

***Segmented Pluralism and Democratisation in Africa: The Case  
of Ethiopia***

By  
Youssef Ahmed Kamal

Submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Politics and International Studies

June 2004

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

This dissertation would not have been completed had it not been for the contribution and assistance of innumerable individuals and institutions. Although all of them cannot be acknowledged here, my sincere gratitude for their help is registered in these pages. First of all, I am grateful to the Danish Social Science Research Council for their support in facilitating this research. Second, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Professor Lionel Cliffe, my supervisor and the director of my dissertation committee, who has been most generous with his time and intellectual resources even after he officially retired from the School of Politics and International Studies, Leeds University. His continuing support and his faith in my ability carried me through the program despite repeated obstacles and frustrations. Without his support, my academic path would have not come to a successful end.

Third, I am grateful to Dr. Morris Szeftel who served as the leading official supervisor after Professor Cliffe officially retired. Even though he joined the project at the final hours he contributed with a valuable advice for which I am grateful. My sincere thanks also to Professor David Beetham, Dr. Ray Bush, and the administrative staff in particular to Caroline Wise for administrative and practical support during these years. Fourth, I am very grateful for the contribution and help of many friends and colleagues of the School of Politics and International Studies, Leeds University, in particular, Cosma Orsi, and Ben White, the Institute for International Studies (former Centre for Development Research) at Copenhagen, and the Institute of International Development Studies at Roskilde University—in particular Roger Leys, Nina Nyberg Sørensen, Fiona Wilson, Finn Stuputat, Ravinder Kaur, Pennilla Sørensen, Christian Lund and finally Uffe Jakobsen of Copenhagen University.

I owe the largest debt of gratitude, to the countless Ethiopians who helped me with this project, but who must remain anonymous because of its sensitive nature. During my time in the field in Ethiopia I was met with both warmth and a willingness to cooperate and help at every step of the research. A special thanks is extended to Dr. Assefa Medhane who was not only willing to meet and discuss the subject of devolution and ethnic federalism, but who then opened the door for me to carry out such detailed and extensive research. Finally, I am most grateful to my wife Gabriella Blomroos, who has been so patient and helpful, as was our son Tobias, who by the age of two absorbed

words such as work, office in his vocabulary. Thanks also to my other son Alexander. They have been a constant source of inspiration, and without their patience and understanding this work could not have been done.

## DEDICATION

I dedicated this dissertation to my mother Hawa Adam who passed away just few months before the final submission of this work. She always inspired me to do my best and I did.

---

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

---

**Thesis Title:** Segmented Pluralism and Democratisation in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia

**Author:** Youssef Kamal

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science

**Date of Submission:** June 2004

### *Abstract*

The principal aim of this dissertation is to examine the dynamics of the contemporary reconstruction of the Ethiopian state on the basis of “ethnic federalism” and democratisation. Among the many African multiethnic polities, Ethiopia is the only country that recognises ethnicity explicitly as an organising principle, even to the extent of de-emphasising the idea of a unitary state and national identity. According to Article 39 (1) of the new Ethiopian Constitution, “every nation, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia has a right to self-determination, including secession.” No other constitution (except, briefly, the former Soviet Constitution) has ever gone so far as to allow such a right. This is perhaps understandable in view of the recent history of regional and ethno-political violence in Ethiopia.

The study adopts an historical approach using a qualitative methodology. It analyses and demonstrates how the policies of state centralisation and Amhara hegemonic control transformed ethnic identity into nationalist mobilisation and conflict that finally ended military rule and brought about the demise of Amhara hegemony. It then examines the government that replaced the military regime of Mengistu, its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of “ethnic federalism” and the democratic accommodation of diversity.

The study finds that Ethiopia’s political system that began in 1991 has successfully established a new federal democratic order but has so far failed to become a truly “self-governing unit” and consolidated democracy. Democratisation and devolution of power opened channels for Ethiopian nations and nationalities to participate as equal citizens in Ethiopian political life and to access to political power, resources, and to protect their ethnic interests both at the national and local levels. It resulted in the formation of local autonomy where regional states were set up on the basis of ethnicity.

Ethiopian political change has taken place under inauspicious circumstances that are generally unfavourable to democratic transition and consolidation. And, whilst the EPRDF has made major strides towards successful democratisation in spite of these conditions, it has been unable to consolidate fully the new federal institutions in Ethiopia. As a result, it has instead been transformed into a pseudo-federal and democratic state with minority [Tigrean] hegemony at the centre.

The study concludes that non-democratic federalism, with which the EPRDF regime tried to experiment, can generate violence rather than serving as a political panacea for ethnic conflict, as also attested by Yugoslav and Soviet experience. The study stresses that successful federalism requires the end of TPLF hegemony and a democratic arrangement that can facilitate “real self-government” for the nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia in line with the new Ethiopian Constitution. It notes that a democratic mechanism is effective as a means of dealing with ethnic cleavages in plural societies like Ethiopia. Thus, only if Ethiopia’s democratisation can truly progress, can its political integration also advance and support for separatist movements consequently weaken. If not, ethno-political conflict will continue and at worst the Yugoslav scenario might follow.

Clearly the study of Ethiopian efforts at democratic change has relevance for similar problems beyond its boundaries. Recent events around the world have shown that nationalist conflicts are an important feature of the post-Cold War World. Although not a completely new phenomenon, ethnic conflicts are considered crucial challenges to national and international politics alike and are often accompanied by a gradual collapse of state authority, particularly in Africa. The persistence of ethnic identity in developed societies as well as in the former communist and developing states has challenged theories that assume that ethnic identity would disappear through modernisation. The ongoing civil war in many countries illustrates the problems of ethno-political conflicts and the needs for its management. Democratisation and power-sharing is emerging as a key element in contemporary [post] civil war settlements and to manage conflict in deeply divided societies.

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iv
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	vii
<b>MAPS</b>	ix
<b>Chapter one</b>	
<b>Introduction: Democracy and Ethno-political conflict Management</b>	1-18
<b>Chapter two</b>	
<b>Theoretical Framework: Ethnonationalist Resurgence and Conflict</b>	19-54
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
<b>The Institutional Management of Ethno political Conflict</b>	55-93
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
<b>Political History: The Establishment of Centralised Government in Ethiopia</b>	94-121
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>The Rise and Fall of the Military Regime (1974-1991)</b>	122-167
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
<b>Top-Down Transition: Federalism and Ethnopolitical Accommodation in Ethiopia</b>	168-212
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	
<b>Democratisation From Above: Power-Sharing or Hegemonic Control</b>	213-263
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	
<b>Conclusions and Summary</b>	264-274
<b>Bibliography</b>	275-301

---

## **Acronyms**

---

AAPO	All Amhara People's Organisation
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
ANDP	Afar National Democratic Party
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front
BGPDUF	Benishangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front
AMC	Agricultural and Marketing Corporation
CAFDPE	Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democratic Ethiopia
CELU	Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions
COEDF	Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces
COR	Council of Representatives
Derg	Amharic acronym for Military Committee
EDP	Ethiopian Democratic Party
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EFFORT	Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (now ANDM)
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front (now PFDJ)
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ERRC	Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
ETA	Ethiopian Teachers Association
Gada	(Oromo) Traditional Oromo age-set social system
Gemgama	"Evaluations"
GPDP	Gambella People's Democratic Party
HoF	House of Federation
HNL	Harari National League
HPR	House of People's Representatives
IFLO	Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia
Kebele	(Amharic) neighborhood level of administration
MEISON	Amharic acronym for All Ethiopian Socialist Movement
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONC	Oromo National Congress
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation
PDO	People's Democratic Organisation
PDM	People's Democratic Movement
PDRE	Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
SAP	Structural Adjustment plan
SEPDC	Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Coalition
SNNPRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State
SPDP	Somali People's Democratic Party
SPO	Office of Special Prosecutor
TAND	Tigrean Alliance for National Democracy
TDA	Tigrean Development Association

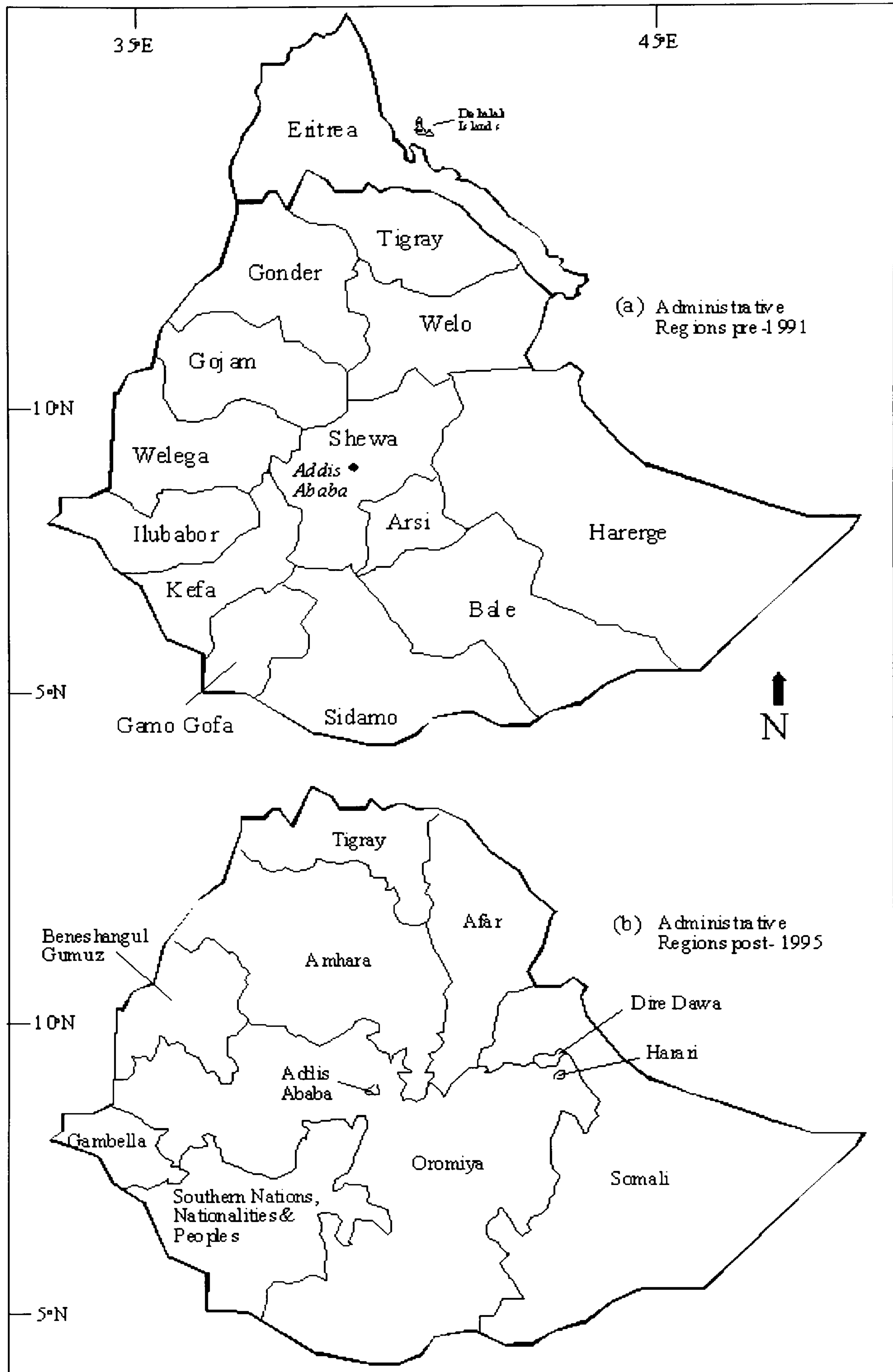
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPDM	Tigray People's Democratic Movement
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front



Map 1 Menelik's Conquest



Adapted from Trimingham (1976)



Map (a) the Pre-1991 & Map (b) the post-1991 map of Ethiopia

# Chapter one

## *Introduction*

---

In the 1990s, nearly all of Africa's fifty-four states have undergone dramatic political changes. Whether through transitions from war to negotiated peace agreements, through guided reforms to multiparty politics, or through battlefield victories that swept rebel movements into power, the stereotypical African one-party state—a common pattern of politics since rapid decolonisation and independence began in the early 1960s—is a relic of the past. Africa has seen scores of new governments come to power seeking to inaugurate a new era that displaces the paradigmatic one-party or military-led “patrimonial” states that held sway over the continent for thirty years (Reynolds and Sisk 1999:1)

While some seek to dispel the early illusions about democratic consolidation, others simply ask outright whether the “third wave” is over. Certainly, for Africa, a critical re-examination of the course of political liberalization on the continent is warranted (Diamond 1996:1)

If, at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, we examine African politics through the eyes of political scientists, we would suffer from double vision. On the one hand, there are grounds for optimism in that more states than ever before have attempted to make democratic transitions (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997, Joseph 1999). On the other hand, despite these positive trends, there is a darker side to the picture. Many democratisation attempts have failed outright, while others remain chronically unstable and still others are severely restricted by what Diamond terms pseudo-democracy (cf. Diamond 1999, Diamond and Plattner 1999, Joseph 1999, Ottaway 1999). According to studies of transitions, most newly democratising states stagnate in an intermediate category that mixes procedural democracy with “illiberal” aspects (cf. Zakeria 1997, Diamond 1999).

After independence the majority of African states rapidly abandoned democratic systems<sup>1</sup>, often as a result of concerns that ethnic divisions would undermine stability.<sup>2</sup> Most, if not all post-colonial African states (including Ethiopia<sup>3</sup>) adopted a centralised system of

---

<sup>1</sup> As Zack Williams et al. notes “the democratic structures inherited from the departing imperial power was soon destroyed and in their place a mixture of one-party states supplemented by decentralized despotism was instituted (see, Williams et al. 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast, Nyerere of Tanzania, Kaunda of Zambia, among others were those who argued that only one party system or “guided” democracies would contain the social tensions in multiethnic post-colonial national states.

<sup>3</sup> Note that Ethiopia is not a post-Colonial African state and therefore Ethiopia is seen as being in Africa but not being of Africa (for a history of the modern of Ethiopian state, see, chapter four). For our purpose here I argue that despite not being of Africa, Ethiopia shares all the problems (e.g. underdevelopment, weak institutions, state centralisation, despotism, diversity and ethno-political conflicts) of other post-colonial African states.

governance, claiming that this was necessary for political stability, national unity and development (Wunsch and Olowu 1990, Bayart 1993, Ake 1996).

During the Cold War period authoritarian one-party, one-man and/or military regimes were either tolerated or encouraged by the superpowers for political reasons (Jackson 1990, Clapham 1996).<sup>4</sup> At the same time a body of academic theory also saw authoritarian systems as the most appropriate institutional form for nation-building and economic development (cf. Huntington 1968, Leftwich 1996).

Three decades later we can see that these centralised and authoritarian regimes produced neither socio-economic development nor stability, as both academics and post-colonial leaders had argued.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, many scholars confirm the "failure" of African states to cope with both development and diversity or multi-ethnicity. It is a failure, as Wunsch and Olowu put it, of the "last, perhaps most serious vestige of Western colonialism" (Wunsch & Olowu 1990:18, see also, Chazan et al. 1999, Zartman 1995, Bayart 1993, Bayart et al. 1999). The failure of political institutions to accommodate diverse interests (ethnic, religious, linguistic etc.) has generated conflict. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) stated recently (Yearbook 2000) that Africa is the most conflict-ridden region of the world and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is on the increase.<sup>6</sup> The continuing civil unrest throughout much of the continent, from Somalia

---

<sup>4</sup> In the immediate post-war years, ideological, political, and military objectives shaped US-Soviet competition to attain a favourable balance of power and, to a considerable degree, these developments influenced the nature of the rivalry in the third world. Moreover, Jackson and Rosberg (1982) argued that one can explain why African states continue to lack the empirical requisites of statehood by analysing the role played by judicial statehood and the norms of international societies (see also Jackson 1990).

<sup>5</sup> It is clear that nationalism, in its most virulent and xenophobic strains, is far from dead in the contemporary world. Contrary to the forecasts of modernisation theorists (who predicted a decrease in the salience of ethnic cleavages as societies became more developed in terms of urbanisation, industrialisation and literacy rates) (Lipset 1960, 1994), ethnic divisiveness shows no signs of abating. A brief glance at the international record of ethnically-driven conflicts in recent years reveals that "ethnicity" as a political factor cannot be consigned to the dustbin of pre-industrial, agrarian history. Particularly following the end of the Cold War, ethnic conflicts erupted in former communist countries in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, while calls for autonomy and national self-determination resounded throughout the former Soviet Union, East and Central Europe, North America (Canada), and the Horn of Africa (cf. Connor 1999; Gurr 1993, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> By the late 1990s, wars had increasingly taken on a regional character, especially in the greater Horn, the Great Lakes region, and Southern Africa. As of mid-1999, large-scale wars were ongoing in Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo (RDC), Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan. In countries such as Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, internecine civil war degenerated into state collapse. Then there were the Rwandan and recent DR Congo massacres/genocide. Low-intensity conflicts plague several countries, including Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Senegal, and Uganda. Other countries suffer internal instabilities which could evolve into greater

and Sudan in the east to Liberia and Sierra Leone in the west, and Congo (CDR) in the centre, Angola in the south (just to mention a few),<sup>7</sup> leave observers sceptical of the democratic potential of most of Africa (Zartman 1995, Ottaway 1997, Joseph 1999, Diamond and Plattner 1999, Diamond 1999). Furthermore, many of these civil conflicts have had a large ethnic component which leads some scholars to conclude that ethnic conflict is practically inevitable in Africa's multi-ethnic states (Ottaway 1997, Glickman 1995).

These observations are not new per se. In fact, Arthur Lewis argued as early as 1965 that, for the new states of Africa "the fundamental political problem is neither economic policy nor foreign policy, but the creation of nations out of heterogeneous peoples" (Lewis 1965:49-50). He asserted that African societies were marked first and foremost by their plurality, not their class divisions, and warned that their post-independence gravitation toward the centralised or mono-ethnic constitutional models of their colonisers was a fundamental mistake (*ibid.*). Moreover, Lewis wrote:

Plurality is the principal political problem of most of the new states created in the twentieth century. Most of them include people who differ from each other in language or tribe or religion or race... The democratic problem in plural society is to create political institutions which give all the various groups the opportunity to participate in decision making, since only thus can they feel that they are full members of a nation (Lewis 1965:49-50).

Until the last decade, in the majority of the African cases, ethnic or national claims would normally be solved by, for example, integration and/or assimilation of the elite into the dominant culture, by elimination or by hegemonic control<sup>8</sup>; in other words, by a denial of plurality and cultural, linguistic or group rights, because the most important goal was seen to be the creation of national unity. Today, after the Cold War, in the age of

---

civil strife. For the post-Cold war civil wars and its consequences see for example, Cliffe and Luckham 1999, Joseph ed. 1999, Zartman ed. 1995, Williams et al. 2002.

<sup>7</sup> A recent report on the causes of conflict in Africa by the Secretary General of the United Nations found that in 1996 14 of 53 countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflict, accounting for more than half of all-war related deaths globally (UN 1998). The social and economic impacts of the continent's many conflicts are staggering. Globally, five of the ten countries generating the most refugees are in the eastern Africa region alone. It is estimated, for instance, that 29% of Rwanda's population live as refugees in neighbouring countries, and 12% of Eritrea's (Renner 1996). Three countries in the eastern Africa region, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Ethiopia, and Somalia, rank in the top-ten refugee hosting countries worldwide (Renner 1996).

<sup>8</sup> In his study of three African regimes, Micheal Schwartzberg explains that leaders such as Moi (Kenya), Mobutu (Congo), and Biya (Cameroon), have successfully continued to remain in power through co-option, and subversion of movements directed against them and their regime (Schwartzberg 1999) see also Chazan et al. (1999).

“democratisation”, such solutions have undergone extensive change and “many policymakers and scholars alike believe that broadly inclusive government, or power sharing, is essential for successful conflict management in societies beset by severe ethnic conflicts” (Sisk 1996:4).<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that African countries are unlikely to achieve stability in the absence of radical political reforms that can accommodate such diversity. In particular, the greatest challenge facing many African countries is the establishment of democratic institutional arrangements that can actively deal with ethnic diversity and facilitate peaceful co-existence of population groups.

While identity conflicts are raging in many Sub-Saharan African countries, only a few states have explored the possibility of accommodating diversity through power-sharing and/or consociational democracy. Among the many African multiethnic polities, Ethiopia seems to be the only country that *officially* recognises ethnicity in such an explicit manner as an organising principle and goes to such an extent as to de-emphasise the idea of a unitary state and national identity. As Young notes:

Devolution of state power has been on the political agenda of governments in Africa since the 1970s when the failure of centralised regimes became increasingly apparent. However, no African governments has seriously entertained the idea of devolving power to ethnically based regions, much less explicitly granting their constituent elements the legal rights to secede. And in the past Ethiopian leaders have been consistent in their efforts—usually through repressive means—to overcome regional, religious, and ethnic divisions, weaken local administration, and establish strong central governments. However, the country’s current Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government has made devolution of state power to ethnically based local administration, including the right of secession, the centrepiece of its programme (Young 1997:1)

Despite his criticism of the current experiment and its outcome (see chapter 8) Harbeson (2001, 1998), also points out the uniqueness of the post-Mengistu Ethiopian political experiment. He formulates the development in this way:

In recent years, the major focus on mediating *ethnic conflict*, that has been prominent throughout the continent, has perhaps centred less than it might on *accommodation* of ethnic interests as an element of state building. The most prominent and innovative recent such initiative has taken place in Ethiopia where the regime of Meles Zenawi has attempted to construct an ethnically confederated Ethiopian state from amidst the ruins of the empire and Mengistu era (Harbeson 2001:11).

---

<sup>9</sup> A recent proponent of Consociationalism or power sharing democracy is John McGarry (2002). In his recent article ‘*Democracy*’ in Northern Ireland: Experiments in self-rule from the Protestant Ascendancy to the Good Friday Agreement”, he argues that only consociational democracy can work for Northern Ireland. The case of Northern Ireland (and also Canada, Spain and Russia) demonstrates that the problem of identity conflict is not only a phenomenon of “third world” or developing countries.

---

While in many respects unique, Ethiopia presents a revealing test case. The failure of the over-centralised Ethiopian imperial state to redress its accumulated structural and ethno-national problems not only led to its ultimate collapse but also necessitated the search for alternative modalities for re-organising the empire state (Mengiesteab 1997, Joseph 1998, Harbeson 1998, Keller 1995). The Ethiopian experience therefore yields useful experience of the political aspects of devolution of power based on ethnicity. Whether or not devolution of power can foster democratic political changes or even peace by making the state more accountable is now an issue of scholarly interest. This is true especially since the crisis of the state in today's Africa is largely due to a failure to evolve political institutions sufficiently adaptable, flexible, and complex to resolve conflicts peacefully and foster economic and social development (Wunsch & Olowu 1990, Ake 1996, Bayart, et al. 1999). The Ethiopian experiment also provides a test case of whether the federalist approach can promote real political democratisation.

### **Aims and Questions of the Study**

The general aim of this study is to explore the growing interest in the notion of ethno-political conflict and, in the context of ethno-political conflict, the best possible arrangement for the management of political strife.

The *theoretical aim* of this study is to advance an analytical framework that draws attention to the institutional arrangements for coping with identity conflicts and/or accommodation of diversity. The central theoretical questions guiding this research are: Do ethnic divisions in a nation inevitably lead to political violence? What are the factors that foster political violence in multiethnic societies? What are the ways by which political violence can be managed in these societies? Beyond these three principal questions, three additional subordinate questions will be posed to specify the analysis: Do democratic systems manage ethno-political conflicts more effectively than authoritarian systems? What kinds of democratic institutions manage identity/ethno-political conflicts most effectively? Are some types of democratic institutions better than others in the management of violent forms of political conflict? For example, do federal, "consensus" or power-sharing" democratic institutions do a better job in ethnic conflict management than authoritarian, centralised systems?

The *empirical aim* is to analyse ethno-political conflict and institutional arrangements in post-Mengistu Ethiopia. The collapse of the authoritarian regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam brought the end to 17 years of military dictatorship and the beginning of a process of peace and democratisation. Under the new regime, called the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Front (EPRDF)<sup>10</sup>, changes in the institutions and the state reflected and facilitated the increasing participation and representation of social and ethnic groups in national politics. This process was accelerated by the adoption of the new constitution in 1994, that gives the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia the right to self-determination including secession (art.39). In 1993, prior to the constitution, but in line with its general thrust, after almost two years as a *de facto* state Eritrea achieved its independence from the Ethiopian empire state. Eritrea's independence is a striking accomplishment given the rarity of successful secession, defined as the achievement of independent statehood. Prior to Eritrea's victory, only Bangladesh in 1971 had successfully broken away from an already established state in the Cold War era despite dozens of secessions wars since 1945 (why and how will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6).<sup>11</sup>

Given the paucity of successful state reformation and peaceful restructuring (compared for example to state collapse in Somalia after the departure of the military regime of Siad Barre), scholars and diplomats have pointed to the case of Ethiopia as a model of conflict management and democratisation that should be emulated by other African nations emerging from war and authoritarianism (Henze 1998, Young 1997). While the Ethiopian transitions have certainly been more successful than those in states such as Somalia, Sudan or Angola, we must not overestimate what has been accomplished. Post-Mengistu Ethiopia has only partly implemented the "right of nation, nationality and people" to self-determination (FDRE Constitution 1995). Nor has the EPRDF regime implemented the liberalisation of the command economy and the democratisation of Ethiopian society.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> An umbrella organisation, comprising the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), which changed its name in 1994 to the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), and the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO).

