

SOPSEA 2022: Ethnolinguistic mosaic in East Africa and Their Impact on the Stability of the Horn of Africa

The SOPSEA 2022 project focuses on a broad region composed of six countries: Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan. The Horn of Africa is a real religious and ethnolinguistic mosaic, characterized by striking physical, social, and political diversity.

Despite this heterogeneity, both historical and contemporary inter- and intra-state relations within these six countries have been largely shaped by a limited number of population groups. These include the Nilotic peoples in Sudan and South Sudan; the Amhara, Oromo, Tigrayans, and Afar in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti; and the Somalis, represented by major clan families such as the Darood, Isaaq, Rahanweyn, Dir, and Hawiye.

The central state's approach to ethnic and clan-based representation plays a key role in shaping conflicts of interest - often more significant than ethnic or cultural differences themselves.

While both the absence and the overconcentration of central authority appear to be major factors of instability, tribal and ethnic identities are frequently instrumentalized by rival factions as political tools for mobilization and conflict.

The SOPSEA project aims to explore the following research question: **How do ethnic and clan divisions in the Horn of Africa contribute to instability within region's states?**

