community who undertook an important peaceful demonstration in 2012" remained unsolved, an*

> *unprecedented and large-scale violent wave of protests erupted in 2015 in Oromia and a year later in the Amhara regions."*

The confluences and symbiotic nature of relations between ethnic, religious, and regional grievances in Ethiopian politics are comprehensively and succinctly illustrated in the International Crisis Group's Report/ICG (2016:12) that covered ethnic and religious conflicts from 2011 to 2017 as;

> *"Religion and religious tensions in Ethiopia, "though in many ways unique due to the millennia-long presence of both Christianity and Islam," reflect broader regional and global trends. The country has not experienced faith-based revolutions, wars, and violent extremism in neighboring Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya. Still, perceptions of discrimination and exclusion, as well as resistance to the top-down government, have been constant drivers of past social revolutions and ethnic and regional rebellions."*

Blurred religious and ethnic grievances have been prevalent in Ethiopia, though they cannot be the sole driver of conflict in the country. The intersection of ethnic and religious elements has often served as instruments of political mobilizations and manipulation depending on specific actors' political expediency. In 2016, the anti-regime protests expanded to the Amhara region, the second largest ethnic community, overwhelmingly followers of Orthodox Christianity. While the Oromo protest was accompanied by contemporary and historical grievances of Muslims across the country, even by Muslims from other ethnic groups, political mobilizations and demonstrations in the Amhara region have been highly intertwined with grievances from the adherents of Orthodox Christianity. It often circulates among Orthodox Christians and their institutions that the regime degraded the historical status of the Orthodox Church as the kingmaker and symbol and identity of the Ethiopian polity. The government's control of income from the country's major tourist centers which are mostly in some way related to the church, such as the Lalibella Rock-Hewn Churches in Northcentral Ethiopia and the Obelisk of Axum in Northern Ethiopia, the regime's confiscation of the Waldiba monastery land for a sugarcane plantation, and the incumbent head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's ethnic affiliation to the politically dominant ethnic group, have angered Orthodox Christians.

The Amhara uprising spawned Amhara Nationalism, a new and more codified ethno-religious nationalism that unified ethnic Amharas’ and Orthodox Christian identities as one. The anti-regime protests among Amharas and Orthodox Christians culminated with the establishment of a far-right political party called the National Movement of Amhara (NAMA). The new party has revitalized the religious discourse of the Solomonic dynasty, which was based on the political marriage of the Ethiopian state and Orthodox Church and its political output of theocratic Ethiopia with the hegemonic Amhara and Orthodox cultures as a provider of the state's national identity and ideological conviction of its elites (Muhamed, 2016). The political aspiration of Amhara nationalism is to restore the hegemonic and exclusive positions of the Orthodox Church and Amharas culture as the representative of the country's national identity and social fabric.

While most Ethiopians associate Amhara with Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who speak Amharic, proponents of Amhara nationalism promote the idea of transforming religious beliefs into ethno-national identities to align their discourse with the country's formal political structure, which is based on ethnic-based federalism. The movement's revival of theocratic Ethiopia's history as a noble past and its inclusion of all Amharic speakers in the newfound ethnoreligious attitude has caused a cultural uproar among Muslims across the country and in the Amhara region. As a result, the movement (Amhara nationalism) faced massive resistance from Muslims in the Amhara regional state and other parts of the country. In addition to Muslims in the Wollo and Raya areas, mainly descendants of Oromo, the movement has hosted grave resistance from Agew and Qimant ethnic groups. Meanwhile, the movement's proponents reacted differently to different resistances from the region and other parts of the country. The Amhara nationalists responded to critics from Muslims using loaded terminologies of 'extremists' or 'Wahhabist' and portraying them as having a long-term wish to destroy Ethiopia and its Christian heritage. On the other hand, the movement's leadership has tried to use religious sentiments to convince the Agew and Qimant people and their political leadership that they share the same identity, that is Orthodox Christianity, for which they should all stand together.

The restoration of the Solomonic historical and religious myth and discourse, outlined in chapter two, under the cover of Amhara ethno-nationalism, but with Orthodox Nationalism at the core, spreads a sense of discomfort to the majority of Muslims across the country and Wollo area of the Amhara region. This is because this ideology served as a tool for the nation-building project of the modern Ethiopian state and the ideology that justified violence, occupation, and assimilation against different peoples, cultural and religious groups and their independent existence in the past. Many have expressed concern that narrations of Amhara nationalism that celebrates this history may endanger the stability of Ethiopian society built up through centuries-old conflictual and political interactions that have been subject to double-edged understandings and memorizations by different ethnic and religious groups in the country.

The role of religion in the newly born Amhara nationalism is visible when Christians in the now Amhara region's Wollo area associate themselves with the emerging ethno-religious Amhara nationalism and disregard their Oromo ancestors and ethnic background. On the other hand, Muslims in the same area resist the new movements' assertion that Amhara as an identity marker can serve as a common identity for Amharic-speaking Christians and Muslims in the Amhara region. Against this narration, Muslims in Wollo areas of the Amhara region and Christians with a good reading of the people's history identify themselves as Wolloye rather than Amhara leaning more towards an Oromo ethnic lineage.

Meanwhile, the two main ethno-religious groups in the country, the Oromo (majority Muslims) and the Amhara (majority Christians), stood united, challenging the minority Tigrayan lead coalition administration. However, the political aspirations of these groups, their orientations to the Ethiopian state and its history, and the notion of Ethiopia as a national identity are anchored in deep controversies. Thus, it seems the alliance between the Oromo (Muslim) and Amhara (Christians) resistance movements will be difficult to sustain and have significant impacts on the national accord and stability of the country, given the historical controversies between the two.

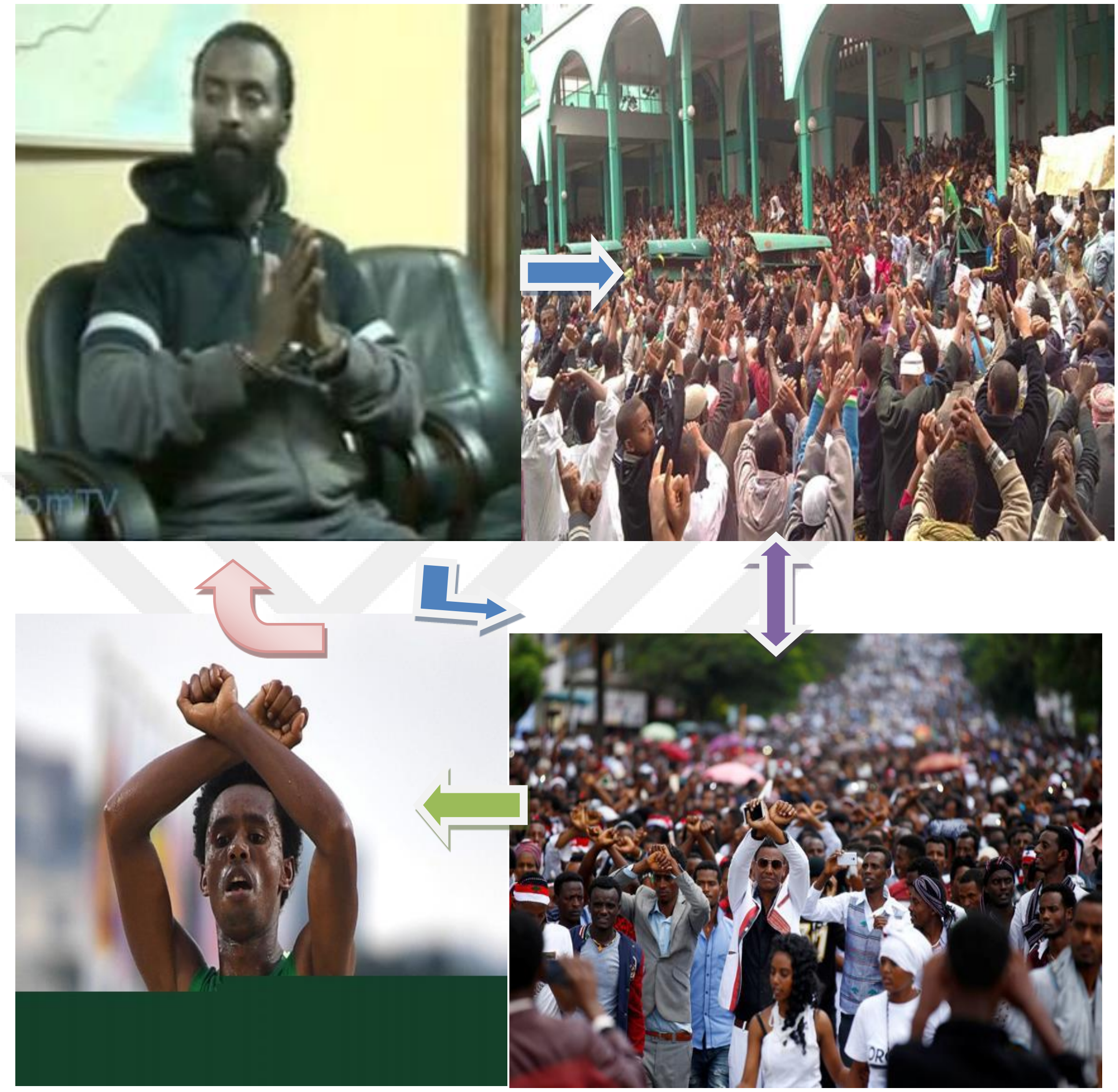


Figure 7, Interactions between ethnic and religious concerns that share a resistance symbol. (The symbol was first adopted by Muslims after portions of a documentary released by Ethiopian National Television showed the head of the Muslims' solution finding committee (Abubaker Ahmed) being interviewed by security staff with chained hands, Muslims protesting during Friday prayer in Adiss Ababa, Oromo protests during their Irrecha cultural celebrity in 2016, and an Oromo athlete joining his ethnic community's protest and reflecting their voice to the international community).

Lyons (2017) argued that as a continuation from previously nationwide protests and resistance of Muslims, Oromo and Amhara ethnic demonstrators had drawn attention to their underlying issues as: "Widespread international attention when marathoner Feyisa

Lilesa crossed the finish line at the Rio Olympics marathon and flashed the crossed arms symbol to show solidarity with the demonstrators." Crossing hands as a symbol of resistance against the government was introduced during Muslims' protests against the government's interference, especially from 2011 to 2014/15. Muslims adopted the mark to express their solidarity with their religious leaders whom the government imprisoned on charges of plotting 'Jihad' or Islamic terrorism to establish an Islamic state in Ethiopia.

The government, on its part, continued to forcefully stop all sorts of ethnic protests and relied on narrations that associated Oromo protests with Islamic movements motivated by violent extremist subversions of the ethnic group. The government's security forces killed thousands of Oromos viciously during the Oromo protest from 2014 to 2018. Moreover, the government declared a state of emergency in October 2016 as the only solution to the security challenges posed by what the former called "anti-peace or extremist" groups who wanted to dispose of the country's constitutional order.

While the protesters entirely relied on anti-government ethnic narratives and mobilization, the regime still tried to label them as 'Islamic extremists.' It associated them with the so-called regional and global networks of terrorism, mainly Al-Shabab. This was primarily to reduce the pressure from Western governments and human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. They sought to report the protests through constitutional and normative terminologies of human rights.

An essential indicator of the government's coverage and labeling of ethnic-centric resistance movements over the past few years was how national media and government personnel portrayed athlete Feyisa Lelisa's symbolic act during his race in Rio Olympics in 2016. The Minister of Communication appeared on national television and commented on the incident in Rio Olympics:

> *"The symbol of crossing the hands that Athlete Feyisa has exhibited during the Olympic race is introduced and used in Ethiopia in recent years by the sections of societies, whom even the western governments themselves believe are in the process of radicalization."*

The Minister referred to Ethiopian Muslims when he said 'the western governments themselves believe are in the process of radicalization" because the symbol of crossing hands was introduced during Muslims' protests (2011-2014/15). In such a way, the government utilized Western narratives about Islamic terrorism to create an image of radicalization among Ethiopian Muslims. Ethiopian partisanship with the US-led 'War on Terrorism' helped the minority authoritarian Ethiopian regime stay in power for three consecutive decades due to the Western governments' unrestricted diplomatic, financial, and intelligence support. Accordingly, to the Minister, the causes of Oromo and other ethnic protests in the country were the extension of the 'extremist Muslims' struggle against the government's de-radicalization strategies implemented on Muslim communities and its institutions. Although the athlete was not a Muslim and his motive was to show the oppression of his ethnic group, Oromo, by the Ethiopian regime, the latter and its institutions portrayed the symbol that the athlete displayed in Rio as a symbol used by radical Muslims. The intention of the government to associate every aspect of resistance politics in the country with Muslims through the security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' was to buy legitimacy from the international community, especially western governments, to accept their discourse when it comes to reports of human rights breaches.

The public outcry in 2017 spread to the Afar and Somali regions. Both the Somali and Afar ethnic communities were excluded from the country's critical decision-making politics while being entirely Muslim religiously. The government used to justify the exclusion of these ethnic groups from main politics because they are 'underdeveloped' and 'uneducated.' Muslims, however, viewed the exclusion of Afar and Somalis from national politics as a government plan to reduce the number and status of Muslims in influential political and bureaucratic positions. According to Markakis (2011), the exclusion of the Afar and Somali people in the Ethiopian nation-building project has been attributed more to the societal values, religion, and cultures as an extension of the historical notion of Ethiopia as a Christian polity by highlanders and elites of central Ethiopia. The regime has only accommodated these ethnic groups as affiliated with the vanguard party, formed by the coalition government of predominantly Christian elites from four regions. A crucial religious grievance channeled in protests among Afar and Somalis in protests they conducted in their respective areas was the regime's prohibition of Muslims from gaining land to construct mosques in the city of Axum in northern Ethiopia. Axum is considered holy by the Ethiopian Orthodox church and its followers located in the Northern region of Tigray. This region constitutes 6% of Ethiopians who are overwhelmingly adherents of Orthodox Christianity. Although only 5 % of Tigrayans are Muslims, the federal and regional government's decisions to ban mosque construction in the city has always been contested by Muslims across the country, mainly on the ground that preventing Muslims from constructing mosques construction in Axum is unparalleled with many churches present in predominantly Muslim states such as Somali, Afar, Harar, Silte, and Oromia.

