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STATE-BUILDING: AN OVERLOOKED APPROACH FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

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Abstract. The study perceives the 'state' as a collection of various institutions that execute core functions that are all basic for the survival of a certain political community. Based on this definition, state-building refers to the process of constructing new institutions, reconstructing old institutions, and consolidating the existing state institutions for the protection of social cohesion and the promotion of economic development and political stability within a given state. Accordingly, the principal objective of this study is to examine the symbiosis between state-building and regional integration in the Horn of Africa by taking the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member States as a Case Study. The researchers argue that any attempt at regional integration will never be achieved in regions that consist of weak, failed, or fragile states. Unlike other regions in Africa and elsewhere, regional integration in the Horn of Africa is at an early stage, as the region is dominated by fragile and insecure states. The study used both primary and secondary data to reveal the symbiosis between state-building and regional integration.

Keywords: *State, State-Building, Integration, Regional Integration, Horn of Africa, IGAD.*

Rezumat. Studiul percepe „statul” ca pe o colecție de diverse instituții care îndeplinesc funcții de bază, fundamentale pentru supraviețuirea unei anumite comunități politice. Pe baza acestei definiții, construcția statului se referă la procesul de creare a unor noi instituții, reconstrucția instituțiilor vechi și consolidarea instituțiilor existente pentru protejarea coeziunii sociale și promovarea dezvoltării economice și a stabilității politice. Prin urmare, obiectivul principal al acestui studiu este de a examina simbioza dintre construcția statului și integrarea regională în peninsula estică a Africii, luând drept studiu de caz statele membre ale Autorității Interguvernamentale pentru Dezvoltare (IGAD). Cercetătorii susțin, că orice încercare de integrare regională nu poate fi realizată în regiunile care constau din state slabe, eșuate sau fragile. Spre deosebire de alte regiuni din Africa și din alte părți, integrarea regională în peninsula de est a Africii se află într-un stadiu incipient, deoarece regiunea este dominată de state fragile și nesigure. Studiul a utilizat atât date primare, cât și secundare pentru a dezvălui simbioza dintre construirea statului și integrarea regională.

Cuvinte cheie: *Stat, Construirea Statului, Integrare, Integrare Regională, Cornul Africii, IGAD.*

1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa is a sub-regional system where peace and security problems have been persisting with no sign of decreasing. The Horn of Africa is the most conflict-prone region in Africa and the world as well [1,2]. It is certain that since the end of colonial rule, the Horn of Africa region has been affected by catastrophic intra-and inter-state wars [3]. As a result, “the region is the laboratory of types of intervention and thus of conflict resolution” [2, p. 48]. Nonetheless, the general climate of conflict and instability in the Horn of Africa has affected the whole spectrum of life. This hostile situation in the region influences states and societies to reduce their activities to the level of survival and defense. The absence of long-term socio-political and economic policies and strategies in the region comes from enduring conflicts and tensions between states and societies.

The Horn of Africa region is widely known for many peculiar things, such as long intra-state wars (Ethio-Eritrea war, Sudan-South Sudan war), destructive wars among governments (Ethio-Somalia, Ethio-Eritrea, Ethio-Sudan, Eritrea-Djibouti, and Eritrea-Sudan were a few among the many wars that have been fought in the region), de facto states (Puntland and Somaliland), seceded states (Eritrea, and South Sudan) and failed states (Somalia and South Sudan) [4,5]. Furthermore, the region still consists of many insurgent groups and guerillas who have been fighting for political power, freedom, and/or independence.

The lively armed conflict that began on 15 April 2023 between rival factions of the paramilitary Rapid Support Force (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) can be used as an illustration for this kind of case. Due to this armed conflict, as of 20 June 2023, between “3000 and 5000 people have been killed” [6]. In addition to this, between “6000 and 8000 other citizens were injured” [7], “while 2 million were internally displaced” [8] and more than 600000 Sudanese had left the country as refugees to various neighboring states [9]. Moreover, the current clashes between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) government and the Oromo Liberation Front-*Shenie* (OLF) in different parts of the Oromia regional state, *Fano* in Amhara regional state, and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) in the northern, northwestern, and northeastern parts of Ethiopia are the best examples of this situation.

The existence of these conflicts and fragile states in the Horn of Africa is an impediment to socio-political and economic integration in the region. We argue that state weakness remains one of the main constraints of regional integration in the Horn of Africa region. Hence, the fragility of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member States and the recurrent conflicts in the entire region affect the smooth functioning of regional cooperation and integration. In support of this argument, Hersi and Akinola [10, p. 120] claimed the following assertion:

One of the challenges of the IGAD regional integration process has been the abundance of conflict in the region and its enduring impact on the performance of the IGAD. Since 1996, IGAD’s regional integration initiative has been constrained by the lack of cooperation between the Member States, in many cases due to active hostility between them.

Nonetheless, with all the above conflicts and state failures in the Horn of Africa, several attempts have been made by national, regional, and so-called international actors and institutions to realize regional integration in the Horn of Africa. More specifically, IGAD and its Member States have agreed to integrate the entire region of the Horn of Africa socially, economically, and politically. However, the process of creating viable regional integration is

not successful in the Horn of Africa. Recently, the project of regional integration has become the most difficult task in the Horn of Africa. Accordingly, this study tries to unfold questions such as why the task of integration is difficult in the Horn of Africa region; what exact problems has regional integration become entangled with; and what should be done for regional integration to happen in the region.

