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Switzerland's Political and Economic Role in Cold War Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1968-1979: Angola, Mozambique and the Ogaden (working title)

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This dissertation analyses Switzerland's political and economic role in the main Cold War crises in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1960s and 1970s: The conflicts in Angola and Mozambique and the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia. These conflicts were profoundly shaped by interventions of the United States, the Soviet Union and other Cold War actors that sought to increase their influence in the Third World. Thus, they had a considerable impact on the global East-West conflict in one of the key periods of the Cold War, when superpower détente gradually weakened and the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union reached a new peak. My dissertation is part of a research project on Switzerland's role in the Cold War in the Third World at the University of Lausanne, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and directed by Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl and Sandra Bott. This project is part of a growing body of research that focuses on the important role that the Third World played during the Cold War, ever since the publication of Odd Arne Westad's seminal study, *The Global Cold War*.¹

Switzerland's role during the late Angolan and Mozambican independence war (both countries achieved their independence from Portugal in 1975), the Angolan Civil War in 1975/1976 and the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977/1978 is approached from two angles. First, I look at Switzerland's bilateral relations with each of the four countries. Key aspects are economic exchanges, diplomatic relations, and humanitarian and development aid. The focus is mainly on members of different governmental agencies, but the interests of non-governmental actors are also taken into account, notably companies and banks with specific interests in these countries, Swiss missionaries and solidarity movements. Switzerland's bilateral relations with Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Somalia serve as a background to the analysis of Swiss actions and policy choices during the conflicts.

The second research axis focuses on Switzerland's role in the system of the Global Cold War. Swiss foreign policy during the latter half of the 20th century has been strongly influenced by the Cold War. Its tradition of neutrality prevented the country from officially aligning with either of the two blocs, and the Swiss people even refused membership in the United Nations. At the same time, Swiss leaders and the majority of its population were strongly anti-communist and had close economic and political relations with the Western bloc. In the ideologically highly charged context of the Cold War, Swiss leaders constantly feared criticism of their neutrality and sought to prove its utility by underlining the country's commitment to humanitarian aid and by offering mediation in conflicts. Switzerland's position during the conflicts in Angola, Mozambique and the Ogaden was thus strongly influenced by its conception of neutrality. The fact that all four countries had a Marxist government posed

¹ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

an additional challenge for the Swiss government. Wherever possible, comparisons will be drawn with Third World policies of other neutral countries, such as Sweden. This dissertation will thus not only improve our understanding of Switzerland's role during the Global Cold War and the country's relations with sub-Saharan Africa, but also shed new light on the role of neutral countries and small States during the conflicts in Southern Africa and the Horn.