Ethiopia: Emergence and Positive Change in a Turbulent Geopolitical Context

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Abstract

Ethiopia is located at the heart of the Horn of Africa. Torn between its position within the Greater Middle East (Culcasi 2008, 128 and Fukuyama 2008, 206) from one side, and Sub Saharan Africa on the other, this East African state is landlocked in a region marked by intense and long-standing political strife and conflicts, and is directly exposed to regional insecurity and political volatility. Against this unstable background, successive regimes and governments in Addis Ababa have been continuously challenged with ensuring stability and prosperity in the context of a turbulent regional landscape. The end of the civil war in 1991 with the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1995) and then the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) following the country's first multi-party election in May 1995, marked a new phase in a centennial leadership transformational process. From a centralized feudal empire, to a communist military dictatorship that collapsed in face of rebel revolutionaries, later forming an umbrella revolutionary democratic organization--the EPRDF.

Ethiopia's current growth is not only a numerical miracle but it is visible on the ground. Remarkably recording high and sometimes double-digit growth rates for the past decade, the booming construction sector along with the agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors are the main drivers of this economy, boasting one of the highest growth rates across the globe. Yet, while Ethiopia's strategic thinking on its emergence and development is mainly focused on the country's internal flaws, that is to say its vulnerabilities, poverty and famine, it is now rapidly facing greater risks from regional turmoil with surrounding civil conflicts and the exacerbation of existing tensions due to the increased militarization of the region under 'anti-piracy' measures and now, with the war in Yemen.

Through this paper, we will use an anthropological and historical approach in the first part, in order to understand Ethiopia's modern state building process since the fall of Haile Selassie's empire to the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). We will also present some of the key initiatives and notions related to the country's democratic transition, specifically the centrality of identity politics in Ethiopia's modern nation-building and the concept of "democratic developmental state" coined by Meles Zenawi. Then, in the second section, we will underline the factors that have contributed to the federal arrangement under which the country is gradually and surely building its national identity, in order to reach national consensus around its growth and transformation agenda. Finally, we will showcase the modern developments in the country within its geopolitical context, taking into account Ethiopia's engagement within its regional and sub-regional environments.

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A sturdy spirit of independence, founded on a rich mystical heritage, characterizes Ethiopian national pride. Honored by U.S. President Barack Obama during his landmark visit in July 2015 as "the Birthplace of Humankind", Ethiopia's immense archaeological and natural wealth has undoubtedly, brought a lot to our understanding of the history of Humanity. Home to the oldest churches in the world, to the Beta Israel as one of the first Jewish communities living in the Horn of Africa, but also to the earliest tradition of Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula (Quirin 2010, Weil 2012), it is beneath its ancient soils that in 1974, paleoanthropologists discovered the most complete skeleton of a 3.2 million year old human ancestor named Lucy, the grandmother of Humanity. Yet, this natural fortress has been isolated from the international scene for most of the second half of the twentieth century, and was mainly pictured to the world through its internal crises, droughts and famines.

Nowadays, Ethiopia is increasingly portrayed as an 'East African miracle under construction'. It is progressing towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) faster than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa (African Economic Outlook 2015). This is a model of controlled development, where nothing is left unplanned. From the fight against poverty and famine, building solid infrastructure, to developing competitive social, economic and industrial environments, the entire country is working on the basis of a well prepared written-plan[1] that serves as the road map for its growth and transformation process.

This economy is on the rise. Exceptional growth rates spurred by a wave of privatization and robust foreign direct investment (FDI) flows have fueled rapid modernization through the past years (World Bank report 2015). With no significant extractive industry, this non-oil producing country has been able to attract foreign investments thanks to targeted macroeconomic and trade reforms, political stability and a great economic and social potential (Asiedu 2002) that are now showcased through advanced development projects, notably in infrastructure. Beside, its extensive and robustly-demonstrated engagements with the international community to maintain regional peace and stability, are prime reasons for in-depth geostrategic consideration (Lautze, Raven Roberts and Erikneh 2009, 8).

Ethiopia is located at the heart of the Horn of Africa. Torn between its position within the Greater Middle East (Culcasi 2008, 128 and Fukuyama 2008, 206) from one side, and Sub Saharan Africa on the other. This East African state is landlocked in a region marked by intense and long-standing political strife and conflicts, and is directly exposed to regional insecurity and political volatility. The current population of Ethiopia is more than 100 million people (UN estimates as of May, 2016) with 70 different languages and 200 spoken dialects (World Bank report 2015). It is the largest single market by population in East Africa and the second in the continent after Nigeria. In many ways, it is clearly a country of exceptions. It is rapidly resurfacing rapidly from years of poverty, famine and war, owing to a viable and sustainably growing economy based on a participatory democratic ethnic and religious pluralism.

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1. Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), drafted by the National Planning Commission, is an ambitious five-year growth plan providing recommendations to boost and sustain gross domestic growth through designated economy sectors. Now, the country is moving forward on the basis of its GTP II (2015-2020) that is aimed at maintaining and sustaining the recent rapid economic development in order to bring forth structural transformation of the economy.

Nevertheless, Ethiopia's regional context is characterized by high volatility, fuelled by past or ongoing conflicts that are intensely affected by the presence of external state and non-state actors. In fact, the latest civil wars in Sudan and Somalia, the lingering animosities between regional states escalating to border conflicts (Ethiopia-Eritrea 1998-2000, Djibouti-Eritrea 2008) and the suggested redistribution of shared regional resources have greatly contributed to the heightened instability and the risk of spillover of extremism and terrorism.

Against this unstable regional background, successive regimes and governments in Addis Ababa have been continuously challenged with ensuring stability, prosperity and regional integration in the context of a turbulent regional landscape. These negative circumstances are definitely hindering any meaningful attempts at establishing a dynamic regional integration but Ethiopia is skillfully navigating through its regional context and forge its way to position itself within the global value chain. In this sense, the end of the civil war in 1991 with the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and then the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), following the country's first multi-party election in May 1995, marked a new phase in a centennial leadership transformational process. From a centralized feudal empire, to a communist military dictatorship that collapsed in face of rebel revolutionaries that have formed an umbrella multi-ethnic democratic coalition--the EPRDF.

Since 1991, the country is steadily ensuring stability and increased prosperity prospects. Throughout the past decade, this laboratory of nations has been experiencing a smooth growth and development process, empirically proving that building political stability in a region prone to recurring natural and political disasters, is a function of the extent to which the government is able to provide democracy, social accountability and provide meaningful economic opportunities.

Through this paper, we will use an anthropological and historical approach in the first part, in order to understand Ethiopia's modern state building process since the fall of Haile Selassie's empire to the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). We will also present some of the key initiatives and notions related to the country's democratic transition, specifically the centrality of identity politics in Ethiopia's modern nation-building and the concept of "democratic developmental state" coined by Meles Zenawi. Then, in the second section, we will underline the factors that have contributed to the federal arrangement under which the country is gradually and surely building its national identity, in order to reach national consensus around its growth and transformation agenda. Finally, we will showcase the modern developments in the country within its geopolitical context, taking into account Ethiopia's engagement within its regional and sub-regional environments.

I. Common Struggle for a Democratic Developmental State and Identity Politics in Ethiopia's Modern State-Building

Ethiopia's key location, close to Bab El Mandab on the Red Sea, and its proximity to the African and Arab worlds, awakened the interest of colonial and modern powers during most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was with no surprise that the coronation of the last long-ruling emperor of Abyssinia, the Negusse Negest –King of Kings–, Haile Selassie I, has seized the attention of the international community at large, making it to the cover of the most renowned magazines abroad (Mosley 1964). Sitting on King Solomon's throne, the Negusse was the 225th King and emperor of an 800-year dynasty

tracing its lineage back to the biblical wise man and to the Queen of Sheba (Selassie 1976). His character and eloquence instantly turned him into a celebrity and captivated the world as over twelve nations sent envoys to his lavish coronation ceremony in November 1930, including the representatives of Britain and of the U.S. President Hoover, hence, reinforcing the country's well-established ancient reputation and its international stature.

The first constitution of the country, adopted in 1931, initiated a speedy opening and modernization process through the implementation of liberal monetary policies and the launch of modern infrastructure development projects. For instance, a new Ethiopian bank was created in the 1930s and the Ethiopian Airlines in 1945. Also, the University of Addis Ababa was founded in 1950. These great illustrations were undertaken as part of an overall development plan, inspired by a modern vision of progress, in which the cultural and natural specificities of this only independent nation in Africa were supposed to play a central role (Mosley 1964). Yet, despite the endorsement of these ambitious projects and the international legitimacy anchoring Selassie's power, plans for greater investments to improve the living-conditions of the pauperized and ruined peasantry were not necessarily favored. The modernization projects, as completed, led however to a greater centralization of power and further marginalization of the peasants (Markakis and Ayele 1986).