The "non-violent demonstrations of Muslims" followed by more spontaneous and violent mobilizations led by Oromo protests expanded to other ethnoreligious communities, including Somali, Afar, Amhara, and others across the country (Lyons, 2017: 7). The intersections between Muslim and ethnic Oromo protests and Christians and ethnic Amhara protests exemplified new inter-ethnic intra-religious collaboration. The line between the two fault lines has always been congruent in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2014). The confluence between ethnic and religious identity also brings new forms of contentious politics in Ethiopia that have been witnessed in the last three or four years while the country entered into what some called political reform or transition. The great limbo now is between Muslim Oromo and Christian Amhara. The divergence of interests and aspirations between the two is not a mere ethnolinguistic element but is also rooted in history, religious identities and the notion of the Ethiopian state as a national identity. Religious narratives significantly enunciate and reinforce the Amhara's/Orthodox Christian's concept of Ethiopia as a state. They see Ethiopia as “a Christian Island surrounded by an ocean of Islam,” with the vast majority of the populations surrounding the Horn of Africa being Muslim. According to them, Orthodox Christianity is the core and moral value of the Ethiopian state. Any groups or activities that challenge Orthodox Christianity's hegemony, even if they seek to reshape the nation's identity on more inclusive grounds, are deemed traitors and dangers to the Ethiopian state's essence and existence. For most Oromo and Muslims, the Ethiopian state is Amhara/Christina's supremacist imperialist nation-building project through the territorial expansion that engulfed the lands of numerous autonomously existing nations and the cultural imposition of the Amharic language and Christianity upon others. Being Ethiopian as a national identity only reflects the historically imposed hegemonic Amhara's language and faith, Orthodox Christianity. Such dichotomized and overriding influences of religious identities over ethno-linguistic ones are amplified by the post-Cold War global trends and contexts of conflicts along cultural and religious fault lines.

6.6. Political Reform, Religion, and violence, 2018

The series of popular uprisings, starting with Muslim protests called 'let our voice be heard'' in 2011, later transformed into ethnoreligious resistance led by the Oromo protest in 2015. The Oromo protests and resistance culminated by forcing the minority authoritarian regime to undertake political reforms in 2018.

The political transition has brought both hopes and desperation. In one sense, Abiy Ahmed's election as Ethiopia's Prime Minister in April 2018 resulted from internal party reforms in response to longstanding popular discontent and protests. The policies he implemented instilled in most Ethiopians a sense of national confidence. He took several reform measures, including: releasing several thousand prisoners jailed concerning religious and ethnic movements and opposition political party members who were subjected to the regime's repressive anti-terrorism law, reforming security sector governance and justice system, and engaging with religious communities with a willingness to resolve their problems. The new Prime minister has taken several prompting measures against the regime he served for three decades (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). On the other hand, the country has been bitten by political violence with great human and material destruction, millions of internal displaced people, and widespread unpredictability. Ethiopia topped the world's conflict zone's worst-case scenario over Syria, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in terms of internal displacement in 2018 (The National, 2018).

Once in power, Abiy Ahmed started to consider himself the country's transformer and introduced his vision of a new Ethiopia based on 'multi-religious unity' (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021; 13). Despite the PM's rhetoric of peace, tolerance, and reconciliation, violence and inter-communal conflicts of ethnoreligious nature have been shocking across the country since he was nominated as the head of the Ethiopian government.

More than a million ethnic Oromos were forcefully evacuated from the Somali region immediately after his ascension to power. Several thousand ethnic Amhara were banished from Benshangul-Gumuz and Oromia regions. The government and non-government sources confirmed that most of the conflicts mentioned above were artificially engineered by the networks of security personnel associated with the Tigrigna People Liberation Front (TPLF). TPLF is an ethnic-based political party that has dominated Ethiopian politics for the past thirty years until it was removed from its dominant position in 2018. The new PM dissolved the ethnic coalition government of EPRDF and merged it into the new unitary national political party called Prosperity Party in 2020.

Although the perpetrators of most of the conflicts were hidden groups and the victims were from all religious communities, plots of igniting inter-communal violence were high in the regions that are overwhelmingly occupied by Muslim communities. The intention of igniting such violence in Muslim dominated areas, according to key informants, was to portray these incidents as inter-religious conflicts motivated by the radical elements within the Muslim population and thereby threaten the Western countries that unless they kept TPLF in power like the past three decades, Islamic political forces would control the Horn of African region. The reason why the conflict manufacturers preferred the Muslim-dominated areas to plant conflict was rooted in the attitudes and policies of Western governments (the US and its EU partners) towards Muslims in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in the post-Cold War/ 9/11 period. Thus, by instigating violence in the region and associating them with Islamic movements, and presenting itself as a good partner in the so-called "War on Terrorism" and efforts against religious fundamentalism, the regime that had been ruling Ethiopia could easily secure support from the US/EU governments (Dereje, 2011). David H. Shinn, the former ambassador of the US to Ethiopia from 1991 to 1996, through his article titled "Terrorism in East Africa and the Horn," cautioned his government to pay serious attention to Ethiopian Muslim populations. The ambassador cited the existence of the Islamic population in the country being larger than any of the other countries in the Horn of Africa region and Muslim's eventual growing religious commitment.

Moreover, he went on to say that he was concerned that "the situation is complicated because the largest ethnic group, the Oromo, which constitutes about 40 percent of the population, is 55 to 60 percent Muslims" (Shine, 2003: 6). In this regard, one of the key informants in this study, who is one of the leading non-Muslim Oromo intellectuals and activists, said that the outlook of the United States towards the Oromo people had been biased due to the Islamic religious identity of the largest ethnic population of Ethiopia. He further asserted that they imposed a minority Tigrayan regime to rule over Ethiopia and gave them significant financial and diplomatic support for the brutal Ethiopian regime for the last three decades. He further expressed his sorrow as "that is why the US government and western countries have been giving deaf ears to Oromo's struggle for justice and equality."

Moreover, the unpredictable rise of 'political Islam' in Sudan and Somalia at the end of the Cold War forced the US to solidify its relationship with Ethiopia, which appeared central to US policy in the Horn (Woodward, 2006). Looking for a reliable client within the domestic context of Ethiopian politics, the US government found the rebel group called Tigrayan People Liberation Front (TPLF) in northern Ethiopia fighting against the Ethiopian socialist regime in the 1980s. In addition to the insurgents' confrontations with the socialist government in one of the critical African states to the US, the former was attracted by the social base and background of the insurgent groups from minority Tigrayan ethnic groups, overwhelmingly Christian in faith. The US supported these rebel groups for two strategic reasons; to topple the socialist regime and serve as its proxy government to contain any Islamic movements in the region. The US government considered the TPLF rulers as 'renaissance' leaders suitable to establish secular order. They are from Christian societal backgrounds with the potential capability to resist Islamist challenges in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa (ibid). This initial relationship between Tigrayans, who deposed the Ethiopian socialist regime in 1991, and the US government has served as a framework for bilateral relations between Ethiopia and the US over the last three decades. The post-Cold

War US policies towards the Muslim world and societies enabled the TPLF to establish political-economic and security domination and networks in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Since 1991, Ethiopia has been ruled by a coalition front called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF), which was entirely dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) till 2018's country's political reform (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021).

The Ethiopian political transitions and reforms that have been undergoing since 2017/18 as a response to multi-faceted popular grievances and uprisings appeared against the political-military and transnational establishment and networks anchored in US and TPLF alliances. The TPLF leadership, now sidelined from power by the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his grave measures, sought to revitalize the original attitude of the US to view the political developments in Ethiopia from the perspective of containing Islamic movements in the country and the region. The TPLF, using their high positions in the security and military sector, attempted to instigate violence and instability in areas mainly occupied by Muslims. The first and second years of the new prime minister's reign were characterized by violence and conflicts manufactured by the hidden hands of the TPLF. Vis-à-vis these conflicts, the TPLF, and its personnel circulated narratives that the US is would lose its strategic interests in the strategic East African region if Islamists gained political power in the region's leading country, Ethiopia, due to Tigrayans being sidelined from their leading role in the decision-making process and control of the country's security governance.

In light of the above direction, the anti-reform old security elements designed Muslim majority areas such as Somali, Afar, Harar, Oromia, and Benishangul regional states, Adiss Ababa, Wollo, and Dire Dawa, to manufacture conflict and thereby depict the country's mayhem and ensuing political crisis to Western governments, particularly the US, as being due to fundamentalist elements among Muslim populations. The report by the US senior analyst, Emily Estelle (2018; 2) to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on Africa on September 12, 2018, about the security conditions of Ethiopia and the trends of Islamic extremism as "sustained conflict risks mobilizing Ethiopia's Somali population, potentially creating a new opportunity for Islamic terrorists to recruit new memberships or even expand their attacks in Ethiopia" heralded the success of TPLF's maneuvering efforts. Given the priorities of the Western governments in the region, the TPLF's conflict creation and narratives that linked every political question in the country with that of political Islam appeared to succeed in convincing the former to continue to perceive Ethiopian domestic politics through post-9/11 lenses. In the same report, Estelle (2018; 2) asserted that "instability in Ethiopia will undermine US efforts to neutralize Al Shabab, al Qaeda's Somalia-based affiliate, and reverberate across the region." In this context, it is possible to argue that Muslim populations have been used as pawns in the regime's maneuvering of Western nations to acquire diplomatic, financial, and material support and therefore remain in power.

When the new Prime Minister and his leadership took more aggressive measures against the TPLF's elements in the country's military and security establishments, the latter was increasingly involved in fabricating narratives that Ethiopia's fate would not be different from countries like Libya, Syria, and Yemen all of which according to TPLF personals entered into chaos by Islamic political forces. To support their discourse of associating violence in the country with Islamist political aspirations, TPLF leaders have utilized their networks and information in the previous security sectors to create several conflicts and violence of religious nature in various parts of the country. Below are some of the conflicts produced by the TPLF and its security establishments to convince the western world that Ethiopia's violence and political crisis are the byproducts of Islamist political groups in the country and the region.

The plot of igniting conflicts of religious nature started in the capital only a few months after Abiy Ahmed was appointed Ethiopian Prime Minister. On May 25, 2018, in Addis Ababa, Ashewa Meda, many criminals unfamiliar with the local community demolished the mosque and attacked Muslims while gathering for prayers (Adiss Standard, 2018). Local witnesses and Muslims in the area stated that security forces linked to the TPLF and its networks orchestrated the conflict and attacks. The purpose of igniting inter-religious conflict was revealed when the perpetrators who engaged in mosque attacks ran and took shelter in the nearby Orthodox Church to create an impression to Muslims that the attackers were Christians and thereby invoke large-scale communal conflict in the area with the potential to expand across the country. Even though the attempt to incite large-scale interreligious conflict failed, the incident left many Muslims injured, and the mosque demolished.

On June 26, the grand Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa was exposed to a fire accident. The grand mosque is considered an icon of Islamic heritage for Muslims in Addis Ababa and across the country. The fire burnt from the women's section of the madrasa and more than 50 electronics shops around the mosque. The government source and people around the mosque held and reflected a firm belief that the TPLF and its networks planned the mishap to generate extensive religious violence to create a picture of the domestic political crisis in terms of conflict created by extremist Muslims. Mosque-related violence happened in August 2018 in the towns of Deese and Kombolcha, where the majority of residents are Muslims with symbolic cultures of tolerance among diverse religious groups. According to sources, the violent attacks near mosques were carried out by groups not part of the local community.

In December 2019, a horrifying and deadly tragedy occurred in Somalia, the country's third-largest ethnic group where the entire ethnicity adheres to Islam. Seven Orthodox churches were burnt down in the Jigjiga, the regional state's capital, by armed men associated with the region's former president and partner, TPLF. Seven priests and several religious community members were brutally murdered. They killed Christians who were not native to the area and were of a different ethnicity than the locals. The motives of the plotters (TPLF and their proxy Abdi Elle, the region's president) to target Christians, churches, and clergies was to attract the attention of the international community in a way that the violent incident in Jigjiga was not just ethnic riots, but violence motivated by radicalized Muslim Somalis in Ethiopia and their network with Al-Shabab. According to government sources, the act was masterminded by prior intelligence members and regional security staff under the supervision of the TPLF and ex-regional president.

The TPLFs rhetoric and manipulation of Western governments through Islamist narratives by creating and spreading conflicts and instabilities in Ethiopia and the wider region have continued even in the ongoing war between the federal government and the Tigray region that started in November 2020. The TPLFites, through their organizations in the Western world (US and Europe), activists, and social media crew, circulate narratives that Islamist political groups called Wahabis are fighting with Tigrayans and Ethiopia National Defense Force (ENDF). On August 24, 2021, the Tigrayan Media House (TMH), a TPLF affiliated US-based satellite television, disseminated news that Tigrayan forces destroyed one brigade of religious-based or Islamist territorial army called 'Wahabis,' recruited and organized by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government in one of the battles conducted in Wollo vicinity, Muslim majority area (Tigrayan Media House,2021). In the following days, Abdurehim Ahmed, a prominent Ethiopian Muslim activist in the US, organized a program via his YouTube channel called Harun Media, titled “What does Tigrayan Medea House mean by "*Wahhabiya force has been destroyed by Tigrayan force*" or ውህብያዎችን ደምስሰናል ሲል ምን ማለቱ ነው? በመስጅዶች ና ሃሪማዎች ላይ የደረሰ ጥቃት. In the program, the activist announced that one prominent scholar from Harvard University, who has conducted numerous studies on Islamic extremism in the region, asked him, *"Is that true that the organized Muslim army joined the Ethiopian army to fight against Tigrayans*" (Harun Media, 2021). The activist further stated that TPLF-supporters in the US and Europe are spreading reports to various institutions and agencies in the Western world that political forces with Islamic ambition are taking part in the ongoing war in Ethiopia on the side of the national defense force (ibid). He argued that such fake information was intended to get the attention and support of the US government by associating the ongoing war with Islamist political forces.

What all the above incidents and rhetoric have in common is that all of them have been plotted by TPLF-supporters to destabilize the country and associate the instability with Islamic political motives in order to challenge Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government and convince Western governments that Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa would fall in Islamist hands in their absence (Estelle, 2018).

In addition to Tigrayan actors, the securitization of Islam has been embedded in ethnic Amhara's history, religion, politics, and security cultures. The historical securitization of Islam in the form of foreignization and othering of Islam and Muslims has been revived in the recent Neo-Orthodox transformation movements led by the Mahabir Kidusan, "a movement for youth and young adults aimed at recovering and rebuilding traditional

Orthodox piety and spirituality as an essential Ethiopian national heritage while characterizing Muslims as an erosive foreign force" (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021: 11). This movement has scaled up in political agency with the birth of Amhara nationalism and an ensuing political party called the National Movement of Amhara (NAMA) in June 2018. The Church institution of Mahibere Kidusan and its political extension NAMA have been displeased regarding the positive approaches the new Abiy Ahmed administration adopted towards Muslims, including the latter's decision to allow the opening and operation of Islamic financial systems and banking systems as part of the country's financial system, provision of lands to construct mosques and Islamic schools, and rhetoric of a united and robust Muslim community in Ethiopia. While the new government's decision to allow the establishment of Islamic finance and banking in Ethiopia is part of his efforts to resolve various issues of all religious groups, religious figures and institutions associated with Orthodox Church have interpreted the government's decision as favorable treatment to Muslims citing the religious and ethnic background of the new Prime Minister. Prime Minister Abiy has made strides regarding various problems of the Orthodox Church, including reconciling the Church's disputed wings, one based in the United States for nearly three decades, and inland Orthodox Church leadership, which had been accused of political association with TPLF. While Christians and Muslims alike praised Prime Minister Abiy's government's positive steps towards religious communities, age old tensions and suspicions between Muslims and Orthodox Christians resurfaced following the demotion of the minority authoritarian regime and the ensuing opening of political and socio-cultural spaces after the reforms.