<sup>11</sup> The international community continues to deny diplomatic recognition of Somaliland after 12 years of *de facto* status as a state.

<sup>12</sup> In the Ethiopian context democratisation is primarily seen as involving the recognition and realization of "nationality" rights, meaning ethnic group rights. These include not only use of the indigenous language, cultural expression, and regional self-government, but also the "unconditional right to self-determination," as the new constitution states in article 39 (1).



---

There is substantial evidence of these omissions as well as state measures that violate the constitution and that undermine the nation's transition to democracy.<sup>13</sup> The EPRDF regime has continued to face serious legitimacy problems<sup>14</sup> and challenges from ethnopolitical and pan-Ethiopian opposition groups. This difficulty has been compounded by single party dominance of the state. As a result of several pitfalls in an attempt to democratise the Ethiopian state and minority control, interethnic and intraethnic conflicts continue in much of the country today.

By providing an empirical illustration of the analytical framework, this study attempts to enhance our understanding of democratisation and ethno political-conflict management in Ethiopia. The more specific empirical questions are: What is the link between state-building (historical process) and ethno political conflicts in Ethiopia? How did successive regimes respond to the “national question” or to the accommodation of diversity? Why did such response, if any, fail? What are the forces that led to the collapse of the former regimes? To what extent has the present regime’s policy with ethnofederal experiment and other forms of power-sharing made progress? In sum: what are the links between ethno political conflicts and the current power-sharing and/or ethno federal experiment in Ethiopia? In a longer historical perspective: what links are there between democracy and nation-state-building in Ethiopia and what progress has been made? And what challenges still remain? Unless one considers the Ethiopian experiment a total failure, these questions are crucial for understanding the Ethiopian path to democracy and nation-state building. The theoretical as well as empirical questions will be specified to focus the analysis, and hence additional sub-questions will be introduced in the various chapters.

---

<sup>13</sup> Firstly, human and civil rights were enshrined in the national constitution, but there have been well-documented violations of them. Secondly, civil society organizations and an independent press are allowed to operate, but under precarious conditions. Thirdly, the right of association and multiparty democracy are constitutionally guaranteed, but some parties are declared illegal while those that are allowed to operate are under serious pressure. Fourthly, several elections have been held but so far all of them have been seriously flawed. Fifthly, there are constitutionally recognised rights for ethnic groups and a decentralization of power was initiated for their practical application, but the reality on the ground is a new ethnocratic state under the command of the Tigrean minority. As a result, intra-and interethnic conflicts have continued in much of the country.

<sup>14</sup> According to one US Embassy official, it will take a least a generation for the Tigreans to build legitimacy and trust among the other ethnic groups (Interview, March 2000).

---

## Relevance of the Study

As mentioned earlier, intrastate violence and national disintegration are among the most pressing problems facing scholars and practitioners in the twenty-first century. In the past ethnic groups seeking some measure of self-determination<sup>15</sup> often met blanket rejection. This reflected the fear that encouraging such movements would only facilitate independent statehood for every ethnic group, ethnically homogenous states, and consequently a highly unstable international order. So in the past, by whatever statesmanship or institutions African states were ruled and however fragile their position was, international norms of territorial integrity and non-interference in internal state affairs, overrode the right to self-determination and other democratic rights. In fact on many occasions the international community failed to punish violations of human rights in many states in post-colonial Africa.

Promoting power-sharing among mobilised ethnic groups is appealing to the leaders of multinational states and the international community as a solution to internal conflicts. Frustrated by the lack of success with other approaches, many international actors have turned to power-sharing as a “realistic solution” to address such conflicts. Power-sharing maintains the integrity of existing borders and is compatible with liberal democracy, while diminishing majoritarian democracy’s destabilising side-effects in deeply divided countries. Power-sharing is often seen as a way to achieve inclusivity, avoid spoilers in the peace process, and accommodate demands for autonomy, democracy and participation. As one of its proponents, Arend Lijphart (1996, 1990) argues, power-sharing (such as consociational democracy) is not only the optimal form of democracy in deeply divided societies but also the only feasible solution.

Power-sharing has been part of recent international conflict resolution strategies in Bosnia, Cambodia, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Burundi. Many policy makers, donors, and academics are increasingly coming to the conclusion that power-sharing is a suitable way of addressing violent conflict. For instance, the OECD DAC guidelines on preventing violent conflict recognise that “in deeply divided societies, a combination of simple

---

<sup>15</sup> I use the term “self-determination” in this study to denote a political claim to self-government by credible representatives of a culturally, historically and territorially distinctive group of people living within an existing state, including, as an extreme possibility, independent statehood.

---

majoritarian political institutions and winner-take-all elections can often make things worse” (OECD 2001). In a report to the Security Council in April 1998, UN-Secretary General Kofi Annan said that African leaders must give up the “winner-take all” mentality that prevails in so many African countries (in Spears, 2000:105-106). There has been an abundance of academic writing that recommends power-sharing as a transitional measure in war-torn societies (Sisk, 1996, Lijphart 1977, 1984, Horowitz 1991, Ake 2000, McGarry 2002). Nonetheless, despite the enthusiasm surrounding power-sharing as a possible solution to ethnic conflict in divided societies, many of the power-sharing arrangements supported by international actors have not succeeded in ending violence. Power sharing attempts have only had limited success in countries such as Cambodia, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia, or have been failures, as in Rwanda and Angola.<sup>16</sup>

On the theoretical level, the aim of this study is to contribute to the current debate on alternative conflict resolution. I argue that power-sharing has enjoyed only limited success because actors in such situations as civil war are more concerned with protecting their interests than in reconciliation and real power-sharing. At the empirical level, this study aims to contribute to an increased understanding of why power sharing failed in post-Mengistu Ethiopia, and of the challenges facing the minority-led EPRDF government. The study will also try to contribute to our understanding of how, on the one hand, the devolution of power might fulfil group aspirations but, on the other hand, under conditions of scarcity, could increase inter-ethnic conflict and, in extreme cases, by encouraging the idea of one's “own” state among some groups pose even greater challenges to the nation-state system.

Finally, the aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the current debate on the new authoritarian types of regime that emerged from the “third wave” of democratisation—the *pseudo-democratic regimes*. Pseudo-democracies are characterised by the presence of democratically-styled institutions such as parliaments, elections, and multi-party institutions which send a signal to observers that the country is becoming more democratic. These institutions, however, remain fully within the control of an authoritarian regime, which can intervene at will should the actors in these pseudo-democratic institutions

---

<sup>16</sup> In the Bosnian case power sharing “success” was heavily dependent on continued international presence.

attempt to act contrary to the regime's interest. As a result, pseudo-democratic institutions become an extension of the authoritarian regime rather than a brake on the regime's power.

### **Research Methodology**

Given the unique circumstances in which Ethiopian power-sharing and the ethno-federal restructuring took place, it is appropriate to examine it in the format of a single case study. Ethiopia was seen as the special case of democratisation that was supposed to solve ethnopolitical conflict through power-sharing and other forms of devolution of power to ethnically-based regions.

The case study is a form of qualitative research which can involve descriptive, explanatory, and analytical features that are invaluable characteristics of research (Lijphart 1971, Ragin 1987, King, Keohane and Verbe 1994, Yin 1994). In comparative politics it is recognised that a single case study can play an important role by focusing attention on one exceptional or "deviant" case which offers some challenge to a more general political theory (Collier 1991:9, Lijphart 1971). The case study design is, according to Yin (1994), preferred when the purpose of the study is to address questions of "how" and "why" a certain contemporary phenomenon occurs in an environment over which the investigator has little control. Case studies allow an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristic of real life events (ibid.). "How" and "why" questions are explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies as preferred research strategies. This is because such questions deal with operational links in contemporary events that need to be traced over time. Events in the case studies cannot be manipulated and they rely on direct observations and systematic interviewing as data sources. One of the strengths of the case study methods is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence. Yin (1994:13) defines the case study as: "an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon and context are not clear evident; and in which multiple sources are used."

The experimental design has greater advantage because of the high level of control over the context so that attention can be focused on only a few variables. In contrast, the case study method does not divorce phenomena from their context. Actually, its advantage is that a contemporary phenomenon can be investigated with its real life-context (Ibid.:13). In

---

addition, case study design is advantageous for explanatory research because it allows vital operational links to be traced over time (Ibid.:6).

For these reasons, I find the case study method appropriate for this study; not least because the conditions that make the case study design most appropriate exist here. For instance, in this dissertation it allowed me to address the following questions: “why” and “how” did ethno-nationalist movements emerge in Ethiopia? “Why” and “how” did the former regimes collapse? “Why” and “how” did the TPLF restructure the Ethiopian empire state? “Why” and “how” was ethnic federalism and power-sharing implemented? “Why” and “how” did Tigrean hegemonic control of the Ethiopian Empire remain despite reconfiguration? “Why” and “how” did the TPLF/EPRDF regime succeed or fail in its accommodation of diversity?

While the case study method has proved to be a distinctive form of empirical inquiry, some scholars continue to view it as less desirable than experiments or surveys, because it is viewed as lacking in rigor, and because of the difficulty of achieving objectivity. Another shortcoming of the case study method commonly cited is that it provides little basis for scientific generalisation, and that case studies sometimes are limited to idiographic storytelling (cf. Yin 1984:21, 1994). It has also been argued that case studies lack rigor, in the sense that the results and conclusions are biased (Yin 1984:21).

As a response to this critique, advocates of case studies have defended the research strategy by arguing that generalisations are not desirable. Yin (1994), for example, argues that just as it is difficult to generalise from a single case, it is also difficult to generalise from a single experiment. Actually, scientific facts are rarely based on a single case; rather they are based on multiple set of experiments which over time have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions. Likewise, case studies can be generalised to theoretical propositions, although not to universal propositions (ibid.:10). Moreover, it has been suggested that generalisations are overvalued as a source of scientific development (Flyvberg, 1991:149).

The position taken in this study is that there is nothing inherently wrong with generalisations as such, provided that we do not overlook the limitation of making them from a single case study. In this way the greatest merit of this Ethiopian case study is to develop the proposition that power sharing inevitably involves some degree of political hegemony. It might be that the unique circumstances of Ethiopian power-sharing and flaws in the nature of the federal experiment led directly to the kind of hegemony found in the country today. But this is what makes Ethiopia a valuable case for further analysis. Ethiopia affords an opportunity to look at this neglected area of research and suggest a new approach to the general study of power sharing remedies in ethnically divided countries.

According to Yin (1994) and others (Eckstein 1992, Lijphart 1971) there are many different kinds of case study methods, each with its own logic. The kind of case study selected is determined by the theoretical question asked, and the theoretical ambitions of the study. This study is best described as a disciplined-configurative case study, with elements of a heuristic strategy, to use Harry Eckstein's terms (1992:138-147). With a disciplined-configurative case study we depart from existing theories, but the case examined could illustrate the need for new theoretical propositions. Eckstein (1992:139) suggests that during the research process we might come across a puzzle that existing theories fail to address. Theory building is thus regarded chiefly as being of an ad hoc character or, by coincidence, to complement existing theories. In contrast, heuristic studies more directly seek to find new general problems and identify preliminary theoretical ideas (Ibid.:51).

### **Methods of Data Collection**

To fulfil the aims of this dissertation I have employed multiple methods of data collection. For the theoretical chapters or literature reviews (chapters two and three) I have used mainly secondary sources that are collected at different locations in UK, Denmark and Ethiopia. I have also employed the secondary sources for chapters three and four that deal with historical settings. For the rest I used both secondary and primary data.

In conducting the field research for this dissertation several different research methodologies were employed. They include use of analysis of: (structured and unstructured) Interviews with a number of key informants; personal observation; policy speeches by government officials and party leaders; official and unofficial documents;

---

newspapers; and statistical data on government finances in Ethiopia. I have relied heavily on interviews conducted with government officials, opposition leaders and academics. Therefore the primary method of analysis used in this dissertation is an “elite-group” approach. By comparing the different groups' views on political change, it is possible to gain greater insight into the success or failure and support for ethnic-based federalism, as well as the distribution of power in the country. For instance while the Tigrean elite see the devolution of power into ethnic based regions and the emergence of ethnic-based political parties as a great achievement and democratic progress, pan-Ethiopian nationalists (mainly Amharas) are critical of the devolution of power, ethnicisation of the Ethiopian state and political system.

The elite-group study approach is never perfect in analysing individual cases, but it is the most direct and effective means of drawing general conclusions about the ethnic configuration of power and regime support in a divided country. In all the regional states that I visited for field work (Oromia, Amhara, SNNP, Somali, Harari, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa) I also interviewed citizens from different ethnic backgrounds who were not part of the political elites about the political changes and their general views about ethnic federalism. In particular these interviews gave me a strong sense of the problems which ethnicisation created. For example when I attempted to establish ethnic identification, fewer Amharas wanted to identify themselves by their “own” ethnic identity, while Somalis, at another extreme, readily defined themselves in “ethnic” terms. Moreover, Somalis and Oromos provided a powerful block of opposition against all attempts to draw them into national life on any terms other than that of their “own” group identity and their continued political and economic autonomy.

In the capital city and regional states I conducted interviews with the minister or deputy-ministers of local administration, civil service, planning, and finance. But I often found that lower-level ministry officials provided more direct answers to questions. Due to the sensitive political nature of my research, many interviewees (both government officials and private citizens) requested anonymity. In these cases I do not cite the interviewee's name, but only the place and date of the interview. This is done to assure maximum protection of the person's identity.

---

The social environment in Ethiopia is very informal. However, an important difference in attitude between north and south came out during my interviews. While the northerners (despite my fluency in Amharic, Oromiffa, and Somali) were suspicious, the southerners were friendly in their conversation and discussion of current events. In particular the Somalis and Afar are open to any political discussion. For example, it was very easy to find oneself with the top officials during the *qat secession*.<sup>17</sup> The Oromo and people from SNNP regional state were, like the Amharas, suspicious about giving interviews and exchanging political views and opinions. Despite some degree of openness and political freedom, there was still some fear among the public. Since this research was conducted within this context of fear, of competing perspectives on the highly politicised ethnic differences, it means that much of the information received in interviews or from newspapers had to be carefully verified from more than one source.

### **A summary of the dissertation's contents**

This dissertation is divided into three parts and eight chapters. *Part One*, including this chapter, comprises three chapters. *Chapter One*, among other things, outlined the profile of the study which includes the general introduction of the dissertation; the statement of the problem, the aims and the scope of the study; and the methodology of the research. *Chapter Two* focuses on major theories on ethnicity and nationalism and attempts to establish the theoretical foundation of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the roots of nationalist movements, and other forms of mobilisation and regional/ethnopolitical conflicts in Ethiopia. This is followed in *Chapter Three* by an exploration of theoretical discourses on the political accommodation of diverse populations. It reviews the general theoretical literature on conflict management in plural societies. The chapter also looks at the multiplicity of theories on conflict management, in particular the problem of democratic solutions and stable democracy in plural societies. The chapter further includes a discussion of democracy and democratisation. The division between minimalist and maximalist views of democracy is introduced at the outset.

---

<sup>17</sup> *Qat* is a natural stimulant from the *Catha Edulis* plant, found in the flowering evergreen tree or large shrub that grows in East Africa and Southern Arabia.



---

There is a long historical debate in political science regarding the prospects for democracy in culturally heterogeneous societies. On the one hand there are scholars who conclude that democracy is “doomed” to fail in such countries. Competition between ethnic groups inevitably degenerates into a “vicious cycle” of ethnic outbidding, ethnic extremism, and the imposition of authoritarian rule by the dominant group. The contrary position is that although the presence of democracy is not a guarantee of a society without violence, democracy can manage identity conflict in the longer run better than other forms of government. But democracies are not all alike. A major problem for the emergence and/or stability of democracy in pluralist developing countries, for example, is not the lack of socio-economic cohesion or a common political culture but rather how and in what form democracy has been introduced. Some scholars therefore focus on institutional arrangements by proposing consociationalism and/or power sharing arrangements as the best possible solution for identity conflict and stable democracy in plural developing societies. This chapter explores various arguments and counter arguments advanced by scholars on democratic solutions and the problems of democracy in plural and developing societies such as Ethiopia.

*Part Two* of the dissertation consists of two chapters. These chapters provide a critical analysis of the former regimes in order to offer a more complete understanding of how the EPRDF regime came to power and how the current experiment with ethnic-federalism and power-sharing among competing ethnic groups developed. It is particularly important to understand the historical background: how former regimes solved/failed to solve or respond to the “national question” in order to explain what motivated the political elite (the current regime) to share-power and to introduce the federal experiment. In other words, key to understanding the nature of post-Mengistu Ethiopian politics lie in its pre-1991 history. Since ethnic federalism, power-sharing and democratisation concern the question of political decentralisation, group empowerment and political openness, it is especially important to understand the nature of state centralisation, group-domination, and authoritarianism. The subject involves the distribution of power and resources between different identity groups.

The first section of Part Two (*Chapter Four*) provides the historical setting with the focus on the emergence of this empire-state in Africa. It looks critically at state centralisation and

---

the hegemonic incorporation of non-Abyssinian ethnic and national groups into the modern Ethiopian empire under the northern elite's hegemonic control. This was achieved by three major state policies: (1) forceful land confiscation, (2) "Amharisation" or assimilation of diverse elites into the core Amhara culture with Amharic as the official language of the empire and (3) centralisation of political and economic power into the hands of an autocratic emperor. In the course of the implementation of these policies, these autocratic and Amhara-centric policies were fiercely challenged both by the newly incorporated Eritrean nationalist elite and by other non-Amhara groups that wanted ethnic equality. This chapter reveals the basis for nationalism and the "national question" as key factors in, first the emergence of the revolutionary regime in Ethiopia and then in the nationalist struggle. As this chapter shows, class and ethnic claims were interwoven in the period of Haile Selassie and national consciousness was on the rise.

*Chapter Five* takes up this class-ethnic struggle as a central factor in the collapse of the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie and the emergence of the Ethiopian revolution. It then looks at how and why the military came to capture state power. It explores the deadly struggle between competing groups for political hegemony and state capture; in short, the struggle between the military and internal civilian groups. To understand how class struggle promoted "national struggle" or the emergence of ethno-nationalist movements from all corners of the empire state, this chapter explores change (and the lack of it) in the Ethiopian political system. In other words, it explores the continued authoritarianism (now under the military and Mengistu instead of monarchy), state centralisation and "Amharisation".

An important point of the first part of this chapter is to show that ethnicity or diversity *per se* was not the main cause of the conflict (as primordialists would have us believe), nor was it elite creation (as instrumentalists would have us believe). Rather, it emerged as a consequence of the state's coercive response to the so-called "national question." In doing so this chapter relates ethnopolitical conflicts to the constructivist theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter Two. It is within this context that we can understand how and why ethnicity transformed into nationalism and deadly conflict. Put another way, ethnicity became 'deadly' after the Mengistu regime managed to destroy the multi ethnic opposition groups. To use Hirschman's terminology, ethnic-nationalism became the only way to make

---

“voice” an alternative to “exit”.<sup>18</sup> The chapter also looks critically at how the military regime responded to class-ethnic claims through its radical nationalisation of land and of the means of production while failing to respond positively to the “national question.”

Finally, the last part of this chapter takes up the oppressive and coercive response of the military regime to the national question and the rise of ethno-nationalist movements in Ethiopia. It examines some of the most important nationalist movements in order to explore why and how they emerged, and what they were fighting for in terms of their political goals. It also examines external actor involvement in internal Ethiopian conflict. In particular, it looks at the involvement of neighbouring Somalia, first in the mobilisation of the Somali minority in Ethiopia and, when this failed, the direct invasion of Ethiopia by regular Somali troops in order to “liberate” the minority from “Abyssinians.” The Somali invasion transformed internal conflict into interstate war and resulted in the reshuffling of alliances and competition of the superpowers in the Horn of Africa.

The key concern of this chapter section is to assess why and how the military regime collapsed. It therefore examines how different superpowers supported different regimes in Ethiopia and how this (military and non-military) support contributed to the survival and/or collapse of the regimes. In particular, it shows how the Derg survived internal and external challenges by changing its allegiance from the United States to the Soviet Union. Crucially, the new Soviet policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* affected the regime’s initial survival and ultimate collapse. Since the external factor is only one among many other causes of the collapse of the regime, this section is also concerned with the economic crisis brought on by the failure of the economic policy of the Derg, particularly its agricultural policy.

*Part Three* of this dissertation is again divided into three chapters. *Chapter Six* analyses the emergence of an ethno-guerrilla government (EPRDF) and its response to the “national question” in terms of its policy of accommodating diversity. The main focus of this chapter is on the rise and fall of the national government and the rise of the *ethnofederal* experiment as a response to the national question.

---

<sup>18</sup> By exit I refer here to withdrawal from politics *within* the country. Other options were exile or to join one of the many guerrilla movements in Ethiopia.

---

*Chapter Seven*, as with the previous chapter, addresses Ethiopia's post-Mengistu politics; specifically, the top-down transition and the nature of Tigrean hegemony. The chapter begins by analysing the way the TPLF continued to share power with particular ethnic groups after the war by creating "puppet" parties in order to maintain some semblance of national unity. But the analysis shows that this largely informal power-sharing arrangement is unbalanced because the Tigrean minority elite holds the reins of real power in the country. The environment in which political change took place in Post-Mengistu Ethiopia and the top-down and hegemonic nature of the TPLF's control are examined. This became an important factor in obstructing democratisation and in the emergence of pseudo-democracy. The problem is further explored through an analysis of the process of elections and, despite some improvement, the declining human rights situation from the middle of the 1990s. In addition, with the failure of the democratic progress, the legitimacy of the regime eroded. The chapter argues that, despite regular elections and constitutional rights, the minority-led EPRDF regime failed to establish a democratic society. The concentration of power in the hands of the Tigrean minority and the marginalisation of the opposition created political tensions that resulted in low-intensity civil war.

Finally, the conclusion (*Chapter Eight*) to this dissertation examines some of the implications of the Ethiopian case for the theory of power sharing and democratisation. It is clear that Ethiopian troubles are related to the flaws in its original power-sharing arrangement and top-down transitional process. These flaws led to the marginalisation and fragmentation of opposition.

In what ways did the current regime's response to the "national question" solve or satisfy ethno-nationalist claims for self-determination and democracy? How is the hegemony of Tigrean minority group to be assessed in Ethiopia? Does it have positive or negative, constructive or debilitating consequences for the country? The conclusion to this dissertation will offer some answer to these specific questions about Ethiopia, as well as the more general question about power sharing and hegemony.

## Chapter two

---

### **Theoretical Framework: Ethno-nationalist Resurgence & Ethno-political Conflict**

---

#### **Introduction**

This chapter lays out the conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding ethnicity, nationalism and ethno-political conflict in plural societies such as Ethiopia. The principal aim is to establish the relationship between those concepts that could construct a framework of ideas that could help guide the succeeding discussions of the dissertation (in particular ch.5). More precisely, it provides relevant theories and debates that can answer our general question: In what circumstances do groups that define themselves using ethnic or national criteria like the Tigreans, Oromos, Somalis, Afars, and/or the Eritreans<sup>19</sup> mobilise to defend and/or promote their collective interests? The chapter consists of two major sections. In the first section, I conceptualise ethnicity, ethnic group, nation and nationalism. In the second section I discuss how ethnicity transforms into ethno-nationalism and conflict.

#### **Conceptualisations of ethnicity, nation and nationalism**

Walker Connor, one of the most fervent critics of the notion of nation-building, observed in the early 1970s “scholars associated with theories of “nation-building,” have tended either to ignore the question of ethnic diversity or to treat the matter of ethnic identity superficially as merely one of a number of minor impediments to effective state integration” (1994:29). Connor reconnected ethnicity to its etymological roots by arguing that, basically, ethnic conflict is a form of ‘*ethno-nationalism*’ Epitomising Connor’s argument, Daniel Coversi (2002:562) has recently stated that the “failure to notice the persistence of ethnic identity has represented one of the major blunders in political science since the Second World War.” Within the African context, one scholar also pointed out, that at the time when state-led nationalism and developmentalism held sway, research on

---

<sup>19</sup> I am very much aware that the Eritrean liberation movement are not ethno-political movement, but a regional movement. However, in historical terms one can rightly argue that Eritrean nationalism incorporated identity nationalism because it was constructed by an Islamist movement (the Eritrean Liberation Front) against the Christian Abyssinian/Ethiopian state (See chapter six, see also, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988).