The imperial rule had survived through the early 20th century on its feudalist structure, benefitting mainly to itself and to the nobles around it, and this early widely-heralded revamp of the economy showed no space for inclusive policies towards development (Gudina 2004). Opponents to the monarchy were systematically executed, and growing revolts denounced preferential policies and exacerbated ethnic cleavages and tensions. For instance, one of the major rebellions taking place in the northern region of Wollo against Shewan domination, and their support to an Amhara lord in his claim to the throne between 1928 and 1930, resulted in political sanctions, massive lootings and confiscations of land and cattle from the northern population. This situation was even further aggravated by the rough climatic conditions leading to drought and famine, for which the imperial misrule provided no relief (Wolde-Mariam 1986, 106).

At the same time, growing frictions with Mussolini's Italy due to its colonialist aspirations in the horn of Africa escalated to reach tipping points (Strange 2013, 11-32). The so-called "Scramble for Africa" urged European powers to expand their hold on strategic areas and resources in the continent, especially given the potential of enhancing food production thanks to the continent's available resources, abundant arable lands and labor force (Bryceson 2001). Aiming at seizing this opportunity in the eastern part of Africa, Italy engaged almost half a million soldiers in its second offensive within the Ethiopian Empire. In 1935, the Italian troops bombed and succeeded in occupying the emblematic northern town of Adawa and a year later, the now- Eritrea was completely controlled. The dramatically aggressive invasion resulted in almost a million death and forced the emperor to exile for several years (1936-1941) but it has also extensively served as a rallying force for the rebellious movements around the resistance and liberation cause hence, temporarily diverting Ethiopians from the feudalist system's internal flaws.

During his famous appeal to the League of Nations in June, 1936, Selassie's call for international support against the violence and 'barbaric actions' of the Italian forces, won him local and global recognition but also the title of the Time magazine's Man of the Year. The gained interest and assistance from the British extensively helped in improving and modernizing the Ethiopian army and in salvaging the country from Mussolini's invasion (Sloane 2013, 185-204). Italy was then condemned to pay for $25 million of repairs,

-although local estimations of the needed amounts to rebuild the country were over ten times higher-, and Ethiopia with Eritrea were placed under trusteeship of England until the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement in 1944, formally reversing the effects from World War II on Ethiopia and literally acknowledging the country as a regional "ally" (Spencer 1984).

Following the London Conference in 1945 and the Paris Peace Conference, reiterating the complementarity of Eritrea within the Ethiopian territory, the United Nations General Assembly's recommendation 390 (November 17th, 1950) established the Ethiopian-Eritrean Federation. However, athough the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) demanded self-rule and auto-determination, their claims were later tuned out by the imperial forces when Eritrea was integrated into Ethiopia in 1962. This situation has led to a long-lasting insurrections from the Eritrean separatists and has depleted the country from the needed political cohesion in order to build a viable development path.

The short-lived stability and the gained maritime access through the Eritrean coasts near Bab el Mandeb, through which passes the Red Sea's maritime traffic bound for the Suez Canal, facilitated the revival and development of trade and the flourishing of national economy, mainly due to rising coffee exports. Nonetheless, despite these new hopes for honest reconsiderations of past imperial mismanagement, the revised constitution, adopted in 1955, had rather toughened-up the autocratic rule and maintained the ban on all political parties. A wide number of protests and violent insurgencies took place in the 1960s including the Amhara revolt in Gojjam, the 1963-1970 Oromo revolt, and other increased ethnic violence, particularly in the Somali province with the appearance of armed ethnic guerrilla movements such as the West Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) and the independentist front (ELM) in the north-eastern Eritrean province.

The aggravation of these inter-ethnic fightings coupled with government malfeasance created a crisis, principally with regards to the security of customary land tenure and ownership of grazing lands. This situation has also accentuated the acute vulnerability to famine risks of populations mainly living in dire conditions (Getnet 2009). The city of Koren in north Wollo was the site of a severe famine in 1966 that had gone almost entirely undocumented, although over 200,000 people had gruesomely perished from starvation (Mogues 1981, 12). This situation generated dramatic societal consequences as the state's perceived slowness in recognizing the humanitarian urgency during these drought-induced famines of the mid-1960s nourished further distrust from the affected population of the imperial maladministration and its devastating governance capacity (Getnet 2009).

Despite this deteriorating internal political environment, on the international front however, the country under Selassie's rule was one of the founding members of the non-aligned movement although it was nominally West-oriented and closely tied to the U.S. (Morderchai 1974). The U.S. communication base in Kagnew, on the Eritrean coast, was strategically important in the West-East confrontation and facilitated the development of the U.S. nuclear submarine activities in the Indian Ocean. In addition, at the height of the Cold War, Ethiopian soldiers have been active members of the UN peace keeping forces, most notably in Korea (6037 troops forming the Kagnew Battalion) and in the 1960s, by providing assistance to the Belgians during the crisis in Congo (Catlin 1993).

1. Ethiopian Revolution against the Feudal System and the Bloody Dictatorship of the Derg Regime

Up until the mid-1970s, Ethiopia received the largest portion of aid to Sub Saharan Africa. Yet, the state's mismanagement, principally due to feudal policies and preferential practices regarding taxes, rents, and debt payments, worsened the situation of a large portion of the population living in food stress and directly exposed to severe climate shocks (Markakis and Ayele 1986). Deadly episodes of ravaging famine and harsh climate conditions were widely silenced and left unassisted by the imperial state and it was not until months later, in September 1973, that a British channel -the ITV- broadcasted to the world the images of the northern inhabitants' suffering and shockingly revealed the reality of Ethiopia's "hidden famine".

Peasant's revolts, in the north-east due to the state's slow response but also in the Somali province to the south-west turned to a more violent and organized resistance in the 1960s and a revolutionary farmers' movement, "Land To The Farmer", was created in opposition to the state's malfeasance and excessive land and farm taxes imposed on the peasants by the feudal system (Segers et. all, 2010). The 1973 oil crisis had also added another layer to the existing tensions as the rising fuel price -by 50%- lowered the country's income and precipitated its general economic recession (Milas and Abdel-Latif 2000 and Mekonnen 2013, 87). Ironically, despite this turmoil and while underground opposition were met with brutal crackdown and torture, soldiers and officers saw their wages increase and the aristocracy took further control of the economy through unpopular discriminatory taxation policies.

Joining the discontented peasants, students, teachers and disenchanted intellectuals were also at the forefront of the protests to condemn the discriminatory education policies imposed to the non-ruling class and to demand a free press, a democratic constitution, fair land distribution and urgent tax reforms (Penrose 1987). The first general strike of the country on March 7th, 1974 left hundreds missing or dead. Faced with this general popular uprising affecting all sectors of the society, many of the emperor's loyals started to defect and a committee consisting of military officials from several divisions within the imperial army was set up under the name of the Derg -committee in Amharic-.

On September 1974, Haile Selassie was deposed and former notables were imprisoned. The humanitarian disasters, economic recession and loss of trust on promising perspectives from the population led to social breakdown and compounded ethnic rebellions, ultimately precipitating the fall of one of the oldest monarchies in the world. The unsilenced famine and the regime's underlying governance failures dethroned the emperor and egalitarian slogans such as «Ethiopia First» and «Democracy and Equality to all" were used as powerful metaphor for the impetus for revolutionary change and renewed promises for growth and equal development (Lautze, Raven Roberts and Erikneh 2009).

Taking power after the fall of Selassie in 1974, the Derg initially gained mass support across the country by voicing the revolutionary demands to overthrow the feudal imperial system and to implement progressive policies (Ambaye 2012). The military regime's very first policy was the "Land to the Tiller" act aiming at abolishing the remaining structures from the imperial regime and creating Peasant Associations (Penrose 1987, 117). Yet, paradoxically, the new regime turned quickly into a sanguinary dictatorship as the military elite granted itself even further rights and control over the economy through extensive nationalization and ill sought-out policies while conducting mass execution campaigns on dissidents.

Moreover, with the more sudden rise of Mengistu Hailemariam as the leader of the Derg, Ethiopia had turned overnight towards a Marxist-Leninist ideology, and went from being one of the closest U.S. allies in the region to signing a Friendship Treaty with the USSR in 1978 (Catlin 1993). In response to this rapprochement with the Soviets, the U.S. and Britain discontinued their aid donations to the country. The military's socialist party, the –SEDED– was the only party allowed but it was rapidly met with informal opposition groups. Most opponents to the regime, largely from the students and intellectuals had fled the country or hidden in the bush to organize their resistance against Mengistu's regime. Underground resistance movements, such as the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON –under Amharic abbreviation–) and the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRF), have gained significant importance amongst the marginalized population. Clashes between the EPRF and the Derg rapidly intensified and the rebel revolutionaries were violently repressed. A blood-stained and horrid era of repression and mass executions of the opposition groups, known as "The Red Terror", demonstrated the brutality of Mengistu's dictatorship (Lefort 1983). It was far from a new start for the country on the basis of the promised equality, instead, more cruel and ruthless than its predecessor (Gudina 1994).