General Asaminew Tsige, a hardliner Amhara nationalist who was serving as the head of regional security of the Amhara region and was killed on June 24, 2019 while leading a coup against the regional government, once reiterated that the contemporary threats to the Amhara people were far worse than the threats that they had faced five or six centuries ago. The security chief was implicitly referring to two political developments in the 15th and 16th centuries, the disastrous defeats of the Christian Highland Kingdom (Abyssinians) by Muslim Sultanates, organized and led by the Sultan of the Adal Sultanate, Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi, and the successful territorial expansion of the Oromo people in the hinterlands of the Abyssinian empire or present-day central and northern Ethiopia.

The same security chief told the priests attending the regional assembly to get ready and follow the legacies of Abune Petros, an Ethiopian archbishop assassinated by Italian troops on July 29, 1936, for his leading role against Italy's colonial occupation of Ethiopia, who is revered as by Ethiopian Orthodox Church as a martyr. The security chief conveyed a message that the attacks against Amharas in the Oromia region and other parts of the country were driven by religious motives of radical Muslims against Christian Ethiopians rather than ethnic considerations. However, ironically, the bishop that the head of regional security referred to was Oromo in terms of his ethnic background.

Four larger-scale violent incidents are worth mentioning that revealed the intersections of religious and ethnic factors that different agencies or actors of securitization have utilized to securitize Islam. While the overlapping nature of ethnic and religious identity markers is not reducible, the emphasis here is how these conflicts have disproportionately been used to securitize Islam by different actors in post-2018 political reforms.

The first violent episode appeared on October 23, 2019, when thousands of followers and supporters of prominent Oromo activist Jawar Muhamed aggressively protested and confronted security forces following the latter's alert on Facebook that the government's security personnel plotted to remove his security at midnight. Jawar has been a leader and coordinator of anti-regime Oromo protests that resulted in internal political reform and transformation within the regime (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). In the following days, many Oromo youth across the Oromia region took to the street and protested, considering the government's attempt as a plan to assassinate the activist. Although the protests against the government seemed non-violent initially, they scaled up into violent confrontations when the public anger turned into violent riots in defense of the activist.

The protestors violently confronted security forces that tried to prevent them from protesting and heading to the activist's residence in Addis Ababa and started targeting other ethnic communities in the Oromia region (Aljazeera, 2019). Over the following few days, protestors attacked dozens of Amharas, who are by default Christians, in different cities of Oromia, including Asia, Dodola, Bale Robe, and Adama. They demolished their properties (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). Thousands of ethnic Amhara were left wounded and fled their homes and areas of residence due to the intercommunal violence (ibid). About 86 people were killed in related violence in the Oromia region (Aljazeera, 2019). However, the violent incident extended the country's political crisis, mainly driven by ethnic factors than religious ones. Ethnic Amharas, Orthodox Church, Christian organizations, activists, political parties, and affiliated media viewed and mourned the incident as instances of attacks and massacres perpetrated against Christians by extremist Muslims, claiming that Jawar Muhamed and his followers and supporters Oromos were extremist Muslims and their movement had Islamist political ambitions (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021).

On December 20, 2019, another violent incident occurred in Mota, East Gojam zone of Amhara regional state. A mob attacked business centers and property owned by Muslims, burned four mosques to the ground, and vandalized and looted several shops and business centers owned by Muslims (Adiss Standard, 2019). Unlike many other violent incidents in the country, in Mota incident was clearly "an attack by Christians upon Muslims and therefore framed as a purely interreligious conflict with no clear ethnic overtones and triggering political events at the center." (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021:15). Given the incidents in October in Oromia and ensuing narratives of Christians and their institutions, it is arguable that the attacks perpetrated against Muslims in Mota were a retaliation of Amharas/Christians against Muslims for what happened to Amharas/Christians in the Oromia region two months previous. Following the Mota incident, large-scale protests and rallies were conducted by Muslim populations across the country regardless of ethnic backgrounds, including in the cities of Jimma, Shashemene, Harara, Bale, Deese, Kombolcha, Samara-Logia, Harar, and Bahr Dar (Adiss Standard, 2019).

The third violent incident was sparked on June 29 by the assassination of a famous Oromo singer known to use his music for political activism and resistance. While the artist was shot dead by unknown actors in Addis Ababa, young Oromos suspected that Amahars conducted the artist's assassination within the circle of the government and people associated with the regime (Time, July 2020). The next day, Jawar Mohamed and many other Oromo opposition leaders were arrested by the government after skirmishes with security forces in Addis Ababa regarding the burial location of the artist (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). More than 355 people were killed over the following days, and dozens of businesses and properties were burned in a violent protest across Oromia by disgruntled Oromo youth. Unlike the incident in Mota, the victims of the violence across Oromia were non-Oromo ethnic groups regardless of their religious identities (ibid). Muslims and Christians from other ethnic groups like Silte, Gurage, and Wolayta were equally targeted by the mob. However, Orthodox Church, Christian associations like Mahibere Kidusan, Media, and activists attributed the violence to religion, claiming that all the conflicts, killings, and displacements in the Oromia region, where the majority of the ethnic members are Muslim, as due to Muslim extremists' religious motives to exterminate Christians from the area. The survey in the post-conflict environment by Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu (2021) revealed that "all Christians categorized the violence as religious and a result called increasing religious extremism," annulling the fact that non-Oromo Muslims too were parts of the victims. One Oromo informant contradicted this association by asserting that the targets of youth riots were not only Christians/ Amhara, but all non-Oromo ethnic backgrounds from all religious groups were equally targeted without any religious considerations.

Another informant, 36 years old Abdu, from Shashemene, where the inter-communal conflicts were intensely interpreted in terms of religious motives, contested the association of the disputes with Islamic extremism by most Christians and their institutions as; "I don't understand why people always regarded Amhara's attack as an attack against Christians." Another informant condemned the labeling that "for Amharas and their agencies everything done by the Muslim Oromo is motivated by Muslims' religious motive of radical ideology." Against such association of the ethnic and religious identities, an Oromo spiritual leader, Sheik Ibrahim in Bale, uttered as:

> *"Of course, it looks religious or Islamic. But deep inside we are struggling for Oromummaa [Oromoness] rather than Islaamummaa [Islam]. The majority here in Arsi and Bale or Harar is Muslim, and whenever we take action, it is automatically labeled as religious. It should be clear that our struggle is about Oromummaa, it is not an Islamic struggle."* (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021: 27).

In sharp contradiction with the above claims, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Christians emphasized the religious dimension of the conflict, insisting that the conflict perpetrators were Muslims motivated by religious motives to attack Christians, repudiating the ethnic factors. The common claim was that "the increase of Salafi Muslims had sharpened boundaries between Christians and Muslims" and destroyed "the century-old social contract between the Muslim and the Christian communities" (Ibid: 26). Despite comprehensive reports about numerous victims of non-Oromo Muslims and Christians alike, the government-controlled media and the media affiliated with Amhara nationalists tried to depict the violence as a religious conflict (ibid:27). Subsequently, Orthodox Church's leadership and institutions, mainly Mahibere Kidusan, conducted large-scale protests that condemned the killings of Amharas in the Oromia region as an attack against Christians. They held the slogan that accused and harassed Muslims as the perpetrators of these violent attacks and called the government to take immediate actions against 'extremist Muslims.' Moreover, Mahbere Kidusan secretly pressured Christian security personnel and officials to retaliate against Oromos/ Muslims for their fellow Christian victims in the Oromia region.

The efforts of Islamizing violence and ethnic conflicts materialized when the government's security force killed two influential imams (one with his infant and wife) and wounded a third in the towns of Assassa and Shashemene in the Oromia region following protests in these towns that demanded the release of Oromo opposition politicians (United States Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report for 2020). The regime security forces also penetrated several mosques, mainly in Kofale and Shashemene, both in the Oromia region, and injured religious leaders and students by opening fire in and around mosques (ibid). These actions of security forces, in turn, generated nationwide mourning among Muslims, who often heard that the government is acting in the interests of Orthodox Christians and Amahara narratives of accusing Muslims of every violent incident in Oromia and other areas. The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) condemned the acts of the government through press releases after the reports of the developments mentioned above. Why did the government and security forces target Muslim religious leaders and individuals and mosques for mainly interethnic conflict in Oromia while they were silent when mosques and Muslim properties were burnt down and looted in Motta by Christians in the area? According to the three decades of the regimes' experiences, the answer is that harassing Muslims and creating Muslim-related chaos is a strategy to reduce criticism from Western governments and human rights organizations.

The fourth episode of violence occurred on April 26, 2022, when an unidentified armed group attacked Muslims in Gondar city during the funeral of a famous local sheik. Three individuals were killed, and five others were injured by a bomb blast thrown into a group of Muslims attending a funeral. The violence and attack spread throughout the city, and the rioters demolished 20 shops possessed by Muslims, set fire to mosques, and looted 11 homes. According to local reports, the violence left more than 50 people dead and 118 others injured. The city's unrest persisted over the following few days. Three persons were killed, and an indeterminate number of Muslim houses were damaged on April 28 due to violence following a funeral ritual of those killed on April 26. Religious-based attacks and tensions spread across the country after the incident in Gonder. On April 28, a mob of Orthodox Christians stormed and destroyed two mosques in Debark, in the Amhara region's North Gondar zone. The attack occurred after a rumor that the Gotet Mariam Orthodox Church in Kebele 01 had burned down. A fire broke out inside the church's grounds, but the church did not burn down. It remains unclear if the fire was started intentionally or by chance. On April 29, Muslims congregated in Muslim majority regions and cities of Oromia, Afar, Southern Region, Somalia, Harar, Wollo, Jimma, Dire Dawa, Deese, Jigjiga, and Worabe to protest the attacks perpetrated against Muslims in Gondar city (EPO Weekly: 23 April-6 May 2022).

In some cases, the demonstrations turned into violent skirmishes between protestors and security officers and between Muslims and Christians in the areas. The protest in Dire

Dawa became violent as participants threw stones at police, injuring 22 officers, and destroyed banks and government cars. The police responded by opening fire. On April 28, Muslim protestors in Werabe stormed and destroyed two Orthodox and three Protestant churches. They torched another Orthodox church the next day. Similarly, on April 28, a mob of Muslim rioters attacked the monks and set fire to the Sakura St. Gebrael Church in Alem Gebeya, Sakura woreda, Silte zone, SNNPR. The rioters burned down Christian hotels, wounding roughly 15 people (ibid).

On April 27, a peaceful demonstration against the attack on Muslims in Gondar was held at the Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa. After conflict between police and Muslim worshippers at Mesqel Square in Addis Ababa after the Eid Al Fitr prayer on May 2, federal security forces used tear gas and bullets against protesters. The National Peace and Security Joint Task Force announced that 76 people had been arrested in Addis Ababa for inciting disturbances. The prisoners were suspected of planning and bringing knives and various flags to the Eid Al Fitr prayer "to provoke religious bloodshed," according to the police. Following the Gondar event, 145 persons were arrested in Adama, Oromia, on charges of planning to provoke religious-based violence. Meanwhile, a federal police officer was charged on May 4 with shooting tear gas during the Eid Al Fitr prayer in Addis Ababa, resulting in conflict between rioters and security forces (ibid).

All the inter-ethnic and religious conflicts across the country since 2011, including the above incidents, have been interpreted in trans-ethnic religious terms and controversies. Most adherents of Orthodox Christians, their activists, and media frequently described violence as Islamic motives underpinned by extremism rather than inter-ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, to view blurred ethno-nationalism and inter-religious tensions and conflicts as engrained phenomena of Muslim-Christian relations in Ethiopia and as an unavoidable outcome for the Ethiopian state would be to overlook the fact that these religious communities have also lived together harmoniously in the past. The point here is that ethno-nationalism and ensuing interethnic conflicts, mainly between the two largest ethnic groups in the country, have become de-territorialized and religionized in the broader contexts of ethnic federalism in general political transformations since 2018. This fact has been ostensibly revealed by violent incidents and destruction of many Orthodox Churches and several mosques in the Oromia and Amhara regions. Thus, it is arguable that the regime's attempt to manufacture and control irrational fear towards Muslims via the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism' has been effective due to the increasing mistrust and tensions between and among different religious communities. In this regard, Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu (2021:19) argued that "unwarranted fear of Muslim extremists caused rising inter-religious tensions to explode" and change the nature of future conflicts in Ethiopia. The opening of political space in 2018 has been witnessing deep controversies and contrary ambitions among religious groups regarding the nature of the state, which entails the possibility of large-scale inter-religious conflicts that override ethnic factors and may alter the country's existence in its present form.

6.7. Incommensurable Visions and International Dimensions

Many local developments, including religious and ethnic conflicts, have always been tied to phenomena and decisions in a remote part of the globalized world (Mcgrew, 2005). This is in line with constructivists’ emphasis that the ideational structure of the international sphere or politics has profound causal effects on local developments and vice versa. It is not intended to imply that all religious and ethnic conflicts and ensuing instabilities in the country have international dimensions and drivers. Rather, it is intended to demonstrate how the global is local and how local is global, to show how the post-9/11 security arena is synthesized by back-and-forth interactions of local and international factors and contexts to shape and reshape people's threat and security perceptions in Ethiopia.

The involvement of external actors in line with the effects of religion in Ethiopian politics is not a new trend. Still, it has profound roots in Ethiopia's long history of state creation. A close-up view of current forms of state-religion-politics interaction in the country informs the actuality of three contending and competing for religious actors, often defined by blurred ethnic and religious markers, which will determine the nature and future of the Ethiopian state, which are Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism. These religious groupings have strong territorial or sub-territorial and ethnic bases and political interests in the country's national politics. Three sets have diverse, often contrary political perspectives and attitudes towards the state and different goals to gain from the outcomes of Ethiopian politics.

Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and Protestants, the contending ethnoreligious communities, can be classified by their neo-hegemonic and reactionary goals, dissidence and resistance, and revolutionary stances vis-a-vis the country's political outcome, respectively. These positions represent and derive each group's approach to the state, politics, and other religious communities in the course of sociopolitical struggles to fulfill their political aspirations and longstanding interests in the operation of Ethiopian polity.

6.7.1. Ortho-mara (Orthodox-Amhara) Neo-Hegemonic Movement

The political aspirations of the sociopolitical group representing Orthodox Christian and Amharic language speakers are defined by the Neo-Hegemonic Camp. This bloc refers to the loosely ethnoreligious association of Orthodox Christians and Amharic language speakers that was established as a hegemonic group in Ethiopian state formation following the restoration of what is known as the Solomonic dynasty in 1270 (Adimasu, 2006). By its intrinsic connection with Orthodox Christianity, Amhara denotes dominant economic, social, cultural, and linguistic elements in the Ethiopian social fabric (ibid). Historically, the interests of Amhara/Orthodox Christians as a unified ideology and identity in the making of the Ethiopian empire chiefly relied on an aggressive and violent approach (Tamirat, 1967). This enabled them to frame the Ethiopian state and its identity in their image by excluding or othering, or assimilating many other identity groups in the country. As a result, the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity served as a lingua franca and provider of ideological lenses to the Ethiopian empire until the collapse of the last imperial throne in 1974 by a socialist revolution plotted by the army. The anti-religious ideological conviction of the socialist regime (1974-1991) and the post-1991 multi-ethnic federalism have been believed to degrade the longstanding social fabric of the Ethiopian state anchored in Orthodox Christianity and Amharic language as superior moral and civilizational values.