---

ethnic and other forms of identity conflict was considered anathema and researchers who studied them were labelled subversive and agents of opposition or imperialism (Osaghae 1999:569).

However, studies in this area have increasingly gained momentum in the past two decades, as ethnic groups tenaciously maintained their identities and ethnic conflicts have continued to cause large-scale destruction around the world (Ellingsen and Gleditsch 1997, Kalyvas 2002, Esman 1994, Gurr 2000). The persistence of ethnic identity and ethnic resurgence around the globe (developed, underdeveloped and former socialist states) has challenged both liberal and Marxist theories that assumed ethnic identity would disappear through modernisation.<sup>20</sup> For this reason the interest of scholars has been growing. As Osaghae (1999:56) notes on the subject, “scholars have not only become convinced of the reality of ethnic conflicts but are in the forefront of championing ethnic interests in the problematization of the national question.”<sup>21</sup>

In other words, there has been an important shift in the social sciences from the analytical category of “class” to that of “identity” or “identities” and into the enquiry of the mechanisms of their production and reproduction. One Africanist even goes further and warns that “unless ethnicity is taken seriously, Africa’s struggle to democratize the state and development will suffer no better a fate than that of an imagined nation state” (Salih 2001:25, see also Hameso 1997, Osaghae 1999). This study acknowledges that identity-based conflict is one of the key sources of national, regional and international instability. Though many hoped that the end of the Cold War would lead to peace and stability (or the End of History as argued by Fukuyama), the focus has shifted from ideological competition to identity-based competition and violence.

Are ethnic and cultural identities static or dynamic, primordial or modern? Are they historically embedded or are they spawned by modernisation and economic development

---

<sup>20</sup> Many dominant political science theories in the immediate post WWII era predicted a decline in the salience of ethnicity and ethnic conflict throughout the world as societies “modernise” “developed”, and become more “rational” “western”. But these theories and predictions proved to be incorrect. The salience of ethnicity has not eroded but instead, ethnic and other forms of identity conflicts continue to affect both domestic politics within states and also relations between states.

<sup>21</sup> The authors goes on to suggest that, “for the converted radicals, the passions of waging a class war which now seems more unlikely, have simply been carried over to the ethnic battlefield” (Ibid.: 57).

within a tradition-bounded society? Do ethnic divisions in a nation inevitably lead to political violence? What are the factors that foster political violence in multiethnic societies? Under what circumstances are people with a shared ethnic identity successfully mobilised? Is ethnic conflict an outcome of cultural and social construction as many propose or is it a rational decision of actors? While these are critical questions in our times, there is no agreement on how to tackle them and/or to define identity politics. Nor do scholars agree on the causes of ethnic conflicts. Some trace it to economic maldistribution, others to modernisation and history and yet another set of scholars point to wrong-headed state policies (state discrimination and/or denial of autonomy to ethnic communities) as the cause of ethnic tensions (cf. Gurr 1993, 2000; Gurr & Hurff 1994; Horowitz 1985; Connor 1994; Smith 1998; Brown eds. 2001). The rich variety of theoretical options produced by scholars of ethnicity reflects the variety of cultural interpretation of such phenomena as well as the absence of any consensus on a single paradigm. Before going into these theoretical discussions, the first step is to define ethnicity and nation and, thereby, the phenomenon of ethnic conflict. In other words, what is ethnicity? What is a nation? And how are they linked to ethno-nationalism and conflict?

### **On the Nature of Ethnicity**

Ethnicity as a concept is resistant to clear-cut definition. The term '*ethnicity*'<sup>22</sup> is generally meant to refer to a complex web of social and historical traits that combine to form one's identity. This points to the fact that ethnicity cannot be adequately defined in isolation. Ethnicity is an important social and political force that must be understood in conjunction with other equally essential and related notions like ethnic groups and nations. Ethnicity is an abstract concept, which includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon. Thus ethnicity can be said to have both objective and subjective dimensions. Objective aspects are those that can be observed as facts in the existence of institutions, including that of kinship and descent and in overt behaviour patterns of individuals. The subjective dimensions refer to attitudes values and preconception whose meaning has to be interpreted in the context of the process of communication. Furthermore, some of the contemporary approaches point out that the

---

<sup>22</sup> In the original historical and cultural setting, *ethnos* referred to a nation or people, *ethnikos* to the others, the outsiders, heathens or foreigners. In general terms, *ethnikos*, delineated those considered the "minority" group, whether immigrants, the vanquished or simply those seen as unlike "us" (Eriksen 1993:3-4).

nature of ethnicity has to be the idea of a distinct culture. Culture is, in essence, a system of encoding group historical experience into a set of symbolic patterns. A distinct culture is a manifestation of a group's particular historical experience. Its product is a sense of unique peoplehood. For instance Schermerhorn defined an ethnic group as:

A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality phonotypical features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group (Schermerhorn, 1978:12, cited in Hutchinson and Smith 1996:6).

Unlike Schermerhorn, John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (1996) de-emphasised the connection with the 'larger society.' They prefer the term *ethnie* or ethnic community to define:

"A named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members (ibid.: 6)."

Whether one adopts Schermerhorn's comprehensive definition or Hutchinson and Smith's more elegant version, 'ethnicity' is a dazzling, ambiguous category, at once descriptive and evaluative-normative. Moreover, there is not much consensus among specialists regarding the nature of ethnicity and the origins of ethnic conflict. As mentioned above it is not possible to construct a general theory of ethnicity and, for that matter, ethno-nationalism (cf. Young 1993, Lake and Rothschild 1998, Hutchinson & Smith 1996, Connor 1994). Some form of theoretical framework needs to be considered as far as the present study is concerned. This would be useful in terms of exploring the outstanding linkages between various inter-related concepts found in the debates pertaining to ethnicity and ethno-nationalism.

### **Prior research and the theory of ethnicity and ethnic conflict**

Traditionally, the literature has been divided into two streams of thought: *Primordialist*, and *Instrumentalist*. The first approach viewed ethnicity as "given" or assumed givens of social existence, and ethnic conflict as a 'bottom-up' phenomenon, driven by ancient animosities, historical grievances, or fear of victimisation etc. This approach has recently fallen out of favour among scholars but very much used in the media (see also Connor



1994, Geertz 1994:29-34).<sup>23</sup> Due to the increasingly obvious empirical discrepancies in this approach, elite-based theories, also known as *instrumentalist*, have gained relatively greater sway and currently enjoy dominance in the nationalism literature. Instrumentalists believe that ethnic identity is flexible and variable; that both the content and boundaries of an ethnic group change according to circumstances. Such theories hold that group mobilisation is a 'top-down' (elite) phenomenon and ethnicity as an effective tool in competition for social and economic resources in contemporary state structures (Rothschild 1981:2, Brubaker 1996). The instrumentalist postulates that ethnicity is one among many possible or available instruments that can be used by groups to gain control of resources and improve their material circumstances.

More recently, a third view has begun to emerge that effectively synthesises the two opposing perspectives, maintaining that in fact, 'ethnic identity' is both rooted in history and subject to social engineering (Lake and Rothchild 1998, Young 1993, Smith 1998 Hutchinson and Smith (1994). As Hutchinson and Smith (1994:41-42) observed, 'primordialists' fail to account for ethnic change, whereas 'instrumentalists' seem unable to cope with ethnic durability. One good example of the new synthesis based on an understanding of ethnicity and ethnic conflict is the work of Crawford Young (see also Lake and Rothchild 1998). In an influential argument in the early 1990s, Young (1993) divided accounts of ethnic identity into three major categories: *Primordialist*, *Instrumentalist*, and *Constructivist* approaches and argued for constructivism as an approach to the systematic study of ethno-politics.<sup>24</sup> David Turton (1997) also echoed a similar sentiment when he asserted that:

The analysis of ethnicity must...take account of both its "instrumental" or material aspects and its 'primordial' or cultural aspects, since its very effectiveness, as a means of advancing group interests, depends on it being *seen* as 'primordial' by those who pay particular attention to the role of political leaders and intellectuals who make the primordial claim credible. They do this by constructing a plausible history for the group—plausible because based on the re-ordering and selective interpretation of actual historical events—which clearly separates it from specific and significant others and establishes its right to some kind of special status, treatment or existence. This activity of constructing an historical narrative to legitimate ethnic claims becomes particularly evident when ethnicity is linked to nationalist or separatist politics (ibid.21).

---

<sup>23</sup> Most contemporary examples of the ancient ethnic hatreds view are journalistic ones, the most famous being Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* which purportedly influenced the Clinton administrations view of the war in Bosnia. See Robert Kaplan (1994), *Ghosts of Balkan: A Journey through History*.

<sup>24</sup> A recent and not untypical example of this discursive approach may be found in the introductory chapter to the symposium, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict* where Lake and Rothchild propose a triadic typology of ethnic conflict theory (see Lake and Rothchild (eds.) 1998:4-7).

---

This, it is argued, justifies not simply another effort to somehow merge the two perspectives, but to reincorporate important parts of both of them by starting at a more fundamental level of analysis. The constructivist postulates that ethnicity is neither natural and unchangeable, nor a matter of rational choice, but rather an aspect of the historically evolved human condition, dependent upon prevailing social and cultural conditions and the structures of meaning which all articulate members of the political community place upon it.

Following Young's (1993) classification and Lake and Rothschild's (see 1998:4-7) triadic typology, this dissertation takes constructivism as its theoretical departure for the analysis of the emergence of nationalist movements and conflict in Ethiopia. It argues that ethno-political identities are constructed and re-constructed through strategic choices in the course of social, economic and political interactions (see also Markakis 1987, Fukui & Markakis (eds.) 1994). Hence, ethnic diversity does not automatically lead to conflict, and ethnic conflicts do not simply pit ethnicities against each other, but rather against the state (or those who control it).<sup>25</sup> But in order to understand the constructivist arguments we need to discuss the first two approaches and therefore, in the following section, discuss all three approaches. First, each approach's principal insights are systematically described, along with its particular explanation of the linkages between ethnicity and group conflict. The strengths and weaknesses of each approach are then analysed with respect to group solidarity and collective action.

### **Primordialist Approach**

One of the first universalist theories of ethnicity and ethnic conflict were the primordialist approach. Primordialism assumes that group identity is a "given": that there exist in all societies certain primordial, irrational attachments based on blood, race, religion, region,

---

<sup>25</sup> While it is safe to say that ethnicity exhibits some special feature in Ethiopia, in particular after 1991 when the new EPRDF government acknowledged and politicised ethnicity with the policy of "ethnic federalism" ethnic identity has been one among the many manifestation of Ethiopian identity. At least three: religious (Christianity vs. Islam), political (Marxism vs. liberalism) and territorial (Abyssinians vs. the others) identities have historically played a great role as have other forms of manifestation and conflict.

etc. (Esman 1994:10).<sup>26</sup> They are, in the words of Clifford Geertz (1973), ineffable and yet coercive ties, which are the result of a long process of crystallisation.

These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour, one's fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself...for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural—some would say spiritual—affinity than from social interaction (Geertz 1973:259).

Some primordialists conceive ethnic bonds as highly persistent and significant regardless of contextual differences that emerge throughout history. They explain strong ethnic attachments with psychological or biological factors that, they think, have *affective* significance in the form of a sense of belonging, in-group identity, and solidarity among the members of an ethnic group. As John Stack (1986:3) argues, “in sheltering the individual from loneliness, the ethnic group may offer a sense of self-worth—a reassurance that life has meaning and value.” Furthermore, according to this school, an individual's ethnic identity is unitary and fixed and each group has its particular constitutive features (cultures, traditions, histories physical traits, language repertoires, religion, and the like) that do not change and that tend to be quite consistently distributed within the group. Extended kinship relations are usually said to be the critical element that holds the group together and imbues it with its emotive power.

Shils (1957) explicitly writes about the perception, not the reality, of primordality of the ties and is clear that people very “normally” are intensely attached to the group and that there are usually only a few hard-core believers. Likewise, Geertz (1973, 1994) writes not so much about the actual “givens” of life but the “assumed” givens, implying a critical element of perception that mediates between the category and the individual. Nevertheless, he does argue that these group identity systems take centuries to crystallise and are quite stable in the face of major societal upheaval.

Primordialism, as Van Evera (2001) reminds us, is not dead, and several scholars have recently applied the label to themselves.<sup>27</sup> But this second-generation primordialists, like

---

<sup>26</sup> Van den Berghe associates the irrational aspect of ethnicity with the fact that humans are biologically selected to be nepotistic because by favouring kin (the ethnic group is an extension of kin) they maximise their reproductive fitness (1987:27-35).

---

Shils and Geertz before them, also interpret primordialism to refer to group *perceptions* of the “primordially” of their groups rather than to actual common blood histories and the like (see Grosby 1994, reproduced in Hutchinson and Smith 1996, Smith 1996, Evera 2001). These perceptions are important, however, since they preclude actual “identity-switching” that is a fundamental concept in the constructivist school of thought.

Geertz (1973) claims that primordial loyalties that are constructed through kinship, racial, regional, or cultural linkages play a central role in the politics of post-colonial states. In a similar fashion, some scholars argue that primordial loyalties also exist in the politics of modern developed states. Primordial attachments and relationships continue to take place, for instance, among the descendents of European immigrants in Canada and the USA (Greely 1974; McKay 1982). Thus according to primordialists, ethnic, cultural, religious, or linguistic differences are stable “givens” that often lead to tension and conflict in a society (Geertz 1973, Esman and Rabinovich 1988).

### **Primordialism and ethnic conflict**

The proponents of the primordialist argument assume that ethnicity gains a political character because of the politicisation of primordial sentiments. Ethnic groups are located in plural societies that contain several other similar competing social formations. Bell (1975:141) defines ethnic groups as collective political actors that challenge the state agenda. According to him, what distinguishes ethnic groups from interest groups or classes is that they are able to combine an interest with an affective tie. He believes that ethnicity has replaced economic class as a new force in modern life, because it provides emotional ties through common identification i.e. language, culture, and music—that are directly relevant to everyday life (Bell 1975:169). Hence, ethnic identity is not a purely interest-based political construction, but keeps a primordial connection. Huntington (1993) also attributes a primordial role to ethnicity and gives cultural factors primacy in explaining conflicts at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He states that:

---

<sup>27</sup> Others such as Horowitz and Walker Connor have avoided being classified as primordialists, and Danele Conversi, editing his book on Connor’s heritage, endorses the view that Connor was, in fact an enemy of all ‘isms’. This is perhaps his most important legacy, but still remains disputed.

---

“Civilization identity will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measure by the interactions among seven or eight major civilizations...The most important conflicts of the future will occur along cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another...Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and most important, religion...These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political, ideological and political regimes” (Huntington 1993:25).

From Huntington’s (1993) point of view, ethnicity is the most significant issue in the world today. He claims that future conflicts will be fought between religious-based civilisations. The Western cultural values that are based on liberalism and democracy will be encountered and challenged by non-western civilisations. According to him, we should expect more identity-based conflict in the upcoming millennium as a result of a revival of reactionary ethnic, cultural, religious, or racial sentiments.

While Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisation* essentially points to a clash between the Christian west<sup>28</sup> and much of the rest of the world, in particular Islam, another most comprehensive theoretical approach to identity politics rooted in primordialist premises has been developed by Donald Horowitz. In his book, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*<sup>29</sup> Horowitz (1985) explores the kinship roots of ethnic ties and presents a theory of ethnic conflict based on inter-group comparisons and the struggle for relative group worth. Horowitz’s detailed historical analysis suggests that the structural changes introduced by colonial rule, such as the inclusion of diverse societies in single territorial units and urban migration, combined with the imposition of colonial standards of value, facilitated invidious comparisons among members of different ethnic groups. Because some groups were clearly advantaged vis-à-vis others, the desire for prestige, the fear of extinction, and group anxiety coalesced in what Horowitz calls a “positional group psychology.” Group status is measured in relation to the perceived status of other groups.

Ethnic conflict, according to this theory, results from mutually incompatible struggles for group worth and legitimacy: “If the need to feel worthy is a fundamental human

---

<sup>28</sup> The events of September 11 brought Huntington’s Clash of civilization onto the international agenda and poses a real danger of becoming a self fulfilling prophecy. For a critique see Tariq Ali’s (2003) the “*Clash of Fundamentalisms*”

<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that Horowitz does not label himself a primordialist, and indeed embraces elements of constructivist approaches to ethnicity. But the core of his arguments in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* derives from the primordial hold of ethnic sentiments.

---

requirement, it is satisfied in considerable measure by belonging to groups that are in turn regarded as worthy. Like individual self-esteem, collective self-esteem is achieved largely by social recognition” (Horowitz 1985:185). Legitimacy, in turn, is a measure of belonging, or harmony with the territory. Ethnic struggles for worth and legitimacy revolve around state power, which confers recognition and pre-eminence upon the group. Symbol affirmations of group status, such as language policy and the composition of the civil service, are the focal point of conflict (ibid: 226).

The primordialist paradigm—seen at its best in Horowitz –accurately captures the emotional and psychological motivations behind basic group identities. However, the approach fails to critically examine the discourse of primordialism that, by endowing certain identity markers with significance, delineates the boundaries between identity groups. As Leroy Vail (1991:6) asks rhetorically, “Does ethnicity appeal because it is intrinsically primordial, or is it constructed as a primordial thesis that tends to “overlook the intellectual contingent” of the ethnic message, which has been historically variable and differentially received among members of putative ethnic groups.” Moreover, the psychological arguments upon which the primordialist arguments rely are taken completely out of context. Horowitz’s theory of group comparisons and relative worth, for example, is derived from psychological experiments performed in specific laboratory conditions that are distinctively different from the conflict situations the theory purports to explain (see Horowitz 1985:144-5).

Finally, it is worth mentioning Jack Eller & Reed Coughlan’s (1993) critique of primordialism. In their famous article *The Poverty of Primordialism*, Eller & Coughlan in fact rejected the basic tenets of the primordialist approach and claimed that “primordialism is a bankrupt concept for the analysis and description of ethnicity.” According to them, one cannot claim the existence of a set of given facts that have no social source because all concepts that make up any kind of group identity are socially constructed.<sup>30</sup> From an instrumentalist view, Robert Bates (1983:152) also argued that rather than being a

---

<sup>30</sup> Shortly after their article was published Steven Grosby responded to these critics by claiming that Eller and Coughlan missed the point by misunderstanding the primordialist approach. According to Grosby, there are a set of given values derived from using the individual as the basis for participating in history “Individual participates in these given, a priori bounded pattern. The patterns are the legacy of history- They are tradition. Ethnic groups and nationalities exist because there are traditions of belief and action towards primordial objects such as biological features and especially territorial location (Grosby 1994). For the discussion between these two groups see Eller and Coughlan (1993), Grosby (1994).

---

primordially given, pre-modern survival, “ethnic groups represent, in essence, coalitions which have been formed as part of rational efforts to secure benefits created by the forces of modernization which are desired but scarce.”

In sum, what are known as primordialist theories of ethnicity define ethnic differences in relation to social structure and the form and features of a given society’s cultural morphology. Such theories emphasise the existence of a tangible foundation to ethnic identification based on deep and permanent “primordial” attachment to a group or culture. The bases of ethnicity are seen to lie in what is objectively “real” and observable. Factors often presented in this light might include a community’s racial, religious and linguistic characteristics. The implication of such an approach is that ethnicity is an immutable fact, rooted in biological phenomena and/or cultural products, values and practices. Such basic elements of identity are represented as permanent, defined through and embedded in, the objective structure of society.

It seems futile to gainsay the power of ethnic affiliations, and a good explanation will have to come to grips with the thick, compelling character of group membership. But primordialists have not provided a satisfactory explanation as to why these affiliations are so emotive. They have identified the phenomenon, but most have not gone beyond it. If ethnic behaviour is primordial in the fundamental sense in which that term is used, why is ethnic conflict so variable and why is even the definition of group boundaries so sensitive to shifting contexts? Although ancient hatreds between groups produce conflict, there are, nevertheless, groups who lived and still live side by side despite some ancient hatred. The second question is therefore, why longstanding hatreds suddenly break out at times and not at other times or in some societies and not in others.

Primordialism also fails to delineate heterogeneity within ethnic groups, and the associated divergences of interests, values and worldviews. It instead focuses on identifying foundations for group solidarity (Geertz 1973:261-73). This impedes its capacity to explain the differential intensity of sentiment among group members, or contemporary ethnicities unrelated to any primordial features (Bayart 1993:51). It also explores cultural foundations for political claims without recognising that representations of culture are selective and

---

constructed in particular political, social and economic contexts. Also problematic for the primordialist argument is that many examples show how people may redefine a choice and of different formulations of ethnicity for instrumental purposes (discussed below, see also Young 1993, Vail 1991).<sup>31</sup>

Primordialism shares with instrumentalism (see below) the failure to question the existence of ethnic groups (Young 1993:23). It takes ethnic ties as givens and seeks in social contexts the factors that activate them, typically an increasingly impersonal modernity that prompts a search for security and belonging (Geertz 1973:258-60, Smith 1981:53), Horowitz (2000:64,131), for example, emphasises their ascriptive nature, their penetration into every realm of life, and importance in competition for symbols of prestige and status to account for their potency.

Finally, Brown and Boswell (1997) argue that “ethnic diversity” and “ethnic mobilisation” have different meanings, and should not be treated as equivalent in empirical research. This possibility is also implied by the one version of the instrumentalist approach in the ethnic conflict literature that suggests that ethnic pluralism does not translate into political violence in a constant, direct, and monotonic manner. Rather, the instrumentalist view paints a picture of ethnic divisions remaining politically dormant for many years or even centuries, yet may be awakened and translated into political violence during or after the processes of political and economic modernisation. Thus, constructivist insights have been used to undermine the very premise of primordialism—that group identities have existed in one form or other throughout time, showing how political elites have self-consciously “constructed” nations where none existed before. I elaborate on the premises of these views in the following sections.

### **Instrumentalist Approach**

The alternative position, usually termed *instrumentalist*, places primary emphasis on ethnicity as a socially created and culturally constructed phenomenon. According to one of

---

<sup>31</sup> Empirical evidence illustrates that a change of identity is, in fact, possible some times. People do switch from one group to another (e.g. from Oromo to Amhara), although this does not happen frequently. More frequent, however, is the situation when individuals brought up in different cultures from that of their parents and socialised to become members of their host culture acquire, through articulation, a new identity which can, at times, act quite powerfully on their behaviour.



---

the best-known and most influential instrumentalist approaches, Fredrik Barth (1969), ethnicity is envisaged not as an expression of a vague culture, but as a form of social organisation. In any case, it refers to culture. It emphasises the cultural differences between groups. The main focus of research is the boundary that defines the group, as well as the process of recruitment of its members, and not the characteristics of the culture of the group. Boundaries have to be understood in the symbolic and social sense of the term. Boundary maintenance is thus essential for the ethnic group and it is not primordial, but rather the outcome of specific ecological, economic, historical or political situations. In terms of identity ethnic groups are characterised by both ascription and self-ascription. Constraint only follows when members accept to form part of the group. The cultural features chosen by the members of a group to differentiate themselves from other groups, that is, to establish a boundary, are to a certain extent arbitrary. Ethnic groups are mobilised, not so much by popular will but to a great extent by *ethnic entrepreneurs or leaders*.

### **The instrumentalist approach to conflict**

Most often ethnicity is viewed in relation to a deliberate pursuit of some strategic objective in the context of individual and collective self-interest. A central argument is that ethnicity offers a valuable strategy for securing power, advantage and access to resources. The cultural forms, social characteristics, values and practices of ethnic groups are considered as little more than strategic resources open to manipulation by existing or would-be political elites. Instrumentalist approaches examine the various ways in which cultural characteristics and practices become symbolic reference points for the ethnic identification of the members of a group versus other communities. In this regard, other communities, whether viewed as ethnic or not, are actual or potential competitors or enemies in the same struggle for advantage. Ethnic identity, constructed on the basis of historical or political myths, is considered a collective reaction to a community's political position whether that might be one of dominance under threat, or one of resistance to enforced marginality. Whenever ethnicity matters in any social context, in the sense of being given significance and predominance by the communities concerned, it is viewed as a deliberate and calculated political creation. Such theories treat ethnicity and the claims of ethnic groups as wholly instrumental and utilitarian products of power struggles. In short, ethnicity is

regarded as a kind of weapon. By implication, ethnicity depends on a kind of collective fictional definition of group identity, rooted in a people's imagination, rather than on objective reality.