On the regional perspective, the added superpower sponsorship dimension contributed to greater regional as well as broader strategic tensions over the Horn's central geostrategic location. Increased frictions with neighboring Somalia - having abrogated its Treaty with the USSR and turning instead to the support of the U.S. - have deteriorated after the 1977 Somalian invasion of the Ogaden province in southern Ethiopia and engendered a violent bloodshed between the two countries. For the first time, the Cuban army fought in an African conflict, joining the Soviets in their effort to protect their newly-declared ally (Gudina 1994). This intensification of ethnic fighting in the south-eastern Ogaden region and the risk of secessionist movements sympathizing with a "Greater Somalia" agenda motivated the regime's severity, mass tortures and increased ethnic stigmatization and discriminations towards the southern population.

Aid flooded to Ethiopia from the USSR with the signed Friendship Treaty, mainly feeding the military's wealth while Ethiopians were still largely struggling with interstate conflicts, harsh climate conditions, famine and discriminatory aid politics. The agricultural policies under the Derg had also forced mass dislocation of population and misallocation of resources and the increased corruption and totalitarian rule disintegrated the economy and depleted the country from its resources (Catlin, 1993). Yet, by the late 1980s recurring acute famines, the brutal repression of dissidents and the social breakdown urged the main ethnic revolutionary groups to join forces to destabilize the dictatorship as the military regime was substantially weakened following the beginning of Gorbachev's Glasnot (openness policies) and the resulting decreased support from the USSR under political transition.

2. The "Remaking" of Ethiopia under Federal Arrangements: Diversity as a Force for Democracy and Inclusive Development

Growing instability due to internal political distress and mounting ethnic-based separatist insurrections have worsened with the humanitarian disasters resulting from drought, famine and the spread of diseases and infections such as Malaria. These situations were mostly met with extremely weak response capacities from a poorly diplomatically engaged military dictatorship.

Adding to the internal political deadlock during the 1970s and 1980s, Ethiopia was drowned into a tough period of isolation that had brought the state into internal mayhem climaxing with the famine, poverty and underdevelopment that had added to 'lost decade of Africa' narrative. The country was associated

with total underdevelopment, as if it was doomed to remain in that backward trend. By the early 1990s, the only university in Ethiopia was that of Addis Ababa, founded under Selassie's rule, and the country had a very low number of school and university graduates.

The young population either had no access to education or in the case of some students facing the dictatorship's repressive methods, fleeing or joining the revolutionary movements represented their only alternatives towards a democratic state (Gudina 1994). Many intellectuals had fled the country or went to hide in the bush to avoid torture or death and the entire country was in a political quagmire where people were both at war against the military dictatorship that claimed to represent or sometimes also fighting against each other.

The revolution was led by a group of young Marxist-leaning students, mainly composed of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) who had coordinated their offensive under an umbrella multi-ethnic organization called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (Joireman 2000). After a long fight organized from the bush and years of bloody oppression from the military dictatorship, the revolutionary rebels have succeeded to overthrow the military dictatorship in May 28th, 1991, a date that today, represents a celebrated national holiday.

The relations between identity politics, democratization and state-building are complex, especially in the cases of relatively young post-colonial countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mengisteab 2008). In the case of Ethiopia, although it had safeguarded its independence from colonial powers, the long history of ethnic tensions due to the past regimes' discriminatory and divisive policies had led to a stronger sense of identity and pronounced claims on self-determination and independence. Also, given the risk of contagion and spillover from neighboring ethnic groups living in war-torn countries in the region, the possibility of balkanizing this fragile region could have had dramatic repercussions. In this sense, both liberal (Keane 1995 and Fukyama 1994) and marxist theorists (Milazi 1996 and Mafejie 1999) argue against the use of identity politics in democratic state-building as they consider that tribalism and ethnic rivalries feeding interstate tensions are in reality, a reflecting underlying struggles for national power among elites and that the conflictual relationship is more the result of internal elitist struggles for power and supremacy. On the other hand, other scholars such as Ghai (2000) and Salih (2001) see that on the contrary, a moderate approach to ethnic politics can help in establishing democratic structures that ensure the autonomy arrangements under a federal arrangement that ensures equal and democratic rights within a well-governed pluralist and multicultural society.

This centrality of the ethnic identity question through this period is often presented as the "Remaking of Ethiopia". A smooth transition phase under the revolutionary students who emphasized the importance of good governance and called for a better distribution of wealth and resources while the country moves forward towards democracy through an inclusive and clearly-defined development approach. In this sense, the very first step for the EPRDF was to first go through an introspective assessment and recognize the country's internal flaws and vulnerabilities in order to move forward positively and avoid the same internal tensions that have weakened and isolated Ethiopia (CPDR 1991) and drive the scourge of famine from this country with full potential.

Although the heightened awareness of ethnic identity exposed the underlying brittleness of Ethiopia

political system's eventful past and posed important challenges to modern state building in Ethiopia, it did however, offer opportunities for collective leadership initiatives and for a revision of inter-identity relationships that could provide equitable wellbeing conditions to all its citizens (Eshete 1997).

The end of the military dictatorship and the coming to power of the first democratically elected government in 1991, finally represented a true and sought-for opportunity for change towards an inclusive model of leadership and development. The choice of politics that could unlock development relied both on the economic side but foremostly, on finding durable responses to the previously discriminatory ownership and taxation policies and to the neglected social and humanitarian aspects. To this end, recognizing and integrating ethnic realities into the transformational process was key to reaching the necessary national consensus on economic and development initiatives within the federal structure. The Oromo ethnic group as an example, whose language could not be used in public settings during the imperial era, since Amharic was accepted as the official language, are now able to develop and use their language within local institutions and through various media outlets.

Furthermore, although Asmara in the Eritrean province under Ethiopian sovereignty was a key industrial base of the country, years of civil war with the Eritrean secessionists have questioned the sustainability of peaceful cohabitation with the autonomous region. Therefore, the approval of the proposed 1993 referendum on the independence of this former province represented a new beginning for Ethiopia's regional and foreign policy from that of a country plagued by internal tensions and famine to a country in phase with its internal reality shaping a normalized and credible international image. Also, the ratified constitution of 1995 was internationally welcomed as a progressive document as it accepted the pluralist characteristics of Ethiopia and acknowledged internal and regional stability as well as the right to self-determination as important factors to induce social and economic development. In this sense, a federal system was established and the process of recognizing and guaranteeing equal rights for each ethnic group was at the heart of the federal state's nation-building process (Eshete 1997).

Thus, owing to democratic governance, a great sense of statehood and the belief in positive change and in a prosperous future for the country, this transition towards a pluralist democracy was a catalyst for change and peace and has shaped the country's unique identity. Indeed, the current constitution is not aimed at coercively holding the nation together, rather it is based upon the free will and consent of Ethiopia's peoples to live together and work towards the same goals (Abdel-Latif 2013).

For the last century, the country's different ethnic groups felt that they were treated as second class citizens and during the end of the imperial order, they have started to organize ethnic based revolts. To ensure internal political stability therefore, it was primordial to negotiate a peaceful ethnic-based solution with a complete devolution of power to empower state through the exercise of self-determination of each nation within the state and induce the contribution of each component of the nation on an equal basis.

So far, the system is holding the country together and different groups feel heard through this participative democracy in which they can handle their own affairs. The modern Ethiopian federal model is paving the way within a region marked by devastating civil wars, and overcoming geographic and socio-economic barriers for the realization of an inclusive growth and an effective structural transformation. The EPRDF pioneered the process of building policies that are developmental in orientation and transformative in content in order to encourage substantive internal and regional peace and stability outcomes.

Furthermore, fascinated by the Asian development models, such as Japan and South Korea, Meles coined the principle of a 'democratic developmental state' as a central paradigm in his approach to position Ethiopia within global economy and value chain thus, ending the cycle of famine and underdevelopment that have been associated with Ethiopia for decades (De Waal 2012). A convinced Marxist, Meles was confident that the Washington Consensus did not take into account the specificities of countries in their way out of underdevelopment (De Waal 2012), however, the perceived dependency that international institutions could generate through ill-advised and imposed structural adjustment programs could lead countries to dead ends instead of the promised development (FANSP 2002).[2] The revival of the Ethiopian economy had to be framed within an individualized path for which economic and social transformation required overcoming seemingly perpetual crises of deep poverty, economic underperformance and disaster vulnerability while at the same time, diversifying the economy with the support of strong fundamentals in order to reintegrate the country internationally.