Concerning these research questions of the study, the researchers argue that the project of regional integration in the Horn of Africa has failed due to the existence of fragile states, and for this problem, state-building should be taken as an approach and key duty by actors to smoothly integrate countries in the Horn of Africa. Our key informants such as Abebe, Amare, Asmamaw, Ayele, Haimanot, and Tages identified state failure as one of the huge challenges of regional integration in the Horn of Africa and they indicate state-building as a panacea for regional integration to happen in the region.

As far as our preliminary review of related literature is concerned, there is no scientific article that shows the symbiosis between state-building and regional integration in the Horn of Africa. No exhaustive research has to date attempted to identify state fragility as a main challenge to regional integration in the Horn of Africa. Besides, there is also a research gap that boldly indicates the practice of state-building as a prime assignment of responsible bodies to better realize the project of regional integration in the Horn of Africa. However, there have been a lot of studies done on other challenges of regional integration as well as remedies for the problem of integration in the region.

To address the main objectives of the study, the article is organized as follows: after introducing the nature of states in the Horn of Africa and problematizing the topic under investigation, section two shows the way how the research is conducted. Section three describes the economy, demography, and geography of the greater Horn of Africa region. Section four explains the concepts of the state and state-building. In section five, the article familiarizes the most common typologies of the state. Section six presents the contemporary debates on the project of state-building. Section seven demonstrates the symbiosis between state-building and regional integration. Finally, the conclusion part highlights the major points that have been discussed in the previous sections and gives recommendations for the furtherance of socio-economic and political integration in the Horn of Africa region.

2. Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach is employed to critically examine the importance of state-building for successful socio-economic and political regional integration in the Horn of Africa region. The researchers consider that qualitative research is the best method to investigate one of the primary agendas of the IGAD region i.e., regional integration in connection with state-building. Moreover, we used a qualitative research approach due to its relevance in examining the various contexts and settings of state-building in regions like the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach is the best method that fits to investigate cross-national issues like regional integration [11].

We employed more balanced primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews and conference participation. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty-three (23) informants based on knowledge and expertise on the topic under investigation. Interviews and conference discussions were recorded, transcribed, and categorized into themes. To this end, three major themes such as the features of IGAD member States, the nature of relations among IGAD member States, and the

symbiosis between state-building and regional integration in the Horn of Africa have been carefully chosen for data analysis. In connection, the data collected from key informants were examined by employing thematic analysis to properly interpret the viewpoints of participants. Furthermore, secondary sources like books, articles, dissertations, reports, conference papers, and newspapers were employed to scientifically investigate the major questions of this study: what we know about the nature of states and state-building in the Horn of Africa and what it means for regional Integration. The data obtained via the above sources were handled using thematic and content analysis to easily manage and critically review secondary sources.

3. A Brief Description of the Greater Horn of Africa Region

The concept of the Horn of Africa is difficult to define because it has geographical, political, social, cultural, economic, historical, and other related meanings. Due to its multifaceted nature, scholars have been unable to come up with a universally accepted definition for the concept of the 'Horn of Africa'. "The Horn of Africa, both as a political concept and a physical entity, does not lend itself to precise definition" [12, p. 2]. The Horn of Africa is described differently depending on socio-cultural, economic, historical, geographical, and political considerations. For instance, some scholars described the region from a geographic perspective, while others from historical, political, social, and economic dimensions. As a result, the researchers observe the Horn of Africa not only as a physical reality having a horney shape but also as a sub-region made up of people who share strong socio-cultural, historical, political, and economic relationships. In their extensive historical ties, the people of the Horn of Africa have formed shared ways of life and identity [12,13].

Furthermore, because of their strategic location, the states that constitute the IGAD region are involved in the socio-political and economic realities of the Middle East, the Indian Ocean, Europe, and Africa because the Horn of Africa links these regions through the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Mediterranean Sea. For instance, oil from Iran to Europe, and the flow of other commodities between East Africa, Asia, and the Gulf pass through the Straits of Babel-Mandeb and the Suez Canal, near the coast of the Horn of Africa countries. As a result, the Horn of Africa is a distinct region due to its geostrategic value to external powers [14,15].



Figure 1. The Greater Horn of Africa Region, Member States of IGAD [16, p. 1].

Despite its abundant natural resources and geopolitical importance, the Horn of Africa remains one of the world's most impoverished regions. With a population of 226 million and an enormous land area of 5.2 million square kilometers, the income per capita of IGAD is significantly less than that of sub-Saharan Africa, which averages USD 1624. An estimated 80% of the area is categorized as semi-arid or arid (ASALs), while over 40% is considered unproductive. The GDP of the IGAD member states as a whole was just 167 billion in 2011, a significant amount less than the 232 billion GDP of Egypt [10].

4. Conceptualizing the State and State-Building

The existence of diversified theories such as evolutionary theory, divine right theory, force/conflict theory, social contract theory, and Marxist theory on the origin of the state makes its definition more elusive and contested. In other words, the variations in the definition of the state are derived from the ongoing disagreements among scholars on the exact origin of the state.

From this point of view, we presented the most common definitions given by commentators in the area. "The state is an ancient human institution dating back some 10000 years to the first agricultural societies that sprang up in Mesopotamia" [17, p. 1]. This definition associates the creation of the state with the development of agrarian societies in the distant past. However, some other definitions also connect the creation of the state with the flourishing of human civilization, urbanization, and complex city life. From this perspective, Harrison and Boyd [18, p. 17] defined the state as: "The state in some form has existed since urbanized and complex societies arose in Egypt, China, India, and Mesopotamia over five thousand years ago. Since then, the more 'civilized' members of humanity have never been without the state". In the second definition, the age of the state reduces by half and it holds the idea that the state is an important machinery for the survival of human society. It underlines the importance of the state for a modern and civilized way of living. Meaning, a modern or civilized human life ultimately depends on the existence of a functional state.