Whereas primordialists emphasise psychological and biological aspects of ethnicity as mobilising forces, instrumentalists emphasize socio-economic and political factors as major motivating causes of ethno-political conflict. The latter perspective is more dynamic than the former because it stresses change, conceptuality, and competition among ethnic groups for resources. For instrumentalists, the resurgence of ethnic conflict is not a consequence of any primordial need to belong, but a result of the mobilisation of ethnic "interests" to obtain access to social, political and economic resources (McKay 1982). Specifically, instrumentalists posit that *elites* play a central role in group mobilisation and the outbreak of ethnic conflict (Lemarchand 1994). Some instrumentalist scholars of ethnic conflict, which has its roots in rational choice theory, hold that utility-maximising elites "mobilise" the masses upon its ethnic features in order to obtain material gains. In this formulation, violence is one such tool that can be used to acquire benefits such as territory, political culture and cultural autonomy and so forth (Figueiredo & Weingast 1997). As David Laitin puts it:

A good entrepreneur... is one who knows how to provide "selective incentives" to particular individuals to join in the group effort. Communal groups will politicise when there is an entrepreneur who (perhaps instinctively) understands the constraints to organization of rational individual behaviour (Laitin 1985:302).

Moreover, other scholars using the instrumentalist approach turned to reformulate the modernisation approach to explain the seeming resurgence of ethno-political conflicts around the world.<sup>32</sup> A new set of theories in this trend asserted that rather than eliminating ethnic divisions, the process of modernisation invigorates ethnic conflict (Barth 1969; Brass 1985, 1991; Connor 1994; Esman 1994; Esman and Rabinovich 1988; Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Lijphart 1977; Newman 1991; Rothschild 1981, Young 1993). Thus, working within a "conflictual modernisation" paradigm, these theories suggested that ethnic mobilisation was not a mere expression of primordial sentiments. Ethnic divisions that are presumably based on primordial differences do not inevitably lead to ethnic conflict. Rather, the organization of ethnicity into ethnic mobilisation is likely to be

---

<sup>32</sup> This approach originally arose as a challenge to modernisation theory, which held that social and economic development would level out ethnic differences and replace them with class stratification.

“situationally determined.” These theories link the mobilisation of ethnicity with interest competition over economic and political resources.<sup>33</sup> A central thesis of these theories is that the processes of political and socio-economic modernisation lead to interest articulation along ethnic cleavages, exacerbating ethnic competition over state resources. In perhaps the best statement of this approach, Robert Bates argued that “levels of ethnic competition and modernisation co-vary”: ethnic groups are “a means of organizing so as to attain the benefits of modernization; it is a form of a coalition-building in the rational pursuit of specific objectives” (1983:152,164).

Modernisation and an increased role of the state in the distribution of resources mobilise ethnicity toward the promotion of certain cultural, socio-economic, and/or political interests. As Rothschild (1981) puts it, the legitimacy of the state is continuously challenged by ethnic groups with regard to whether the political system reflects their ethnic and cultural identity. Which language will be the national language? What will the education policy be based on? Who gains and loses from redistribution policies? Brass (1985), for example, suggests that the state plays a differentiating role in the distribution of resources among ethnic groups. He argues that most modern states with heterogeneous populations classify their populations and distribute resources differentially. This process contributes to the identity formation of different groups, encouraging their competition for state power, resources, and local control. In his research on the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi since 1959, Rene Lemarchand argues that:

The crystallization of group identities is not a random occurrence; it is traceable to specific strategies, pursued by ethnic entrepreneurs centrally concerned with the mobilization of group loyalties on behalf of collective interests defined in terms of kinship, region or ethnicity ...Clearly, one cannot overestimate the part played by individual actors in defining the nature of the threats posed to their respective communities, framing strategies designed to counter such threats, rallying support for their cause, bringing pressure to bear on key decision makers, and, in short, politicizing ethno-regional identities. ...The essential point to note is the centrality of the state both as an instrument of group domination and as an arena where segments of the dominant group compete among themselves to gain maximum control over patronage resources. So from this perspective the state, far from being a mere abstraction, emerges as a cluster of individual contestants and cliques actively involved in the struggle for control over the party, the army, the government, the civil service, and parastatal organizations ...*Access to the state thus become a source of potential rewards for some groups and deprivations for others (Lemarchand 1994:77 emphasis added.)*

---

<sup>33</sup> In an influential 1970 article, for example, Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (1970) argued against the predictions of modernisation theory. Rather than reducing the political salience of ethnic identities, they pointed out that the economic opportunities available in a modernising economy promote competition and conflict, which tends to be defined in ethnic terms (pp. 114-5).

---

During the process of state building and modernisation the struggle over state resources is characteristic of many plural societies. Van de Berghe's (1990) description of the state as "the ultimate social parasite, a self legitimating protection racket, a killing machine run by the few to steal from the many" aptly describes the nature of many African states (see Bayart et al. 1999, van de Walle 1997, Fukui & Markakis (eds.) 1994, Salih & Markakis (eds.) 1998).<sup>34</sup> It is a doubly instrumental state that was created to articulate the interests of its metropolitan power in the post-independence era. It is also a centralised state with a paternalistic leadership that is often transformed into an instrument of local hegemony for one or two of its constituent nations.

As will be discussed in later in this dissertation this is also true in Ethiopia. For example, before the formation of the modern Ethiopian Empire state, different groups have land as a means of subsistence. However, first Menelik and later Haile Selassie established economic and political power in the hand of Amhara (*Neftagnas*) and Amharaised elites. When the land and economic resources started to be controlled by the Amharas and Amharised elite, the ethnic differences were mobilised into violent conflicts (see also, Markakis 1987, Clapham 1988, Keller 1988, Fukui & Markakis (eds.) 1994, Salih & Markakis (eds.) 1998, Jalata (eds.) 1998, Lata 1999).

In any case what is common to the instrumentalist argument is the premise that ethnicity is "there" to be exploited at will. The central tenet of this approach is that modernisation induced structural changes that create new opportunities to acquire wealth and power, incites ethnic competition and conflict. In other words, ethnicity becomes politically salient when it serves an interest. The state is central to instrumentalist arguments because capture of the state and its resources is the often catalyzing factor in the decision of individuals to adopt "ethnic" identities and affiliations. In this sense, the state creates ethnic networks and

---

<sup>34</sup> In his book *Africa in Chaos*, George Ayittey (1998) dramatically describes the problem of post-colonial African politics. His representative "Vampire African State" is "totally divorced from the people, perceived by those running it as a vehicle not to serve but to fleece the people .... In effect it is a 'state' that has been hijacked by gangsters, crooks, and scoundrels" (1998:150-51). In this context, the power of city-based politicians to direct government funds to one ethnic group rather than another greatly influences the level of poverty or affluence of any rural areas. Davidson (1992) is for example frustrated that no viable political alternative has emerged that would empower rural people at the expense of urban affluence, since most politicians inherit the urban bias. However, the rural/urban divide is only one factor in inequitable distribution. Resource division along ethnic lines, which enables the ruling party's ethnic group to get the lion's share of national resources, calls for investigation. Davidson explains that much of today's so-called "tribalism" is actually a misnomer. If "tribalism" means each tribe having a set of common interests championed by its representatives, this is not in itself so bad, for it is like nationalism on a small scale. But what actually evolved instead of tribalism is "clientelism."

institutions.<sup>35</sup> The state becomes an instrument for the advancement of sectional and parochial interests.<sup>36</sup> Or as John Markakis (1994) puts it:

“Because it controls the production and distribution of material and social resources, the state has become the focus of conflict. Access to state power is essential for the welfare of its subjects....Since those who have used the state to defend their privileged position, the state has become both the object of the conflict and the principal means by which it is waged. Dissident groups seek to restructure the state in order to gain access to its power, or, failing that, to gain autonomy or independence.” *And all this means* “the ultimate goal of most parties to the conflict, of course, is to enlarge their share of the resources commanded by the state. This is ...the root cause of the conflict in the Horn, whether it is fought in the name of nation, region, religion, ethnicity, or clanship”.

Interestingly, instrumentalists acknowledge that individuals have multiple social identities, each of which may be relevant to politics. Indeed, Melson and Molpe (1970:1126-8) argue that modernisation multiplies the social identities possessed by the individual, who in turn chooses among identities to find the one most relevant to the situation at hand. The multiplication and compartmentalisation of social identities enables individuals to “respond more flexibly to changing social and political circumstances. What instrumentalists fail to explain, however, are why some identities are considered ethnic and not others, and why ethnic identities have their motivating power? In this sense, they do not differ so much from primordialists who assume that the absorptiveness of ethnic markers “naturally” render ethnic affinity politically potent”.

In sum, the instrumentalist reductionism, claiming that ethno-political phenomena and even the formation of ethnic group and/or nations is the result either of elite efforts to promote their particular interest or of rational choice by group members striving to use ethnicity as an instrument for social and material gains remains prevalent. It has to be admitted that in certain cases “*playing the ethnic card*” works but not in others. In this sense, like the primordialist, the instrumentalist has difficulty explaining why group markers fail to become salient in circumstances when it appears politically irrational, or why the same markers fail to become salient when it would seem to be rational. Such an explanation requires that we investigate the historical process through which meanings become invested in the markers and symbols used to differentiate social groups from one another.

---

<sup>35</sup> As will be discussed later, instrumentalist and what we are distinguishing as constructivist approaches share the prominent role accorded to the state in the ethnic construction process.

<sup>36</sup> This is indeed true in Africa where at the core of concentric power is the dictator and his family, who control the vast resource of the state. And the immediate concentric zones are loyalists mostly drawn from his tribe. See, for example, Bayart et al’s “*The Criminilization of the State in Africa*.”

---

As mentioned earlier, like many constructivists, I accept that the human need to belong to a community of others and to be recognised by others may be primordial, but the ethnic or ascriptive markers that signify particular communities are the products of social construction. The content of the ethnic bond is not primordial; rather, it is the fact of social classification—the forging of identities in relation to an “other” –which is primordial. Thus, “the way in which social classification is realized in specific forms of collective identity, ethnicity no less than any other, is always a matter to be decided by the material and practical exigencies of history” (Camaroff 1992:64). Finally, I agree with John Markakis’ (1994) statement that in the Horn of African context, “other factors provide sufficient cause for ethnic conflict.” Such as (1) competition for resources in conditions of increasing scarcity, (2) the ethnic group as a political actor is a product of the situation, and (3) ethnicity is not always the basis upon which ethnic groups mobilize.

### **Constructivist Approach**

Young (1993:23) labels as *constructivist*, approaches positing ethnicity as a cultural and historical *process*, akin to Anderson’s (1991:6) conception of nations as ‘imagined communities.’ As mentioned earlier the primordialist perspective is that ethnic identity and sentiment are essentially pre-existing cultural givens that define belonging and social existence. In contrast, the constructivist approach argues that ethnic identity is situationalist, an imagined community discursively and politically constituted. Accordingly, identity is not essentialised but contingent; that is, identity is not based on an objective series of characteristics but constituted and contingent on a distinctive array of social and cultural arrangements.

Constructivism is the notion that individuals have multiple ethnic identities that are constructed through, and are relevant for, various types of social interactions and thus may change (Chandra 2001:7-8). Constructivist authors acknowledge, however, that there are constraints on the unfettered construction of ethnic identities. Eriksen 1993:56), notes that “...individuals choose their allegiances, but not under circumstances of their own choice.” Norval (1999:86) points out that socially inscribed identities are not fungible in the sense that they can be “picked and chosen as if from a supermarket shelf” and emphasises the contingencies of historical, social, and political process through which the symbols for identification are sustained, contested, and negotiated. In other words, we are born with an

identity but come to acquire identities through social interaction. Moreover, the categories we use to build individual identities and to identify others are inscribed in culture and social practices.

Jean and John Comaroff have formulated five propositions which structure a constructivist approach to the question of ethnicity. First, they argue that collective social identity is based on a self/other opposition “inscribed in culture”:

The irreducible fact of identity implies the cultural structuring of the social universe...classification, the meaningful construction of the world, is a necessary condition of social existence. But, we stress, it is the marking of relations—of identities in opposition to one another—that is “primordial,” and not the substance of those identities (Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:51).

Ethnic consciousness then entails the formation of collective identities and their symbolic embodiment in markers of contrast between social groupings. Second, ethnicity, “far from being a unitary ‘thing’ *describes both a set of relations and a mode of consciousness ...produced as particular historical structures impinge themselves on human experience and condition social action* [ibid:54, emphasis added].” Ethnicity is not a constant category reducible to a shared set of primordial “givens” or to an enlarged kinship group. The role of the state is key in this regard. States have intentionally and unintentionally bolstered (indeed, brought into being) ethnic institutions and networks and thereby ethnic identity. Third, ethnicity “has its origins in the asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy” (ibid.: 54), and is therefore experienced differently by groups according to their position in the social division of labour (see also Horowitz 1985). Fourth, “while ethnicity is the product of specific historical processes, it tends to take on the ‘natural’ appearance of an autonomous force, a ‘principle’ capable of determining the course of social life” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992: 60). This means that when ethnicity attains hegemonic status, it comes to be “taken for granted as the natural, universal, and true shape of social being” (Ibid.: 28). Finally, “ethnicity may be perpetuated by factors quite different from those that caused its emergence” (ibid.: 61).

The way ethnicity has structured the social universe cannot easily be created by eliminating the cultural markers giving rise to ethnic identifications. Ethnicity, once created, “may have a direct and independent impact on the context in which it arose.” In constructivist parlance ethnic identity emerges conceptually somewhere between primordial assumptions of “naturalness,” unity and immutability, and instrumentalist descriptions that sometimes

assume the flavour of ethnicity-as-organising-principle or focal point (Lake and Rothchild 1998, Eley and Suny 1995).

In line with instrumentalists, *Constructivists* hold that nations are not so much *discovered* as consciously *created* by intellectuals or ethnic entrepreneurs (Eley and Suny 1996, Smith 1998). It is these individuals and groups who invent 'nationalism', common history and language, revise tradition, create identities and impose those attributes of nationality upon unsuspecting and malleable masses. It must be noted that both instrumentalists and constructivists qualify their propositions concerning the casual role of elites in ethnic conflict. As Lake and Rothchild (1998:7) assert, the instrumentalist and the constructivist are not mutually exclusive, and because the constructivist is subordinate to the instrumental or rationalist theory:

...individuals may rationally choose an identity within the limited range that is socially available to them. Given some identity, individuals or groups can also rationally choose strategies that are the best means to their ends.

However, constructivists hold that the choices made by nationalising actors are significantly constrained by the available options, since:

"[n]ationalists make their own history, but not entirely as they please; not with cultures of their own choosing, but with cultures, directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past" (Eley & Suny 1996: 39).<sup>37</sup>

By the same token, the freedom of elites to foment conflict and violence is limited by their follower's definition of the situation and what they are willing to fight over. Generally, the constructivist argues that the two approaches (primordialist and instrumentalist) discussed above are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Aspects of the different theoretical perspectives and definitions converge in contemporary arguments, which recognise and treat as analytical significant all elements used in the constructions of ethnic differentiation (Young 1993). In other words, the constructivist borrows something from both primordialist and instrumentalist arguments. Ethnicity tends to be viewed as a form of social organisation maintained by inter-group boundary mechanisms, which are based on manipulations of a notion of shared identity in different situations and contexts. If ethnicity

---

<sup>37</sup> Some constructivists, however, go further claiming that elites do not merely steer the process according to existing ethnic juxtapositions, but more or less shape them in view of their own material interest, with wide latitude to foment conflict and violence. These broader claims are highly contestable. The constraints of the field in which group interactions occur limit what elites can do and what interests they can pursue. See Horowitz (1985:64-65).



---

allows for the classification of people in terms of their most inclusive sense of what is common or shared, emphasis is placed on characteristics presumed to be determined by or associated with a community's socio-economic cultural background which people use to differentiate themselves from others.

Most obviously, ethnicity simply implies the existence of a dynamic relationship between several groups which co-exist in a common area. When collective identities are constructed in any context this involves the dual process of intra-group boundary creation and inter-group boundary maintenance. Eriksen (1993) expresses this dualism in terms of a process of dichotomization and complementarity. If the former relates to the expression of differences and the latter to expressing similarity, obviously the significance of ethnicity depends on what else is happening at the local level. The central features of the process both affect and are affected by the economic and political positions of groups. At the same time the range of internal or local and external or global forces in any context create further unpredictability and instability, especially when ethnic boundaries have become viewed as significant for any ideological or material purpose.

In sum, constructivism holds that "ascriptive" identities emerged through a process of construction, which is simultaneously cultural and structural. Cultural because such identities are invested with meanings that are inscribed in culture. Structural, because the meanings attached to identities are politically and economic relevant. Constructivism differs from primordialism mainly by considering identity as not given and not as inherently conflictual and focusing on the moulding of identity by leaders, social systems, or circumstances. The bulk of the effort in constructivist literature on ethnic violence is to identify the social origins of identity and establish patterns of evolution of identity as a result of social interactions, linking specific social systems and pathological patterns of identity evolution to the outbreak of ethnic violence (Anderson 1991; Brubaker 1995). Constructivists also focus on the role of elites in manipulating ethnic, religious, or class identity to pursue private goals often through violent means (Brass 1985; Rotchild 1986:1). Enloe (1994:11-12) argues that ethnicity is clearly a phenomenon with more staying power than other social formations such as social class or religious denomination. At the same time it is subject to change, assimilation and manipulation.

---

Ethnicity is consequently constructed from the individual's point of view, which in reality makes it hard to objectively determine. To the individual ethnicity may be a crucial constituent, to such an extent that ethnic traits that seem artificial from outside appear, for the individuals, as 'natural' or 'given'. As long as the ethnic group does not strive for statehood, they will stay an ethnic group among other groups. However, when claims of Self-determination and/or a state of their own are raised (e.g. Tamil, Oromo), ethnicity is transferred to something larger, and qualitatively held in higher esteem, judging from the order of the *international* system. Ethnicity is changed to nationality and the ethnic group becomes 'ethno-nationalist' or 'state nationalist' (Gurr 1994:18-19). Ethno-national movements then are movements conducted in the name of the national group (Connor 1994). The rest of this chapter therefore explores the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism and ethno-national mobilisation. In other words, how can we explain nationalism, especially in relation to identity as I have discussed above?

Furthermore, I want to explain why nationalist action within state and national groups changes over time. Why do ethnic, religious, racial, or cultural differences translate into violent political actions? We now turn to explaining these views, but first a few words on nation and nationalism.

### **Theoretical discourse on nation and nationalism**

Greenfield (1992) suggests that the idea which lies at the core of nationalism is the idea of the nation. Therefore, if the nation is the core idea of nationalism, then we should first focus on the concept of 'nation' itself in order to identify the importance of the nation in the formation of nationalism or the emergence of ethno-nationalism. Having said that it must be noted that one of the problems of studying nationalism is defining just what is meant by nation and nationalism. As Walker Connor (1994) so aptly pointed out, the literature on nationalism has revealed a terminological confusion around the concepts of nation and nationalism. In similar vein, Craig Calhoun (1997:123) came to the conclusion that "nationalism is too diverse to allow a single theory to explain it all." In other words, the subject of nationalism is extremely complex, not least because of the many different sources and manifestations of the phenomenon (see, Smith 1988, 1991, 1998; Connor 1994; Hobsbawm 1990; Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991; Greenfield 1992; Armstrong 1996, Breuilly 1993; Hutchinson & Smith 1994; Calhoun 1993). Since there is not room here to

go into the discussion of the theoretical discourse of nationalism, this chapter will only deal essentially with certain contemporary forms of nationalism which are useful for our case study. In order to place this discussion in perspective, first I outline the basic characteristics of the nation, and then turn to nationalism.

### The Concept of Nation

Whether one believes that nationalism creates the idea of nations or that nations develop the ideas related to nationalism (Armstrong 1996, Hobsbawm 1990) one cannot discuss nationalism without considering what one means by a nation.<sup>38</sup> It must be noted again, that the nationalism literature contains different approaches to defining the term. If we take a close look at the recent literature on nationalism we can identify at least two forms of conceptualisations of nation, namely as a cultural unit and as a political unit. This overlaps with the construction of a nation as primordial (Smith, Smith 1989, 1991, 1998, Connor 1994, Horowitz 1985) versus those who see it as a modern construct (Hobsbawm 1990, Gellner 1983, Anderson 1991, Greenfield 1992, Breuilly 1993, Nairn 1977).

Perhaps the first scholar who provided a definition of 'nation' (in addition to the former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin), was the Austrian Socialist, Otto Bauer. According to Bauer the *nation*<sup>39</sup> is:

“... the totality of people who are united by a common fate so that they possess a common (national) character. The common fate is ... primarily a common history; the common national character involves almost necessarily a uniformity of language” (Bauer in Davis, 1967: 150).

Stalin took a similar approach, adding territory to the list of characteristics of a nation.

According to Stalin (1913), a nation:

“...is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture... It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation.”  
*Nationality* ... is not a racial or tribal phenomenon. It has five essential features: there must be

<sup>38</sup> Originally, the word nation (Greek *nasci*) meaning to be born.

<sup>39</sup> Both Stalin and Bauer's definition is related to Marxist attempts to find the solutions to the problem of the oppressed peoples or the people who wanted to be recognised. Bauer's concern was "how the several nationalities in the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary could receive their rights without exercising the ultimate sanction of secession" (Davis, 1967:149). Stalin was concerned with incorporating some of the national groups into what would be the Soviet Union. In general, he was opposed to national-cultural autonomy regarding it as a route to secession. This may explain why he adds territory to the list of characteristics, see Stalin (1931/1994). While he favoured national-self determination, he generally looked on nationalism as bourgeois. Stalin's definition has often been repeated and used in other parts of the world national liberation movements, influenced by socialism and communism. In particular his definition has influenced the liberation fronts in Ethiopia and in fact the current Ethiopian Constitution's (1994) definition of 'nation' and 'nationalities' is close to Stalin's. See Chapter 7.

a stable, continuing community, a common language, a distinct territory, economic cohesion, and a collective character. It assumes positive political form as a nation under definite historical conditions, belonging to a specific epoch, that of the rise of capitalism and the struggles of the rising bourgeoisie under feudalism” (Stalin, in Hutchinson & Smith 1994:20).

Similarly, Anthony D. Smith (Smith 1971, 1986, 1991) sees an enduring *ethnie* as providing the foundation of the modern state. He defines a nation as a:

named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths, and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (Smith 1991:14).

On the other hand, Max Weber (in Hutchinson & Smith 1994) projects a different image of the nation. For Weber, nations are too varied to be defined in terms of any one criterion. Instead, his definition hinges around a common political project: the nation as a community of sentiment likely to produce a state of its own. Whereas Stalin stressed objective characteristics, Weber’s definition brings in the element of subjectivity. Also other modernists like Gellner (1983), Anderson (1991), and Hobsbawm (1990), stress the modernity of nations. These authors claim that nations are invented phenomena, primarily for the expediency of capitalism and/or the state. They therefore note the discontinuous (as opposed to linear) nature of the nation-building exercise.

Keeping in mind these ideas, what are some of the common threads of the definitions of “nation” in the nationalism literature? First and foremost, a nation is a collective of people. This is a necessary detail, but one that does not help us distinguish between nation and other groups in society. What makes nations unique is that they are collectives united by shared cultural features (myths, values, etc.) and the belief in the right to territorial self-determination. Thus nations are groups of people linked by unifying traits and the desire to control a territory that is thought of as the group’s national ‘homeland’. In other words, the belief in the right to territorial control is central to distinguishing nations from other collectives. Many groups hold common myths, values, and symbols (e.g. religious groups, ethnic groups, or even professional associations). But nations are not just unified by culture, they are unified by a sense of purpose: controlling the territory that the members of the group believe to be theirs.

Following the above argument, for the propose of our case study “*nation*” is employed to mean *a socially mobilised body of individuals, believing themselves to be united by some set of characteristics that differentiate them (in their own minds) from outsiders, striving to*

*create or maintain their own state..* As Anderson (1991:6) notes 'imagined' does not necessarily imply that nation is 'invented' but rather the people who define themselves as members of a nation "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even heard of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion".<sup>40</sup> In this context, the distinction between the term "nation" and "ethnicity" is the former's relationship to the state. In line with this definition the term "*Nationality*" then refers to *a group of people who speak the same language or closely related dialects, who cherish historical transitions, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society.*

## **Nationalism**

Once again, nationalism is a contentious issue. Analysts cannot agree on its definition and its role in society. As the ensuing discussion will show, it is almost impossible to come up with a uniform definition of nationalism. In its historical context, it is an ideological movement aimed at attaining and maintaining the identity, unity (through social cohesion) and autonomy (through national self-determination) of a "nation," (see next chapter) or a people united under a "national" banner (Smith, 1991). In other words, it is the most potent ideology in nation state building and consolidation. However, as we will seek to illustrate, nationalism, particularly in the contemporary era, has also been a vehicle for disaffected ethnic or cultural communities to voice their dissatisfaction with the status quo (see chapter 5). The sources of discontent may be related to a variety of factors such as denial of cultural identity, political discrimination, repression, or economic deprivation (cf. Gurr 1993, 2000). In these cases, it is a movement of minority groups (in some cases even majority groups) which springs up in reaction to the policies or performance of the central state. At other times, it is a counter-reaction, either on the part of the political authorities, or of threatened social groups, in response to the political authorities, and therefore embodies different

---

<sup>40</sup> In his influential work "Imagined Communities," Anderson (1991:6) emphasising the relationship between print capitalism and nationalism, defines the nation as a political community that is imagined, not imaginary. This imagined political community is characterised by its territorial limitations as well as by its sovereignty. Anderson describes this imagined community as an imagined union of members, even though most will never know each other. He points out that the nation is limited since all nations have finite, if elastic borders as it is imagined as sovereign. The nation is always perceived as a deep horizontal comradeship, regardless of actual inequalities (ibid.:6-7). Anderson illustrates how through the use of maps, the census and museums, the attachment to an identification with a certain territory is established in the attempt to classify peoples, regions, languages and so on to make them bounded and countable. The map replaced other understandings of space while the census was to utilise to organise education, law, the police and other forms of bureaucracy, Museums in turn help legitimise the state as the protector of the nation's cultural heritage (ibid.:175).