II. Building National Consensus on a Self-Authored Growth and Development Path under the EPRDF through an Evolving Regional Geopolitical Context

For most of the 20th century, internal struggle for power and control of resources depleted the country from the needed stability to induce economic and industrial growth (Lefort 1997) but currently, the country is witnessing a development that can be assimilated to that of the Asian tigers in the 1970s, taking full advantage of the growth potential by endorsing an enhanced globalization process. The Ethiopian economic rise is in this respect, ultimately discrediting the idea that Sub-Saharan African states are doomed to failure and chronic underdevelopment.

Since 2005, the East African state is part of Africa's non-oil producers experiencing the strongest growth (IMF 2015) thanks to national cohesion, overall prudent macroeconomic policies accompanied by industrial incentives and ambitious investments in growth and development projects (Fantini 2013). Relying on a strong collective identity to realize national aspirations for viable democracy and durable peace, the country's long history of statecraft, the population's strong sense of national identity and its demonstrated military tradition, make it capable of pursuing clearly defined national interests (Abdel-Latif 2013).

However, gathering everyone on equal basis for the development of the country and for the start of a positive path is a time consuming process but the governing party has proved that it is also a matter of well-designed and clearly laid-out national strategies. Elected in 1995, the EPRDF insisted on locally designing and championing its own development agenda by mobilizing the public opinion on common goals and initiating an approach that would take into account the flaws and strengths of the country. For the Ethiopian government, securing its development required an honest approach in addressing and ending the country's main problems and vulnerabilities, internally first and externally. Past tensions due to previous regimes' ill-advised practices and policies, the mismanagement of humanitarian disasters and the lack of a clear inclusive development agenda urged the elected party in 1995 to encourage national enthusiasm by reconciling the nation around a common growth and development plan for a better future based on resilience and prosperity.

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2. The Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy document, which is currently under implementation, was formulated and issued by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 2002.

Ethiopians are actively shaping their own development. Almost two decades ago, Meles Zenawi, the emblematic prime minister of Ethiopia under EPRDF, skillfully drafted national strategies for development in the form of five distinct themed White Papers , and emphasized the need for local authorship in national policy-making. Written in colloquial language, these documents aimed at reaching national consensus and at gaining public opinion on the country's proposed development choices. A dazzling array of policies oriented towards addressing the underlying causes of the country's stagnation and disaster-prone environment were outlined by Meles in these documents, highlighting the priorities for the maintenance of national consensus around rigorously developed strategies.

The main threats to the country's stability and development were due to internal vulnerabilities, and the first step for the elected government was to openly recognize that poverty and famines were the two main "enemies" to eradicate.

In this sense, the EPRDF three main goals were outlined as follow:

> 1. Poverty reduction and ensuring food security through a comprehensive approach to investment in human capital while revamping and reenergizing the economy to catch up rapidly in managing new development process.
> 2. Championing the peasantry and protecting the small holder, making him the engine of change and Ethiopian growth.
> 3. Decentralization and implementation of viable federal state system, ensuring internal stability as a prerequisite for national and greater economic integration and societal well-being.

Meles was repeatedly depicting the cycle of deepening poverty in Ethiopia, which would if unreversed, present qn existential threat to the nation and the regime. This long term vision setting-up the common terms of an enlightened inspiration on the idea of a "social contract" represented a pre-requisite for the country's venture towards democratization and development following centuries of feudal system, stagnation and international isolation under the military dictatorship.

1. Overcoming Poverty and Famine to Sustain and Secure Development

The emergence of a country is an upward process from a state of underdevelopment to a better and more prosperous future, from a war torn country to tranquility and from poverty-trapped single income to an economy modernized through increased trade and investment. The historical approach through the first chapter of this work may explain the genesis of the country's internal power struggle, but it does also highlight the centrality of issues related to climate vulnerability, land distribution, poverty and famine that have continuously led to social breakdown and conflicts when ignored by the state or met with low and discriminatory response capabilities.

The main national challenge was to end poverty and underdevelopment. In his detailed strategy for Ethiopia's foreign policy and security, former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi reiterated the government's engagement in fighting poverty and underdevelopment to avoid collapsing into chaos and despair (FANSP 2002, 28). Concerned with what could be done with power to change things for the better, the government went through a rapid phase of implementing the principles of 'democratic developmentalism' focusing on radical solutions for early humanitarian-crises' warning systems especially in the drought-prone

ecosystem where most of the rural population is localized.

While revenues per inhabitant increased from 400 to 550 dollars over the past and poverty is declining at an average rate of 1.94% per annum since 1995, almost 30 million Ethiopians (33.5%) still lived on less than $1.90 per month by 2010 (World Bank 2015). Mainly living in rural areas, as close to 90% of Ethiopians reside in the highlands, accessing developed urban areas remains limited for most of the population. Also, the population's growth rate is high at 2.5% with nearly 60% under the age of 25 (WDI 2014). Ethiopia has one of the highest pro-poor spending levels in Sub-Saharan Africa representing 84% of all public spending in 2014, but the minimal concentration in towns and cities prevents a fast achievement of the development since most of the population remains largely sedentary.

As many Ethiopians live in remote rural areas and are directly affected by unpredicted shock, they are exposed to high vulnerability, cross-border conflicts and insecurity and also to severe climate conditions. Therefore, ensuring food security for the peasantry while enabling them to join the national development path, is part of the three main urgent goals outlined by the government.

In response, some programs have been introduced by the government to respond to this vulnerability, such as the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) currently providing 8.3 million chronically food insecure households with reliable food supply and needed financial assistance to build and sustain long-term resilience. Principally targeting food insecure population, the program also encourages households to engage in investment and production in order to increase its purchasing power and exit the vicious circle of poverty, vulnerability and famine.

The development trend is also visible in terms of life expectancy rising by almost 13 years for both men and women between 1990 and 2013 to reach an average of 63.4 years (UNICEF 2015). The country has generally made impressive gains in health over the past two decades, with significant decreases in infections due to poor sanitation and malnutrition, and in neonatal mortality and disorders. These indicators demonstrate the centrality of human security in the modern policies-orientation of the country.

## 2. A Visible Growth Miracle and a Burgeoning Economy

Rapid urbanization, infrastructure development and both domestic and foreign direct investment have boosted trade flows and accelerated economic growth and structural transformation over the past decade. Ethiopia's growth is not only a numerical miracle but it is visible on the ground. Remarkably recording high and sometimes double-digit growth rates for the past decade, the booming construction sector along with the agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors are the main drivers of this economy, boasting one of the highest growth rates across the globe.

With a steady growth since 2005, and a real GDP around 8.7% in 2015 (graph below) compared to 3.8% for the rest of Sub Saharan Africa, Ethiopia was the 5th fastest economy in the world in 2010. Its GDP per capita (on PPP basis) quadrupled from that of 1991. Also according to Lars Christian Moller, the World Bank's lead economist and program leader for Ethiopia, with the falling oil prices, the pace of growth for the country in 2016 could further quicken.

Ethiopia's economy still relies largely on agriculture and it is by far the primary income of the country, forming the backbone of the Ethiopian economy. The share of GDP from agriculture is one of the highest

in the region and it represents 80% of total employment (global impact investing network). Although yields per hectare are increasing, agricultural productivity is one of the lowest in the continent principally needing to enhance its use of fertilizers and modern machinery.