The state is a political concept that comes into existence either by war or social contract. The history of the world shows the fact that some states degenerated from war, while others came out from social contracts. Meaning that ancient states all over the world were the outcome of war and conquest, while modern states are the product of people's consent. Political scientists associate the reasons behind the emergence of a modern state with the need for peace, security, justice, equality, and liberty. For example, Max Weber defines the state as "a political-institutional organization whose administrative staff can successfully exercise a monopoly of legitimate physical force in the execution of its orders" [19, p. 11]. This definition depicts the point that the state is all about accumulating strong physical power at hand and being able to use it legitimately to enforce laws, provide essential public services, and maintain order in a defined territory.

As it has been stated in the literature, the 'state' is the most contested concept in the area of social sciences. From earlier times till now, elites have been advocating ambivalent views about the 'State'. To be clear, scholars of political science and sociology defined the term 'state' from two extreme (i.e. positive and negative) viewpoints. From a positive perspective, the concept of 'state' refers to a political association that "provides an infrastructure in which conflict is mitigated by providing institutional checks and balances on power and/or through the redistribution of resources" [20, p. 300]. According to Greven [21, p. 45], the concept of the state refers to: "a human community that (successfully) claims the

monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory". Greven [21, pp. 45-46] also further adds a positive definition of 'state' that was originally drawn by Theda Skocpol as: "a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority. Any state first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organizations." Social contract theorists and their apostles also defined the concept of the state positively as: "the state is a political society constructed through an implicit social contract to provide certain basic functions to its members by those who are entrusted with political authority" [22, p. 3].

In light of the above positive definitions, one can deduce the point that the 'state' is the highest form of political association that provides basic services to its people. It is formed to defend an individual and/or society from internal and external threats. Its ultimate aim is to preserve peace and security within a defined territory. To this end, the state works to realize equality, liberty, law and order, prosperity, and ameliorate the conditions of disadvantaged members of a polity.

From a negative perspective, for example, followers of K. Marx consider the 'state' as: "an institution that stands for the interest of the dominant class" [22, p. 3]. They viewed the state as: "a vehicle for predatory elite interests that exploit society" [20, p. 300]. In other words, for these groups of thinkers, the state is a political organization that keeps the property of the haves from the have-nots. For Marxist scholars, the state is created not to preserve peace but to interrupt it; not to realize equality but to sustain inequality; not to defend the poor/disadvantaged but to exploit them. Supporters of this position work day and night not to build the state but to break down it. They further argue that if the state loses legitimacy and power, then the exploitation and domination of the lower class will automatically wither away. Thus, for them, the state should be abolished at the last stage of socialism i.e. communism to have a good life and polity. To be precise, Fukuyama [17, p. 1] viewed the opposite dimensions of the state as:

States have a wide variety of functions, for good and ill. The same coercive power that allows them to protect property rights and provide public safety also allows them to confiscate private property and abuse the rights of their citizens. The monopoly of legitimate power that states exercise allows individuals to escape what Hobbes labeled the "war of every man against every man" domestically but serves as the basis for conflict and war at an international level.

In addition to the above opposing definitions, recently, commentators brought a definition that seems neutral and dominant. Accordingly, this neutral and commonly used definition views the state as "an embodiment of people, territory, government, sovereignty, and recognition" [22, p. 3]. In short, the state must comprise at least these five essential components to claim the status of 'statehood'. To this end, the control of a recognized people, the control of an identifiable territory, the existence of relative permanency, the enjoyment of internal and external sovereignty, and international recognition can be considered the common features of all modern states regardless of the specific system of the state, the size of population and territory, the level of the economy, its ideological foundations, or the government bureaucracy that guides it [18]. Therefore, for this study, the term 'state' must be seen as a collection of various institutions that execute core functions that all are basic for the survival of a certain polity. We believe that these definitions and features of the 'state'

provide an adequate foundation to conceptualize the subsequent discussion on the nature of 'state-building'.

Questions such as what is state-building, when did the idea of state-building originate, what are the rationales behind the project of state-building, and how is the project of state-building become successful are the most important questions that will be examined subsequently. As works of literature, there is no universally agreed definition of the term 'state-building'. Like "state", the concept of "state-building" is more contentious and scholars discuss it in an obfuscated manner. However, most people use the term state-building to refer to "the intervention strategies of superpower countries like the USA to restore and rebuild the institutions and apparatus of the post-conflict states, for example, the bureaucracy" [23, p. 27]. In this sense, state-building is fundamentally institution-building.

State-building also refers to the process of constructing, re-constructing, and consolidating state institutions to better serve the local population. In a more related sense, Bogdandy et al [24, pp. 583-584] defined the concept as "State-building means the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of a public structure in a given territory capable of delivering public goods." As cited in Greven [21, p. 4], Francis Fukuyama defined state-building as: "the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones." The philosophy of state-building holds a central claim that international communities should first, identify weak and post-conflict states and second, should design mechanisms through which to transfer their bureaucratic systems and best institutions into those states. The state-building activity gives a full mandate to superpowers and international organizations to intervene in the internal affairs of fragile or weak states. It was primarily the USA's and UN's, but later also the European countries' responsibility to resolve institutional weaknesses and bureaucratic deficiencies in post-conflict environments and failing states.

As Greven quoted, "State-building refers, at its core, to militarized interventions by a foreign state or coalition with the explicit goal of creating a new regime, where the previous one has already collapsed, or of changing a regime that would otherwise fail" [21, p. 48]. This definition allows an international community to the extent of armed oppression to build peace and preserve security in weak states. The recent military interventions in Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan are typical examples and parts of the USA's state-building project.