---

objectives. But in most cases, the central state, whether directly or indirectly, plays a key role in manipulating or being the target of nationalist sentiments.

In any case, most scholars of nationalism contend that nationalism is a specifically modern phenomenon, which became salient in the 18<sup>th</sup> and/or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kohn 1944, Greenfield 1991, 1992, Anderson 1991, Alter 1989, Hobsbawm 1990, Calhoun 1993). In modern times “nationalism has become the pre-eminent discursive form of claims to political autonomy and self-determination” (Calhoun 1993: 213). Liah Greenfield (1993)<sup>41</sup> describes nationalism as a political ideology, a perspective or style of thought, indicating both consciousness and identity. Anthony D. Smith (1986:2) calls nationalism an ideological movement that extends and intensifies the meanings and scope of historic *ethane*; those named communities whose members share ancestry myths, histories, cultures, and a sense of solidarity. John Hutchison (1987) distinguishes between political and cultural nationalism, depicting the latter as a movement produced by a crisis of identity in which “the political” replaces religion as the key to individual and collective identity.

Contrary to some critics who see nationalism as a throwback to pre-modern, tribal systems of identification or behaviour (Smith 1986, 1991, Hutchison 1987, Connor 1994), Gellner (1983:1) delineates nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy based on the correspondence of ethnic and state boundaries. In line with other modernist he argued that nationalism emerged in Western Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and spread quickly to other societies in the era of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The assumption that nationalisms are historical (Greenfield 1992, Hobsbawm 1990, Kohn 1945, Anderson 1991, Gellner 1983), rather than natural phenomena shapes most of the scholarly literature, so that the study of nationalism leads to historical analysis rather than to biology or physical geography. Herein lies the need to identify the origin and destination of the state and state-society relations.

---

<sup>41</sup> Greenfeld (1992) writes from a classical liberal perspective that emphasises individual agency and challenges the materialist structuralist or Marxist theories of nationalism (such as Gellner 1983, Anderson (1991) and Hobsbawm (1990)). Yet Greenfeld also develops her own structural explanation for nationalism by focusing on the *ressentiment* of social groups who were unhappy about their lack of social influence.

According to Tom Nairn (1977:3) “The theory of nationalism represents Marxism’s great historical failure.” Nairn, (in addition to other Western Marxists, such as Eric Hobsbawm<sup>42</sup> and Benedict Anderson (1992) boldly challenged the almost universally negative assessment of nationalism by his fellow Marxists and, from within the fold, they claimed that nationalism was not only required by modern industrial society but also met certain psychological needs of individuals, namely their quest for identity. Nairn followed Gellner’s lead in linking nationalism to uneven development:

The subjective point of nationalist ideology is, of course, always the suggestion that one nationality is as good as another. But the *real* point has always lain in the objective fact that, manifestly, one nationality has never been even remotely as good as, or equal to, the others which figure in its world-view. Indeed the purpose of the subjectivity (nationalist myths) can never be anything but protest against the brutal fact; it is mobilization against unpalatable, humanly unacceptable, truth of grossly uneven development” (Nairn 1974:60/reprinted in Eley and Suny (eds.) (1996).

Nairn defined nationalism as a “modern Janus”—one face looking to the future, a vehicle for social transformation, the other looking to the past, reproducing social subordination. He saw nationalism as “both healthy and morbid”, reflecting its origins as a necessary outcome of global capitalism—not chosen as the vehicle political change, but imposed by the logic of capitalist development (Nairn 1977). For him, nationalism was imposed by uneven development: nationalist self-determination is a “grim necessity of modern social development” (Nairn 1977). In this context, the agent of nationalism is the intelligentsia, “the most conscious and awakened part of the middle classes,” which responds to uneven development with a particular political ideology (ibid.:63):

Real, uneven development has invariably generated an imperialism of the centre over the periphery; one after another, these peripheric areas have been forced into a profoundly ambivalent reaction against this dominance, seeking at once to resist it and to somehow take over its vital forces for their own use. This could only be done by kind of highly ‘idealist’ political and ideological mobilization, by a painful forced march based on their own resources: this is employing their ‘nationality’ as a basis (ibid:12)

Nairn approaches the study of nationalism from a Marxist perspective. He considers nationalism as a bourgeois phenomenon which can be derived from the class consequences of the uneven diffusion of capitalism (Nairn 1988:98-99). Nationalism generates and, at the same time, requires the exploitation of peripheries whose deprived elites have no alternative but to turn to the masses and engage them in the nationalist project. In this

---

<sup>42</sup> Accepting Gellner’s definition of nationalism, Hobsbawm also positioned himself firmly in the modernist camp, asserted that the nation is an invented idea, and stated: “Nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round (1990:10).

---

context, nationalism's main objective is to fight against a concrete form of "progress" promoted by the colonial capitalist while at the same time embracing a distinctive idea of progress generated by the intellectuals capable of leading their struggle against capitalist oppression (ibid:339). Nairn explains the emergence of nationalism in deprived areas as a reaction against the uneven spread of capitalism. But he acknowledges the existence of some exceptions to the connection he establishes between nationalism, backwardness and periphery. To mobilise the masses<sup>43</sup> and gain their support for the nationalist cause, the new intellectual elites have to work towards the construction of a "militant inter-class community" sharing a common identity even if, as Nairn stresses, they share this identity in a mythical way."

Nairn's position parallels that of Benedict Anderson, who stresses the cultural and political dimensions of uneven development in reproducing new forms of nationalism (Anderson 1991). Like Nairn, Anderson argues that nationalism is a profoundly modern imagining, not about to be dissolved in the global context (see Anderson 1993).<sup>44</sup> This approach offers a useful corrective to ethno-nationalist and modernisation approaches to nationalism (Smith 1980, Gellner 1983). Contrary to ethno-nationalist interpretations (Smith 1992), nationalism cannot be reduced to an ethnic core separable from the state and from the broader global context.

All of these authors have contributed to a broader understanding of nationalism, but one author, John Breuilly (1993:420-21) advocates restricting the term to political movements which aim to acquire state power on the basis of a distinct cultural identity. He stresses the relationship of the nation to state power and offers perhaps the most comprehensive political theory of nationalism. Like Anderson, Breuilly views the modern state as the force that shapes the attachment to a territory through all of the paraphernalia of a centralised bureaucracy.<sup>45</sup> Territory, for Breuilly, is considered the necessary arena of state power and therefore nationalist aspiration. Breuilly limits the term nationalism to refer to political movements attempting to exercise state power while justifying their actions with nationalist

---

<sup>43</sup> Nairn (1977) envisages a chronological progression in the spread of nationalism from elite into mass involvement. In Nairn's theory, the support of the masses is crucial if a nationalist movement is to succeed.

<sup>44</sup> Some (both leftist and nationalist) Ethiopian scholars follow similar argument in their explanation of the emergence of ethno-nationalist movements in Ethiopia (see for example Jalata 1993, Jalata (ed.) 1998. Hassan (1998), Holcomb & Ibssa (1990).

<sup>45</sup> This specific territory is important not only because of its instrumental values but also because of its symbolic values as the "land of our ancestors" (Breuilly 1993:92).



---

arguments. According to Breuilly, a nationalist argument contains three basic assertions: a nation with a specific and peculiar character exists, the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values, and the nation must be as independent as possible: it must be at least politically sovereign (ibid.:2).

Breuilly is concerned only with significant political movements and focuses on nationalism as a form of opposition politics. The Author summarizes his general line of argument as follows:

...nationalism should be understood as a form of politics and [...] that form of politics makes sense only in terms of the particular political context and objectives of nationalism. Central to an understanding of that context and those objectives is the modern state. The modern state both shapes nationalist politics and provides that politics with its major objectives, namely possession of the state (ibid: 352).

His argument explains well how nationalist movements first gained prominence. Claiming that nationalism is a form of the political concerning the appropriation and exercise of state power, Breuilly does not advocate that the state produced nationalism but rather that the context of state formation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were particularly well suited for the rise of nationalist movements. When the state system emerged in the early modern period, Breuilly (1993) argues, power became increasingly concentrated in a centralised intrusive state organisation. As the state began to assert more control over the population, distinct public and private spheres appeared.

By using the construct of the nation as a representation of all the members of the community nationalist politicians tried to link the separate spheres. The masses constituted the nation; the state looked out for its best interests. Nationalism emerged concurrently with the state system because control of the state became the goal of political movements just as the state system expanded with claims to represent greater proportions of the society. The modern state system makes nationalism possible because it provides a specific goal for national movements. According to Breuilly, in order to understand best nationalist politics and behaviour, scholars should examine nationalism in light of objectives to obtain and to use state power. Political analysis, he contends, provides the key to understanding nationalism.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Similar to Breuilly, Micheal Hechter (1997), divided nationalism into four groups: state-building nationalism, unification nationalism, peripheral nationalism and irredentist nationalism. State-building nationalism embodies an attempt to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories in a given state.

Breuilly acknowledges different national experiences in various regions of the world. He broadly categorises them into three political movements: *reformist*, *unification*, and *separatist*. The reformist programme seeks to reorganise and modernise an indigenous society according to the dominant conception of an independent nation-state. *Unification movements* aim to attain or establish state power for a specific group of geographically “scattered” peoples. *Separatist* activity occurs within a predominantly non-national context (e.g. Empire and post-colonial states) where culturally dominant groups form a political movement to found their own nation-state and separate themselves from other groups in the region by expressing their case in historical term. Reaction to this process occurs when culturally subordinate groups in turn express their own case for an independent nation. All three categories demonstrate Breuilly’s view that political movements only become nationalist when combined with other ideas about a distinctive cultural identity. This poses problems for independence movements in which the idea of a nation as a group of independent, individual citizens plays a central role. According to Breuilly (1993:2-3):

The term 'nationalism' is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments. A nationalist argument is a political doctrine built upon three basic assertions: (a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character; (b) the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values; and (c) the nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty.

Breuilly’s classification of nationalist movements (*reformist, unification and separatist*) will allow us to differentiate between nationalist movements in Ethiopia. If we take the four nationalist movements which are discussed in chapter 5, while the Eritrean and Oromo nationalist movements can be classified as what Breuilly’s terms *separatist movements*, the Afar and the Somali as the *unification movements* and, the Tigrean nationalist as *reformist movement*. However, it must be clear here that this is an ideal division and there are groups inbetween these three categorisations. As will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6 there are

---

A conscious effort by central rules to make a multicultural population, to some degree, culturally homogenous (e.g. England, France). In this dissertation this will be referred as state nationalism. Unification nationalism is the merger of political divided but culturally homogenous territory into one state (examples German, Italy). It is the creation of a new state by the nation, rather than the creation of a nation by the state often culturally exclusive. Peripheral nationalism occurs when a culturally distinctive territorial sub-unit resists incorporation into an expanding state (often a response to the expansion of direct rule and/or state-building nationalism), and/or attempts to secede and establish its ‘own’ national government (examples Eritrean, Oromo, Afar), often exclusive in its outcome. Finally, irredentist nationalism is an attempt to extend the existing boundaries of a state by incorporating territories of adjacent states occupied by co-nationals (example Somali nationalism).

---

divisions among ethno-nationalist movements in terms of their goals e.g. there are Oromo separatist/reformist, Ogaden/Somali and Afar separatist/reformist/irredentist).

In general terms these politicised groups advanced politicised demands for greater governing power in their territory, ranging from autonomy to secession. While the conflict for autonomy is critical the separatist/secessionist and/or unification (irredentist) conflict is the most serious one, because it poses a serious challenge to the stability and security of the state. Ethnic groups invoke the right to self-determination and have the capacity to receive assistance from abroad, turning domestic disputes into international issues or spill-over (e.g. the Ethio-Somali Conflict) (Mayall 1990, Markakis 1987, Keller 1988, Lake and Rotchchild, 1998, Gurr 1993). Having clarified our concepts we now turn to find an answer to the question: why and how ethnic identity transformed into collective action or ethno-political mobilisation?

### **Ethnic identity, Collective Action, and Conflict**

Brass (1974, 1985) observed the mobilisation of the people toward an identity formation as a process. In a sense, the elite groups of a society manipulate the masses in the following two stages: (1) From an ethnic category to an ethnic community and; (2) from an ethnic community to a nationality. When the people of a particular community consciously differentiate themselves from other groups of people by taking on some ethnic attributes e.g. language, religion, or life style, then the stage of an ethnic community is reached. When this ethnic identity is manipulated by the raising of social, economic and political demands by the elite groups for the attainment of a new identity, then the stage of nationalism materialises in the society.

This theory has proposed three assumptions for the consideration of mass mobilisation in any society. First, every society in the world has its own distinctive attributes (language, religion, territory, race, descent or some combination of these characteristics) to identify and differentiate itself from other societies. All of these characteristics undergo similar processes of changes, which lead to internal solidarity and external differentiation from other groups. Second, there has always been observed in all culturally heterogeneous societies an even greater variety of cultural groups. Third, the emotional content, social salience and political significance of cultural distinctions vary over time, as well as with

---

regard to territory. These three assumptions, in fact, provide us with information about the process of social change in the society.

Previous literature on both ethnic nationalist resurgence and social movements in general tended to derive their analysis from one of three broad levels: the state, its institutions and their relationship with society (termed the “structural approach” here), social movements and their mobilisation imperatives (referred to as “resource mobilisation” and rational choice” perspective here), and finally, social psychology and identity. A few, such as Charles Tilly (1978) have important elements of all three approaches in their work, but one level of analysis dominates the others (in Tilly’s case, the resource mobilisation perspective), and the synthesised interplay of the variables is not clearly laid out.<sup>47</sup>

Another scholar who is at the forefront of these advances has been Ted Robert Gurr. After nearly four decades of work on civil war, ethnic conflict and nationalist conflict Gurr has developed a model of ethno-political behaviour (Gurr 1993, 1993, 2000) that integrates the literature on nationalism, social movements, and domestic conflicts. In this study I use this theoretical model to explain the emergence of ethno-political conflict in Ethiopia. One of Gurr’s primary suppositions is that the study of ethno-political rebellion is best placed within the context of the domestic conflict and social movement literature. Accordingly, the explanation he has developed is essentially a modified model of domestic civil strife. At its core is a theoretical synthesis of the central concepts of the three competing approaches to understanding civil conflict—*mobilisation capacity* from resource mobilisation<sup>48</sup> (Tilly 1978), *incentives* (primarily grievances) from relative deprivation<sup>49</sup> (Gurr 1971), and *opportunities* from structural political opportunity theory (McAdam & Snow 1996). The principal theoretical adaptation to the model supplied by the nationalism literature (especially Horowitz 1985) is the importance placed on group *identity* and cohesion in facilitating ethno-political mobilisation and rebellion. Gurr weaves these four concepts into a coherent explanation of ethno-political rebellion:

---

<sup>47</sup> Tilly’s approach, for example, fails to consider identity as a dynamic variable, subject to influence by both social movements and structural change in the state and society. As a result, people’s identity, goals and values are treated as given.

<sup>48</sup> Specific interest is placed on the capacity of groups to mobilise their members in support of collective action.

<sup>49</sup> The central premise is that conflict will result when relative inter-group inequalities generate grievances that give groups the incentive to rebel.

---

Ethnopolitical action presupposes an *identity* group that shares valued cultural traits and some common *grievances* or aspirations. These sentiments and interests provide the essential bases for *mobilization* and shape the kinds of claims made by group leaders.... The timing of action and the choice of strategies of participation, protest, or rebellion depends largely on political *opportunities* external to the group, principally its relationship to the state and external actors (Gurr 2000:94-5, emphasis added).

In short, Gurr's model (1993, 2000) at its core posits that ethno-political rebellion is more likely to develop within those groups that have the strongest, most cohesive *identities*; the greatest extent of *grievances* supplying the incentive to organise; the most elaborate networks and leadership capabilities that give them the capacity to successfully *mobilise*; and a set of external political factors furnishing the *opportunities* to mobilise against the state. The interplay among identity, grievances, mobilisation and opportunities hence forms the crux of the model that Gurr fully elaborates in two treatments of ethno-political conflict (1993, 2000).

It is important to note that as Gurr (2000) argues, whenever we attempt to export a model, certain factors become more, or less, important, depending on the environment in which it is applied. The precise causes of ethno-regional grievances may be different in Ethiopia, for example, than they are in Sudan.<sup>50</sup> For this reason, Gurr outlined a model that is sufficiently generic that it can be translated to almost any case throughout the international system. Gurr argues that mobilisation, "the extent to which group members commit their energies and resources to collective action in pursuit of shared interests" (2000:74), is chiefly a function of the strength of group identity, grievances,<sup>51</sup> state repression, and the group's size and spatial concentration. Lindström and Moore (1995) and Gurr and Moore (1997) both found support for the first two factors, while the former also saw an impact for a composite measure of group size and concentration.

---

<sup>50</sup> For instance, I found that state repression was crucial in the crystallisation of Tigrean, Eritrean and Oromo nationalism.

<sup>51</sup> There are three basic categories of grievances in the model that give a group the incentive to mobilise for political action: "(1) the extent of their material, political, and cultural disadvantages; 2) the historical loss of political autonomy; and 3) the extent to which force has been used to establish and maintain their subordinate status" (Gurr 2000:73). While repression (Schock 1996) and lost political autonomy are relatively straightforward concepts whose escalatory effects have been posited by Lindström and Moore (1995), Gurr and Moore (1997) and Moore and Gurr (1998), among others, the concept of collective disadvantages, which refers to "socially derived inequalities in material well-being, political access, or cultural status by comparison with other social groups" (Gurr 2000:71), has specified a number of different ways. Gurr and Moore (1997) included measures of political discrimination, economic discrimination, and demographic distress, Moore and Gurr (1998) used economic, political and cultural discrimination.

---

Gurr argues that, in particular, material grievances can derive from such factors as unequal economic growth, expanded educational opportunities, and high inflation rates (1993). In short, there are good reasons for characterising lagging economic and educational performance as factors that sharpen the grievances of ethnic and national communities and also a cogent argument for citing increased regional GDP and education as factors that enhance the mobilisation potential of these communities.

Gurr and Moore (1997) found that the success of previous repression was strongly associated with increased rebellion. In this regard Gurr (2000) argues that the values and institutions of democracy tend to pacify the rebellious tendencies of potentially violent ethnic communities insofar as democratic states are less likely to rely on coercive means of social control. The relationship between regime type and repression actually involves two distinct hypotheses (Gurr 2000) (1) higher levels of institutional democracy will diminish elite preferences for coercion (Gurr and Moore 1997), and (2) the more durable a democracy, the less likely elites are to resort to repression due to the historical success of accommodation (Gurr 2000).

Finally, Governments have an impact on the extent of regional mobilisation by reducing reliance on repressive measures. Governments might also be successful in ameliorating mobilisation via comprehensive “nation-building” policies designed to counteract the more parochial or exclusive aspects of competing ethno-regional identities. Given the important impact of contagion on rebellion, states should also be wary of potential spillover effects from either kinship groups in neighbouring countries or other contentious domestic communities. The way in which the state relates to the units it administers is of the utmost importance in the emergence and salience of ethnic groups in conflict.

## **Conclusion**

During the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world community witnessed a remarkable growth and spread of nationalism and ethnic conflict. Moreover, movements for national liberation and autonomy have become worldwide phenomena spreading to every corner of the world. As Calhoun (1993:1) notes “neither nationalism nor ethnicity is vanishing as part of an obsolete traditional order. Both are part of a modern set of categorical identities invoked by elites and other participants in political and social struggles”

As discussed in this chapter, theories of [ethno]nationalism are usually divided into two broad categories: those presenting as a product of modernisation based on allegedly malleable identities, and those interpreting it as a continuation of pre-existing ethnic characteristics. This division between modernists and perennialists is often repeated by

---

scholars analysing theories of ethnicity (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:8). It can be refined by distinguishing between three set of theories: (1) those which consider nation and nationalism as 'givens' (the primordialists and socio-biologists); (2) those which analyse them as constructions, either as by-products of the modernisation process (ranging from social mobilisation to state-building) or consequences of the instrumentalist strategies implemented by elites in conflicts (for the control of the state or the creation of the new state) and; (3) those which rehabilitate the role of ideas and culture and look at nationalism as an ideology, be it propagated (in the difusionist perspective) or shaped by indigenous intelligentsias on the basis of the existing ethnic material. This typology has great heuristic power. It enables us to reject the first approach because of its simplistic views; it also invites us to integrate the two others in a logical as well as chronological order. To begin with, the intelligentsia builds a nationalist ideology in order to resist the domination posed by some dominant other as suggested by Smith, Greenfield and Nairn and others, nationalism, therefore, is an ideology based on a strategy of stigmatization and emulation of a dominant Other. As will be clear from the preceding analysis, nationalism has assumed a multitude of forms, both historically and in the contemporary era, most of which are generally related, directly or indirectly, to the policy or performance of the central state. Moreover, nationalism had historically served three paradoxical purposes by contributing to the formation, survival as well as the dismemberment of nation states. In this context, one could argue that state nationalism constitutes a celebration of sovereign statehood; ethno-nationalism, a challenge to the legitimacy (and sometimes, integrity) of the state; and protest nationalism, a critique of state policy or, going one step further, a response to the crisis of the nation state.

Although one obvious conclusion that can be drawn is that the nation state has clearly failed in its claim to represent the popular will, it does not necessarily follow that it has also exhausted its purpose as an effective or desirable form of political organisation. One fundamental impediment to transcending this claim is the prevailing and ever-strong aspiration of most self determination movements to seek the nation state paradigm as the final embodiment of their political goals. Hence, the issue appears to be more one of how boundaries should be drawn, rather than that of questioning the basic legitimacy or desirability of sovereign political statehood within a defined territory. Given the historical

discrepancy between the political development of different peoples, a more realistic approach for the medium term may be to advocate measures which seek to narrow the growing disparity between the rights of (all members of) society and the obligations of the central state. It is also conceded that given the rise in nationalist sentiment in recent years, the question of the recognition of ethnic and minority rights will eventually have to be treated beyond the nation state paradigm.

In conclusion, currently, finding mechanisms for the management of domestic conflicts or accommodating diversities is the major concern of the political leaders of multinational states and scholars. History has shown that permanent solutions to such conflicts are nearly impossible. Yet, some states have been more successful in accommodating their diversities than others; and in the past individual states have engaged in various strategies in order to eliminate or accommodate their diversity. This is the issue to be discussed in the next chapter.



## *Chapter three*

---

### ***The Institutional Management of Ethno-political Conflict***

---

#### **Introduction**

Having analysed the nature of ethnic and national conflicts in the previous chapter the focus of this chapter now switches to ethno-conflict solution, or at least conflict management. The chapter examines the principal strategies of conflict regulations (McGarry & O'Leary 1993). In other words, it seeks to answer a question passed down from Plato to the present: what is the best possible arrangement for the management of political violence? It is obvious that the types of political responses and concessions that can accommodate the demands of ethno-nationalist movements vary in accordance with the basic aims of the movements concerned (see chapter 2). A popular strategy for ethno-political conflict management espoused by scholars and policy makers is democracy. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the number of books and articles advocating the 'democratic peace' (solution) has increased considerably and the subject is also on the agenda of the politicians.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to democratisation, the promise of inclusive participation or power-sharing among diverse community and federalism is a key conflict management tool recently adopted by some countries.<sup>53</sup> In this context, (in addition to South Africa), Ethiopia provides a rich terrain for exploring the relationship between such institutional design (arrangements) and conflict management in post Cold War Africa.