Comparison of Real GDP Growth Rates (1980-2021)
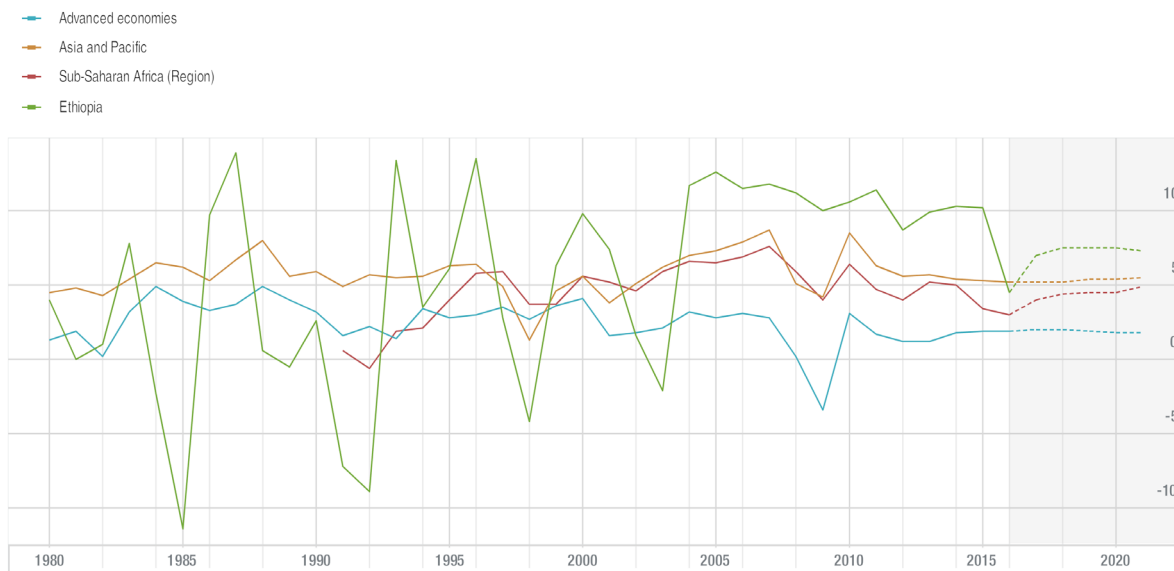
Source: World Economic Outlook, IMF, 2016

For this purpose, an advisory service providing consulting on the use of appropriate fertilizers through a technology developed by the Ethiopian Soil Information System (EthioSIS) successfully completed the country's digital soil fertility map providing this agriculturally-reliant economy with the much needed information on soil characteristics and nutrient needs for effective and sustainable agriculture and balanced and customized fertilization recommendation and monitoring (Summers 2015). Besides, linkages between urban and rural areas are still weak but expected to change rapidly thanks to ambitious road and railway projects linking major cities to rural areas and to Djibouti's port on the Red Sea.

Exports followed an increase, with coffee representing the third of these exports -Arabica coffee sustains 12% of population during harvest period and has the potential to go from 6th to 3rd exporting country in few years. Floriculture, oil seeds and gold are also rising sharply. More than half of these are exported to Europe and one third to Asia (Saudi, China, and Japan) and neighboring countries (Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti). Imports are also in the rise, particularly due to needed materials for infrastructure reflecting the recent rapid growth of the industrial sector.

Ethiopia enjoys a very diverse environment and geography with various ecological niches. The country's topography is also varied, from high mountainous reliefs, canyons and volcanic regions, to depths of 120m below sea level. Its proximity to the Indian Ocean and its tropical location provides the country with six climatic zones and natural parks with significant number of species and vegetation. The biodiversity of Ethiopia is also a strength for an overwhelmingly underexploited eco-tourism and also reveals a greater potential for agriculture with abundant under-exploited fertile lands (OECD 2008).

Foreign investments are conditional upon sound economic policies, movement towards democracy and respect of human rights, stability and peace. Cautiously rebuilding itself from the rubble of years of civil

strife and natural disasters, Ethiopia's growing market potential is attracting an important amount of FDI inflows through the past decade (UNCTAD 2015) but it still remains relatively low as a percentage of the GDP. China, India and Turkey remain Ethiopia's biggest foreign direct investors by far and a burst of private-equity investments from Europe have principally targeted industries including floriculture, wine and energy while the U.S. is lagging behind despite being the country's principal aid donor and defense partner (Africa Economic Outlook 2015). The Government of Ethiopia has also successfully floated a 10-year international bond worth USD 1 billion using its proceeds to finance infrastructure projects.

Yet, Ethiopian economy needs to undergo further diversification. Arkebe Oqubay, a popular former mayor of Addis Ababa who now leads Ethiopia's industrialization drive insists on the important strategies developed through the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). This rational five-year development covers elements on both the long and short term visions with priority sectors including health, education, agriculture, roads and water and sanitation, identified for public expenditure with a central aim at maintaining growth and modernizing agriculture while increasing industrialization (Oqubay 2015). The second outlined strategy in May 2015, (GTP II) defined very ambitious targets for infrastructure and energy production as the main drivers for an export-led economic growth and laid out comprehensive incentives to maintain macroeconomic stability and facilitate the financing of the GTP goals.

Building a strong and diversified manufacturing industry that will accelerate the structural transformation of the economy and provide tangible benefits to the population requires substantial investments and therefore, an improved environment for investors. This way, Ethiopia can achieve its targeted transition towards sustained export-led growth and finally reveal the unlocked potential of East African countries as sourcing destinations. Ethiopian transformation into a manufacturing powerhouse also requires the preparation of its workforce through education and training and a simplification of its business climate to gain in competitiveness.

According the 2015 African Economic Outlook, the Ethiopian economy is due to continue in high positive growth for the next years although protectionist constraints on private sector development could slow its momentum. In addition, a survey conducted by McKinsey on 40 apparel chief purchasing officers on the developing outsourcing destinations ranked Ethiopia 7th after China (McKinsey 2014) as it is expected to play an important role in apparel manufacturing, mainly due to Chinese outsourcing to the country. A number of European companies- among them, H&M, Primark and Tesco- have also started sourcing some of their garments from Ethiopia. Linkages between urban and rural areas are still weak but expected to change rapidly thanks to ambitious road and railway projects linking major cities to rural areas and to Djibouti's port on the Red Sea that will facilitate further investment flows to the country.

In order to achieve sustainable national economic growth, the East African country has successfully negotiated an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union and has resumed discussions to join WTO. Ethiopia has also sought for enhanced South-South cooperation and partnerships by integrating into larger initiatives and markets through its memberships within the NEPAD at continental level and with the COMESA regionally.

3. A Rising East African Green Powerhouse and Increased Tensions on Shared Resources

Climate change will most likely trigger severe disruptions with ever-widening consequences for local, regional, and global security. Hence, droughts, famines, and weather-related disasters could claim thousands or even millions of lives and exacerbate existing tensions within and among nations over existing resources.

Resource scarcity due to climatic stress may aggravate conflict in the Horn of Africa as changing patterns in climate and agricultural yield could result in increased population movements and pressures on urban destination areas. The control of resources could also become a political instrument and the continent's natural resources may attract the attention from richer, resource-poor countries.

Against this pessimistic background, Ethiopia is moving towards a greener economy with a comprehensive and promising approach towards energy self-sufficiency that would not only ensure national and regional energy security but also encourage the accelerated industrialization of Ethiopia. Industrial development is still largely undermined by recurring electricity cuts but the energy sector in the country is rapidly developing. Hydropower potential is estimated at 45,000 MW, along existing and developing capacities in geothermal energy, agricultural waste, and wind energy. Energy capacity could increase significantly with the finalization of the ongoing dam projects and the Universal Electrification Access Program (UEAP) aiming at providing access to over 70% of the population affected by repeated power-cuts.

Through the past years, Ethiopia is pursuing a wide range of Green Economy Initiatives including the National Clean Cook Stove Program (NCCSP), the national biogas program facilitating investments in clean energy and wind power, advances in ethanol production, the construction of mega hydro-dams and the Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP). These programs have started to produce tangible results in reversing climate and environmental degradation and concretely demonstrate how a green economy can experiment concrete cases in practice. Moreover, since 2011, Ethiopia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry's efforts focuses on implementing the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy that sets the targets for becoming carbon-neutral by 2025. The Reducing Carbon Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation (REDD) initiative launched sectorial reduction mechanisms that will help Ethiopia access carbon trade and reduce vulnerability and emission.

Maintaining growth goes with an efficient development and use of the energy sector that is heavily challenging the industrialization in certain parts of the country because of the frequent blackouts. In this sense, built by the French firm Vergnet S.A. and with concessional loans from BNP Paribas and the French Development Agency (AFD), with the government covering 9% of the costs, Africa's biggest windfarm, Ashegoda, has begun production in 2013 Ethiopia, helping the country in becoming a major regional exporter of energy and in expanding capacity from MW 2,000 to 10,000MW within next five years (MW 6,000 only from GRD).

In addition, vulnerability to environmental and climatic shocks remains a critical challenge for Ethiopia's agricultural sector, therefore, developing the energy capacity with a climate-conscious objective in mind has led to one of the most impressive investment plans in renewables in Africa. Ethiopia is increasingly faced with the added burden of climate variability and the country has pushed forward demands to

develop a reconsideration of its share of regional water resources by launching a mega-national project, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam" (GERD), with hydroelectric power station projects along the Nile (Rahman Majed 2011), that will be operational by 2017.

Yet, while Sudan is in favour of this project for its strategic interests, the GERD has drawn strong opposition from Egypt as it is definitely a considerable move and landmark to redefine water politics in the Nile basin that were first based on the water agreements between Britain and Egypt in 1959 giving large privilege to the Nile's "gifted" country, while downstream riparian states had only limited shares from the river's resources.