Orthodox Christians, along with their political and cultural institutions, strive to reclaim their political, socio-cultural, and economic dominance over all other identity groups in the country and preserve the state's national identity as defined in the imperial past. This aspiration brought political forces, social institutions and groups, and individuals ascribed to Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language mainly in the Amhara region of the current federal structure and across the country together (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). Propagating the idea that Ethiopia's past is noble, this sociopolitical group aims to celebrate every aspect of the country's history, including violence and marginalization, and urge the need to maintain that historical pattern under the slogan "we were great, we shall be great again."

According to Orthomara's view, all of Ethiopia's current problems result from ethno-linguistic federalism and constitutional recognition of diverse identity groups in the country following the demise of the imperial rule of the country in 1974 and political upheavals in 1991. This movement accuses the current federal system of government and its constitutional order of prompting divisive ethnic and linguistic fault lines against the country's century-old centralized and unitary administration established around Orthodox Christianity and Amharic language as core values. This idea has been increasingly propagated by sociopolitical groups and movements, mainly those with a social base in Amhara and Orthodox Christianity. They constantly want to retain and maintain the century-old domination and assimilation under cover of unified government and citizenship politics. Moreover, the sociopolitical and cultural uniformity of Orthodox Christianity and Amhara cultures serving as a source of ideological lenses has been refreshed by emerging and sweeping Amhara nationalism. While the core ideological orientations of proponents of unitary politics and Amhara nationalism are the same, retaining the Orthomara's hegemonic version of Ethiopia through citizenship politics and delegitimizing ethnic political factors and wither away the country's three decades of ethnic and linguistic federalism, the Amhara ethnic-nationalists strive to redefine Amhara religion in ethno-linguistic terms to mobilize political support. Although their claim generates reluctance among Muslims, Amhara nationalists expressed their movement's distance from any religious motives as expressed in Tazebew's (2021:1) words; "The founding premise is that the Amhara constitute a nation, a secular ethnocultural identity and a not just a religion."

However, the redefinition of secular and primordial ethnic terms has faced resistance from cultural discourse created by the movements from other ethnic groups and the Muslim community in the Amhara region and throughout the country. Most resistance revolves around the blurry and fuzzy definition of Amhara. For some, Amhara is not an ethnic identity. Yet, a religious identity cannot serve to mobilize people of different religions in the Amhara region, let alone in Ethiopia for others, Amhara is an imagined dominant culture that has been produced through historical interactions of different ethnic and religious communities in central parts of Ethiopia. Orthomara's reliance on religious sources to frame the Ethiopian state's national political direction and identity faced fierce resistance from Tigrayans, an ethnic group in North Ethiopia who are overwhelmingly Orthodox Christians. Though Orthodox Christianity is prevalent both in Amhara and Tigrayan ethno-territorial bases in the north and central Ethiopia, the Tigrayans seldom manipulate the religious discourses for domestic and national political consumption. Instead, they emphasize multicultural, political pluralism, and federation that accommodates diversity in the country. This Tigrayan rhetoric has wider acceptance among non-Orthomara's social bases, including Muslims and non-Amhara ethnic groups in the country.

Generally, the Orthomara movement aspires to revive and restore the pre-1974 establishment anchored in Amhara culture and language and Orthodox Christianity as the national identity of the modern Ethiopian state. Moreover, the Orthomara's camp has always been reactionary to most of the new sociopolitical developments in the post-1991 periods, including the increasing assertive activities, involvement, and public visibility of Muslims, widespread Protestantism, to which a lot of adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have converted, and cultural globalization.

In domestic power struggles, Orthomara's movement considered Muslims a primary and Protestantism as a secondary source of threat to their vision of Ethiopia. Thus, the groups articulated their version and hoped for the country's external relations in a way that would serve the movement's ambition of preserving hegemony over all other social values and political aspirations. This camp relies on three fundamental external relations: Israel, the Western world, and Russia. Like the Tigrayan elites, this bloc has adopted and utilized the post-9/11 global security narratives of Islamic fundamentalism by linking and presenting the civil rights movements of Muslims and other political questions as Islamic movements that aim to create an Islamic political order in Ethiopia. The Amhara and Tigrayan political elite share the rhetoric and worldview vis-à-vis Islamic extremism in order to exploit external actors, particularly Western Christian states, and thereby secure enormous security and financial support in domestic politics. This made Ethiopia one of the satellite or proxy states of the US and the Western European governments in the Horn of Africa in the latter's bid to contain Islamists in the East Africa region.

Secondly, the Orthomara religio-political community has always viewed the Zionist state of Israel as a source of moral, military, and diplomatic assistance. Even though the religious discourse and teaching of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity condemn Israel for the latter's presumed betrayal and execution of Jesus Christ and rejection of him as the Son of God, politically, the group always considered the Jewish state as Ethiopia’s trusted partner in external politics. The religious and legendary text, Glory of Kings, is the primary source of anti-Israelite speech, which claims that "the ignorant Jews, who are blind of heart and adversaries of righteousness did not comprehend the Gospel of Jesus and in their evilness, they assassinated him." (Cited in Erlich, 2013:15). At the same time, such beliefs have been prevalent in the day-to-day affairs of Orthodox Christians who often use '*Ayihud or Yehuda'* (Amharic for Jew) to express betrayal and betrayer. Politically, the Orthomara campaign did not use such religious discourse. Instead, this camp prefers discourses that bond the Ethiopian state with the state of Israel through spiritual, historical, and ancestral lines. They stress biblical discourses and myths that chronicle the travel of Ethiopia's historical empress of Saba to Jerusalem and her marital relations with King Solomon of Israel, through whom she had a son named Menelik, who founded the Ethiopian state under the Solomonic dynasty (ibid).

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church leadership and Orthodox religious activists have sought to revitalize relations between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Russian-Orthodox Church, circulating messages of brotherhood in faith, the similarity of religious traditions and customs as a base for Ethiopian-Russian diplomatic relations (Denisova, 2021). The Orthomara sociopolitical aspiration is to maintain the historical hegemony of Christianity and Amhara's culture as the ultimate representative of Ethiopian national identity by every possible means.

6.7.2. The Protestant Reformation Movement

With its many denominations, Protestantism has been significantly spreading and challenging the religious landscapes in Ethiopia for the past three decades, with ever more visibility now in the country's public sphere than before (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir Kadir, Yihenew, & Alemu, 2021). In 1950, Finnish and Swedish missionary teams and works brought Protestantism to Ethiopia for the first time (Elliesie, 2014). As a religious movement within modernization, it has added new aspects to Ethiopia's pattern of religious characteristics that attract scholarly and popular attention and the consequences of social behavior and inter-communal tensions and disagreements (ibid).

Protestantism has spread significantly in the Southern region, Western Oromia, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz regions, urban areas, and large cities. Besides the religion's fast expansion and effects on Ethiopia's religious dynamic, Protestants have become influential and critical players in Ethiopian politics. Followed only by 5% a decade ago and broadened its membership to encompass 19% of Ethiopians, a significant number of its followers hold crucial governmental positions and ministerial offices that often-outstripped Orthodox Christians and Muslims in governmental circles. Such ever-increasing political empowerment of Protestants has created gripes among Orthodox Christian and Muslim followers on the ground of proportional representation. Prominent religious figures and opposition leaderships have frequently argued that the regime's extensive inclusion and political empowerment of Protestants is part of the former's diplomatic efforts to please the Western world, particularly the USA, which is considered a core state of Protestantism. Enormously social media campaigns and activism circulated narratives that US government agencies and diplomats played a role in the nomination of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed due to his Protestant religious orientations.

Even though Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is from the country's largest ethnic community and regional constituency, Oromo whose dominant faith is Islam, his political approach and discourse do not reflect the demands and aspirations of his social base. Moreover, the

Premier prioritizes religious considerations over ethnic factors in his political sermons, nominations of individuals over governmental posts, and positions that have become a point of informal contention among both Muslim/Oromos and Christian/Amharas alike. The New York Times on January 3, 2019, as, "Abiy is constantly invoking religious symbols; especially that linked to American Protestant evangelical megachurches and has brought a greater number of Pentecostals into the higher ranks of government." Over the previous years, the Protestants' political engagement in Ethiopia had dual fronts, represented by Ethiopian Evangelical Church called Mekane Yesus and Pentecostalism mainly through Oromo politics. The Mekane Yesus church played a very active role in Oromo politics by advocating for Oromo causes and even supporting the pro-secessionist Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) against repressive Ethiopian politics' repressive and imperial ramifications on the ethnic community (Girma, 2018).

On the other hand, Pentecostal politics focused on the doctrine of 'healing the nation' through individual conversion rather than political cooperation (ibid). However, with the optimistic new generations of Pentecostal theologies in recent years, there has been excessive interest in politics under the doctrine of "occupying for Jesus," which refers to the condition in which believers should hold bureaucratic seats and political power to serve God’s purpose on earth (ibid, 12). Such political dreams of Pentecostal theology culminated in the rise to power of PM Abiy Ahmed, a Pentecostal himself. He appealed to a prophetic discourse to become the seventh Ethiopian king decades before his actual nomination as Ethiopian PM. Having enormous scholarship, financial, and diplomatic support from the Western world, mainly Pentecostal and evangelicals' associations in the United States, protestant movements have been transforming Ethiopia's century-old socio-cultural and political fabric to serve their religious community as well as reflect their world view.

Within a few months of his ascension to power, Abiy Ahmed dismantled the ethnic coalition party that ruled Ethiopia for the last three decades and forged a new party called Prosperity Party (PP) based on ideological orientations of Protestant Christianity called prosperity gospel. The Prosperity Gospel originated in the US as a version of protestant Christianity with a faith prescription of wish, claim, and get, "if followers strongly feel and visualize what they want, then they can get it" (Mulubrhan, 2021). Politically, the ideological foundation of the prosperity gospel is divine intervention and prophecies as a key explanatory factor to domestic political, social, and economic policies and foreign relations, which puts the party in anomalous or conflict with intellectual efforts and scientific analysis (ibid). Similarly, Abiy and his party were highly welcomed and celebrated among US evangelical Christian lobby groups and congress members. This corresponds with the post-2001 rising influence of evangelical Christian lobby groups in the US foreign policy decision-making in sub-Saharan Africa, whose strong focus has been the global fight against Islamist political groups (Rye, 2017).

The creation of Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity party based on Protestant Christianity's religious and ideological orientation of prosperity gospel in 2018, avowed the resurgence of theocratic politics in Ethiopia. This condition resulted in two significant developments in the political spectrum of the country: ethnic factors that were celebrated as a dominant tool of political mobilization were replaced by religious considerations, and the return of populist leadership that reduced the legal and constitutional rhetoric and frameworks in the conduct of the politics. In addition to his fellow Protestants, Abiy's religious rhetoric and language in politics and at the center of administration tasks were broadly welcomed by Orthodox Christians "who have for many centuries proclaimed Ethiopia as a land of God's special favor" and 'the Island of Christianity,' a notion that Muslims have considered and contended as an exclusionary discourse and means of othering their identity, Islam from the social fabric foundation of the state (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, and Yihenew, 2021: 13).

Moreover, Abiy Ahmed's leadership style and philosophy of prosperity gospel discouraged rationality and expertise in politics. The leaders and supporters of prosperity party gospel try to persuade the Ethiopian public that Ethiopia will be among the great and prosperous nations of the world shortly, irrespective of the realities on the ground that most Ethiopians witness, such as widespread violence and chaos, thousands of killings and millions of displaced people, the mass arrest of opposition leadership and membership and political assassinations of high profile personalities, ethnic profiling and cleansing and civil war in the country (Mulubrhan, 2021).

6.7.3. Muslims’ Unresolved Resistance and Dissidence

Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds have been subject to exclusionary national policies and institutions and have been sought for inclusive socio-economic and political situations. Muslims have resisted exclusionary national discourses of the polity as a Christian state and engage in assertive activities toward full-fledged citizenship and communal status and political inclusion against the multi-dimensional historical and institutional marginalization of Muslims and Islam in Ethiopia. In today's Ethiopia, Muslims constitute the greater part of Oromo Society (the largest ethnic group in the country), the entire Somali (the fourth largest ethnic community in the country), Afar, Harari, Silte, and ethnic groups, substantial sections of societies in Wollo area of Amhara region and Benishangul regional state.

As articulated by different agencies of the religious community, the political aspiration of Muslims is to redefine and change the historical courses of marginalization by reforming the country's national identity on an inclusive basis (Dereje, 2011). To that end, Muslims have demonstrated a high degree of public engagement in political and civil associations to have their share and sayings in the country's politics and decision-making process. However, as has been detailed in the previous chapters, Muslim's socio-political and economic activities have always been viewed and interpreted as an offspring of political Islam, as if they are preparing and waiting for the time to establish an Islamic system by force. The Ethiopian government, Orthodox Church and its institutions mainly Mahibere Kidusan, and global and regional powers, particularly US and Israel, have initiated and supported the regime’s intensive obstructive policies towards the religious community over the past three decades (Muhamed, 2015).

As a result, Muslims have developed victim mentalities, grievances, and a sense of deprivation and exclusion against the state and its policies and institutions (Dereje, 2013). Such negative feelings toward Muslims are not limited to domestic spheres and politics. Still, they have external dimensions. They always view the anti-terror rapprochement between the Ethiopian government and the Western powers as their social security and an obstacle to the religious community's multi-dimensional progress in Ethiopia. Remarkably, due to the increasing exposure of Muslims to modern education and international order and politics, Muslims have developed animosities toward the external world, mainly Western states and their partners in the Middle East (i.e., Israel, Saudi, and United Arab Emirates) on the ground that the post 9/11 international order of security and Western actors have obstructive effects on Muslim's aspirations and questions in Ethiopian domestic politics and struggles among various social groups (Dereje, 2011).

Nevertheless, Christians have a strong belief and a closed government circle that Middle Eastern and neighboring Muslim states might support Ethiopian Muslims for their geopolitical and religious interests in Ethiopia and the greater Horn of Africa. As Orthodox Christians sympathize with Russia and Israel, Protestants look to the US as the respective core states of their identity. Plenty of Muslim activists, institutions, and personalities have expressed their hope in Turkey as an emerging and dependable Muslim power that will have positive contributions to Muslim causes in the region, citing the ever-increasing involvement of Turkey in economic, investment, and charity activities in the Horn of African countries, mainly in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia (Cannon, B. J., & Donelli, 2020).

Given the resurrection of religious factors and language under the leadership of Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party Gospel, the feature of the Ethiopian state lies in the patterns of the triangular incommensurable visions and aspirations of ethnoreligious groups at the national level, along with regional geopolitical developments and global contexts. Although some believe that the general public has applauded Abiy's religious rhetoric on the ground that religion is an essential element and integral part of the day-to-day life of most Ethiopians and their national identity, such views are an oversimplified and unrepresentative of facts (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, Yihenew, and Alemu, 2021). As discussed above, all three ethnoreligious communities have contrary visions of the Ethiopian state, its pasta, and their groups' status in history. For instance, Orthodox Christians claim and believe that "Ethiopia is an island of Christianity in the sea of Islam and land of God's special favor." Muslim's notion of Ethiopia as "the land of the first Hijra" has been the source of contentions and controversy in cooperation and tolerance among the two largest religious communities of the country (ibid; 2013).