Yet, there is a lively debate among politicians and scholars alike about whether democracy and federalism will mitigate ethnic conflict and secessionism or promote it. On the one side

---

<sup>52</sup> Democratisation has been widely celebrated in recent decades as the unmitigated liberation of the human spirit from the bonds of arbitrariness and oppression (Fukuyama 1989/1992). Yet the process of political opening and democratic elections have been suspiciously close to the scene of the crime in the outbreak of genocidal violence in Burundi and Rwanda in 1992-1994, the ex-Yugoslav wars of the mid-1990s, the secessionist violence of Russia's southern rim etc. (Snyder 2000, Brown 2000, Gurr 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Power-sharing has been part of recent international conflict resolution strategies in Bosnia, Cambodia, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Angola and South Africa. Moreover, in his recent article, Daniel Elazar (1996:417), for example, states that scholars of both federalism and international relations have recently noticed that "the world as a whole is in the midst of a paradigm shift from a world of states, to a world of diminished state sovereignty and increased interstate linkages of a constitutionalised federal character."

of the debate are those who believe that democracy and federalism is the best hope for managing conflict and secession in ethnically diverse countries and democracy is superior to the authoritarian approach<sup>54</sup> and other forms of conflict management such as assimilation, hegemonic control and secession (Lijphart 1977, 1990; Gurr 2000; Sisk 1996; Horowitz 1990, 2002). On the other side of the debate are those who believe that democracy and federalism will promote, rather than prevent, ethnic conflict and secession. And some of them even go further to argue that: “the [ethnically] plural society...does not provide fertile soil for democratic values or stability” (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). In this latter scenario, democratisation will lead to a rising tide of violent conflict and “the opening of democratic space throws up many groups pulling in different directions, that it causes demand overload, systematic breakdown and even violent conflict”(Ake 1997:8, Huntington 1968, Snyder 2000).

The institutional scholars on their part continue to argue that although “democratic states suffer from conflicts just as others do, and the presence of democracy is no guarantee of a society without political violence....democratic societies tend to develop the institutions, resources and flexibility, in the long term, to peacefully manage these kinds of conflict” (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998:13). According to these scholars the problem is not democracy *per se* but the type of democracy these societies adopt [ed]. They argue that stable democracy in plural societies requires power-sharing arrangements, where power-sharing means “practices and institutions that result in broad-based governing coalitions generally inclusive of all major ethnic groups in society.”<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Rummel for instance stresses that whereas autocratic regimes often use force to repress opposing beliefs and views; democratic regimes tend to tolerate opposition through voting, negotiation, compromise, and mediation. The plural and open nature of democratic regimes enables the development of a culture and norms that emphasise existing differences to negotiate and conciliate. Autocratic regimes, however, rather than acknowledging differences in views and offering mechanisms for reconciling conflicts among them, try to impose an ideology or religion of their own and control all aspects of society by force and coercion. Therefore, Rummel claims, the ascent of violent opposition and civil war is more likely in autocratic regime than it is in democratic regimes. He concludes that “democracy is a general method of non-violence” (Rummel 1995:26).

<sup>55</sup>The theory is a fusion of insights from previous studies of institutional ethnic conflict management and from normative theoretical concern with institutional constraints on social discord. However, there is a fundamental dispute between advocates of a communalist perspective (of which consociationalism is perhaps the best known variant) and those of a more integrative bent. See Sisk (1996), Lijphart (1990).

In sum, power sharing theorists (Lijphart, 1977, 1990, Lewis 1965, Sisk 1996, Horowitz 1990), propose the devolution of power into regional-ethnic divisions under a federalist system of government as one possible remedy for ethnically divided societies like Ethiopia. Thus, their emphasis on alternative forms of democracy implies “institutionally engineering,” to use Giovanni Sartori’s (1995) phrase, can positively alter the way ethnic groups politically conduct themselves. Changing the political perceptions and competitiveness of ethnic groups is important in trying to reduce ethno-political conflicts. Since this approach is one among many other political strategies states employed (and still employ) in their attempt to eliminate or accommodate diversities, I found it important to first briefly consider ‘other’ political strategies as outlined by McGarry and O’Leary (1993) and then explore the institutional arrangements which is the most useful approach for the examination of post-Mengistu Ethiopia.

## **Conflict Research and Ethno-political Conflict management**

Conflict theories provide a broad range of responses to ethno-political conflict management or solutions and numerous historical examples exist of successful and mostly unsuccessful attempts to manage multiethnic states. McGarry and O’Leary (1993, ch.1) present a systematic overview of macro-political ways of regulating ethnic conflict. They distinguish between (1) methods of *eliminating differences*, and (2) methods for *managing* differences. Four specific methods belong to the first and four to the second category:

<b>Methods of eliminating differences</b>	<b>Methods of Managing differences</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Genocide</b></li> <li>• <b>forced mass population transfers</b></li> <li>• <b>integration</b></li> <li>• <b>assimilation</b></li> <li>• <b>partition/secession</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>hegemonic control</b></li> <li>• <b>arbitration/third party intervention</b></li> <li>• <b>cantonisation/federalism</b></li> <li>• <b>consociationalism/power-sharing</b></li> </ul>

### **Method of eliminating differences**

Methods of eliminating differences, often named ‘pre-’or ‘extra-institutional’, do not belong to the recommended strategies, the first two (*genocide* and *forced mass population transfer*) primarily for ethical reasons since both are immoral and illegal practices (McGarry & O’ Leary 1993, Rummel 1997:1-13, Horowitz 2001 Chap. 2, Lemkin

1946:79).<sup>56</sup> The method of forced *assimilation or homogenization* also referred to as “cultural genocide” “ethnocide” or “cultural colonialism” has another approach to erasing ethnic differences. In some cases, the state has banned the use of a particular language, religion or custom. More often than not, however, coerced assimilation has backfired, stimulating ethnic revival and/or secessionist movement (Rayan 1990). As Christopher Clapham remarks:

Assimilation to a core identity, while it offers on the one hand the chance of participating in the national political system, involves on the other hand the subordination of one’s own original affiliation ...at its worst it has fostered a level of resistance which few other African states have to face (Clapham 1988:24).

As the Ethiopia case shows (see chapter four), modern Ethiopian rulers combined assimilation (Amharisation and Christianization) and alliance formation in their attempt to consolidate power. Yet, the assimilation and homogenization project was increasingly resisted by the so-called ‘nationalities’ and the ‘national question’ was and still is one of the main problems and causes of conflict in Ethiopia (see chapter 6, also Clapham 1988, Markakis 1987). In addition, assimilation violated the contemporary ideal of multiculturalism (Kymlicka 1995).<sup>57</sup> According to Esman:

For two centuries prior to the 1960s it had been assumed that a normal ‘nation-state’ was obligated to build an integrated nation, and that member of ethnic minorities were expected to assimilate willingly into the national community. In recent years, pressures toward assimilation and other forms of depluralisation have begun to relax with the recognition that political community and viable statehood is not incompatible with ethnic pluralism (Esman 2000:3).

In other words, assimilation involves serious human rights violations and results in protests, political mobilization and often violent resistance against the dominant group. Most

---

<sup>56</sup>Genocide is understood to be the systematic mass murder of people with a particular ethno-religious, identity. According to Lemkin (1946:79) genocide is “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The national identity of the victim group is replaced with the oppressor group. Only four years after the coinage of the term, genocide became a legal construct with the 1948 signing of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Since 1946, about 80 million people have been murdered en masse by a state or a state sponsored agent, excluding military battle deaths. The latest of such being of Rwanda where an estimated 600,000 people were killed in 1994.

<sup>57</sup> The literature on multiculturalism has become a burgeoning industry. The bulk of the literature involves weighing the arguments for and against public policies that would allow special provisions for protecting distinct cultures and ways of life. This upsurge in interest in the claims of minority groups is closely tied to the fact that many democracies in the world are confronted with increasing demands for accommodation in matters as wide ranging as linguistic and education policies, family law and immigration regulations, national symbols and public holidays. The pioneering works of theorists such as Will Kymlicka (1995), Charles Taylor (1994) and Iris Young (1990) mark the beginning of the current justice claims of minority groups, and argue in favour of respecting group-based cultural differences under a new multicultural (or “differentiated”) citizenship regime.

importantly, individuals may assimilate but ethnic groups do not.<sup>58</sup> Although sometimes integration or assimilation projects work, in many cases ethnic communities seek collective rights and ask more than the individual opportunities provided to them—such as group autonomy or self-government (Kymlicka 1995, Taylor 1994, Young 1990). Finally, as McGarry and O’Leary (1993) pointed out, ethnic questions that evolved around nationality, language, territory and culture are relatively “non-tradable” and therefore, create zero-sum conflicts.

### Secession

For the purposes of this study, secession is defined as “an attempt by a national group claiming a homeland to withdraw with its territory from the authority of the larger state of which it is a part” (Horowitz 1992:119). Secession could lead to the unification of the secessionist entity with kin-state and/or becoming an independent state. Nationalist movements (e.g. Kurds, Tamil, Chechens, Oromo, Afar, Ogaden) hold that they have a right to *self-determination* (Gurr 2000). This normally means a right to independent statehood (but it can also in principle be a right to remain a larger multiethnic state or leave one state and join another). The main point is that the right resides in the national group as such. Originally the agenda of national rights was the post-Enlightenment liberal agenda. It proclaimed the principle that nations have the right to self-determination and these rights are a privilege of “humanity.” John Stuart Mill (1975:381) writes for example in 1861:

Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a prima facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government and a government to themselves apart. This is merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed. One hardly knows what any division of the human race should be free to do, if not to determine, with which of the various collective bodies of human beings to associate themselves.<sup>59</sup>

But the principle was not universally applied—there were restrictions on who qualified as a nation. Liberal nationalists exercised a threshold principle, believing that a nation had to be

---

<sup>58</sup> The crucial factor in these cases has been that individuals/ethnic minorities wanted to be assimilated into the dominant culture. Success has also been more likely when individuals or minorities are more similar culturally or are migrants rather than ethnic groups living in their own territory (Nordlinger 1972). Assimilation is not however, a short term project. Deutsch (1984) estimates that full assimilation of different groups (through intermarriage and blurring of ethnic boundaries) requires between 300 and 700 years and often cannot be accomplished purposefully. In short, unless targeted at people who are willing to acquire a new civic identity, assimilation projects have typically created rather than prevented conflict.

<sup>59</sup> Mill supplements these procedural claims with an argument that democratic institutions require and assume a basic national unity of “public opinion”.

of sufficient size to survive to merit a state, while organic nationalists defined the nation in ethno-linguistic terms in particular to ethnic groups who have developed a national consciousness (Buchanan 1991; Hobsbawm 1990:31-32, Gellner 1983:1, Barry 1991 see also chapter 2). In both cases, self-determination was limited to European people. It was Woodrow Wilson who formulated the right of self-government (including the creation of nation-states). Like Mill, Wilson saw the “rights and liberties of small nations” as integral to a broad democratic agenda.<sup>60</sup> A similar agenda was also proposed as early as 1903 by Lenin, “the right of nations to self-determination.” Lenin, specifically, was a firm believer in the self-determination of peoples as a sine qua non for the development of a socialist state.<sup>61</sup> Lenin identified the colonial problem as a national one. He famously argued that the most advanced form of capitalism was imperialism, which he defined as colonialism overseas. Just as national minorities would revolt in the archaic Ottoman and Czarist Russian Empires, the national groups in the colonies would themselves create national movements and revolutions. This was progressive, and therefore worthy of the support of the proletariat.

In more plainly ideological terms, Lenin defined the right to national self-determination as a genuinely socialist demand, given that socialism was incompatible with the continued oppression of minorities. The doctrine of self-determination was also in conformity with socialism because it underlined the equality of all nations, negating the imperial tendencies of larger nations, including, prominently, the ‘Great Russians’. Moreover, granting the right to self-determination would also reduce tensions between national groups and therefore strengthen proletarian unity after the revolution. The process of reducing suspicion and hatred between ethnic groups is hence of utmost value to the revolution on a global scale, and self-determination is in this context also valuable (Low 1958:47-48).

Yet Lenin ran into problems as he sought to balance this both practical and ideological support for self-determination with the need to ensure that the class consciousness of the

---

<sup>60</sup> Yet the Allies and, strikingly, Wilson himself ultimately limited the application of the self-determination principle to the defeated Central powers, and even then only to some of the nations on their territory and only immediately following the war. The Allies quickly came to see nationalism as a threat to international stability and to their own colonial empires, and Wilson himself soon backed off a broad endorsement of nationalist ideals of political legitimacy.

<sup>61</sup> This has heavily influenced the Ethiopian leftists, the former and current regime and nationalist movements in Ethiopia see chapters 5-7.

---

proletariat remained its main focus. Hence nationalism could be progressive, but it could not be allowed to obscure the primacy of class as the marker of identity. Another paradox of Leninism was that his emphatic support for self-determination was coupled with an equally enthusiastic endorsement of the assimilation of minorities—which was inherently progressive as it prevented national ossification, and led to the tearing down of national differences. But, according to Lenin, self-determination was a necessary precondition for the later assimilation of minorities.<sup>62</sup> In other words, Lenin's solution to the national question was national self-determination—but this must be 'no more than a brief moment of independence, leading rapidly to social revolution and thence, to the reestablishment of a unitary, revolutionary, workers state (d'Encausse 1978:40). He argued that the suspicion and hatred of Russians among minority peoples needed to be done away with before these populations could voluntarily assimilate. For this purpose, a period of full national rights was necessary (ibid.).

In sum, it was widely assumed that the principle of self-determination of "national groups" was a direct effect of the development of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism. When first uttered, such a principle carried weight only with reference to Europe and to its multinational empires—which assumedly offered to victors the opportunity to dismantle the defeated empires. Although the principle of self-determination of peoples plays an important part in modern political thought, especially since WWI, it must be pointed out that little was implemented until the end of WWII and the formation of the UN. The term 'self-determination' appears as such in Article 1(2) and in article 55 of the UN Charter. It refers to the principle of 'equal rights' and 'self-determination' of peoples in contextual phrases that take into account the right of the people of a state to be defended from the interference of another state or government, while the 'equal rights' were those of the *state* not of the *people*.

Since the beginning of the 50s, self-determination becomes more a 'moral' problem to be dealt with by the General Assembly of the UN, and increasingly political in the 1960s with

---

<sup>62</sup> Autonomy, in Lenin's view, did not restrict the powers of the central authorities since it was the centre that determined the legal framework of autonomy. Autonomy was therefore not in contradiction to democratic centralism. Autonomy would include the setting up of separate educational institutions and encourage the use of local languages, yet, it was only a step in the eventual assimilation of the minority.

---

the accession of new member states in Africa and Asia. It is historically linked to decolonisation, and began to be accepted as a legal right within this framework as colonial powers granted independence to some of their colonies. Even more, although self-determination became accepted as a legal right during the decolonisation process, it was never restricted to the “independence option” (Moore 1998, Alexis 1991, Horowitz 1997).

The self-determination doctrine as applied to the post-colonial world differed in one fundamental respect from its application in Europe. The basis for political independence was no longer defined in ethno-linguistic terms (nation)—It was defined *territorially* (Mayall 1991, Alexis 1997, Moore 1998).<sup>63</sup> This change had two profound consequences. The boundaries of the colonial units, universally acknowledged to have been drawn without regard for the make-up of the population captured within them, were frozen by common consent of the new states leaders. Not only was there no effort to redraw these inherited artificial boundaries, territorial integrity became sacrosanct. It was, as one author put it, an “unprecedented attempt to bring history to an end”, at least so far the territorial division of the world is concerned (Mayall 1990.56).

The international community has, as a rule, opposed secession as a rule, and it almost always tolerates or even encourages states to maintain their borders against national separation by whatever means. In Africa, where colonialism was widespread, administrative boundaries were particularly arbitrary. Nevertheless, European powers nearly always used these boundaries as the framework for the independent states that would follow colonial rule and both Western and African governments rebuffed efforts to change them. The policy of sacrosanct colonial boundaries in Africa has persisted for over forty years despite cases of blatant majority oppression of minorities (in some cases minority oppression of majorities).<sup>64</sup> The main reason that political officials and some scholars give

---

<sup>63</sup> The UN Charter contains several provisions about the right to self-determination. Article 1(2) states that it is the purpose of the UN to “develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people...” Article 55 reiterates the commitment to “the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.” the precise meaning of this term remained contested for a long time within the UN, but “the right to self-determination” eventually came to be interpreted as a right for overseas colonies to sovereignty, within the territorial boundaries that were established by the colonial powers. For established states, the right to self-determination was interpreted as a right to territorial integrity and a right to protection under the principle of non-intervention.

<sup>64</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie played a great role both in the creation of the OAU and in defence of the colonial boundaries.



---

for the agenda of stable borders is the fear that allowing secession would throw borders open to question regionally or even globally<sup>65</sup> (Barkin & Cronin 1994, Mayall 1991, 1990). In an African context, as Jackson and Rosberg (1982), and Herbst (2000) note, the OAU played a crucial role in the maintenance of boundaries and the prevention of outside support for secessionists. The international and African aversion to secessions contributed directly to the failure of Biafra (the Eastern Region of Nigeria) to secede from Nigeria in the late 1960s and the continued lack of international recognition for Somaliland despite almost a decade as a *de facto* state.

Moreover, it is important to note that secession is not, in most cases, a feasible solution. It is, usually, accompanied by violence and devastation. It does not create the desired ethnic homogeneity, it is practically impossible for each ethnic group to have its own state and, in most cases, it is unlikely that the new independent state will develop into a sustainable political system. Secession involves the parties disputing international boundaries and inevitably internalizes the conflict (Horowitz 2002, Kaufmann 2001).

Having said that, it is important to recognise that since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, some analysts have perceived a possible Western and UN move toward support for secessionist claims (Barkin & Cronin 1994, Horowitz 1997). They have based this view on recent international recognition of Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia and the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into their 'constituent republics'. Yet in all these cases, with the partial exception of Yugoslavia, major western governments and international organisations persistently opposed the creation of new states. For example, in the Eritrean case, despite the almost total control of Eritrea by the Eritrean nationalist movement in 1989-1990, the then American mediator openly opposed Eritrean independence. Herman Cohn, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs declared to Congress that "Ethiopia will be able to achieve a durable peace only by means

---

<sup>65</sup> If groups within already established states have the right to self-determination, then virtually every state in the system, from the long-established European states to post-colonial states of Africa, face the risk of dismemberment. Unwilling to sanction a practice that would tear apart existing states, the international community constructed a durable *regime* against secession, evident as early as the drafting of the UN and OAU Charters. Such international resistance to state creation through break-up has not dampened the enthusiasm of national groups seeking independent states of their own. Since 1945, scores of secessionist movements have affected nearly every region and every type of political system, including Britain, Burma, Canada, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan and Yugoslavia-- just to mention a few.

of a negotiated political solution. The outlines of the solution are not hard to see, Ethiopia must remain whole” (Iyob 1995:44). But it was too late and Eritreans achieved independence by force of arms (see chapter six).

In short, the number of ethnic groups on the planet numbers in thousands –what if all of them demand states? (Gellner 1983:2) International policy makers have repeatedly voiced fears that support for national separatism will foster an increasingly fractious state of war, a slippery slope of multiplying and contending claims for secession and irredentism all appealing for the world’s solicitude. More generally, given the long history of brutal wars over border disputes, it seems not only imprudent but irresponsible to reconstruct national boundaries on the basis of groups of national identity. Secession violates the important stabilising international guarantee of secure and unmolested borders. Yet, as one analyst has noted:

Assertions that successful secession by one or a few will produce runaway disintegration, thanks to the demonstration effect, deserve to be greeted with the same skepticism that should be directed at other straight line extrapolations. The domino theory of nationalist disintegration is no more persuasive than similar domino theories.”(Lind 1994:90)

The oft-voiced fears of international chaos have met with little analytical challenge, in large part because of the misplaced moral priorities behind intentional anti-secession doctrine. We ought to be suspicious of an argument that values peace and stability without any regard for mass aspirations.<sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Herbst, for example, has recently argued that the international community’s “dogmatic devotion to the current boundaries “should be discarded in favor of new forms of sovereignty. For Herbst (2000:267), “the inevitable disruption caused by state creation will also have to be balanced against the profound harm that existing states...do to their populations every day.” However, despite their criticism of the current state system in Africa, scholars such as William Zartman (1995), Mohammed Ayoob (1996) nonetheless believe that the existing system can still be made to work better, democratic solutions can provide a safety valve which can relieve the pressure toward self-determination and or/secession. Before exploring these solutions, I will first discuss two other forms of managing differences.

---

<sup>66</sup> The interests of authoritarian regimes in associating democracy with chaos are not very different or more disingenuous than many governments’ interests in condemning all secession threatens to unleash a flash flood of territorial conflicts. a consensus which in many former colonies, amounts to collusion among existing governments to collectively guarantee their own territorial security against popular ethnic dissent.

## Methods of Managing Differences

Methods for ‘managing differences’ in contrast to methods of eliminating differences, aim at preventing multiethnic societies. The most common system of managing differences is *hegemonic control*. As McGarry and O’Leary (1993) write, imperial or authoritarian regimes controlled multiple cultures within their territories through coercive domination and elite co-option. *Hegemonic control* violates the norm of democracy and this makes it an unacceptable solution. Control is the mechanism by which one majority/minority segment dominates and reduces any other groups to a position of formalised subordination. The control approach, whilst undemocratic, is considered preferable to other repressive means (elimination and assimilation), especially when conditions for accommodative policies are absent (Lustick 1979:31). However, the long-term maintenance of a control system is not immune to rebellion by the dominated groups as it generates the “majority’s/minority dictatorship” or control (Lijphart 1985).

“Hegemony” is most simply defined as a type of political influence and control. The origin of the word is from ancient Greek, “hegmon,” that means “leader.” Hegemony implies that the one who exercises political influence and control has certain leadership qualities deserving of others’ consent. The word entered modern political theory through the writings of Antonio Gramsci (1971:258-261). Gramsci wrote about hegemony to describe the way political leaders use public norms and values to gain political influence and control.<sup>67</sup> In the Marxist tradition Gramsci’s work is considered a step away from the economic determinism of classic Marxist theory. Robert Boccock (1986: 35) writes:

The originality of the Gramscian concept of hegemony stems, in large part, from the break it produced away from dogmatic Marxism’s approach, an approach which saw Marxism as being only a theory about economically determined classes and their actions...In Gramsci’s view this was mistaken, for it neglected the other major areas of society, namely the state and the institutions of civil society...Gramsci sought to emphasize the political. This was not to the exclusion of the economic area, but to include the state and civil society as areas in which power was exercised and hegemony established.

In short, Gramsci contributed to Marx and Engels’ assertion that the ruling classes’ economic power also gave them control of “mental production” by placing ideology, culture and

---

<sup>67</sup> In International politics traditional hegemony asserts that a single country’s preponderance of power accounts for stability. Hegemonic stability focuses almost exclusively on the distribution of power among countries. The hegemon uses its overwhelming share of power capabilities to supply goods, such as liquidity, open markets and foreign investment that entice countries to engage in economic cooperation. See for example, Keohane (1984), O’Briens & Clesse (2002), and Gerguson (2002).

---

economic power in a conceptual framework, emphasizing hegemony over society as a whole. As Gramsci (1971:80) states, “the normal exercise of hegemony...is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent.”

As will be discussed in chapters five and six, contrary to Lustic’s (1979, 1980) formulation of the control model of the management of ethnic conflict, the resort to military solutions of ethnic problems in Ethiopia by the Derg was counterproductive and contributed largely to its overthrow in May 1991 by a coalition of ethno-nationalist movements. Also, the theory of hegemony can best address the roots of dominance and subordination of ethnic groups until 1991. I believe it allows us also to look at current Tigrean hegemony and its federal project (see chapters 6-8).

#### **Arbitration (third party intervention)**

Arbitration is the last recognized method in the literature on conflict regulation. Arbitration entails the intervention of a neutral, bipartisan or multi-partisan authority. It differs from other methods used to stabilise antagonistic societies because it involves conflict regulation by agents other than the direct contending parties. Arbitration of national or ethnic conflicts is of two broad types, the internal and the external, each of which can be performed by different kinds of agents (McGarry and O’Leary 1993). Internal arbitration can be executed by an individual who is not a member of the main antagonists; it can also be an institution (e.g. the Supreme Court). External arbitration, by contrast, suggests that the national or ethnic conflict cannot be successfully managed within the political system. Arbitration/third party intervention is used for immediate conflict resolution when more desirable solutions fail.

But Kaufman (1996:125) has argued “...third parties cannot change ethnically defined grievances, negative stereotypes, symbolic disputes, threatening demographic trends, or histories of ethnic domination in foreign countries; and they cannot eliminate the fears of extinction that may result.” If we accept Kaufman’s thesis (in addition to mediation, patching the conflict up with peacekeeping/ peace enforcement) that third parties cannot change the nature of ethnic cleavages, then it is here irrelevant. We then are left with

---

cantonisation/federalism, and power-sharing, which refer to various modes of giving “voice” and power to minorities/majority. Federalism and consociationalism, are not only advocated but also often applied institutional arrangements with the aim of ameliorating inter-ethnic cleavages (Sisk 1996, Gurr 2000, Lijphart 1977, 1990, Ghai ed. 2000). Although societal conflicts owe their origins and persistence to many factors and not all can be peaceably resolved, political institutions can play an important role. I therefore find it important to explore in much greater detail these institutional arrangements that lay the foundation for the overall understanding and explanation of post-Mengistu Ethiopia’s institutional arrangements as a solution to ethno-political conflict or the “national question.”