4. A Regional 'Tiger' in an Evolving Geopolitical Context

Modernizing military and security capabilities was an urgent imperative on the aftermath of the fall of the Derg regime and the EPRDF has succeeded in demobilizing the largest ar;y in Africa after the fall of the dictatorship (kingma 1996). In this respect, the main security priorities in the early 1990s were to legitimize the newly established democratic federal rule through open multi-party elections, tackle deeply rooted and unresolved internal problems, bring egalitarian reforms for the country's development and avoid further proliferation of weapons and instability in the country.

The stability of Ethiopia and of the region are important factors for the progress of trade, regional integration and for the achievement of development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence, well aware of this interconnectedness between stability, economic growth and social development (Milas and Abdel-Latif 2000), regional security issues were not taken lightly by the elected EPRDF's government. Showing a clear determination to defend the country's border against any threat that could jeopardize its objectives, the government faced the complexity of its direct security situation in the east African region, infamously known as the 'arc of crisis' (Catlin 1993).

Ethiopia has the largest standing army in Sub-Saharan Africa and the third in Africa (GFP 2015). Beyond its size, its military experience in both conventional and anti-guerrilla warfare (Makonnen and Lulie 2014) makes it one of the few countries in the continent with recent conventional anti-guerrilla and modern peacekeeping experience. It is the best equipped military in the region, with ground and air force personnel numbering 200,000 to 250,000 (Berrouk 2011, 89) and has managed through recent, to ensure its position as an active regional actor while resisting the global and neighboring threats leading to the politicization of religion (Abdel-Latif 2013).

Beyond internal stability that is central to policy-making, the prime preoccupation that keeps the country active on a military and security level is mainly due to existing neighboring tensions. The country's relations with neighbors are sometimes tensed although it tries to develop good and cordial diplomatic channels for discord and conflict resolution. Yet, The horn of Africa is one of the most turbulent regions in the world, retaining great importance to global security strategies (Catlin, 1993) and the control of the horn means the control of the Red Sea.

In this context, regional and global powers but also unconventional actors are clearly competing for influence and control within this geostrategic location. Many issues leading to cross border conflicts and insecurity relate to lacking financial, skill and institutional capacities, and low information sharing between regional security agencies, which are necessary in order to adapt to modern regional challenges. Thus,

within this rough neighborhood, home to countries witnessing intense political strife and destabilizing internal conflicts and immersed in all types of low and high intensity insecurity, Ethiopia's national and regional peace and security actions during the past quarter century fall within the framework of a three-level approach:

1. Sub-regional level: Through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a seven-member regional organization (re)established in 1996 and in charge of bringing peace mediation and peace-keeping in the region through conflict prevention and resolution methods;

2. Pan-African level: The African Union Peace and Security Architect used by Ethiopia as an instrument to bring up issues relevant to continental peace and security;

3. Country level: The country handles itself unilaterally with its own defined strategies, especially regarding neighboring countries posing serious and eminent and direct risks of spillover, such as Somalia and Sudan.

5. Active and Rational Approach for a Dynamic Regional and Sub-Regional Integration

Strengthening regional capacities to prevent and counter violent extremism in the greater horn of Africa remains the main security objective for regional and broader stability. The severe drought, ecological vulnerability and rural economic hardship in Eastern Africa strongly highlight the centrality of regional approaches to supplement national efforts in maintaining regional security. Collective sub-regional efforts in building resilience to shared threats and the promotion of an efficient harmonization of security policies were stressed with the creation of the IGAD.

With some of its neighbors, Ethiopia has succeeded in turning internal borders into bridges for better diplomatic and economic relations in order to achieve a dynamic regional integration and collectively overcome shared issues and obstacles. Good economic ties are maintained with Sudan as Ethiopia's main oil provider, and Djibouti since following the latest escalated tensions with Eritrea (1998-2000), the city-state provides the landlocked country with its most secure and advantaging access to the Red Sea (Rondos 2016). It also has historical relations with Kenya and shares numerous strategic agreements and partnerships in key sectors of the economy namely, trade, investment, infrastructure and agriculture.

Institutionalized diplomatic mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of inter-state and intra-state conflicts have provided substantial support during recent outbreaks. However, in spite of this, conflictual relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia have also shaped the regional unstable landscape. The 1998 border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia has attracted international attention for the large fatalities and for the tactics used by each side (Joireman 2000). The two countries were spending over $100 million per year on defense prior to the outbreak of the 1998 conflict and their military spending have skyrocketed in 1999 to reach $480 million for Ethiopia and $306 million per year for Eritrea (Joireman 2000). As a result, human displacements have exacerbated existing tensions and put further pressure on regional integration. The use of landmines against both combatant and civilians has also left large superficies of land filled with landmines, making farming impossible in an already semi-arid ecosystem.

The underlying tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the ongoing civil war and the piracy off the

coast of Somalia and the results of the 2011 referendum in Sudan weaken regional integration initiatives and affect the balance of power in the region and beyond. The current war in Yemen has also led to an alarming militarization of the region and has shifted security interests in the region as east African states are now increasingly joined by Gulf countries' forces, as the UAE and Saudi military coalition is also expanding to the Horn of Africa, using Eritrea's port for their armed forces (Korbybko 2015) and Qatari troops have been overseeing a truce between Djibouti and Eritrea following their border conflict in 2008.

Also, the increased threat to international shipping since 2005 has led most powers to scramble their navies to the region under the auspices of "combating piracy". The U.S. and France have on-ground presence in Djibouti, and were joined by the Japanese in 2011, opening their first base abroad since WW II and very recently by China with its first overseas base. Russia is also approaching the east African state for naval positioning in the Horn. These shifts not only influence the region but also regional dynamics and the security agendas in the Middle East and Europe (Rondos 2016).

Taking the broader chronological and strategic perspective, the Horn of Africa witnessed the first instances of violent international terrorism prior to 9/11 with terrorist groups operating in regional fragile states. In 1998, Kenya's U.S. embassy was bombed and in 2000, the attacks on the U.S. Cole have signaled the increasingly alarming situation in the Horn, threatening the stability of this geostrategic location. Devastated by long-lasting civil wars, terrorist organizations have used some regional countries' lawless grounds as training camps for their activities and neighboring states have been targeted by these terrorist groups.

The collapse of the Somalian state and the growing radicalism with the presence of Al Shabab, who has recently pledged allegiance to ISIL, have urged regional states to take drastic measures in order to avoid a contagion that could have wider continental repercussions. The lack of proper border demarcations in remote and semi-arid areas facilitates cross border terrorist activities and regroupings, adding another layer to this existing threat (IGAD-SSP 2015) that could be further exacerbated if met with localized political grievance.

Able to impose its regional vision through a combination of strong military force and Western support, Ethiopia intervened in Somalia at the end of 2006 to fight and put an end to the Islamic Courts (IC). Yet, despite Ethiopia representing one of the two pillars of U.S. foreign policy in east Africa, along with Egypt (US State Dept. 2013), recent leaked cables (WikiLeaks 2007) reveal that this intervention was not approved or encouraged by the United States and that it was "a unilateral decision based on Ethiopia's interests". The Ethiopian government still decided to wage a war against the terrorist group to support the fragilised Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu (Awol 2010).

Ethiopia now remains a target of Somalia's main insurgent group which provides support to low intensity insurgencies within Ethiopia. Also, adding to the existing tensions, the UN Security Council Resolution 1907 (2009) has called for imposing an arms embargo and international sanctions against Eritrea for backing Islamist rebels and attempting to overthrow Somalia's internationally backed TFG. The underlying regional relationships amongst east-African states are feeding much of the existing instability, but these local dynamics could be extensively exacerbated by regional and global powers' growing interest in the horn.

7. Grand Strategies in the Horn of Africa

The horn of Africa is the continent's most volatile region (Chitiyo 2010) as international powers have successively been moving farther to this region in order to secure the strategic access through Bab el Mandab. Part of global geopolitics for thousands of years through its connection to the old maritime trade, Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa in general, have been the theatre of competitions and rivalries between regional and super-powers. India and China's rising global ambitions, military capability, political and economic influence and their quest for energy security may also lead to an arms race in the region (Chitiyo 2010).

Addis Ababa is the African diplomatic capital as it hosts the AU headquarters, a wisely meant present from China to demonstrate its growing interest in the continent. Unveiled in 2013, the Maritime Silk Road (map below) is the Chinese strategic vision of infrastructure development along key ports and maritime routes in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Africa is a strategic center point in this framework and the maritime roads will link China's port facilities with the African cost pushing-up through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean. For China, it is its shipping route to Europe and the current project of the -One Belt One Road-, with the revival of China's New Silk Road, primarily developed through ports, puts Ethiopia and the region in another geopolitical position and places the horn of Africa at the core of international geostrategic considerations.