Similarly, doctrinal differences and denigration have been a source of conflict and animosity between Protestant and Orthodox churches rather than the basis of mutual recognition and understanding among the religious communities (ICG, 2016: 8). Moreover, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church claims herself as an engine of Ethiopian state formation and the sole moral provider of Ethiopians and designates Protestant Christianity as heresy (ibid). On the other hand, the Protestant church accuses the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of distorting the messages of Christianity through the worship of local saints and traditional idiosyncratic rituals and calls on Orthodox Christians to convert to Protestantism (ibid). Thus, Abiy Ahmed's articulation of his political vision of Ethiopia by integrating religious narratives and rhetoric represents inconsistent with his appeal for "multi-religious unity that would transcend inter-religious boundaries in the name of the nation" (Østebø, Haustein, Fasika, Kedir, Kadir, and Yihenew, Alemu, 2021: 13).

Abiy's vision of multi-religious unity to maintain the territorial integrity of the ethnically and religiously fragmented Ethiopian state has welcomed Orthomara or the so-called Ethiopian nationalist. They considered the former's visions and rhetoric to return to their supposed glorious past (Mulubrhan, 2021). However, the prime minister's vision of unitary Ethiopia with uniform culture has produced dissidence among Muslims, groups, and political forces who considered the country's past as an imperialist and assimilationist entrenchment against the autonomous existences of their ancestors. Against the Premier's vision of a unitary state, Muslims and ethnic nationalist political forces in the country prefer a system that respects, celebrates, and protects cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and political pluralism. The struggle between these ethnoreligious political forces will determine the fate of the Ethiopian state in the upcoming future.

6.8. Possible Futures of Ethiopian State

As discussed above, the synergy of religious and ethnic identities forms a base for diverse and contrary views, attitudes, orientations, interests, and aspirations of different ethnolinguistic groups towards the state. Such domestic realities will determine the Ethiopian state's fate and future in conjunction with the interests of external actors. The current trends of reinforcing ethnic and religious strife in the country, historical experiences of interreligious conflict to shape the state according to their world views and cultural insignia, as well as external actors' geopolitical interest in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, provide insights into the Ethiopian state's likely futures.

The short-lived cooperation and expression of sympathy between different religious and ethnic mobilizations in protests against minority authoritarian regimes has disappeared and turned into suspicion and tension in the immediate aftermath of the dominant party's unseating from power in 2018. They only had one thing in common: an aversion for the government, which was governed by elites from a tiny Tigrayan ethnic background. Following the demotion of their ostensible common adversary, the TPLF, inter-ethno-religious conflict and violence, religious and ethnic polemics, public defamation of other political associations and social groupings, and demolition and destruction of mosques and churches across the country have replaced the sense of alliance between different ethnic and religious groups and mobilizations against the government in the previous years. The post-2018 political developments and events have proved that ethnicity and religious factors are essentially twisted in Ethiopian pluralism. One helps the other in political haggling, struggle, expression, and articulation of interests.

The overthrow of the TPLF, the former dominant party from the EPRDF coalition government, is a hard-won victory for many Ethiopian dissidents. Muslim protests mainly sparked the struggles against the regime's securitization of the identity group and its institutions. The Muslim disobedience movements were joined by the Oromo nationalist anti-regime struggles that culminated in the sidelining of TPLF from the center of power and the ascension of Abiy Ahmed as Ethiopian incumbent PM from the Oromo ethnic majority. Muslims and ethnic Oromos were hopeful in the initial period of the Premier's idea of reform on the ground that he would serve the interests and aspirations of marginalized Ethiopians, mainly Muslim and Oromo identity groups.

However, the hope of Muslims and the Oromo community that the new Prime Minister would address their long time grievances and dissidents were quickly dashed when the Premier forged an alliance with unitarist political forces and elites and sidelined the demands of the Oromo community, namely: territorial integration and possession of the capital, Addis Ababa, founded on historic Oromo territory by the expansionist king Menelik II, Oromo as a working language at the federal level of government, fair representation at the national level of government institutions and bureaucracy, as well as equitable resource distribution. Hardliner Orthodox and Amhara nationalists, on the other hand, have circulated narratives that the Prime Minister came to power through the influence of Western governments (primarily the US) as part of the latter's grand project to destroy the old social and political fabric of the state, which was based on the moral superiority of Orthodox Christianity, and propagate their ideologies and values to shape Ethiopians' socio-political lives. The country's future relies on the interactions between divergent visions and aspirations of local actors and directions and contexts of outside actors' interests and involvement in the country and region. Thus, the country's worst-case and best-case scenarios will be determined by the existing state of affairs, the degree of commitment of various local interest groups to address conflicts of interests through the bargaining process, and the interactions and interests of external parties.

To begin with, the ideal situation for the country and the people is an all-inclusive national consensus toward democratic and inclusive politics, but this is doubtful. This would result in a national council that would include all stockholders in the country, including opposition political parties' leaders in prison, armed rebellions, and civil society organizations whose ultimate end should be to set up or establish robust institutional frameworks that every section of the society can trust and rely on for its security may serve the purpose of sustaining and stabilizing the country. Creating functional, robust, and inclusive institutions can only halt the tensions of ethno-religious fault lines and reduce their destabilization roles. Strong institutions will enable people to move away from collective and mass political mentalities. The country's current security dilemma is exacerbated not only by the lack of inclusive institutions to protect people from violence perpetrated by out-group ethnoreligious adversaries, but also by the manipulation of existing institutions and security apparatus to protect the interests of groups close to the regime at the expense of other groups' security. Unfortunately, given the widening of interests among key actors and interest groups in the country and their lack of political will to discuss and solve conflicts of interests and harmonize contrary visions, domestic political actors have little hope for genuine deliberation. Apart from working towards addressing the country's political crisis based on mutual understandings and interests, the country's acrimonious political forces have been searching and working for and with outside supporters and strategic partners as a means to realize their ambition in domestic politics and win over their adversaries. For the past three decades, the minority Tigrayan regime, Amhara nationalists, and Protestants groups have utilized the strategy of presenting the threat of 'Islamic extremism’ to the Ethiopian state and its values to get the heart and minds of Western governments and ensuing strategic, financial, and diplomatic supports as well as excluding and marginalizing majority of the country's Muslim population from the national political, economic, and social scene. In the post-Cold war period, the Western governments, i.e., the US and its European partners, had created and have been supporting minority authoritarian regimes to curtail any sort of political aspirations and movements from Muslim society in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Such international political patronage between local and global actors has hampered genuine political processes toward democracy consistent with the country's realities and contexts.

Ethiopia's worst case that could happen is disintegration or balkanization, making the country into an African Yugoslavia. In this case, diverse political forces and interest groups primarily organized along ethno-religious fault lines will resort to violence and intimidation to achieve their visions and political aspirations. Multiple political groups believe that the state and its institutions cannot serve their interests and fulfill their ambitions and have claimed respective independent states or nation-states as a way out. These facts make Ethiopia a latent failed state, "a state that fails to promote the interests of all their inhabitants through political choice, often intending to benefit the incumbent regime and its supporters at the expense of another group within the state" (Williams, 2007:2). However, disintegration and the formation of new states will not be as easy as ethnic-nationalists imagine.

Protracted and intense conflicts will accompany the disintegration or balkanization of the highly populous East African state. The bloody clashes between separatist political forces, mainly Oromo, Somalia, and Tigrayan ethnic nationalists on one side and the government and its unitarist (Orthomara) ally who wants the enduring existence of the Ethiopian state in its present form, which they believe was made by the priceless sacrifices of their ancestors on the other side. Even with the collapse of the state and its central authority, various political forces and separatist groups will fight over their particular territory and resources that each exclusively claims to their ethnoreligious group. Indeed, this process has already been sparked through the ongoing genocide and bloodshed across the country.

Moreover, the domestic conflict for power and domination of the national scene will invite external players who, in turn, will further complicate the nature and scope of the already heated contentions in Ethiopia. Intrastate conflict, the causes of their eruptions, and patterns of courses are integral parts of global trends and dynamics of great power rivalry (Malley, 2019). Moreover, conflicts in a particular state dictate the issues and interests those external actors are obsessed with (ibid). The past three decades have witnessed that the dominant global actors, mainly the US and EU, have been creating strong actors from non-Muslim sections of Ethiopian society as dependable agents to implement their interests in Ethiopia and Muslim societies and states in the Horn of Africa. In the case that the post-Cold War and 9/11 security framework and principle of balancing continues to be the modus operandi for international politics, global support for parties in Ethiopia's ongoing and upcoming conflicts will be based on religious and ethnic considerations. In this case, the future of Muslims and Oromos, which constitute a significant portion of Ethiopian society, is not promising. The external environment and contexts will not be on their terms and aspirations. However, such bigoted patrimonial politics between local and external actors will not bring long-lasting solutions to the current political crisis in Ethiopia or the broader Horn of the African region. The domestic actors' expectation that the Western powers will act in line with their 'Global War on Terrorism' modus operandi might misguide their political miscalculations to undertake genuine political deliberations and bargaining of power within local circumstances and realities. This will increase political deadlock in the country and finally contribute to the country's disintegration, as learned in history that religion-driven ethnic conflicts and external involvement facilitated Yugoslavia's disintegration. Only a political willingness and commitment from all stakeholders towards all-encompassing national reconciliation and dialogue will save the country from collapse.

6.9. Findings

The triangulations between primary and secondary data, theoretical principles of securitization and regional security complex theories, policy frameworks, and institutional practice reveal that Islam has been securitized in the elite's speech acts and rhetoric that labeled and associated Muslims with violent extremism and changes in policies that have negatively affected the lives and interactions of Muslims, inter and intra-religious trust, and stability in the country. In Ethiopia, the securitization of Islam is a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single factor, with specific securitization actors' behavior, motives, and interests differing in particular contexts. While there are no occasions, research, or legal findings that prove Ethiopian Muslim's ambition for political power based on Islamic orientations, the Ethiopian government and Orthodox Church institutions, mainly 'Mahibere Kidusan, or the Association of Saints, have portrayed Muslims as a danger or existential threat to the Ethiopian state through the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism.'

Various contextual or facilitating factors have enabled the regime to securitize Islam, Muslim communities, and institutions. The main elements are the macro-level contradictions between the Christian kingdoms and Muslim Sultanates in the making of the Ethiopian state and national identity formation; contemporary socio-cultural transformation within the Muslim community especially following the liberalized socio-cultural environment of the early nineties; and the rise of Islamic political forces in Somalia, and an Islamic regime coming to power in Sudan. Islamic Movements in Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea in this critical geostrategic region threatened the interests of Western global powers and their regional allies in the Middle East and Africa. This forced Western countries to pick up and support the Tigran minority to control political and military power to serve the mission of containing Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa. This trend was the regional implication of the post 9/11 global security paradigm and discourse anchored in Islam as a threat to modern values such as democracy, human freedom, and liberty. Moreover, the unprecedented outbreak of Arab Spring in 2011 facilitated the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. These phenomena have been interpreted by the

Ethiopian government and functional actors of securitization in a way that has security implications for the Ethiopian state concerning its Muslim population.

The securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has changed the government's policy and approaches to the Muslim community. The security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' as a national security threat serves the regime as a framework to scrutinize the Muslim community mainly through coopting the religious community's institutions and organizational life at federal and local levels. Moreover, the securitization of Islam has enabled the government to design policies that compromise various components of religious liberty declared under the Ethiopian constitution. Worse of all, the securitization of Islam resulted in extraordinary interventions when the regime forced Muslims to adopt a foreign Islamic sect called "Ahbashism" in 2011 as a moderate version of Islam that all Ethiopian Muslims have to confess.

The ultimate goal of any securitization policy is to take special measures against the designated existential threat. The extraordinary measures need to secure acceptance from the majority, if not the entire general public or audience. Similarly, the Ethiopian government has justified its intentions and actions to take measures against Muslims, including imposing a foreign sect on the religious community, through the language of national security. While the indoctrination program ignited nationwide grievance among Muslims of all regions and ethnicity, the government claimed disciplinary power asserting that compulsory training of Muslims in a moderate version of Islam is a necessary evil to prevent the growing trends of radicalization among the religious community.

By their very nature, securitization policies compromise people's fundamental civil and political rights normally granted to them under legal and constitutional provisions. Securitization means enabling the system to transgress these provisions of rights and privileges that citizens are entitled to practice under political circumstances and constitutional considerations. The malpractices of violating constitutional norms by the government are often justified as a necessary evil to ensure national security. As a result, they always produce dissidents due to the violations of fundamental human rights. Likewise, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia via the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism' and ensuing repressive policies towards the religious society have produced counter-securitization dissident voices and strategies. Muslim communities have consistently contested the government's notion of 'Islamic extremism' and ensuing justifications of intrusions into the religious community's internal affairs and institutional life.

However, the Ethiopian experiences of securitization of Islam do not precisely fit with the theoretical patterns and principles of securitization as presented by Copenhagen School's securitization theory for the following reasons. First and foremost, the relations or communications between the securitization actor and the audience have no significance in the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. According to securitization theory, securitization is mainly the matter of utterance or speech acts of a securitization agent that aims to create public fear by presenting the hazardous elements of subjects of securitization as an existential threat to designated referent objects or uncompromising cherished values. The ultimate end of such threat framing and informing the public is to convince a significant portion of the audience or the general public that the issue is a fundamental security matter and that securitizing agents should be allowed to employ extraordinary measures or act without considering normal legal and political circumstances.

However, the Ethiopian case of securitization of Islam demonstrates that securitization in the forms of speech acts is primarily a post-securitization phenomenon, which means that speech acts are done after the policy changes have already been introduced. Extraordinary measures have been introduced without creating security inter-subjectivities among the general public. Public speech acts were/have mostly been made to suppress counter-securitization activities, narratives, and strategies of Muslims against the government's securitized policies towards the religious community. Thus, it is arguable that despite constitutional values and legal frameworks that contradict securitization policies, securitization actors in non-democratic political cultures do not need the audience’s involvement or approval for the success of securitization policies.

The second important point of theoretical departure is regarding the issue of evaluation of securitization. According to securitization theory, securitization is said to be successful if the securitizing agent obtains support from the greater section of the general public in its implementation of extraordinary politics. Unlike this theoretical conviction of securitization theory, the audience has had an irrelevant role in the securitization process in Ethiopia. In other words, the regime and state institutions have not considered the public's reaction to its securitizing narratives to take extraordinary measures against what it labeled as the existential threat. According to securitization theory, public approval or acceptance of a particular issue as a security matter serves as a standard to evaluate whether the problem is securitized and whether it deserves extraordinary means.