It is important to note here that even though federalism/autonomy is incorporated as a component of the consociational model of democracy (discussed later), federal arrangements need to be discussed separately because a federal system can exist without necessarily being consociational. Moreover, both in the past and present, democratic and non-democratic (pseudo-federal) systems exist around the world.

## **Institutional Design: Federalism and Consociational Democracy**

### **Federalism and its relation to conflict management**

Federalism or some other form of regional autonomy is commonly looked upon as a mechanism for mitigating ethnic hostilities. As Duchacek (1977:13) pointed out, federalism is frequently identified as a panacea for multiethnic societies in conflict. Unlike secession, and repressive practices, federalism is a less threatening and costly mechanism of ethnic conflict management (Gurr 2000, Horowitz 2002). Daniel Elazar (1987:6, 1991:xvi), one of the most renowned scholars of federalism, observed that more than a third of all countries make use of some kind of *federal agreement* for their territorial organisation, even going so far as to talk of a worldwide “federal revolution.” However, this does not mean that all these countries are federal states or federations in a strict sense. In a far more recent study, Ronald Watts has argued that only 13% of current states are, in fact, federal (Watts 1999:4).

In any case, federalism, and Ethiopia is one of the 13% of current states with a federal experiment, requires the explanation of the federal system and its relations to conflict management in plural societies such as Ethiopia. In the following section I explore the answers to the following three questions: How do we define and measure federalism? What explains the origins of federalism? What is the relationship between federalism and conflict management?

### **Federalism: Definition, origins and significance**

There are myriad definitions of federalism, all of which emphasize some kind of shared, joint or equal authority between central and regional authorities (cf. Wheare 1964:1, Riker 1975, Elazar 1985, 1991). According to Elazar (1991:xv):

Federal principles are concerned with the combination of self-rule and shared rule. In the broadest sense, federalism involves the linkage of individuals, groups, and polities in lasting but limited union, in such a way as to provide for the energetic pursuit of common ends while maintaining the respective integrities of all parties...In the twentieth century it has come to be particularly useful for its flexibility when it comes to translating principles into political systems.

Elazar distinguished a few important characteristics and principles of a federal system:

1. A written constitution should outline the terms by which power is divided, should outline the general government and the polities constituting the federal government;
2. Non-centralisation understood as diffusion of power and diffusion of specific powers to subordinate local governments (it is a subject to recall by unilateral decision).
3. Areal division of power – internal division of authority and power on a regional basis;
4. Maintaining union – direct lines of communication between the public and both the general and the constituent governments; people should be able to elect representatives to all governments which serve them;
5. Maintaining non-centralization – constitutional polities must be equal in population and wealth (or be balanced in their inequalities); permanence of boundaries of the Constituents Units (CUs); substantial influence of CUs over the (in)formal amending process;
6. Maintaining the federal principle: both CUs and the nation have a set of institutions with (a) the right to change them unilaterally (b) separate legislative and administrative institutions are both necessary, (c) the contractual sharing of public responsibilities by all governments in the system, (d) intergovernmental collaboration or informal agreements, (e) different “balances” are to be developed between central government and CUs.

Elazar’s typology of federalism involves both the structure and process of government and diversity. Federalism is both a political and a social phenomenon. Federalism concerns both means and ends; federalism is pursued for both limited and comprehensive ends. Federalism as a structure involves a political system [that]is established by compact and has

---

at least two ‘arenas’, ‘planes,’ or ‘levels’ of government each endowed with independent legitimacy and a constitutionally guaranteed place in the overall system and possessing its own set of institutions, powers, and responsibilities (*ibid*).

In his classical treatment, William Riker (1964, 1975:101-103) also defines a federation as a political system in which there is a central government and a number of constituent units, each having the final say in at least one category of action. In practice, the central government or the constituent units may be politically dominant—in fact, Riker argues that they can never be in perfect balance for if there were, there would be stalemate and indecision and the system would collapse.<sup>68</sup> For Riker (1975:97) (and most other scholars) in a genuinely federal system the units and the centre will share authority over policy issue areas. The United States, which served as a model for Riker’s theory, was such a federal country both in name and in practice. By contrast, the federal system in places such as the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were shams, in which the authority of the constituent units is entirely fictional. These constituent units formally have the final say on a wide range of issues, but in fact there are other institutions (such as the party apparatus in communist countries) that render this formal authority meaningless.

In short, the definitions of Riker and Elazar, like most other definitions of federalism generally focus on the allocation of political power between two levels of government—the central and regional governments. Following these scholars we define federalism as a polity with dual (or multiple) levels of government, each exercising exclusive authority over constitutionally determined policy areas, but in which only one level of government—the central government—is internationally sovereign. The levels of government of federal systems are territorially defined and are always divided between a central government with national jurisdiction and sub-national governments (e.g. ‘states’ or ‘provinces’) with jurisdiction over delimited areas of the union. The division of powers between levels of government varies by constitutional design or political practice (Dahl 1986:114).

---

<sup>68</sup> As an example of a minimal case of central authority, Riker describes the Achaean League in ancient Greece, in which the central government had the final say only in one policy areas, military tactics, and then in war. A maximal case is one like the USSR, at least in principle, since in that system the units had the final say only over decisions relating to cultural and linguistic policy (see Riker 1964).

---

Understanding these dynamics requires attention not only to the institutions of federalism themselves, but to how they relate to the broader political system in which they are embedded.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, patterns of legislative apportionment vary considerably across federal systems. In bicameral federal systems territorial and population representation are usually divided between Upper Houses of the legislature (Senates), which are based on territorial representation, and the Lower Houses where seats tend to be apportioned according to population.

The basic rationale for the adoption of a federal system is generally related to the elements of the territorial size or complexity of a state manifested in its cultural and linguistic diversions, historic specificity and consideration for administrative decentralisation. Implicitly, the purpose is to overcome some of the problems inherent in the formation of a national state. Riker (1964:12) suggested that political entities with actual or presumptive claims to sovereignty agree to join together in a federation to meet a joint security threat or foreign military opportunity that they are unable to meet on their own. Accordingly, all federations follow the “coming together” federal bargain (1975:11-14, Stepan 2000).<sup>70</sup> However, Stepan notes that the paths to federalism are many and Riker’s model of federal formulation is only one possible model, one which Stepan labels “coming together” federalism (Stepan 2000). For example, he identifies two other possible forms or logics of federal formation which he called: “*coming together federalism*” and “*holding together federalism*.” The first logic, Stepan suggests, is the preservation of a pre-existing union, such as a multiethnic unitary state that adopts federal arrangements in order to prevent the union’s dissolution or to manage ethnic tensions more effectively. Stepan labels such cases, whose more notable members include India, Spain, and Belgium, as examples of “*holding together*” federalism (ibid.).

According to Stepan, the distinction between “*holding together*” or “*coming together*” federalism reveals a great deal about the dynamics of change, whether in federal systems

---

<sup>69</sup> For example we must look at the constitutional features of the federal system (institutions, authorities, limitation of power, the policy scope of the different governmental bodies and levels of government etc.). We must also look at the relationship between the federal institutions and characteristics of the broader political system in which they are embedded.

<sup>70</sup> Drawing from the experience of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century North American colonies, Riker proposed this as a general model for the formation of federal systems. In this “coming together” federation each of the previously sovereign units retains many of their self-governing rights.



themselves, or in the transformation of unitary states into federal or quasi-federal systems. It also reveals much about the dynamic relationship between federalism and ethnic differentiation. In a path dependent sense, the origins indeed shape the subsequent trajectories of federal systems. The second logic driving federal formation is coercion, and Stepan, building on the example of the Soviet Union, proposes “*putting together*” federalism as an additional type of federal formation to incorporate this and similar historical examples. According to Stepan the Soviet Union and later Russia:

“is the only country ...in which many of the members units joined not *via* a Rikerian “coming together” bargaining process or *via* a “holding together” democratic constitutional transformation of unitary state into a federal state, but by a heavily coercive “putting together” process (Stepan 2000:139).

If the distinction between “*coming together*” and “*holding together*” federalism is accepted, it seems that post-Mengistu Ethiopian federal experiment looks like what Stepan has termed “*holding together*” federalism, as a decision was taken to create sub-national states from a unitary state. The adoption of federalism in Ethiopia was the result of civil war and ethno-political conflict. In *holding together* federation that starts from a unitary state, the most common justification given for entering into federal arrangements is the desire to reduce group conflict while at the same time demonstrating not only a respect for the diversity of the cultures of the given polity, but also a commitment to protecting the integrity of the constituent cultures (Stepan 2000, Smith 1995, Horowitz 2001).

The exploration of the origins of federalism provides a way of understanding not only the eventual balance of power between the central government and provincial government, but also the balance of power *between the provinces themselves* (e.g. Tigray vis-à-vis other states in Ethiopia).<sup>71</sup> To a great extent, federalism is an institutional solution to the problem of power asymmetries between the constituent units of a federation, a fact that is startlingly overlooked in theoretical treatments of federal systems. In the bulk of the literature on federalism, the main line of conflict identified is inter-governmental –between the central government and the sub-national government as a whole.

---

<sup>71</sup> These suggest that we need to go beyond institutional design in order to understand federalism’s varying effects on politics and policy making. Just as the design of federal institutions is often an outcome of conflicts between political actors, the impact of federalism on politics is an outcome of interaction between federal institutions and partisan alignments, party system characteristics, political economy, and economic geography. Whether the empowerment of sub-national units by institutional features of federalism constrains or enables central governments depends much on the political linkages or partisan alignments that exist between those controlling the central government and those controlling the sub-national governments.

In the Ethiopian context, as this study will show, Stepan's distinction between "holding together" and "putting together" is blurred in that what started as the logic of "holding together" has now evolved into the "putting together" federalism where the EPRDF regime in fact follows the Soviet model. Like the communist party, the EPRDF also contains a highly centralised form of federalism, with the real power and control over policy making both at the centre and sub-national levels (see chapter 6 & 7).

Finally, what is the role of federalism in ethnic-territorial conflict management? To answer this question, Diamond and Plattner (1994) argue that "ethnic conflict – particularly ethno-political threats to the central state – can often be mediated through a judicious implementation of federalism and constitutional guarantees for the protection of individual collective (minority) rights." Unlike unitary systems, federalism "compartmentalises friction" while allowing for "expression of cultural distinctiveness" (Hardgrave 1993:55). It compartmentalises friction by increasing the quantity of authority-holding political entities. Thus, federalism reduces and partitions the volume of the network of political transactions. It also increases the potential creativity of government. This combination of deconcentrating workload and proliferating policy-strategy entities enhances ethnic conflict regulation capacity in four ways (Lijphart 1977, ch. 3; Suberu, 1993; Nordlinger 1972, ch. 2; Hardgrave 1993):

1. It increases the boundaries placed around politicised ethnic groups by keeping their activity concentrated within the sub-national division.
2. It increase the partitions that regulate interactions among ethnic antagonists, particularly where the antagonists are geographically concentrated
3. It reduces the burden placed on the central government to integrate unruly ethnic groups.
4. It increases the manageability of the complex problems associated with political, cultural and economic disparities among ethnic groups.

This compartmentalising character of federalism also assures cultural distinctiveness by offering dissatisfied ethnic minorities access to public affairs. This proximity provides a feeling of both control and security that an ethnic groups gains regarding its own affairs. It instills the group with a sense of relevance in the public policy process. In general, such institutional proximity expands the opportunities for political participation and socialisation (Lijphart 1977chs. 2, 3, Nordlinger 1972 ch. 2, Hardgrave 1992, Smith 1995).

To sum up, federalism creates many decisions-making entities (as a result of territorial and non-territorial partition). The proliferation of decision-making entities may expand the opportunity to expose alternative, relevant political cleavages. It is argued that federalism increases the chances to expose ethno-political conflict cleavages so that the political process can easily make them the object of management efforts. It institutionalises these cleavages by localising decision making. By making ethnic conflict part of the political institutional routine, federalism pre-empts the festering of inevitable conflicts. It also reduces the probability of the spontaneous ventilation of conflict (cf. Lijphart 1977, ch. 2, Horowitz 1985, ch.14).

It must be noted, however, that the effects of federalism depend greatly on institutional structure and contextual conditions. Although federalism does not guarantee absolute conflict resolution, it is hard to find any other form of successful accommodation of a multinational state (or so-called “divided society”) that does not involve the federal principle. As Linz states, “federalism, rather than self-determination or independence, is more constructive, less conflictual, and often more democratic, although it will never fully eliminate the tensions in multi-national societies” (Linz, 1997:15). Federalism does not prevent or eliminate conflicts, but it does make them more manageable.

Finally, it is worth noting that not all federalisms have managed to regulate ethno-political conflicts. Federalism has broken down in some countries such as Czechoslovakia, the former Soviet Union<sup>72</sup> and former Yugoslavia. However, as noted earlier, even when it existed, these federations have been characterised as “sham federations” since they were based on the hegemonic control of the communist party and/or democratic centralism.

According to Crawford Young (1994:11-12):

In the Soviet case, and subsequently the Yugoslav and Czech instances modelled upon it, territorial subdivisions based upon “titular nationalities” were created...It is striking that, in all three communist federations, the loss of ideological and political legitimacy by the regime resulted at once in the fragmentation of these states along the often gerrymandered lines of nationality divisions, which originally reflected the strategic ethno-political calculus of the center.

---

<sup>72</sup> In the 70 years Soviet period a very complex state and territorial structure of the former USSR was based on strict centralisation. Soviet power has been based upon the principle of democratic centralism. According to this principle the relations between state, regional and local governments were grounded upon hierarchy. That is why the 15 republics were named as federal republics of the USSR, in reality it has been a unitary state with very few elements of federalism.

---

Federalism has also broken down throughout Asia and Africa, with the possible exception of India and Nigeria whose survival is partly accounted for by the degree of central control possible in its quasi-federal systems. India is a country which is often used to illustrate how federalist structures can have a moderating effect in ethnically divided countries. India's federalist system is noted for creating effective means of "compartmentalising" the country's ethnic tensions, thus minimising the problems arising from India's multiple ethnic divisions (Hardgrave (1994:72, Suberu 1993). Yet, even in the Indian case, there have been well-noted difficulties (e.g. Kashmir). Similarly, both the Canadian and Belgium federations have been challenged by identity groups. However, as McGarry and O'Leary (1993) pointed out "despite the difficulties associated with it, genuine *democratic federalism* is clearly an attractive way to regulate national and ethnic conflict with obvious moral advantages over pure control." A democratic federal system, by most definitions, must have credible guarantees that there are some policy areas that are constitutionally beyond the scope of the sub-units (Dahl 1986) The implication of this argument is that democratic federalism is not just about granting national minority's special rights it is also about maintaining and defending democratic institutions at the level of the federation.<sup>73</sup>

Among proponents of the "democracy" school, federalism is seen as intimately connected to democratic practice, whether from a perspective that sees local governments as more responsive to individual citizens than national governments, or from one that sees such governments as democratic bulwarks against the encroachments of a central state. Federalism, or the decentralisation of federal systems, is thus seen as a natural institutional consequence of the contemporary wave of democratisation that is sweeping much of the developing world. Daniel J. Elazar sees federalism as a liberating global movement that follows from centuries of centralising state building and authoritarian rule (Elzar 1991:x). It must be noted that federalism is not an outcome or end of the democratisation process, but as a variable that interacts with democratisation—strengthening at some level and inhibiting the operation of democratic government at others. Federalism and democracy are linked not ontologically, but via institutional mechanisms. Federalism often pushes

---

<sup>73</sup> A multinational federation with no effective common citizenship or with a central government that is not accountable to the citizenry is very likely to disintegrate into separate states once democracy gets a hold in its component parts.

democracies in the direction of what Arend Lijphart labelled “consensus” democracies, that place checks on democratically elected majorities and give minorities virtual veto power over major policy decisions. To Lijphart (1977), such majority-constraining devices were characteristic of highly divided societies, and in his work on “consociationalism” he listed federalism as one of several arrangements for multiethnic societies where language and ethnicity coincide with territorial cleavages.

## **Democratic Governance and Strategies of Accommodation**

The consociational or power-sharing<sup>74</sup> literature acknowledges ethnic identities and sees them as legitimate. Different identities are viewed as basic elements of society and it is believed that state power should be exercised jointly by the different groups (Gurr 1995:21). One tradition - consociational power-sharing - is connected with the name of Arendt Lijphart (1968, 1977), the other tradition—integrative power-sharing is advocated by Donald Horowitz (1985, 1990, 2002, Sisk 1996). Both traditions of institutional engineering commence from the same idea, that democracy is not only the most peaceful political order, but it is also an order superior to all other forms of political systems.<sup>75</sup> So, democratic governance should be universalised.

At the same time, however, we have to realise, as both traditions argue, that certain types of democracy and democratisation can lead to violence, to death and destruction in plural societies (Lijphart 1977, Horowitz 1985, Rummel 1995, Gurr 1993, 2000, Lewis 1965; Snyder 2000). Therefore, under certain societal constraints, only some types of democracy are feasible instruments for conflict management, whereas others might even exacerbate

---

<sup>74</sup> The roots of power-sharing theory lie in the study of democracy. In 1960s, Arend Lijphart conducted research on the problem of democracy in ethnically divided countries. He focused his research on divided countries that at the time exhibit stable forms of democratic government, namely Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as countries outside Europe like Lebanon and Malaysia (Lijphart 1969:207-225, 1977). These countries were considered exceptions to the general rule that ethnically divided countries do not make stable democracies. Lijphart (1969, 1977, 1990, 1999) proposed that democracy succeeds in some ethnically divided countries due to a political arrangement or pact between political elites representing these countries’ various ethnic groups. Such pacts predetermine how political positions will be allotted in a post-election government. In some of his recent writings, Lijphart substitutes the term “power sharing” for his old concept of “consociation” (Lijphart 1990).

<sup>75</sup> What these two scholars of thought implicitly shared, of course, was the then dominant view of “national” “ethnic” or “cultural” identities as “primordial” and hence, fixed and immutable. As discussed in chapter two, however, such identities are socially and politically constructed and historically contingent—i.e. not only are they shifting and malleable, but all individuals at least potentially have “multiple identities” or manifold and possibly competing foci of group affiliation and loyalty.

violence. As Van Berghe (1981:85) puts it “since peace and harmony imply equality, the question really asks whether stable cultural pluralism can even lead to a stable democratic polity.”<sup>76</sup> To this question he argued with Lijphart (1977) that it is difficult, but not impossible to achieve a stable democracy in plural societies, yet only under very special conditions:

In plural societies...majority rules spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy. What these societies need is a democratic regime that emphasizes consensus instead of opposition, that includes rather than excludes, and that tries to maximize the size of the ruling majority rather than satisfied with a bare majority: consensus democracy (Lijphart 1984:23).

Contrary to the view that democracy inevitably gives way to a vicious cycle of instability, ethnic conflict, and authoritarianism (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972, Huntington 1968), consociationalists maintain that diverse developing countries can sustain democracy even at low levels of economic development, if other conditions are right. In addition, increasing levels of economic development (i.e. economic growth) can facilitate interethnic accommodation and positive change in terms of civil society and political culture when the benefits of this growth are equitably distributed.<sup>77</sup>

Though not claiming that power sharing structures can eliminate deep ethnic hatred, advocates of power-sharing do suggest that the rules of the political game can be structured to institutionalise moderation on divisive ethnic themes, to contain the destructive tendencies, and to pre-empt the centrifugal thrust created by ethnic politics. Institutional approaches, in the words of Donald Horowitz, try to steer a realistic course between

The naiveté of those who would abolish ethnic differences in short order through ‘nation-building’, the cynicism of those who would simply suppress those differences, and the pessimism of those who would counsel costly and disruptive partition as the only way out... . They entail measures to contain, limit, channel, and manage ethnic conflict, rather than to eradicate it or to aim at either a massive transfer of loyalties or the achievement of some consensus. They involve living with ethnic

---

<sup>76</sup> The most widely quoted theorist who raises doubts about the possibility of crating a liberal democratic community in a multinational, multilingual state, is of course John Stuart Mill “Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feelings, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative institutions cannot exist” (Mill 1861/Williams 1993:396).

<sup>77</sup> Consociational theory treats favourable factors as given, as fixed parameters of political life. The relationship between favourable factors and elite behaviour is one way only, with the former affecting the latter. But this is only one part of the story, Brennan O’Leary (1989:574) asserts that policy makers confronted with unfavourable factors have an option: to engineer the conducive conditions. O’Leary hereby extends the concept of consociational engineering, i.e. leaderships’ attempts to purposefully create and maintain a consociational democracy, to the favourable factors. O’Leary selects at least four favourable factors: a multiple balance of power, a commonly perceived external threat, socioeconomic equality between the segments, and overarching society-wide loyalties. The third factor is from Lijphart (1985) the other three from Lijphart (1977).

differences and not moving beyond them. All of these measures fall within the domain of political engineering. Not learning theory, but the theory of political incentives, inspires these more limited measures (Horowitz 1985:599-600).

Assuming democracy is possible, we then have to explain democracy and democratisation in developing nations and then return to democratic solutions. Clearly many of these countries do not have the preconditions for democracy laid out in earlier literatures such as wealth and economic development, a strong civil society, a democratic political culture and consensus as to the process of government.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, there is now a substantial recent body of literature on the issue of transition to democracy.<sup>79</sup> In line with “consociationalists” these scholars (*transitologists*) argue that democracy can emerge by *pact* in which elites agree upon a compromise between themselves (Rostow 1970, Schmitter & Karl 1994; Whitehead et al. 1986, Liz & Stepan 1996, Diamond 1999, Przeworski 1991, Przeworski et al. 1997, Beetham 1994a, Shin 1994, Bunce 2000). For most “transitologists” it is elites who make the final decisions that lead directly to a completed transition. It is therefore elite consensus on the rules of the game and the nature of elite choice (actors rather than structures) that is regarded as central to democratic transition and consolidation.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> One theoretical tradition that has been highly influential for democratisation studies focuses on how underlying conditions, such as socio-economic development, institutional legacy, class structure and cultural traditions, affect the onset and prospects for democratisation. Among the most influential theories that focus on democratisation is the modernisation school. One of the most important contributions in this tradition is S. M. Lipset’s thesis that “*The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chance it will sustain democracy.*” The central theme of this study is that socio-economic development will increase the likelihood of political democracy (see Lipset 1959, 1994, Huntington 1984, for classic study of civil culture. See Almond & Verba 1963/1982, Inglehart 1988, for influential study on class structure and democracy see Moore 1966, Rueschemeyer et al. 1992).

<sup>79</sup> There is a substantial and ever growing literature on democratisation theory as a large number of countries turned their backs on authoritarian rule and introduced multiparty democracy since the late 1970s. As Shin (1994:138) wrote in his review article on these scholars “conceptually, the establishment of a viable democracy in a nation is no longer seen as the product of higher levels of modernization illustrated by its wealth, bourgeois class, tolerant cultural values, and economic independence from external actors. Instead it is seen as a product of strategic interactions and arrangements among political elites, conscious choices among various types of democratic constitutions, and electoral party system.” In short, the transitologist focuses on the contribution of political elites to transition to democracy. As such the focus is on the ability of political actors to exert their agency (see Rostow 1970, Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995, Gunther 1995, Haggard & Kaufman 1999, Anderson 1999, Diamond 1999, Bratton & van de Walle 1997).

<sup>80</sup> Scholars have drawn a crucial distinction between *liberalisation* and *democratisation*. Whereas the former encompasses the goals of merely loosening restrictions and expanding individual and group rights within an authoritarian regime, the latter goes beyond expanded civil and political rights. Democratisation, in the logic of causal sequence, may run from the decay and disintegration of an old authoritarian regime and the emergence of a new democratic system, through the consolidation of that democratic regime, to its maturity (Shin 1994:143). Consolidation is a discernible process by which rules, institutions, and constraints on democracy come to constitute “the only game in town,” the one legitimate framework for seeking and exercising political power (see Diamond 1999:65, Linz and Stepan (1996).

## Defining Democracy

A longstanding debate regarding how to define and measure democracy continues to this day. As Wiseman (1990:3) has observed “over the centuries more ink has been spilled by political writers on the question: what is democracy?”<sup>81</sup> Even in the 80s and 90s where scholarship on democratisation has dominated comparative politics, a glaring lack of consensus remains over what exactly constitutes democracy. An analysis of different models of democracy is not the main concern of this study, but the discussion of different concepts of democracy forms a background for the analysis of democratisation and democratic conflict management in post-Mengistu Ethiopia. It must be noted from the very beginning that democracy is an ideal that should be aspired to, but will probably never be realized.<sup>82</sup> As a political system, democracy emphasizes sovereignty of the people, that power is vested in the people. In power terms democracy is a political system that measures whether political power is widely shared among the people so that they can participate and influence decision-making. However, the direct participation of the people in decision-making process is impossible. It was only during the heyday of Greek democracy that direct democracy prevailed. In modern usage democracy has become representative i.e. the masses elect their representatives.