China's Proposed New Silk Roads
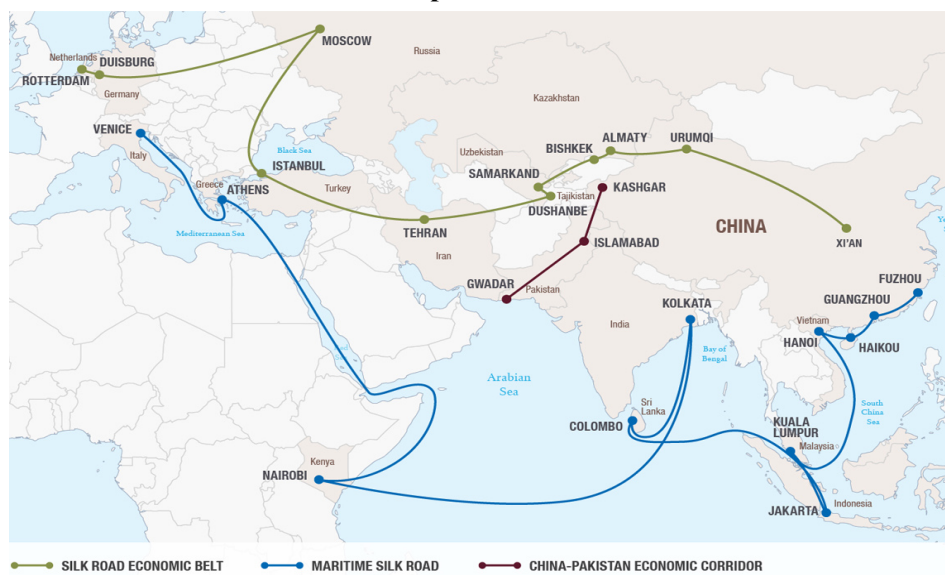
Source: Council on Foreign Relations, 2016

Port facilities in the horn were gradually expanded and Djibouti became almost overnight the principal conduit for Ethiopia's foreign trade following the 1998 border conflict with Eritrea and with the help of massive Chinese investments. Building on close ties with Ethiopia, changes in Djibouti's economic and strategic options was driven by four main factors: the Ethiopian-Eritrean war of 1998-2000, the impact of Ethiopia's economic transformation and growth upon trade, shifts in US strategy since 9/11, and the upsurge in piracy along the Gulf of Aden and Somali coasts. In this sense, massive investments, principally from Chinese companies, will facilitate the access to the Red Sea through road and railways

connecting Ethiopia to the rapidly developing city-state.

Djibouti is host to the IGAD, the regional body linking all the greater east African states. It remains host to France's largest military base in the continent but global defense bases are gradually shifting to the East. Home to growing Japanese and Chinese presence protecting shipping in the region. It is also the launching pad for drone surveillance and attacks, as well as the logistical hub for anti-piracy and other multilateral missions in the region. Djibouti has become a military and maritime laboratory (Stvan 2013) adding to the centrality of the region in global security agendas.

On the other side, under the Obama Administration, the announced strategic pivot toward the Pacific represents a significant shift in American foreign policy and signals a crucial historical turn away from the Atlantic and Europe towards the Indian Ocean. As a reaction to US retreat from the Middle East, we are already noticing the militarization of the Gulf of Aden. Hence, according to Robert Kaplan, this could therefore potentially attract US, China and Russia competition over the Horn of Africa leading to a new security threat to the region and affecting countries in their development trajectory (Kaplan 2011). In fact, according to the U.S. Navy's new maritime security published in 2007, it is clearly stated that the navy will henceforth seek a sustained forward presence in the Indian Ocean and adjacent western pacific. Similarly the US Marine Corps "Vision and strategy" unveiled in 2008 also concludes that that the Indian Ocean and its adjacent waters will be central theater of conflict and competition (Kaplan 2011). As a result, there has been strong perception from China that all of these are part of US' China containment policy in the horn of Africa and around the Indian Ocean stressing the geostrategic importance of this region with remaining untapped potential.

Conclusion

Finally, while reading through Ethiopia's past, one can quickly sense the great mysticism that its ancient history reveals. With a rich historical narrative nourishing the national pride, the country has gone through a progressive nation-building process during most of the XXth century. The country's transition phase towards a modern federal democratic state in 1991 has shaped the arrangements under which the country is building its present path to a more inclusive development process. The EPRDF three main goals towards a developmental state were outlined as reducing poverty and ensuring food security; championing the peasantry; and finally, decentralization and the total devolution of power under an ethnic-based federal system.

Encouraging growth rates and national initiatives for the achievement of a vibrant economy and positively connected to its region and to the world, Ethiopia aims at unleashing its full development potential while ensuring durable stability.