However, this study demonstrates that in a system characterized by rule by law, and not the rule of law, the relation between the regime and audiences is inconsequential for the government to take extraordinary measures against the securitized issue. Therefore, one of the theoretical contributions made by this study is that in the case of authoritarian political cultures, securitization should be measured in terms of the changes in security policies and extraordinary actions as indices of the securitization process and ends rather than as a mere consideration of the audience's approval of the elite's securitization. This follows that the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia, in the context of CHS securitization theory was not successful given the fact that the audience's role in the securitization's agent's policy formulations and implementations has been one-way communication without creating grassroots and security subjectivities among the Ethiopian general public. Partly as an attempt to contribute to theoretical debates around securitization theory, the findings in this study reveal that evaluating the degree and success of securitization policies and activities based on their end, i.e., extraordinary measures than an exclusive consideration of the role of the audience helps to avoid theoretical ethnocentrism and develop a more comprehensive analytical tool for security studies. Thus, according to the theoretical claims of securitization theory, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia failed, as demonstrated by the country-wide public discontent with the securitization policies.

The findings of this study depart from securitization theory regarding the evaluation of the success of securitization. This study advances the idea that securitization should be evaluated in extraordinary approaches that generate dissident voices rather than conversations between securitization actors and audiences. In this regard, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has successfully enabled the design of practical policies that negatively affect the life and relations of Muslims as individuals and as a religious community.

The third theoretical nonconformity found by this study reveals is with regard to the sequential orders and securitization procedures. According to securitization theory, securitization is primarily a "speech act" or labeling by the securitizing actor that aims to bring changes in the societal mood of thinking about specific subjects or development. The difference in societal outlooks progressively leads the general public to develop the common perception that the issue (radicalization among Muslims) poses an imminent threat to the referent object (Ethiopian state in this case). For all these purposes, the securitizing actor utilizes its bureaucratic and institutional advantages and power to create an irrational fear about the threatening aspects of the designated subject of securitization. The securitizing actor also plots violent incidences, including attacks on public institutions and circulating security discourses by state-run media to convince the broader public that the subject of securitization poses a real threat. The purpose is to cultivate inter-subjective agreements so that a significant part of the general public agrees on the subject's threat and supports the government's extraordinary measures. At this juncture, the securitization process is said to culminate with the complete transformation of the issue from the realm of everyday politics to security matters that can only be dealt with through emergency politics. Now the public will not question the actor's adaptation of new security policies and regulations, the modification of the existing ones, and the use of extraordinary means to deal with the issue at hand.

However, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia does not resemble the securitization process framed by the securitization theory. According to securitization theory, securitization starts with speech acts or labeling the subjects of securitization (Islam and Muslims in this context) as an existential threat. The speech acts followed by efforts to convince the general public to support the security discourse, i.e., Islamic extremism as an imminent danger to the Ethiopian state and its values. Finally, the securitizing actor takes extraordinary measures against the subjects of securitization that can be justified by national security and cannot be questioned by the public. Ethiopian securitization actors, however, did not follow these theoretical procedures in framing 'Islamic extremism' as a national security threat to take extraordinary policies. The regime mainly did not produce security discourses that the people agreed to and supported. The government introduced policy changes and altered its approaches toward Muslims without the audience’s approval. The regime's attitude towards Muslims changed in the mid-1990s shortly after the introduction of more liberalized policies after 1991. Only changes in the regime's mode of thinking resulted in changes in policy directions and state institutional approaches towards Muslims without public rhetoric and efforts to create and spread irrational fear about Islam and Muslims among the general public. In other words, the security discourse of 'Islamic fundamentalism' only appeared in government circles, not in the public sphere, resulting in numerous policy changes without public support or audience involvement in the process. Although the government had already developed securitized views towards Muslims since 1995, there was neither elite public speech, nor media coverage that associated Islam and Muslims with violent extremism until 2011. The underground securitization operation of the government can be attributed to two unique contextual factors in Ethiopia. First, Ethiopian society is highly heterogeneous, with more than 60 million Muslims, threat manufacturing around a particular identity group (Islam) would be susceptible to generate resistance from a significant portion of the audience (Muslim). The second reason is the absence of a political culture of transparency where the elite do not communicate pertinent issues with the public. Despite its anti-democratic nature, securitization, by its very nature, needs a democratic environment where the communication between securitization actors and the broader audience is two-way and smoothly bounded by legitimacy and authority. In contrast to this conception, the securitization process in a non-democratic system follows the pattern that discounts the role of the audience in approving and supporting the government’s securitization policies.

In subjective political cultures like Ethiopia, only changes in the elite's mode of thinking produce securitization policies and extraordinary institutional practices against the subjects of securitization without the general public's approval. Political culture is said to be subjective when the citizens are aware of the system's inputs and have no role in the outcomes. In this context, security is only what the regime's elite perceive as an existential threat, not what the public at large perceives or believes.

Fourthly, this study reveals that securitization of identity in the context of a multicultural and multi-religious society, particularly in a condition where the state and government's institutions are not loyal to the public, does not serve the very purpose of ensuring the public good or security, but serves the opposite by increasing people's suspicion of the state and its institutions. Instead of state institutions and security apparatus, the identity group that is subject to securitization policies (Muslims in this context) is obliged to rely on their in-group organization to secure and thrive in their personal and group ambitions. In this light, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has created not only a societal security dilemma among Muslims and, thereby, Oromos, which constitute the majority of the Ethiopian population, but also a synergetic mobilization of religious and ethnic groups against the state and its institutions. Muslims and Oromos' anti-regime successful resistance movements and mobilization, particularly from 2011 to 2020, have been interpreted by other religious communities, mainly Amharas and Orthodox Christians, that the former may pose challenges to their identity. Meanwhile, these two major fault lines have been broadened by the development of an antagonistic conception of each other that resulted in several violent and bloody intercommunal conflicts throughout the country, mainly in the period between 2017 and 2021. Thus, the Ethiopian regime's securitization approaches to ethno-religious identities and their grievances have not brought peace and stability to the country, although the former adopted extraordinary mechanisms to deter what it perceived as extremist elements. Instead, the excessive use of force to suppress identity groups incurred the destabilization of the Ethiopian state, even threatening the future of the country. Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is mainly part of the minority regime's outside-in foreign policy and security approaches to manipulate the post-9/11's security formation in the western world by presenting itself as an ally in the so-called 'War on Terror.' However, the securitization policies and ensuing repression of Muslims and related identity groups in the country have destabilized the state due to identity groups' counter-mobilizations against the state and its institutions. From this, it is arguable that the primary security concern, policies, and practice should be domestic sociopolitical realities rather than mere international collaborations. The ultimate security of the state should be defined and emanate from its citizens' security.

Conclusions

This chapter has scrutinized counter securitization strategies of dissents of securitization of Islam, the articulation of national security threats around Islam through the security discourse of 'Islamic extremism,′ views of other religious communities and their agencies, and the overall outcomes of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The securitization of religious and ethnic identities to suppress the quest for civil rights by religious communities and ethnic affiliates has led to the destabilization of the Ethiopian state. The securitization of Islam has generated anti-securitization agent (government) reactions with grave horizontal or inter and intra-societal implications. While the anti-regime reactions and struggles have resulted in political transformation and regime change, inter-religious and ethnic violence that has been in the background of securitization politics continues to ravage the country, which has appeared to be the most fragile state in Africa. Counter-securitization strategies expanded into ethnic strife that put the survival of the Ethiopian state in its present form into question.

While domestic political realities and social contexts should be the primary considerations of security articulation, policies, and practices, the Ethiopian government's securitization of Islam driven by external actors' geopolitical perception and interests as a foreign policy instrument has cost Ethiopia the breaking of its social fabric. The post-9/11 security understanding in the Western world has contributed to the securitization of Islam by the Ethiopian regime mainly to gain diplomatic, financial, and material support from Western governments. Similarly, it created a fertile ground for the administration to suppress religious and ethnic grievances within the country. The securitizing rhetoric of the Ethiopian regime around Islam has been justified by the logic of protecting the national security, peace, constitutional order, and values against the imminent menace of 'Islamic extremism.’

However, the practical realities on the ground have witnessed that the securitization of Islam and ensuing repressions against Muslims neither ensured national security, nor brought peace and stability to the country but generated grave resentment, resistance, and counter-securitization movements that overthrew the Ethiopian authoritarian minority regime in 2018. The US government has supported the minority regime for its commitment to scrutinizing Muslim populations in Ethiopia and potential Islamist political forces in the Horn of Africa. Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds and localities have mainly mobilized against the Ethiopian regime's securitization policies since 2011. Today, Ethiopia is swamped by instabilities and political crises that have roots in religious and ethnic grievances and contradictions between the Ethiopian state and the Muslim community.

Ethiopia is a multi-religious and ethnically diverse country with a high level of identity and cultural sensitivity. Ethnicity and religion are inextricably linked in the country. Although Ethiopian formal politics have been based on ethnic federalism that recognizes and appreciates ethnicity as a means of political mobilization, religion has undisputable political ramifications anchored in historical controversies among religious groups to forge the state according to their worldviews. Ethiopia has appeared as one of the most fragile countries due to its ongoing deep political crisis. The instabilities in the country are rooted in the religious and ethnic fault lines of Ethiopian society that have contributed to contentions in defining national identity. The domestic controversies among multiple identity groups are compounded by the Ethiopia’s location in one of the most geostrategic regions of the world. Significantly, the post-9/11 global security perceptions and contexts amplified the controversies between the state and the Muslim community and between different ethnic and religious groups.

The country's ethnic federal system has created ethnic and territorial administrative units that reflect religious landscapes. While religious and ethnic rivalries for power and resources were the hallmark of Ethiopia's state formation process in history, there has never been a group of dissent that compromised the country's national and geographic integrity to alien or external forces. Against this fact, nowadays, Ethiopia has suffered from political crisis and state fragility rooted in contradictory visions of groups who identified themselves along ethnic and religious fault lines. A country known for never bending its knee to European colonial powers has been shattered by inter-communal hatred and violence, which are the spin-offs of colonialism in most African countries.

The country's deepening of disputes has attracted the attention of external actors, who have often evaluated the country's dilemma in light of the post-September 11 global/Western security environment. Although Ethiopian domestic politics celebrated ethnicity and denigrated the role of religion in formal politics, the post-9/11 international security understanding in the Western world and their geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa resulted in the translation of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. They served as a flashpoint for religious and ethnic consideration of external actors' approach to Ethiopia and its domestic trends. Thus, Ethiopia's politics of ethnic federalism, inter-ethnic conflict, and communal violence have equally been explained by religious factors, especially regarding the nature of relations and interactions between actors in domestic politics and regional and global external actors. Centuries' old theocratic politics, the memory of marginalization, the resurgence of religious politics under Abiy Ahmed's government, and its tendencies to suppress ethnoreligious grievances in a profoundly divided society may expose the country to external intervention and manipulation, and finally to balkanization.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

According to securitization theory, securitization is primarily conducted through speech acts to convince the broader audience that the actor's designated existential threat poses an imminent danger to cherished societal values. The process is facilitated and supported by self-generated security discourses and practices created by intersubjective agreements between securitizing elites and a significant portion of the general public. The ultimate end of securitization is to legitimize the actor's use of extraordinary measures against the subjects of securitization to address imminent security concerns.

Despite similarities in totality, the trend of securitization in Ethiopia demonstrates departures from that of the securitization process outlined by securitization theory as presented by the Copenhagen School. The first and foremost difference is the pattern of relations and communication between securitization agent and audience. Securitization of Islam as a phenomenon of changes in the mood of thinking among closed government circles has appeared in Ethiopia's security discourse since 1995. However, it never appeared in public speeches or sermons that presented Islamic extremism as a national security threat until 2011. The regime's approaches and policies toward Muslims were securitized without public discourse and attempted to create a general understanding and perception that 'Islamic extremism' is a national security threat. This contradicts securitization theory's claim that securitization actors need the general public's approval to employ extra-judicial measures.

The Ethiopian minority regime has been the primary actor in the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia for the last three decades. However, external and domestic functional actors facilitated the government's securitization process. Domestically, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church institution called *Mahibere Kidusan* contributed to the securitization of Islam through various means, while externally joint US-Israeli intellectuals and agencies have directly or indirectly influenced the government's policies towards the Muslim community. However, as outlined above, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has been undertaken without supportive security discourse that secured some level of consensus among the Ethiopian public and satisfied the parameters of securitization as understood by securitization theory. In other words, the role of the audience to approve the securitizing claims of the elite is irrelevant. Only shifts in the elite's attitude towards Muslims transferred to Islam and Muslim activities, a security matter that the former has dealt with through extraordinary means the cost of which is the life of Muslims and thriving of Islam in Ethiopia. The changes in the regime's policies toward Muslims in 1995 without securitization rhetoric and informing the public attributed to Ethiopia's general authoritarian political culture. Most of the time, securitization claims were made as a response or to suppress dissident voices generated by changes in policies towards the religious community and to buy legitimacy from powerful global actors, mainly the US and EU countries who have established security partnerships with the Ethiopian regime to curtail Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa. Thus, this study's addition to the theoretical debates of securitization theory is that in non-democratic political cultures, where legitimacy is not a matter of regimes' concern, the measure of securitization better considers the parallel changes in securitizing actor's attitudes and changes in policy orientations and institutional practices implementations without considering the public's role in the process. Thus, securitization, in this case, is the transfer of an issue from everyday politics to security politics through changes in policy and security practices towards the subject of securitization because non-democratic actors behave extraordinarily without transparency or accountability for their actions. The referent objects that both securitizing and functional actors have reiterated in their securitization rhetoric threatened by the existential threat of 'Islamic extremism' include national or state security, secularism, and constitutional political order as cherished values of the Ethiopian state.

As indicated in chapter two, one of the major criticisms against securitization theory is its overemphasis on speech acts and the little attention it pays to the contexts in which securitizing speech acts are conducted. Partly to fill this gap, this study examined the domestic and geopolitical contexts that the Ethiopian regime and other functional actors have utilized to securitize Islam and the Ethiopian Muslim community. Accordingly, the securitizations of Islam in Ethiopia, in its various forms, via the security discourses of 'Islamic Extremism,' have been conducted in different domestic, regional, and global contextual factors in different periods. Domestically, the opening of socio-cultural and political spaces for the religious community due to the 1991 political transformation resulted in a resurgence of religious observance and activities despite the historical marginalization of Muslims in the country. However, the increasing religious observance and revivalism among Muslims was interpreted or viewed by the government and other religious institutions as a potential source of political mobilization that would challenge national security and other religious and cultural communities, mainly Orthodox Christians who previously enjoyed the status of hegemony.

Moreover, different securitization agents have excessively manipulated violent incidents from inter-ethnic conflicts in various Ethiopia to link Muslims to religiously motivated violent behavior. Regionally, the rise of Islamist political forces in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Sudan in 1995, Somalia in 1995-2006, and the potential in Eritrea have been interpreted as if such developments have implications for Ethiopian national security vis-a-vis the activities of Ethiopian Muslims. Globally, the post 9/11 security formations and discourses around Islam and Islamic movements, the global 'War on Terror,′ and the events of the Arab spring in 2011 have been implicated in articulating the national security threat concerning Ethiopian Muslims. The Ethiopian government has expressed its security concerns that 'Islamic extremism’ is a long-term national security threat to the Ethiopian state and its values by associating the developments mentioned above with Ethiopian Muslims. However, the government and judicial institutions have presented no empirical facts based on objective assessments, research, and tangible shreds of evidence to prove Muslims planned violent activities that aimed to destroy the constitutional order and convert the state into an Islamic state. Many researchers, local and international human rights organizations, and civil rights activists have condemned the government's unnecessary politicization and securitization of the religious community's social and spiritual activities.