Scholars also connected the core tenets of state-building with modernization, liberalization, security, the rule of law, free and fair elections, a peaceful transition of political power, and many other democratic principles. In this perspective, state-building refers to the transformation of Western liberal values and democratic principles to pre-modern and undemocratic states across the world. Westerners attempt to implant the legacies of modernization and liberalism in the non-Western world [25].

By and large, for this study, we will be confined and guided by the following definition: "State-building refers to the processes used to build a state's institution or set of institutions (formal or informal, economic or political, military or civil) that increase the state's capability to wield the 'legitimate use of physical force'; establish order; and seek economic means that support and sustain state functions" [21, p. 50]. The researchers believe that one of the major challenges to development in the Horn of Africa is the lack of capacities and institutions to execute governmental policies and strategies. Moreover, this definition gives also attention to the consolidation of formal and informal societal institutions as part of the state-building

project. Therefore, we believe that state-building in the Horn of Africa should create a striking balance between formal and informal institutions.

As our practical experience, the leaders in the Horn of Africa simply held the supreme political power of a state (either by fair or foul means) at hand, but they are practically incapable of enforcing laws, preserving order, providing basic services, and maintaining peace in their respective jurisdiction. Moreover, the most peculiar thing in the region is not only the existence of incompetent rulers but also the prevalence of too few as well as too weak institutions together with inefficient and politically divided public servants. Let us take Fukuyama's view cited by Krasner [26, p. 67] to verify this line of argument: "A key feature of many countries in the developing world is the gap between the formal claims of state authority, which mimic patterns in the advanced industrialized democracies, and the actual capacity to govern".

When did the idea of state-building emerge? "State-building developed and used from the late 1890s through the end of the Cold War, emphasized building loyal and politically stable subordinate states" [27, p. 257]. Writers of the area argued that since the beginning of the 20th century, the USA and Western European countries have been using the idea of state-building as an instrument to create loyal, ideologically identical, and politically stable states across the globe. Historically, the glimpse of state-building has progressed around the late 1890s, but it has become dominant and common in academia since the end of the Cold War. The contemporary discourse for state-building in the field of international politics has evolved in the post-Cold War period [28]. Regarding this, Algaw [22, p. 1] supplements:

The end of the Cold War ushered in the resurgence of internal conflicts across the Third World. These conflicts caused humanitarian disasters, and the breakdown of political authority, notably in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In response to these dynamics, peace-building, and state-building has become the twin goal of Western intervention policies and United Nations programs toward conflict-prone countries.

Accordingly, the theory and practice of state-building evolved in the 1890s but gained wider recognition and application since the 1990s. After the end of the Cold War, state-building was seen as a logical response to fragile states that have divided communities, legitimacy crises, weak institutions, security problems, neo-patrimonial systems, clientelistic political arrangements, and the like. These types of states characterized by the above traits are leveled as volatile and considered to be dangerous for their people and the international community due to their vulnerability to civil war, anarchy, conflict, instability, terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and dangerous diseases [22].

5. Typologies of the State

As contemporary researchers, there is no generally accepted classification of states due to the existence of variations among states in terms of ideology, capacity, legitimacy, efficiency, recognition, economy, technology, and system [29]. Political scientists call states by different names based on the levels of control, the sources of political power, the type of constitution, the degree of acceptance by the international community, the ability to provide political goods, and the like. The states across the world are not perfectly divided into socialist and capitalist, democratic and autocratic, liberal and developmental, strong and weak, etc. due to their mixed and inconsistent practice. We believe that this nature of the

state impedes the possibility of attaining universally agreed classifications of states. For example, Richmond [30, pp. 33-34] has persuasively described the multiple typologies of the state as:

Despite the conceptual framing of Westphalian sovereignty for the modern state and indeed because of historical debates about its provenance, there are many terms available to describe different types of states. Communist, socialist, capitalist, democratic, monarchical, constitutional, authoritarian, expansionist, totalitarian, bureaucratic, post-colonial, patrimonial, failed, failing, weak, and collapsed remain in the lexicon of terms to describe states.

However, for this study, our categorization hereunder is based on the level of capacity that the states have at hand. As we observe, states across the world are not found at the same level of economy, capacity, and efficiency. "States are much more varied in their capacity and capability than they once were" [31, p. 2]. In other words, some states are capable of preserving peace and security, and providing essential services to their citizens, while others are incapable of doing such basic functions that are expected from a modern state. Some states occur in a better position to sustain the socio-political and economic benefits of their inhabitants, while others appear in a volatile situation where the rights and freedoms of citizens fall under a temporal or permanent threat. For example, Max Weber [32] classified states as modern (i.e., they can preserve societal values and orders via formal institutions), and primitive/traditional (i.e., they can't guarantee the fundamental rights of human beings such as life, liberty, equality, and property) based on the ability to deliver political goods to their people. The subsequent lengthy quotation may illustrate this difference meticulously:

...the basic functions of the "state" are the enactment of the law (legislative function); the protection of personal safety and public order (police); the protection of vested rights (administration of justice); the cultivation of hygienic, educational, social welfare and other cultural interests (the various branches of administration); and, last but not least, the organized armed protection against outside attack (military administration). These basic functions are either totally lacking under primitive conditions, or they lack any form of rational order. They are performed instead, by amorphous ad hoc groups, or they are distributed among a variety of groups such as the household, the kinship group, the neighborhood association, the rural commune, and completely voluntary associations formed for some specific purpose [32, p. 905].