Yet, while Ethiopia's strategic thinking on its emergence and development is mainly focused on the country's internal flaws, that is to say, its vulnerabilities, poverty and famine, it is now rapidly facing greater risks from regional turmoil with surrounding civil conflicts (Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia) and the exacerbation of existing tensions due to the increased militarization of the region under 'anti-piracy' measures and now, with the war in Yemen.
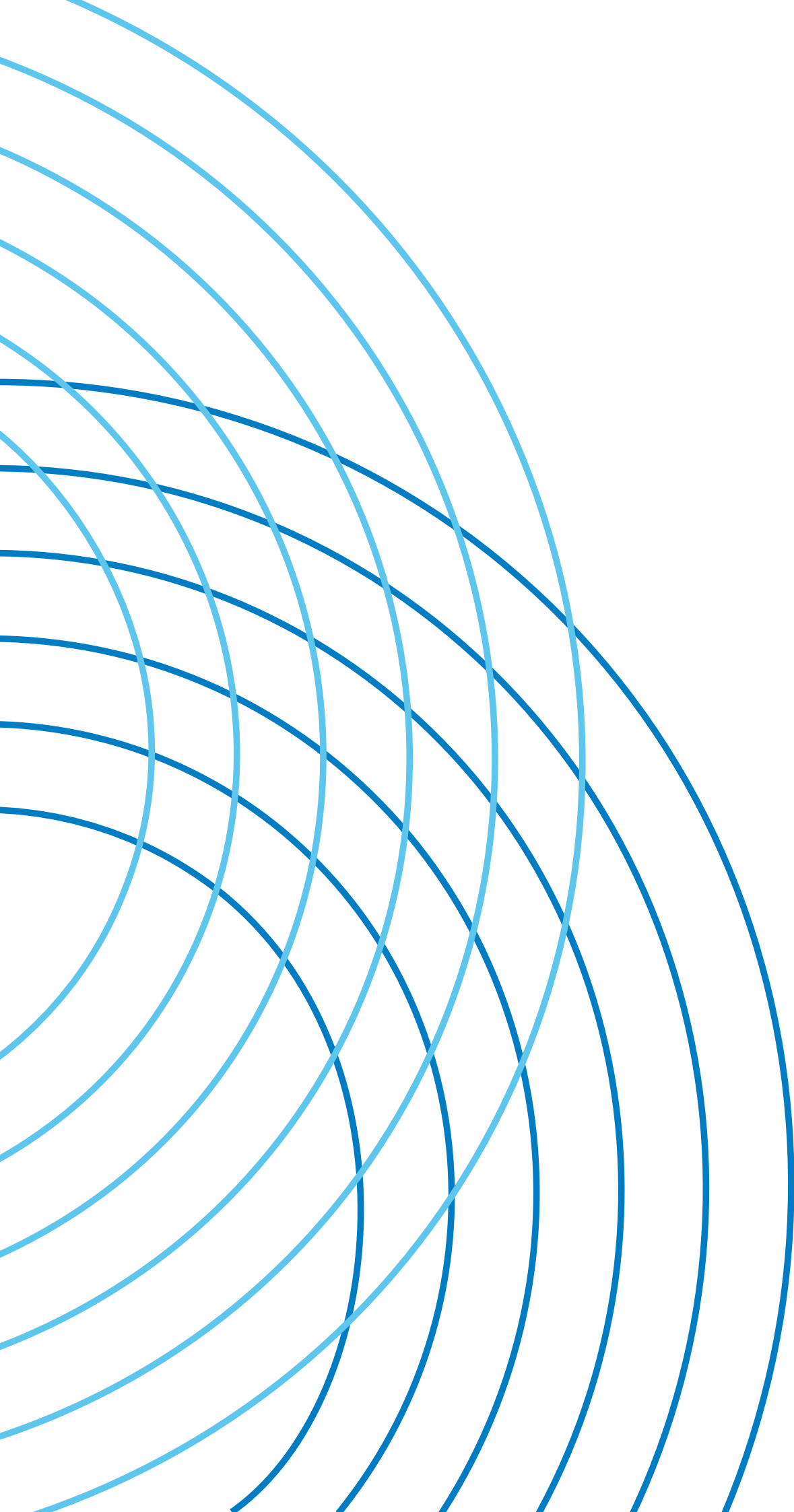
With thirteen states on its western shores, the Indian Ocean is where escalated rivalry is emerging between the US, China and other powers. It provides sea routes connecting the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe. Competition is increasing over the region's geostrategic importance. Regional and global powers but also unconventional actors are clearly competing for influence and control within the horn of Africa. Thus, within this rough neighborhood, home to countries witnessing intense political strife and destabilizing internal conflicts and immersed in all types of low and high intensity insecurity, Ethiopia's national and regional peace and security actions during the past quarter century fall within the framework of a three-level approach: national, sub-regional and regional.
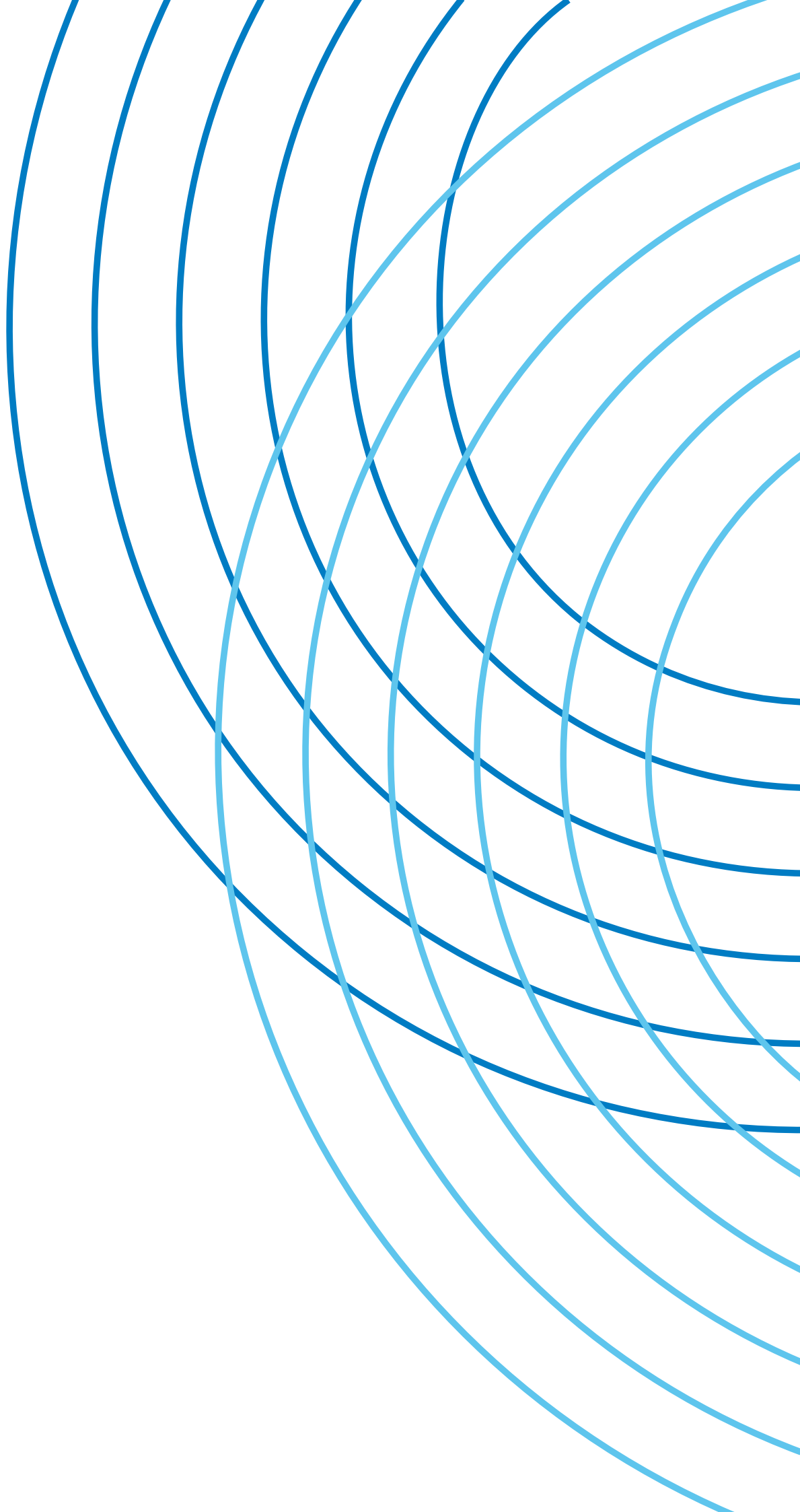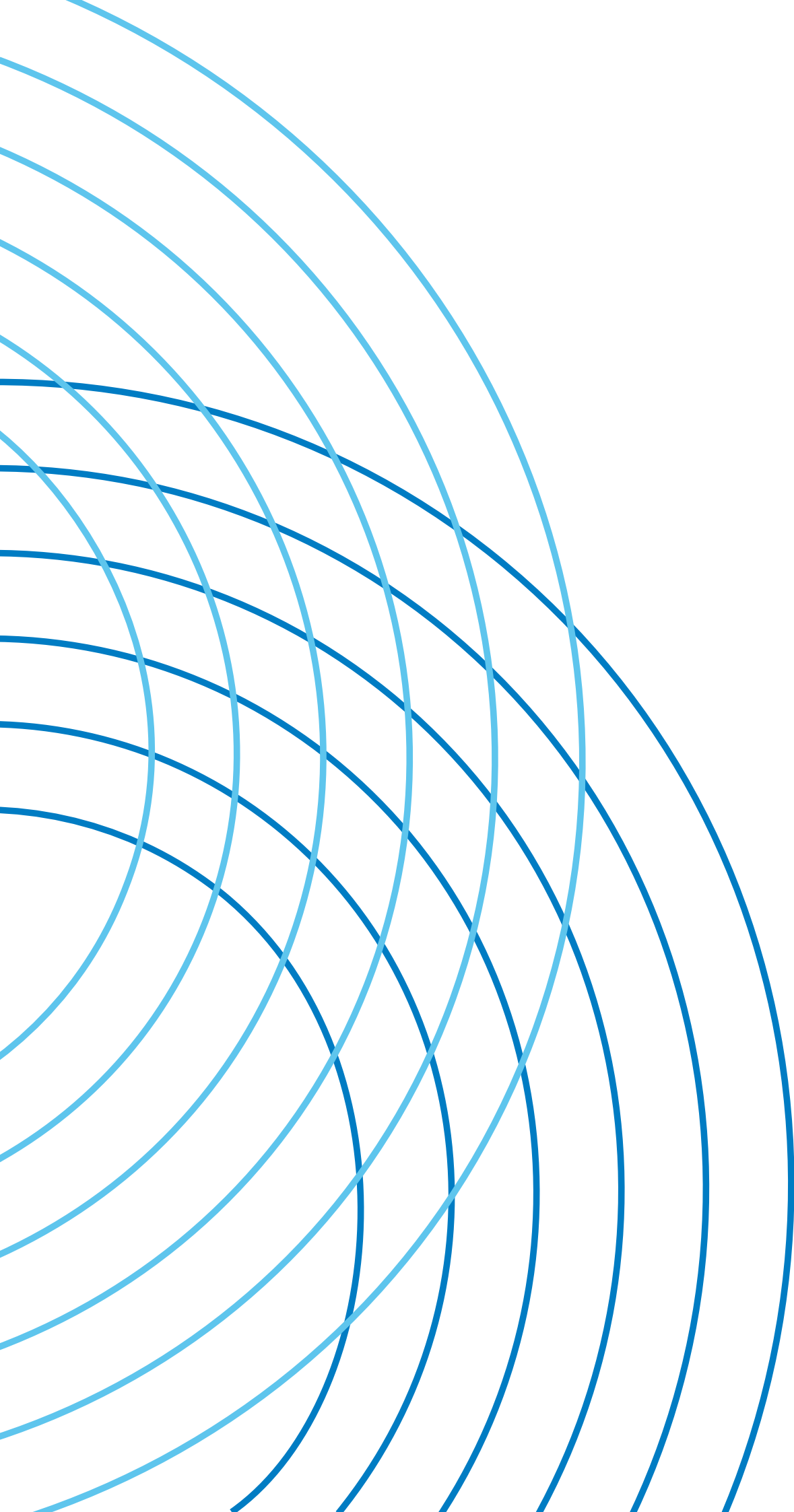
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