One of the research questions that this study addressed is the measure and degree of securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. The success and failures of securitization projects, according to securitization theory, are measured through the degree of intersubjective agreements that the securitizing actors can generate among the general public or the audiences that the subject of securitization has elements that can pose an existential threat at any time, if not addressed soon. Therefore, the question in this study is to what extent the Ethiopian general public has been convinced that 'Islamic extremism' is an existential threat to Ethiopian national security and the values of Ethiopians.

For securitization theorists, although the ultimate aim of securitization speech acts and ensuing policy institutional changes is to adopt extraordinary means to deal with the designated existential threats, the public's agreement serves as the standard to measure the success and failure of the securitization process. The findings of this study depart from the measure of securitization in terms of the audience's approval. Instead, the study discovers that the securitization standards in non-democratic political systems should be based on the elite's extraordinary steps against the designated existential threats. As revealed by the findings of this study, securitizing actors might not be interested in discussing or disclosing to the public the issues that they are going to deal with extraordinarily. Thus, it is better to evaluate securitization in the contexts of subjective political culture in terms of extraordinary measures towards the perceived existential threat rather than through a mere approval of the audience. A possible challenge to the idea that securitization should be evaluated in terms of extraordinary measures, changes in policy direction, and aggressive security practices towards the subjects of securitization or designated existential threats might be the absence of public/mass/audience involvement in politics and decision making, extraordinary politics or repressions are the essences of the authoritarian political system that cannot be considered as abnormal politics. However, this view completely ignores that the very purpose of security analysis that securitization theory strives to build and develop is a more comprehensive human center security approach. By its very nature, securitization is anti-democratic and aims to hide oppressions that are justified by national or state security. Thus, to entirely rely on the audience's approval to evaluate the success of securitization projects and process is to ignore the sufferings of dissidents of securitization and its impact on democratization. If we consider the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia through a security framework and discourse of 'Islamic extremism’ in securitization theory, the regime's securitization efforts have failed, as its security narratives have been objected to by a sizable percentage of the general population, regardless of religious affiliations. To make the government's claim of 'Islamic extremism' as an existential threat to the state and its people credible, Muslims (who make up more than half of Ethiopia's 120 million people) must have threatened and agreed to the regime's security articulations regarding Islam or developments within the religious community.

At this juncture, this study argues that the lack of public support and legitimate security discourse should not measure the securitization process in the autocratic political system as it prevents the analysis from comprehending the consequences of the securitization policies. Instead, the voices of those affected by securitization actors' use of extraordinary means should serve as a measure of securitization in non-democratic political systems. In other words, considering only the audience's reactions to evaluate the condition of securitization incurs the cost of oversimplifying complex phenomena. In this consideration, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has been carried out successfully as it resulted in changes in the regime's policy orientations towards the religious community that created security dilemmas among Muslims as individual and collective beings.

Although securitization theory relies on the audience's approval to evaluate the success of the securitization process, it also provides a framework to analyze the outcome of securitization in terms of dissidents created by actors' extraordinary approaches toward the subjects of securitization. The consequences of securitization can be evaluated through its effects, particularly in terms of the security dilemma that the securitization policies created against issues of securitization in the name of securing the national security of the state or other referent objects (Buzan, 1983). In this light, this study evaluates the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia in terms of policy changes and security practices that the securitizing actor or the government has introduced to scrutinize the life and activities of Muslims and their institutional life. Thus, the resistance of Muslim communities that disputed the government's narrative of 'Islamic extremism’ and dissident voices produced by repressive policies and actions of the government are significant indices of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia. As securitization is a way to deal with things undemocratically and unconstitutionally, it is always accompanied by grave violations of human rights and civil liberties, which results in dissenting voices denouncing the policies and actions of securitizing actors. In this regard, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia has been encountered by Muslim agents grieving from the regime's violation of human rights, religious freedom, and institutional autonomy. However, the veracity of contradicting claims between securitizing actors and their subjects of securitization depends on their relative power, which makes securitization power-oriented relations.

Although the securitization actor has the advantages of power and state institutions to frame and articulate security issues, its narratives of security are not without alternative interpretations by different public sections. Similarly, the Ethiopian government has institutional advantages in formulating threats and disseminating irrational fear among the public. However, the state's securitization narratives have been subject to different interpretations by different sections of the Ethiopian public or the society. For this reason, this study tried to discover alternative understandings and reinterpretations of the government's threat articulation and narratives of 'Islamic extremism' as an existential threat to the state and its orders by different religious communities. The Muslim community's reactions to the government's narratives of 'Islamic extremism' and ensuing policy changes and security practices have been entirely adverse, as expressed by various means, including public outrage. Unlike the government's expectations to spread and administer fear and divisions among the Muslim community by using the terms of extremism and fundamentalism, the religious community has developed a victim mentality and mobilized against the regime, if not the state and its institutions. The government's repressive policies serve Muslims as a base of mobilization towards unity and solidarity even by putting aside their traditional differences in interpretation of religious dogmas and their local implementations. In addition to Muslims, the government's securitization narratives and discourse of 'Islamic extremism' were invalidated by non-Muslim agencies, including Christian activists, civil society organizations, and international advocacy groups, which recounted the acts of the regime as a violation of civil and religious liberties of the Muslim community. Moreover, many studies and interview results show that the government's securitization discourse of 'Islamic extremism' and ensuing activities against Muslim communities have not secured the necessary levels of acceptance from the majority of other religious communities. Overall, almost all critics, from international rights advocacy organizations to local opposition parties, media outlets (non-government and international Media), diaspora communities and activists, significant portions of other religious communities, and almost all scholarship works have viewed and presented the government's discourses and policies as civil rights infringements against Muslims.

The security dilemmas created by excessive securitizing policies and activities that the securitizing actors designed under cover of safeguarding the state's national security help measure the impacts of securitization. Securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is not limited to security narratives that link Islam and terrorism but result in policy changes and security practices that negatively impact the life of Muslims both as individuals and at the community level. Moreover, the securitization of Muslims and their ethnic affiliates have turbulent effects on the country's peace and security and efforts toward democratic state-building. This is due to resentment, injured party mentality, and feelings of exclusion among most Ethiopians from the state and its national security understandings.

As discussed in chapter six, the inter-ethnic and religious conflicts that have been seen in Ethiopia for the past three decades in general and the past three years, in particular, in one or another way, are the byproducts of the securitization of Islam by the minority authoritarian regime that has dominated Ethiopian politics for the last three decades. In the absence of inclusive notions and understandings of national security that are equally valuable to all citizens and segments of the society, securitization narratives along particular identity formation will replace people's loyalty to the state and its institutions with civil identity based on an informal association of people by religious and ethnic bonds. Moreover, the regime's national security articulations and discourses vis-a-vis particular identity groups resulted in suspicious attitudes among plural Ethiopian society and an identity crisis among Muslims that emanates from the conflicts between their national identity and religious affiliations.

Feelings of exclusion, the state's otherization, and labeling as a source of insecurity among Muslims have led the later to conduct multi-dimensional resistance against the government and unfavorable notions of the state to the religious community and its identity. The battle had taken various forms, including mosque protests, large-scale peaceful protests and demonstrations, and ethnic mobilization that have mounted into an interethnic conflict that imperiled the country's national peace and enduring existence. The political crisis that the government has been facing is to a large extent the byproduct of centuries-old contradictions between the Ethiopian state and the Muslim community. In other words, the past attempts of successive Christian emperors to make Ethiopia a nation-state characterized by Christianity as a national identity have reproduced contradictions between the state and the Muslim community today. A lot of research, surveys and conflict analysis reveals that the Muslims' historical grievances of marginalization and the present-day intervention of the government in internal religious matters form the base of confrontations between the state and various ethnic-religious groups in the country. The sympathies and intersections between ethnic and religious identities between ethnic Oromo and Muslims and ethnic Amhara and Christians in recent years' resistance politics and struggles against the minority authoritarian regime is for the most part an extension of Muslims’ counter-securitization narratives and strategies. Such synergies between ethnic and religious identities have widened societal polarization and resulted in widespread inter-communal violent conflicts and national instabilities evidenced in the post-transformation periods (2018-2021).

In sum, the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia is a multi-faceted phenomenon produced by the interplay of several factors and actors' interests operating in multiple contexts. Historically, Islam has been viewed as a national security threat, and the country's security culture is based on a 'siege mentality.' The perception is that Ethiopia is an island of Christianity or a Christian state in the sea of Islam, as if Ethiopia has no Muslim society. The sea in this context refers to the Muslim communities and countries in the Horn of Africa that share boundaries with Ethiopia, mainly Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. The historical perception is a source of tensions between the state and the Muslim community in contemporary Ethiopia. The post-9/11 security formation in the West based on the perceived threat of Islam to the values of democracy, human rights, secularism, and modernization has reinforced domestic conditions in Ethiopia. The regime and some other functional actors utilize the global context to adopt policies and different approaches toward Islam and Muslim communities in Ethiopia. Although some viewed the government's repressive policies toward Muslims as part of a general trend of dictatorship not unique to Muslims, other religious communities have never faced the same challenges and harassment of dehumanizing labels like 'extremism' or 'terrorism' like that of Muslims.

Moreover, no foreign entities have been involved in the internal religious matters of other religious communities. However, the regime forced Muslims to undertake compulsory training called '*Ahbashism*' by joint Israeli and American agencies under a counter-radicalization strategy. National security justified the regimes' activities toward Muslims. Securitization is all about putting national security above all other political and social considerations. The government has never presented or discussed religious communities other than Muslims regarding national security threats. The ultimate effects of the securitization of Islam in Ethiopia were the deprivation of Ethiopian Muslims' independent socio-cultural representation and agency at the federal level, the infringement of civil liberties, and national discord resulting from counter-securitization movements.

Potential Areas of Further Study

Scientific research should provoke questions for further studies on the topic. Likewise, this study discovers the following points of consideration for future studies.

1. Securitization as an extreme version of politicization is integral to third-world politics. Although securitization is an antithesis of democracy, it needs democratic political culture for its proper implementation. It relies on mutual trust and communication between the government and the public as the audience of the securitization process. However, securitization in non-democratic or authoritarian political traditions excludes the social and political challenges and has been undertheorized and needs to be theorized about to complement securitization theory's aspiration to be a yardstick analytical tool of security study.

2. A sort of de-securitization narratives and activities has been reflected in the government's approach to the Muslim community following the political reforms in 2019. In this regard, the government released members of the Muslim Solution Finding Committee who were accused and charged with plotting 'Islamic terrorism' or 'Jihad' and establishing an Islamic state in Ethiopia. In this regard, Tilahun, one of the key informants in the Ministry of Peace working as a Director of the Conflict Resolution Department, said that the government did not refrain from categorizing and labeling Muslims as "Wahabis" or 'Sufis' or extremist or moderate version of Islam. This, according to the director, led to "unnecessary controversies between the government and the Muslim community." Why and how? Such attempts of de-securitization have emerged and need to be examined

3. While the government has tended to reduce the use of de-humanizing terms or labels of Muslims in the national security scene, such as 'extremists or jihadists,' and has shown a willingness to resolve the problems of the Muslim population along with political reforms that the former has initiated since 2019, Muslims have shown semi-sectarian divisions. Although Muslims maintained unity during anti-government protests, they couldn't retain such unity when the government showed interest to address Muslim questions politically. This division, however, is at the leadership level, especially among the leaders and *Ulema* of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), not among ordinary members of the faith community. This deserves further scholastic investigation, particularly vis-à-vis the previous developments between the Muslim community and the government.

4. While securitization theory provides an analytical framework to study security or the process of threat framing through the constructivist knowledge claims of intersubjective agreement between securitizing actors and audiences of securitization, de-securitization has been understudied. The process of de-securitization likewise needs a comprehensive framework. De-securitization study means how and what strategies de-securitization actors use to neutralize society from the irrational fears they previously propagated while securitizing the subject of securitization.

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Interview Anis 03/02/2020.

Interview Adissu 03/02/2019.

Interview Tamagn 05/02/2020.

Interview Abdulfetah 08/02/2020.

Interview Zinet 08/02/2020

Interview Fatuma 09/02/2020.

Interview Abbas12/02/2020.

Interview Tilahun12/02/2020.

Interview Fatima 15/02/2020.

Interview Reyan 13/03/2020.

Interview Izedin 14/03/2020.

Interview Abel 16/02/2020.

Informal conversation Fana16/02/2017.

Interview Hassen 16/02/2020.

Interview Bekele 17/03/2020.

Interview Rehmet 20/02/2020.

Interview Molla 22/03/2020.

Interview Moges 23/003/2020.

Interview Government official 05/04/2020.

Informal conversation Mesfin 09/04/2020.

Interview Kedir 10/04/2020.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

The following questions were asked to different entities including government authorities in security sectors, religious leaders, ordinary people, academicians, and members of other religious communities in efforts to collect relevant data for this study.