Recently, scholars of the area typologies modern states into four (Strong, Weak, Failed, and Collapsed) after a careful evaluation of the state regarding human and national securities, protection of human and democratic rights, provision of essential basic services, and the like [31]. Practitioners and policymakers launch the project of state-building when states are supposed to be incapable of providing these basic functions. It is demanding to understand the concept and objective of state-building without having adequate knowledge about the recent attributes (such as weak, fragile, volatile, failed, and collapsed) given to some third-world or post-conflict states. For example, how to create authoritative, legitimate, and effective bureaucracy in weak states and prevent state failure or collapse are the prior questions of the state-building project in the 21st century [31,33].

Richmond [30] further substantiates this claim as the state-building discourses and practices emerged in the 1990s mainly to construct or reconstruct failed states that could not maintain peace and security, and fulfill the material and non-material needs of their people.

Subsequently, we will clarify the imprecise and vague nature of the above states which are classified based on their potential in satisfying the basic needs of a political community. After that readers may easily comprehend the rationales behind the questions of why, when, and where the project of state-building is initiated by responsible bodies.

In strong states, citizens have a feeling of comfort and security because the government has a sufficient amount of power to effectively control its territory from internal and external threats. These states are successful in preventing and resolving conflicts at the local and national levels. Strong states can answer the socio-political and economic questions of their people quickly, fairly, and transparently. The existence of democratic institutions together with ethical and impartial public servants, a higher level of socio-political cohesion, peaceful transition of political power, protection of human and democratic rights, and provision of quality services are some of the manifestations of a strong state [29,31,33]. More broadly, Rotberg [31, p. 4] characterizes strong states as:

Strong states offer high levels of security from political and criminal violence, ensure political freedom and civil liberties, and create environments conducive to the growth of economic opportunity. The rule of law prevails. Judges are independent. Road networks are well maintained. Telephones work. Snail mail and e-mail both arrive quickly. Schools, universities, and students flourish. Hospitals and clinics serve patients effectively. And so on. Overall, strong states are places of enviable peace and order.

As Rotberg [31], the above basics must be easily accessible to call a given state as strong. Most of the time, these kinds of states presume themselves as superior and global moral agents to resolve the socio-political and economic crises of quasi or fragile states. When we see the practice and history of state-building, strong states such as the USA and Western European countries aim at the realization of a peaceful and legitimate state and effective bureaucracy in the Third World based on liberal norms and principles [30]. For them, being strong means, shouldering an extra-territorial responsibility to ensure international peace and security and to preserve world order. That is why strong states together with their multilateral corporations and regional organizations have been intervening in the domestic affairs of post-conflict states since the end of the Cold War. Their institutional, financial, and military strength gives them the chance to do whatever they want in weak or failed states [34].

In contrast to strong states, weak states fundamentally show poor performance in providing essential services such as justice, security, health, education, transportation, communication, electrification, and clean water to their inhabitants. "In weak states, the ability to provide adequate measures of political goods is diminished or diminishing. Physical infrastructural networks have deteriorated" [31, p. 4]. In these states, people feel insecurity and discomfort due to the existence of internal and external threats to peace. It is common to observe antagonistic religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other identity-based groups in weak states mainly to scramble for political and economic resources. Moreover, the prevalence of corruption, internal displacement, crime, illegitimate groups, unrepresentative leaders, and the like are the most known features of weak states [31]. Above all, there is a low level of socio-political unity among the entire community due to the unfair distribution of benefits and burdens in the state.

As Kreijen [29, p. 64] argued "State failure is a matter of degree and essentially a relative notion". As a result, all states that are called failed or fragile by the international community don't have the same legitimacy, capacity, and internal situation. For example, in

the Sub-Saharan African case, “Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are commonly understood as failed states” [29, p. 65]. However, they do not have identical failures in all functions that are expected from a rational state. Regardless of slight differences, failed states are known for endured violent conflicts and the inability to control some parts of their territory [30]. Rotberg [31, p. 5] explained this commonality among failed states as “there is no failed state without disharmonies between communities.”

In failed states, the ruling elites are busy not in building development projects and democratic institutions, but in resolving the perennial civil wars and conflicts between antipathetic groups. The presence of insurgent and terrorist groups, lawlessness, deep socio-political factions, high levels of human and drug trafficking, famine, tragic incidence, destruction of physical infrastructure, uncontrolled area, politically affiliated military, paralyzed police force, local currency plummet, foreign intervention, and the like are the exact manifestations of a failed state [29,31]. More precisely, Rotberg [31, p. 5] explained the conditions of failed states as:

Failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions. In most failed states, government troops battle armed revolts led by one or more rivals. Occasionally, the official authorities in a failed state face two or more insurgencies, varieties of civil unrest, and different degrees of communal discontent.

Finally, state collapse is an extreme form of failure in which there is no legitimate authority or responsible central government to administer the internal and external affairs of the state. In collapsed states, anarchy prevailed and law and order completely failed. Moreover, “security is equated with the rule of the strong” [31, p. 9]. The political and economic resources of the state easily fall into the hands of non-state warlords or local strongmen. These sub-state warlords started to govern a certain local area due to the complete disappearance of the previous central government. In the long run, these illegitimate sub-state actors can simply build their local security apparatus and claim a quasi-state just like current Somaliland [29,31,33]. As an empirical observation, this situation is rare when we look at the political histories and dynamics of states across the globe. However, some states couldn’t escape from collapse. In the book entitled “State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror”, Rotberg [31, p. 9] mentioned states that fulfilled the criteria of collapse as “when Somalia failed in the late 1980s, it soon collapsed.”

In a nutshell, one thing that should be remembered when we discuss the issues of state strength, failure, weakness, and collapse. All of the manifestations of strong, weak, failed, and collapsed states are not eternal. State failure is not a stagnant reality, but it is a changing phenomenon. “Failure is a fluid halting-place, with moving forward to weakness and backward into collapse always possible” [31, p. 10]. Strong or weak states may unexpectedly enter into an undesirable failure or collapse, but they can recover from such a situation through the consistent implementation of sound policies and strategies. We believe that state failure and collapse are not inescapable and unpreventable circumstances. Committed people and leaders can easily curve their worst conditions if they develop a culture of rational dialogue. The evils of state failure and collapse can be avoided if the root causes are identified and functioning solutions are applied [30, 31,35].

Concerning these typologies of the state, all of our interview participants leveled the majority of IGAD member countries except Kenya and Djibouti as failed and fragile. For them, the states in the Horn of Africa are characterized by weak institutional capacities,

antagonisms between formal and informal state institutions, economic and social disruption, economic and geographic isolation i.e., Eritrea, intra and interstate wars, low level of government performance, persistent social tensions, and the like.

That is why the researchers argue that countries in the greater Horn of Africa should first build their own respective states and preserve their peace and security before any attempt at regional integration. Because states of a certain region cannot solve their shared problems and cannot arrive at any phases of integration without having efficient and functional institutions (formal and informal) at national levels. Based on the above rationale, therefore, weak and fragile states in the Horn of Africa should consolidate formal and informal institutions that can effectively execute basic functions for the common good of their respective citizens. In turn, the state-building project would finally serve as a bridge to integrate the Horn of African countries on various issues. Therefore, we argue that to ensure regional integration in the IGAD region, both formal and informal state institutions should be impersonal, fair, and strong enough to execute transnational objectives.

6. Contemporary Debates on State-Building

The rationales behind the project of state-building are many. Scholars associated the theory and practice of state-building with many things, sometimes to opposing functions. For some groups of elites, state-building is the practice of creating effective governance, making peace, conducting free and fair elections, inviting opposing political parties to power, advancing state legitimacy, and strengthening state bureaucracy. For example, as Greven [21, p. 50] cites “State-building is the construction of institutional networks supplanting notables and linking the state to social classes and groups and the expansion of the state’s provision of public goods, particularly as the state assumes responsibility for establishing infrastructure, regulating the economy, and managing ties to the global economy.” However, others viewed state-building as a weapon of superpowers to easily control and intervene in the internal affairs of post-conflict states. It is a well-designed project to re-colonize Africa, Asia, and some other weak Latin American states in the cover name of institution-making and peace-building.

Due to the above contradictory views, there is an ongoing debate regarding the meaning, feasibility, and desirability of state-building both in academic and policy circles. Besides the positive things mentioned in support of state-building, there are also manifold problems associated with the theory and practice of state-building. The first criticism posed by scholars regarding state-building is its inclination to the ideology of neoliberalism. As we have stated earlier, the American project of state-building aims to create strong and legitimate states that are effective and consistent in implementing Western neoliberal values and principles such as judicial independence, accountability, individual liberty, transparency, rule of law, fair election, political pluralism, and so on. However, “liberalism is not a universally shared philosophy that flourishes everywhere” [27, p. 271]. The philosophy has no intellectual and societal foundations in the non-Western world. That is why the attempt at state-building has failed in Africa and other continents having too weak states. To strengthen this argument, Lake [27, p. 270] adds, “In less religious societies that nonetheless lack experience with democratic institutions, liberalism may clash with local practices and political thought, and will also fail to confer legitimacy on states.”

The second criticism pronounces that the practice of state-building privileges militarized and influential groups of fragile states to control governmental power. In the

name of state-building, the international community assigns an influential group to state power and this is witnessed in many African, Asian, and Eastern European countries. The history of the USA's directed state-building project has shown us armed groups of shadow states had a chance of controlling political power. For example, in Somalia, the powerful militarized group was led by General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, and in Iraq, the armed majority Shiites were pushed to the front with the support of the USA to control the central state administration [27]. The succeeding text may support this criticism:

In Somalia, for instance, the United Nations initially negotiated with the principal warlords, who enjoyed political power roughly in proportion to the size of their militias. By spring 1993, however, it began a process of democratization by building elected district-level councils, with the ultimate goal of creating a new country-wide representative body. This enraged the warlords who correctly saw this as a deliberate attempt to sideline them and empower others in society. The strongest warlord, General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, quickly broke with the United Nations process [27, pp. 271-272].

Therefore, the historical incident that we saw from the quotation tells us that "rules that preserve the power of formerly privileged groups will, by definition, not be democratic" [27, p. 278]. To this end, the theory and practice of the state-building project were criticized by many intellectuals due to its favor of armed groups and formerly privileged entities.

The third criticism is that the practice of state-building may finally create autocratic states. As we understand from the definition of state-building, one of its objectives is to constitute strong states in post-conflict regions to effectively enforce law and order. If post-conflict states become stable and strong, then they could be transformed into a predatory form of government. Because, in principle, if states once realized effective institutions like the military, then they would have a chance to oppress their people for a long time. In other words, these states, unfortunately, start to use their strong institutions not to serve the people but to subjugate and persecute them until another strong group emerges. In this regard, Lake [27, p. 279] puts the following:

Strong states may also be predatory states. In turn, populations need some safeguards against state power before they willingly accept its authority. Democracy is a primary but not the only means of regulating state power. By minimizing the importance of democracy, state-building risks creating states that are, ironically, too strong. Even though democracy may not be an end in itself, as in state-building, it should be accorded a higher priority for the instrumental reason that it helps control the state and thereby makes it easier for groups to trust and support their leaders.