1. What do you think about the sources of conflicts between the Ethiopian government Muslim communities?

2. What is the institutional understanding of religious extremism?

3. Do you think, Islamic extremism is a threat in Ethiopia, If yes how?

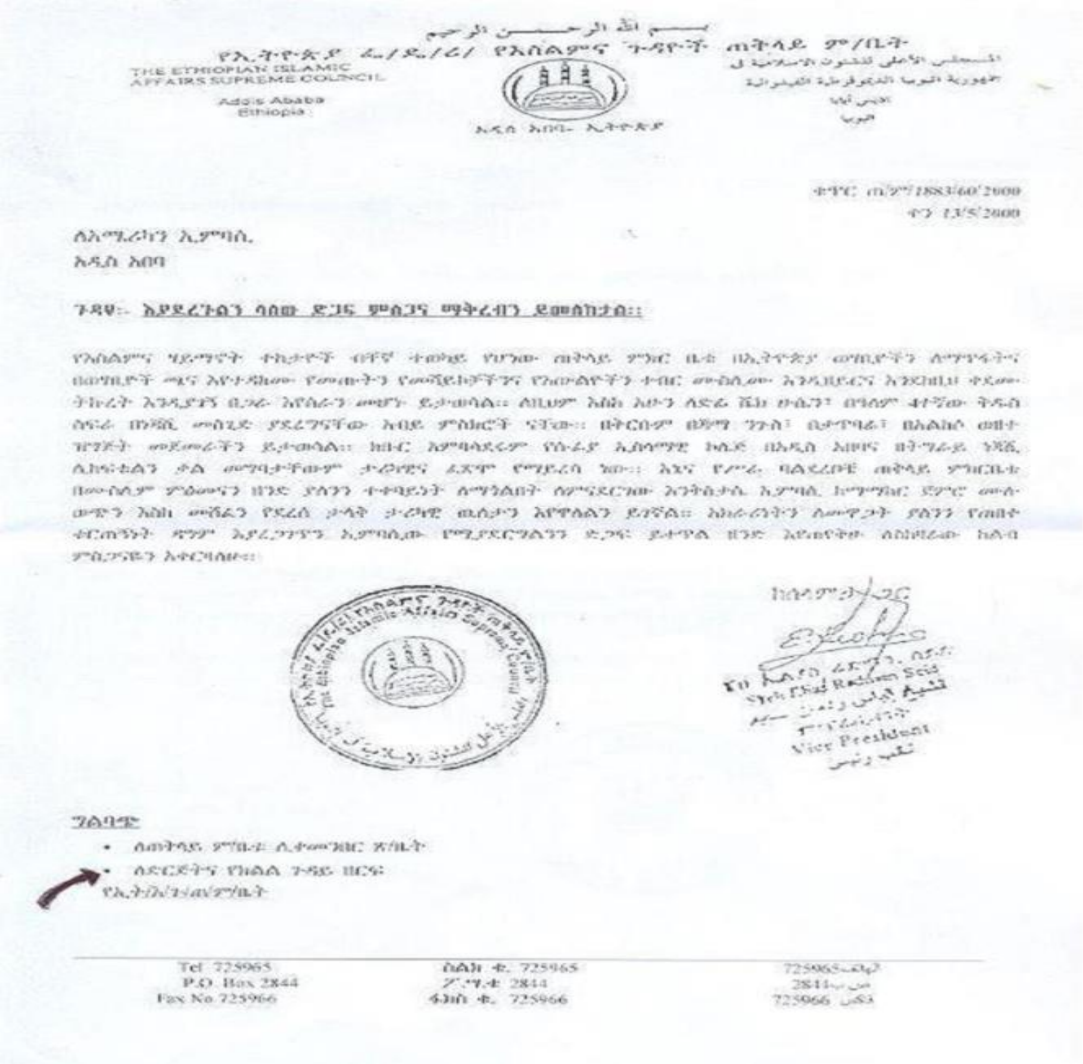
4. Did the government conduct surveys that support its articulation of ‘Islamic extremism as a national security threat to Ethiopia?

5. What do you think about Muslim community protests and demonstrations in the period between 2011 and 2015? Were these questions legitimate and addressed by the government?

6. Do you agree with the government that there is “Islamic extremism” in Ethiopia? If yes, what are the manifestations of extremism for you?

7. Are there practical incidents where Islamic extremists had engaged in violent activities in Ethiopia?

8. Are there recorded Ethiopian Muslims who cooperated with “terrorist” organizations like Al-Shabab, Bokko Haram, Ansare-din, Al Qaeda to operate in Ethiopia?
9. How far the media is neutral in narrating the dispute between the Muslim community and the government?
10. How and to what extent do the people conform to the media? Why do they complain?
11. How the criminal investigation procedures and security practices have been handling Muslim prisoners who are charged with terrorism or extremism?
12. Are there legal grounds for the government to intervene in religious affairs in Ethiopia? If yes how?
13. What is the status of the relationship between the Majlis and the Muslim community?
14. What were the sources of contentions between the government and Muslims over the last ten years?
15. Do you think the government is neutral in religious affairs in Ethiopia? Is Mejilis a religious institution free from government influence?
16. Why do you think terrorist actions in recent times tend to be attached only to Muslims?
17. Are there religious grounds for extremism to appear in Islam?
18. What are the manifestations of Islamic extremism in Ethiopia? What roles the institution has played to address the problem?
19. Some complaints are heard as the Majlis has cooperated with the government in facilitating “Ahabash’s teaching” in Ethiopia. Is that true?
20. Is Majlis serving and representing the interests of the Muslim community?
21. Are there circumstances for religion to become a national security issue in Ethiopia? How
22. Are there circumstances for the government to interfere in religious affairs? If yes how?
23. What is religious extremism for you?
24. Which religious groups do you think have most exercised religious extremism in Ethiopia, how?
25. What roles have been played by the institution to handle conflicts between the Muslim community and the government over the last ten years?



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

የኢትዮጵያ ፌ/ዴ/ሪ/ የእስልምና ጉዳዮች ጠቅላይ ም/ቤት

THE ETHIOPIAN ISLAMIC
AFFAIRS SUPREME COUNCIL

Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

المجلس الأعلى للشئون الإسلامية ل
جمهورية اثيوبيا الديمقراطية الفيدرالية
اديس ابابا
اثيوبيا

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ከሰላምታ ጋር

Sheik Elias Redman Seid

Vice President

نائب رئيس

ግልባጭ
- ለጠቅላይ ምክር ቤቱ ሊቀመንበር ጽ/ቤት
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Tel 725965
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Fax No 725966

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“An amazing “Thank you” letter written to American Embassy in Adis Ababa by Elias Redma, Former vice president of Mejilis (Photo taken from the document “Ye Ethiopia Muslimoch yetgl Wullo Be internet, yetemeretu stuhufoch ,2012;271”)

42. Sheikh Ahmedin Abdullahi receving a book from an Israeli deligate

43. Hagai Elrich in 2008 in Addis Ababa

Ethiopian Muslims Online Struggle, June 2012

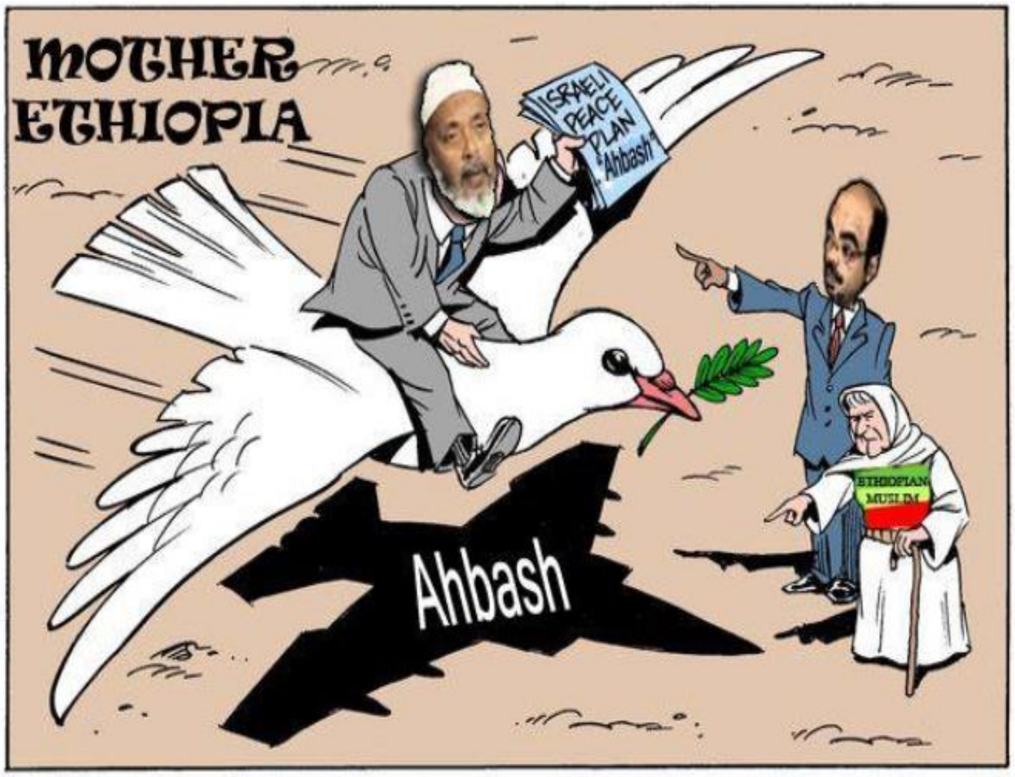
36. The two Arabs whom ETV called "Jihadists who came to fuel violence in Ethiopia": May 4/2012

Ethiopian Muslims Online Struggle, June 2012

29. Crowd of Muslims at Aweliya Mosque, February 23/2012

30. Crowds Chanting "Allahu Akbar"; Aweliya mosque, March 2/2012

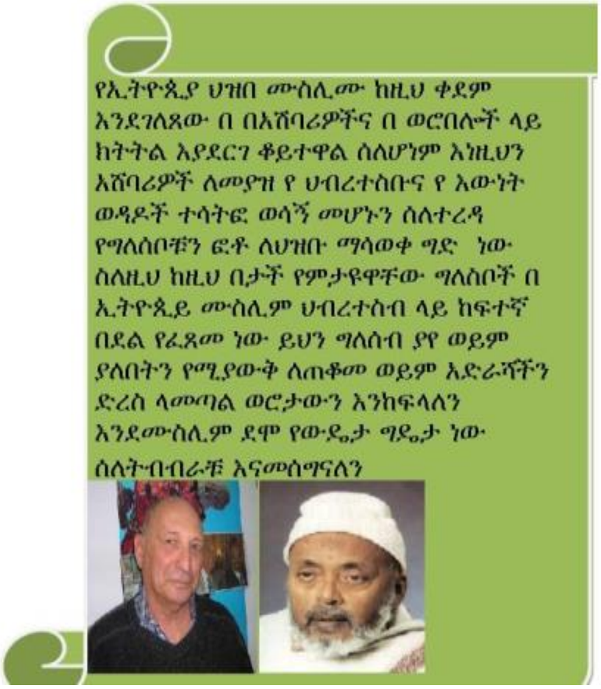
Ethiopian Muslims Online Struggle, June 2012


MOTHER ETHIOPIA
ISRAELI PEACE PLAN "Ahbash"
ETHIOPIAN MUSLIM
Ahbash

24. A cartoon to express "Ahbashism" is being sponsored by the state.

Ethiopian Muslims Online Struggle, June 2012

22. Poems for the struggle



የኢትዮጲያ ህዝበ ሙስሊሙ ከዚህ ቀደም
እንደገለጸው በ በአሸባሪዎችና በ ወሮበሎች ላይ
ክትትል እያደርገ ቆይተዋል ስለሆነም እነዚህን
አሸባሪዎች ለመያዝ የ ህብረተስቡና የ እውነት
ወዳዶች ተሳትፎ ወሳኝ መሆኑን ስለተረዳ
የግለሰቦቹን ፎቶ ለህዝቡ ማሳወቀ ግድ ነው
ስለዚህ ከዚህ በታች የምታዩዋቸው ግለስቦች በ
ኢትዮጲይ ሙስሊም ህብረተስብ ላይ ከፍተኛ
በደል የፈጸመ ነው ይህን ግለሰብ ያየ ወይም
ያለበትን የሚያውቅ ለጠቆመ ወይም አድራሻችን
ድረስ ላመጣል ወሮታውን እንከፍላለን
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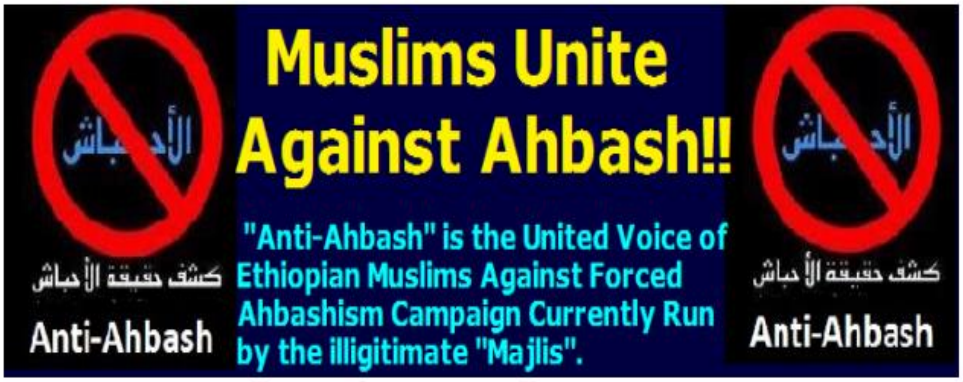
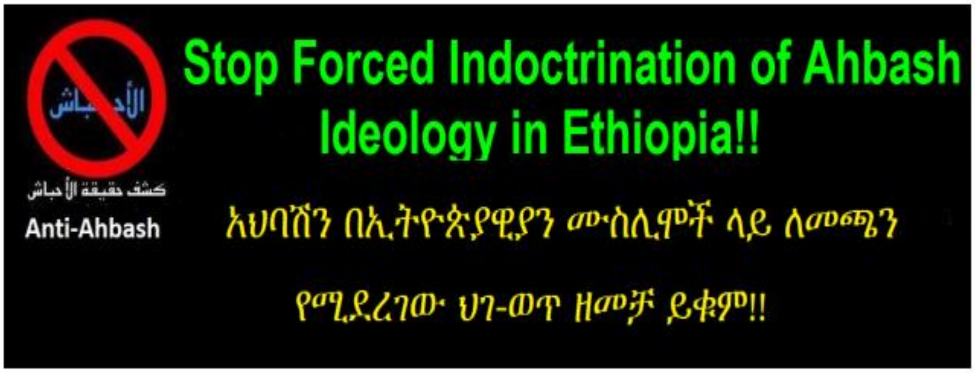
ስለትብብራቹ እናመሰግናለን

23. "Catch the two Criminals": an Ethiopian Muslim expressing his anger at Hagai Erlcih and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Harari on facebook.


الأحباش
كشف حقيقة الأحباش
Anti-Ahbash
Muslims Unite Against Ahbash!!
"Anti-Ahbash" is the United Voice of Ethiopian Muslims Against Forced Ahbashism Campaign Currently Run by the illigitimate "Majlis".
الأحباش
كشف حقيقة الأحباش
Anti-Ahbash


الأحباش
كشف حقيقة الأحباش
Anti-Ahbash
Stop Forced Indoctrination of Ahbash Ideology in Ethiopia!!
አህባሽን በኢትዮጵያዊያን ሙስሊሞች ላይ ለመጫን
የሚደረገው ህገ-ወጥ ዘመቻ ይቁም!!

1. **Some Cover photos (banners) Used by Anti-Ahbash Group**

Breaking The Silence: The Day Ahmedin Jebel, Ahmed Mustefa and Myself Were Kidnapped

Addis standard, July 4, 2018,

CURRICULUM VITAE

1. Education Information

Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science and International Relations, Istanbul Sabahhatin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey January 2018.

MA in Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University (2015 –July 2017) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Thesis Topic - "*Secularization of Islam in Ethiopia and* Muslims *quest for Institutional Autonomy*"

BA in Political Science and International Relations, Dire Dawa University 2011-2013 Senior Essay Topic - *"The problem of human trafficking and People Smuggling from Ethiopia to the Arab World: Policy implications"*

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Lecturer in Political Science and International Relations at Samara University in Ethiopia from January 2014 to presesnt.

3. Publications

Adem, J.M. (2018). Securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia, in Bayraklı, E., & Hafez, F. (Eds.). *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies* Routledge.

Adem, J. M. (2020). Blurred Bottom lines of Ethiopian Political Crisis from 2011 to 2020, Journal of International Affairs and Global Strategy, Vol.79, 2020

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Melek SARAL, (Political Science and IR, Istanbul S. Zaim University)

Prof. Dr. Ömer Çaha, (Political Science and IR, Istanbul S. Zaim University)