So, this is a severe criticism that frequently comes from intellectuals who are living in shadow states. They usually offend and interrupt the attempt at state-building in their respective nations. For them, states should be neither too weak nor too strong.

Last but not least criticism that we found from the discourse of state-building is ineffective and therefore legitimate states may not be loyal to the values of their builders. As we deduce from the theory and practice of state-building, the intention of international communities (i.e. state-builders) is to create small, effective, and democratic states which are typically loyal to their socio-political and economic ideologies. To have a historical illustration of this critique, we put the subsequent note:

Implicitly, Americans have assumed that democratically elected leaders would support the United States and its interests around the globe. This rests on the notions that small-d democrats are inherently alike, and that democracies are innately peaceful and therefore favor the status quo, which largely complements America's position in the world today. This belief may also rest on the lessons learned from the successful state-building efforts in Germany and Japan after World War II, although as I argued above both cases were more complicated than any simple notion of democratization can explain. Nonetheless, the recent wave of democratically elected leftist governments in Latin America, including Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia, challenge this liberal notion [27, p. 273].

Therefore, the above historical account shows that states built by the USA and other Western European countries acted and behaved out of the interests and traditions of those states. Finally, this kind of situation may produce another round of conflict and affect international politics, and world orders and systems.

As we tried to show above, those criticisms and opposing perceptions emerged because countries have used the project of state-building to achieve various overt and covert objectives. However, this study looks at state-building from the perspective of its contribution to regional integration. For this, Kathryn Langat, one of the staff at IGAD head of mission to Ethiopia, indicated the point that the relative stability and strength of every Member State of the European Union have contributed a lot to their successful socio-economic integration. Accordingly, for Kathryn, states in the IGAD region must have functional institutions and internal peace to effectively carry out any kind of agreements and treaties aimed at regional integration. This is because shared cross-border problems can be solved only when Member States of the IGAD region have internal stability as well as permanent and functional institutions (formal and informal) at all levels of government, i.e., local, regional, and national.

7. The Synergy between State-Building and Regional Integration

Many states have been using the European Union as a model to build their respective regional organizations [36]. Some regional organizations are built to overcome a single regional problem, while others are established to tackle multiple problems. Having this rationale in mind, regional organizations across the world don't have identical objectives, functions, builders, interests, capacities, and sizes. When we examine the history of regional integration, each regional organization developed uniquely, responding to local circumstances informed by culture, language, ideology, history, and geography [37].

Why do adjacent states build regional organizations by denouncing their sovereignty? The answer to this question is obvious i.e. to integrate the states' cultural, socio-political, and economic resources to improve the living standards of inhabitants of a wider region. Hence, states constitute either supranational or intergovernmental organizations to make regional integration possible in all important aspects of a sub-region. The term regional integration has existed for more than half a century, a precise definition is not yet easy to articulate. Accordingly, we will state some of, but related definitions for the term regional integration. Regional integration can be connected with a voluntary association in which people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and economic settings, with different histories and unique ways of thinking, come together and simultaneously form a legal entity to achieve long-observed sub-regional or continental problems. The philosophy of regional integration

connects peoples and states in pursuit of identical socio-political as well as economic objectives [38]. To validate this definition, Peace [39, p. 7] portrays:

Regional integration refers to a situation where nation-states decide to pool their efforts towards achieving specific objectives. It may not necessarily involve committing themselves to integrate their independent economies. These states are interested in actualizing objectives, which may not be possible if they were acting unilaterally. Regional integration connotes a form of interdependence among nation-states. In establishing regional integration arrangements, sovereign states within a geographical space enter into a formal agreement to work together to actualize political and socio-economic benefits. More importantly, regional integration requires independent nation-states to cede their national sovereignty, make political commitments and sacrifices, and forego certain benefits in the interest of the larger body.

In general speaking, regional integration is the process of unifying sovereign states into a larger whole or a supra-national body to mitigate the overall spectrum of life. In this dynamic regional integration process, individual states willingly share their sovereign power with a newly established supra-state organization. This action paves the way for the supra-national authority to directly intervene in the socio-political as well as economic issues of member states. In this sense, individual states give up their sovereign power to enrich the standard of living at a sub-regional or continental level [40]. In uniformity of this assertion, Solomon [40, pp. 2-3] summarizes the definition of regional integration as:

Regional integration can be defined as the process or arrangement, where countries in a defined geographical area voluntarily surrender their sovereignty in one or more areas to carry out specific transactions, in the view of achieving a goal or enjoying specific benefits to a higher degree than they would individually. In regional integration arrangements, a supranational body is usually required to make decisions and participating States lose their sovereignty over some issues. Thus, regional integration involves some compromise on the part of member states' sovereign power but, should enhance the general quality of life for the citizens of those states.

Regional integration can be explained from three dimensions based on the definitions presented above. The first dimension of regional integration focuses on geographic issues (i.e. scope). This dimension of regional integration shows us the number of nation-states involved in an arrangement and the area incorporated in a sub-regional or continental organization. The second dimension of regional integration concentrates on substantive topics (i.e. width). Under this dimension, the sector, or activity (for example, trade, security, infrastructure, and the like) will be performed by the regional arrangement portrayed. The last dimension of regional integration rests on the degree of integration (i.e. depth). In this dimension, the amount of sovereignty that a state is ready to sacrifice for the sake of eradicating sub-regional or continent-wise problems [40].

To this rationale, both IGADD and its successor IGAD were constituted in 1986 and 1996 respectively by numerous actors, drivers, and institutional designs to alleviate transnational problems in the Horn of Africa region. The transition from IGADD to IGAD can be described as a kind of advancement from environmental-related objectives to broader objectives of regional cooperation and integration [41].

Article 7 of the IGAD Establishing Agreement comprises a long list of regional cooperation and integration objectives such as-promote joint development strategies, harmonize macro-economic policies and programmers in various fields; harmonize policies with regard to trade, customs, transport, communications, agriculture, and natural resources; promote free movement of goods, services, and people and the establishment of residence; create an enabling environment for trade and investment; achieve regional food security; assist efforts of Member States to collectively combat drought and other disasters; initiate projects for sustainable development of natural resources; develop a coordinated and complementary infrastructure, particularly in the areas of transport and energy; promote peace and stability in the sub-region; mobilize resources for the implementation of emergency, short-term, medium-term and long-term programs within the framework of sub-regional cooperation; and facilitate cooperation in research, development and application in the fields of science and technology [41].

As enshrined in Article 7 of the IGAD Establishing Agreement, the Horn of Africa region was envisioned to be open and competitive in an environment that allows the free movement of goods, services, persons, and capital. However, “the IGAD region, in comparison with the rest of the RECs in Africa (Such as the EAC and COMESA) has lagged in terms of economic and security integration” [10, p. 96]. Over the last three decades, IGAD has failed to put in place a regional strategy that avoids intra- and inter-state conflicts and a regional trade policy that facilitates closer socio-political and economic integration between Member States [42,43].

To this end, we argue that one of the major challenges for the poor performance of IGAD regarding regional integration is the existence of antipathetic and weak states in the region. The weakness of the IGAD Member States in maintaining peace and security, avoiding intra- and inter-state wars, mobilizing resources and knowledge to integrate the region, and promoting people-centered transnational cooperation is the major challenge of regional integration. The project of regional integration needs capable states to implement regional policies and strategies for the benefit of transnational communities. Regional integration is easier in regions having stable and capable states in addressing shared problems. Concerning this, Hersi and Akinola [10, p. 146] examined the question of how the project of regional integration is connected with the behavior of states in the Horn of Africa as:

Because of the lack of political stability of some of the member States of IGAD, like Somalia and South Sudan, the enmity between Eritrea and Djibouti, and Ethiopia’s political transitions, IGAD’s regional economic integration has suffered vital setbacks.

The above discussion, therefore, manifests that state-building is a cornerstone for successful regional integration. One of the synergies between those concepts is that the project of regional integration demands state-building. State-building plays an irreversible role in fulfilling the objectives of regional integration. The other symbiosis between state-building and regional integration that we found from this discourse is that both projects compromise the sovereign power of a state for the common good. It means that surrendering some sort of national sovereignty is a must during the process of state-building and regional integration. For example, in the process of state-building, superpowers like the USA, the UK, Germany, and others directly intervene in the internal affairs of weak states. Similarly, a different actor i.e. supra-national body or regional organization which is constituted by voluntary agreement regulates the internal business of member states.

8. Concluding Remarks

This study creates a bridge between state-building and regional integration and analyzes how state-building could be used for regional integration in the Horn of Africa. It is about state-building and its importance in realizing socio-political and economic integration in the Horn of Africa. In other words, the study attempted to answer the questions of what is state-building and how can it lead to regional integration in the IGAD region. The researchers argue that state-building must be seen as an approach and a necessary strategy to integrate the IGAD Member States successfully. To this end, the paper discussed the characteristics of strong or functional states and their ability to offer high levels of peace and security, political freedom, civil liberty, and economic development. For this, the study showed several illustrations of successful state-building leading to regional integration in other parts of the world. One such illustration is the European Union, which includes 27 stable and peaceful states, has become a major political and economic power in the world by promoting economic cooperation and preventing future conflicts between member states. Another illustration is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which incorporates 10 functional states and has contributed a lot in promoting regional integration in the Southeast Asian region.

However, the existence of weak and fragile states in the Horn of Africa has affected the process of regional integration. The Horn of Africa region is staffed by either weak or fragile states that show poor performance in providing essential services and are characterized by intra and inter-state wars, maladministration, corruption, migration, etc. The existence of these stark realities in the Horn of Africa has served as a prohibiting factor in the implementation of regional integration agendas. Accordingly, state-building is necessary for weak and fragile states of the Horn of Africa to create a conducive environment for peaceful cooperation and regional integration. This is because state-building in the Horn of Africa would facilitate regional integration by creating strong institutions and systems at a national level and by connecting Member States in areas such as transportation, communication, trade, healthcare, education, agriculture, manufacturing, and mining at a regional level.

As a result, the study recommends the following important points for successful state-building: First, the states in the Horn of Africa should be built by their people and government because effective state-building depends upon the ownership and initiative of local people at the grassroots level. If a state is built by external actors, then it will be doomed to failure. Second, state builders should consolidate the state without eliminating or affecting some important informal institutions. The formal and informal institutions of the state should co-exist peacefully. In this sense, actors of state-building should balance the striking difference between modern apparatuses and traditional institutions inherited from the past. Third, IGAD should invest more in the people of the region to ensure socio-political and economic cohesion by crafting homegrown policies, designing appropriate institutions, and critically appraising the neoliberal norms of regional integration.

Finally, the researchers believe that this study hasn't provided sufficient and satisfactory answers to the research questions raised. However, it will serve as a reference for scholars in the field to conduct further research in the Horn of Africa and other regional arrangements. The research questions that have been raised in this study should be further investigated by other scholars to provide functional solutions to challenges of state-building and regional integration in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

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