### Maximalist vs. Minimalist Conceptions of Democracy

There are so many subtypes of democracy and so little agreement on terminology as to render it nearly useless to compare cases. To offer an extremely simplified picture, one could propose that a major dividing line runs between advocates of a maximalist concept and advocates of a minimalist conceptions of democracy (sometimes referred to as procedural models see Collier and Levitsky 1997:430-51). Whereas maximalist definitions represent the broader, more all-embracing concepts that pay attention to social and economic democracy, minimalist definitions refer to the institutional arrangements. One example of a maximalist scholar David Held (1989/1998) who offered a definition of democracy. He argued that in a democracy:

Individuals should be free and equal in the determining of the conditions of their own lives; that is, they should enjoy equal rights (and accordingly, equal obligations) in the specification of the

---

<sup>81</sup> While there is a general agreement that it is government “by, for and of the people”, this is a very loose definition that both democratic and non-democratic regimes have used in self-description.

<sup>82</sup> Even the established democracies have mixed records on equality. In all real democracies, economic inequalities coincide with political inequalities and give rise to unequal influence over the authoritative allocation of values. Class, racial/ethnic, and gender hierarchies grant certain individuals and groups greater influence over the decision making process than others (Dahl 1971, 1998).



---

framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others" (Held 1989:271).

For Held, democracy is about giving individuals real power in determining the conditions (economic, social, political, environment, etc.) that affect their lives. Held's vision entails maximizing liberty and equality, a decidedly radical idea of liberal democracies in capitalist market economies. Held's definition speaks to the issue of social justice, which is inextricably linked to notions of equality. A society marked by gross inequalities in power (economic, social, political, etc.) is by definition not democratic. Individuals are not "free and equal" to determine the conditions of their lives and do not take an equal part in shaping the "opportunity structure." Held's democratic vision entails dismantling economic, social, and political hierarchies standing in the way of individual and collective empowerment.

Like Held, David Beetham (1994b) also presents an ideal (yet less utopian) definition of democracy. He argues that "the simple answer to what democracy is based on are two key principles: *popular control* over collective decision-making and decision-makers; and equal rights in such control or *popular equality*". However, Beetham like Dahl (1971) before him, admitted that "these two principles are nowhere fully realized, to the extent they are, that we can call a system of group or collective decision making democratic" (Beetham 1994b:28). Accordingly Beetham emphasizes four main components or building blocks of a functioning democracy. (1) free and fair elections; (2) open and accountable government; (3) civil and political rights; and (4) a democratic civil society (ibid).

Beetham's democratic audit refers to a standard for the subjective assessment of the quality of democracy. He asserts that the two principles that provide the standard for the democratic assessment or audit are *popular control* and *political equality*. By control, he means the political control or influence of citizens over the decision-makers (such as legislative and executive branches). Effective control over decision-makers in turn requires the presence of a complex set of institutions and practices. Political equality, on the other hand, refers to the equality of votes between citizens, equality of opportunity for everyone to stand for public office, and the guarantee of equality of voices for all citizens by government officials. Beetham (1994b:30) adamantly rejects Schumpeter's procedural

definition of democracy (discussed below). He instead conceptualises democracy as a continuum, suggesting that the quality of the political system must always improve. To Beetham, Schumpeterian definition of democracy sustains a static procedure i.e. accepts only free competition for public offices and not much more.

The minimalist school have emphasised the methodological disadvantages of maximalist concepts of democracy and question the use of such an elusive concept in empirical research (Huntington 1991:7). Minimalist definitions of democracy perceive democracy as a set of procedures and institutions for decision-making. The focus is on the electoral process, in which citizens choose between different candidates. Joseph Schumpeter (1947:260) perhaps the best-known advocate of this school provides the classic minimalist definition of democracy. In his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Schumpeter set out what he claimed to be a new theory of democracy. For Schumpeter the Greek polis was a small primitive community, in which face-to-face relations prevailed and therefore political issues were simple. The polis can conceivably allow for popular participation in the duties of legislation and administration. However, in modern democracy the demands on the citizen are simply casting the vote at regular intervals. As he writes:

The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1947:269).

Russell Bova (1997:113) supports this typology, suggesting that there are nations which cannot meet the liberty requirement of liberal democracy, but whose political systems offer sufficiently regular leadership turnover to distinguish them from authoritarian regimes.

Huntington also subscribes to the notion that elections are a benchmark of democracy.

According to him, a country's political system is democratic if:

Its most powerful decision makers are selected through fair, honest, periodic election in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually the entire adult population is eligible to vote" (Huntington 1997:6).

However, there is obviously an inherent danger in equating democracy with elections or what Schmitter and Karl refer to as the *fallacy of electoralism*—of equating democracy with fair, honest and regular elections (1991:78). If one subscribes to the notion of electoral democracy, then the spread of democracy worldwide is impressive indeed. According to Freedom House, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century close to thirds of all nations (120) were

electoral democracies, as compared to merely 31% (22) in 1950<sup>83</sup> Yet as Larry Diamond (1996; 1999) rightly notes, at the same time as the proportion of electoral democracies to non-democracies has increased, the proportion of liberal democracies (those countries in the democratic population that also qualify as “free”) to electoral democracies has declined during the 1990s. In 1990, 85% of democracies were liberal democracies; at the turn of the century, only 70% were liberal democracies (Diamond 1999, and Kartanycky 2000).

Zakaria (1997:22) clearly demonstrates the limits of the electoral concept, writing that “democratically elected regimes...are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms.” He calls this phenomenon “illiberal democracy,” whereby countries that respect civil liberties less than political liberties can still be deemed democratic. Significantly, Zakaria finds no evidence that countries pass through an illiberal “stage” en route to a democracy that is here to stay.

Like many other current scholars on democratisation (O’Donnell et al. 1986, Przeworski 1991, Di Palma 1990, Collier & Levitsky 1997), this study adopts a definition of *democracy* consistent with Robert Dahl’s (1971, 1998) *polyarchy* which is more than Schumpeter’s electoral democracy, but less than Held’s democratic autonomy.<sup>84</sup> A country is democratic when there is:

1. Meaningful and extensive *competition* among individuals and organised groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power (at regular and intervals and excluding the use of force)
2. A highly inclusive level of *political participation* in the selection of leaders and policies (at least through regular and fair elections in which no major (adult) social groups is excluded);
3. A level of *civil and political liberties* (freedom of expression, of the press, freedom to form and join organisations) sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation (Diamond and Lipset 1988:xvi).

In principle, if a regime fails in any dimension, it should not be considered democratic. Yet, it must be noted that democracy is a matter of degree and democratisation is an ongoing process without a clear endpoint: competition can always be made more real, participation can always be further extended; and rights can always be advanced and made more secure.

---

<sup>83</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, “*Freedom: A Country of Progress*,” The 1999-2000 Freedom House Survey. [Http://www.freedomhouse.org/news/akessay.html](http://www.freedomhouse.org/news/akessay.html)

<sup>84</sup> Dahl (1971) distinguishes between real-life democratic systems, which he called *polyarchies*, and ideal type democracies, which do not exist except in theory. Dahl’s model of polyarchy has been very influential in democratisation studies. It has the advantage of being able to combine a broad conception of democracy with clear institutional requirements that are easily applied in empirical research.

At the same time, however, democratisation does not follow a path of inevitable linear progression. Democratising states can become less democratic by restricting competition, participation, and and/rights (Beetham 1994b, Diamond 1999).

### **Semi-democratic and Authoritarian regimes**

As mentioned earlier many of the so-called new democracies fall far short of even the minimum standards of democracy, particularly in terms of competition and/or civil and political liberties. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1988), classify as only semi-democratic all countries where:

...the effective power of elected officials is so limited, or political party competition is so restricted, or the freedom and fairness of elections so compromised that electoral outcomes, while competitive, still deviate significantly from popular preferences; and/or where civil and political liberties are so limited that some political orientations and interests are unable to organize....

Even Diamond (1999), who accepts electoral democracy as a valid regime type, suggests that a particular class of regimes exist between electoral democracies and authoritarian regimes,<sup>85</sup> countries typified by “multiple parties and many other constitutional features of electoral democracy but that lack at least one key requirement: an arena of contestation sufficiently fair that the ruling party can be turned out of power” (ibid. p.15). The authors have chosen the label pseudo-democracy “because the existence of formally democratic political institutions...masks (often in part to legitimate) the reality of authoritarian domination.” (Diamond, Linz & Lipset 1988:8) While still mostly autocratic, pseudo-democracies are moderately less repressive than traditional authoritarian regimes (Diamond 1999:16). Subsumed within this typology are several “diminished” types of democracy, including semi-democracies and hegemonic party systems (ibid. p. 25).

According to these scholars what marks pseudo-democracies is the existence of democratically styled institutions such as legislatures, multipartism, ostensibly independent judiciaries and the like. What differentiates these institutions, however, from truly

---

<sup>85</sup> In his seminal article “An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain” Juan Linz (1975:255) defined authoritarian regimes as “Political systems within limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined but actually quite predictable ones. Political opposition is therefore severely circumscribed, if permitted to exist at all; rather than allowing open contestation, the regime relies on the intimidation (exclusionary authoritarianism) and/or co-option (inclusionary authoritarianism) of its adversaries to stay in power. In authoritarian countries where limited contestations exist—during parliamentary elections, for example—significant realms of power are outside the scope of popular will. Non-elected officials like the military or a single person retain control over the polity, and may override the policies and wishes of elected politicians. Authoritarian leaders tend to rely on patrimonial and clientalist relationships, using the resources concentrated in their hands to patronise key sections of society.

---

democratic institutions, is the degree of control the authoritarian regime maintains over them. The regime is able to intervene at will if players in these institutions challenge their power. Rather than providing increased horizontal accountability among institutions, pseudo-democracy as a regime type undermines the claims of those who suggest that democratic institutions are the key variable in democratisation. The number of pseudo-democracies has increased dramatically during the last decade, as the global norm of democracy has taken root. Although numerous authoritarian regimes that liberalised during the third wave have since retreated and become even more entrenched in authoritarianism, the illegitimacy of authoritarianism in the eyes of the West has compelled autocratic leaders, at the very minimum, to cloak their institutions in democratic language (Diamond 1999, Joseph 1999). International factors, then, play an important role in the development of pseudo-democracy. The proliferation of financial support for democratising states has had an enormous impact on how politics are conducted worldwide. Carothers (1997) notes that non-democratic leaders have recognised that not only money, but also prestige and attention, are to be gained when the international community recognises a regime as in transition to democracy.

The trick is thus to use political liberalisation only as far as necessary to persuade international donors that change is sincere, while assiduously ensuring that the regime does not lose significant control (Carothers 1997:89; Diamond 1996:32-33).<sup>86</sup> Again, pseudo-democratic regimes demonstrate the limits of another competing explanation of democratic transition: while the international community has succeeded in forcing liberalization, pseudo-democracies have been equally successfully in staving off democratization. Adopting pseudo-democratic institutions has allowed these nations to retain the outward appearance of liberalism while ensuring that all meaningful power remains fully within the authoritarian bloc, as large “reserve domains” remain outside the arena of political contestation. This certainly applies to the Sub-Saharan African countries in general and Ethiopia in particular. (Table 3.1 lists the forty nations that Diamond classes as pseudo-

---

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Carothers (1997:90) characterises many of the third wave transitions as “highly controlled and top-down, reflecting ruling elites’ desire to relieve rising pressure for change or to impress Western governments rather than a commitment to cede significant authority.” Clearly, these are cases of liberalisation, not democratisation. Carothers blames the west’s over-optimism about the supposed global triumph of democracy and its willingness to label the slightest liberalisation as the onset of democratisation for this misidentification.

democracies). In the African context, for example, citing the Freedom House 1996-7 survey Zakaria (1999:247) writes “Although elections have been held in most 45 Sub-Saharan African states since 1991... there have been setbacks for freedom in many countries....” (See also, Joseph 1999, Diamond 1999, Ottaway 1999, Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Another problem as mentioned earlier is the increase in violent intrastate conflict, which raises the question of the possibility of democracy in plural societies, which is the core of the investigation in the following section.

Table 3.1 Pseudo-democracies worldwide

Country	Average Score for political and civil Rights, 1998*
Antigua and Barbuda Mexico	3.5
Jordan Senegal Tonga Uganda	4.0
Armenia Burkina Faso Comoros Ethiopia Gabon Malaysia Peru Zambia	4.5
Azerbaijan Côte d'Ivoire Morocco Singapore Tanzania Zimbabwe	5.0
Chad Guinea Kazakhstan Lebanon Togo Tunisia Yemen	5.5
Algeria Angola Belarus Cameroon Congo (Brazzaville) Egypt Indonesia Kenya Mauritania Niger Yugoslavia	6.0
Cambodia Gambia	6.5

- Freedom House assigns a rating of 1-7 each for political liberties and civil liberties, with 1 being completely free, and 7 being completely unfree. Source: Larry Diamond (1999:280).

### Consociational model of democracy and power-sharing

Arend Lijphart's writings (1969, 1977, 1990) on "Consociational democracy" and the more general work of Erick Nordlinger (1972) on "Conflict Regulation" generated a great deal of enthusiasm about power-sharing arrangements in plural societies. In the foreword to Nordlinger's book *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*, Samuel Huntington hailed Nordlinger's idea as having refocused attention on the primacy of politics, providing greater hope that political scientists can develop ways to reduce political instability within troubled countries of the World (ibid). The same could be said of Lijphart's research. Indeed the subject of power sharing became a fertile field for developing new political theory and practice. Over the last thirty years Lijphart and Nordlinger's ideas have served as the basis of an expanding field devoted to finding negotiated settlements to conflict

within divided countries. Following the end of the Cold war and the resurgence over the last decade of ethnic conflicts in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia, there has been a great flood of books on the subject. Much of recent scholarship has continued to build on Lijphart and Nordlinger's work in order to prescribe the most effective remedies for divided countries (Sisk 1996, Gurr 2000, McGarry & O'Leary 1993). In this sense the field has become very "mechanistic" in orientation. Lijphart (1990:449) and others describe it as a kind of political "engineering" where the focus is the advancement of certain 'tools' with which political elites may create more stable and peaceful conditions in divided countries.

Again, as mentioned earlier, the theory of consociational democracy challenges two paradigmatic conditions: (1) that democracy should be equated with majority rule; (2) that democracy is not a viable form of government in a deeply divided society (Lijphart 1977).

According to Lijphart (1977:113):

Majoritarian democracy, of which the Westminster model is the ideal type, is not the only best form of democracy; especially in plural societies—that is societies deeply divided by religious, ideological, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, or racial cleavages into separate sub-societies with their own apolitical parties, interest groups, and media of communication—consociational democracy is the more suitable democratic model.

It is worth noticing that these observations by themselves are neither noble nor new. Actually, Arthur Lewis (1965:49-50) warned about this back in 1965 when he argued that for the new states of [West] Africa "the fundamental political problem is neither economic policy nor foreign policy, but the creation of nations out of heterogonous peoples." He asserted that African societies were marked first and foremost by their plurality, not their class, and warned that their post-independence gravitation toward the centralised or mono-ethnic constitutional models of their colonizers was a fundamental mistake. According to Lewis (1965:71) "the surest way to kill democracy in plural society is to adopt the Anglo-American electoral system." Quite apart from challenging the rationality of implanting the democratic value of a winner-takes-all type in plural society, consociational democracy is offered as a deviant form for fragmented but stable democracy. In such a system, the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society can be overcome through an institutionalized mechanism of cooperation among the elites representing various segments of the polity.

The prevailing objective conditions in plural societies are those that are externally or internally conditioned to facilitate "overarching inter-elite cooperation" in a consociational

politics (Lijphart 1984:25). They include such factors as (i) a multiple balance of power among the sub-cultures, (ii) small and moderate size of the polity, (iii) a moderate multiparty system, (iv) cross-cutting cleavages, (v) over-arching loyalties as an important catalyst to provide cohesion for the society as whole and thus moderate the intensities of all cleavages simultaneously, and (vi) the tradition of elite accommodation (Lijphart 1977:55-103). All these conditions are merely “helpful” but not sufficient in and of themselves for the success of consociational democracy (ibid:54). In other words, experimentation with consociational democracy should not be considered totally impossible in plural societies even when all the prerequisite conditions are unfavourable (ibid.).

### **The Salient Characteristics of consociational democracy**

Lijphart (1977, 1984, 1990) outlines four basic principles of this model. (1) a grand coalition executive; (2) minority veto; (3) proportionality in the allocation of civil service positions and public funds; and (4) group autonomy (see table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Ideal type of Consociational Democracy**

Grand Coalition	Segmented autonomy	Proportionality	Mutual veto
The government includes representatives from all relevant groups in society either in the form of great coalition among the main parties, of all-party-governments or of temporary round-tables. In each case, it would be decisive to secure “the participation by the leaders of all significant segments.	Each group enjoys some degree of self-government; they maintain their own elected bodies, institutions and competencies. Only few issues have therefore to be co-ordinated with other segments of society. This can be organised on the basis of territorial or non territorial arrangements. The former implies that consociationalism will coincide with a federal-type structure (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland, Bosnia or Ethiopia), the later implies that the various groups are organised on the basis of the personality principle, irrespectively of their territorial basis (e.g. Cyprus 1960-63)	All groups or segments are adequately represented within the executive, the parliament, the legal system and the public services, including the army or state-owned companies. This can be assured through a quota system according to the size of the groups, the number of voters or a fixed ratio. Often smaller groups are significantly over-represented in this kind of key positions.	Each group has the opportunity to bloc political decisions by using its veto rights. The aim is to foster consensus building and the search for compromises. The right to veto could either apply to some basic laws or it could just have a delaying effect in order to re-negotiate disputed issue.

### **Major critique and the problem with power-sharing**

The theory of consociational democracy or power-sharing has attracted an avalanche of criticism since its popularization by Lijphart. There is no space to go through all criticisms but a few need to be mentioned here. Critics argue that Lijphart’s theory abounds in



---

generalities about how the system of consociationalism/power-sharing operates (see van Schendelen 1984, 1985; Steiner 1981; Barry 1975; Horowitz 1985; Sisk 1996). The quality of Lijphart's conceptual tools of analysis has been seen to show problems in terms of empirical measurements (Steiner 1981:160). Indeed, a case is made by Jurg Steiner (1981) that his method is purely "impressionistic." Without any proven empirical validity as to the success of a consociational experiment, Lijphart seems to be more interested in the "the applicability or the engineering potential of his theory than about its political science validity" (Van Schendelen 1985:174). In other words, critics argue that Lijphart is probably too quick to proclaim consociational democracy as a universal solution for fragmented societies. He assumes that what might seem 'successful' in his four 'classic examples—Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium—is equally good for non-western countries with similarly fragmented political cultures; even though the debate is still on as to whether these four European countries "are really sub-culturally segmented," as claimed by Lijphart.

Moreover, the theory of consociational democracy is fundamentally elitist in the sense that its focus is almost entirely on the elites and the level of cooperation among them. Again, such cooperation is made conditional on the stability of consociational politics. While there is substance in the assumption that the stability of democratic political system requires, at a minimum, a degree of cooperation or consensus among the governing elites, the theory of consociational democracy is virtually silent on the relationship between the elites and the masses. As indicated by Rodney Stiefbold (1974) the theory of consociational democracy has many troublesome problems and included among them are (1) the dynamics of elites-mass interaction, and (ii) how, once established, can consociational democracies be sustained, modified, or transformed between the elites and the masses. The stability of a democratic system cannot be based exclusively on cooperation among the elites alone, without reference to their political support base, the masses.

Finally, another typical critique of consociationalism is that it privileges certain divisive identities (such as ethnicity) over other integrating or cross cutting identities (such as class), and that it institutionalises and entrenches divisions based on these identities (McGarry 2002). According to Horowitz (1985, 1990, 1993) consociationalism relies too much on elite cooperation and reinforces ethnic identities (the mutual isolation of the segmental

---

units). Horowitz's integrative power-sharing, using territorial and electoral reforms to promote inter-ethnic cooperation and intra-ethnic competition, thus creates cross-cutting cleavages. He offers five reforms designed to increase intraethnic competition and interethnic cooperation (1) dispersion of power to reduce concentration on one focal point; 2) reservation of some local posts on an ethnic basis to promote intra-ethnic competition for these posts; 3) electoral laws (especially vote-pooling) promoting inter-ethnic electoral coalitions; 4) policies encouraging social identities other than ethnicity, strengthening cross-cutting cleavages; and 4) policies encouraging social identities other than ethnicity, strengthening cross-cutting cleavages; and 5) distribution of resources based on need rather than ethnicity.

Summing up then, consociational power-sharing seeks to reduce ethnic tensions and fears by minimising the need for interaction between ethnic groups, except at the elite level, while integrative power sharing seeks to minimise conflict by creating cross-cutting cleavages with bases of identities other than ethnicity. Put differently, integrationists focus their attention on the electoral system in order to produce arrangements "which fragment support of one or more ethnic groups,...induce interethnic bargaining; encourage the formation of multiethnic coalitions; produce fluidity and a multipolar balance; and produce proportional outcomes" (Sisk 1996:42). They aim at implementing electoral institutions that have the potential for voting across ethnic lines and the election of candidates with perceived obligations wider than their own ethnic group, or the creation of parties that are multiethnic in character (Sisk 1996, Reilly 2001). They thereby try to counteract the centrifugal forces of ethnicity with strong centripetal tendencies arising from the design of the electoral system. These approaches aim at minimising the importance of ethnicity for political life. They stress the fundamental role of individual rights, which should be the only basis for ensuring group rights. Individual equality is the declared basis of political organisation.

Both approaches opt for federal solutions. They advocate fundamentally different principles of federalisation, however. Whereas consociationalists favour solutions that follow ethno-cultural boundaries when drawing state boundaries, integrationists plead for the opposite recipe. They argue that state boundaries should criss-cross ethnic settlement patterns in order to open up fissures within ethno-cultural groups, which might be useful in

---

counterbalancing the deep cleavages between the groups. In my view, it is important, however, to realise that the different and sometimes contradictory avenues to conflict resolution offered by the two approaches should be interpreted not as a zero-sum game in which either consociational or integrative strategies win, but in terms of a problem-solving exercise, in which the choice of means has to be guided by detailed analysis of the concrete circumstances.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter focused on the nature, extent and explanations of conflict management. Following McGarry and O'Leary, I examined and presented a systematic overview of macro-political ways of conflict regulations. I tried to answer the two main questions raised in this chapter: What strategies are available to tame the conflict in plural societies? What institutions work best in the long run to accommodate and solve the nationalist claims? One thing that must be clear from this analysis is that: 'there is no single 'best' solution to the problem.' Whether we like it or not, what is the best solution is depends on the nationalist claims (whether they are secessionist, autonomy seekers or state captures). In this sense, what is best for the state (power holder) and for that matter international society, does not necessarily mean the "the best" for the nationalist movements.

In any case, as discussed above, there are numerous solutions that have been suggested by political practitioners and scholars concerned about the destabilising effect of ethnic politics. As I stated above, the choice of a specific strategy is historical in the sense that until very recently many saw the policy of homogenisation or systemic policy of elimination (e.g. assimilation, co-option/integration and or hegemonic control) as the best possible solution for multinational states. For example, in the Ethiopian context this meant Amharisation and Christianisation. The contention was that if all or elite groups belong to the 'dominant culture' the problem of ethnic politics, with its conflictual dimensions would be eradicated and stability would be established.

However, in the post-Cold War era such solutions have undergone intensive change and "many policy makers and scholars alike believe that broadly inclusive government, or power-sharing, is essential to successful conflict management in societies beset by severe ethnic conflicts" (Sisk 1996:4). Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that plural societies are unlikely to achieve stability in the absence of radical institutional reform in a

democratic direction. This by no means implies that other ideologies and philosophy have been abandoned. It is just that given the failure of political and economic conditions in the post-Cold War era the “democratic peace” became the order of the day.

Do democratic systems manage ethnic conflict more effectively than authoritarian systems? Yes, they do—by permitting the plural expression of ethno-political venues for resolution of legitimatised conflict. By prohibiting such expression, authoritarian regimes deny that legitimacy. Thus, authoritarian systems encourage politicised ethnic groups to engage in greater and more severe extra-institutional political activity i.e deadly conflict. In other words, democracies are more apt to manage ethnic conflict; authoritarian systems are more apt to exacerbate ethnic conflict.

Having said that it must be noted, contrary to popular opinion and to the most fervent advocates of exporting democracies across the world, democracy does not automatically produce inter ethnic harmony. Especially during the early decades of democratisation, tensions along ethnic-religious lines may be heightened and lead to violence and finally the abolition of the democratic process itself. Moreover, the theoretical argument deriving from the institutional approach supported by recent findings suggests that partial (pseudo-democracy) and failed efforts at democratisation prompt increased violent conflicts. To be sure, established democracies resolve ethnic conflicts more peacefully than autocratic and pseudo-democratic regimes. However, this may be due to the fact that democracies are often on average much richer. And richer countries have the means to accommodate ethnic claims peacefully.

In any case the global democratisation process has provoked a growing interest in the process of democratic transition and democratic accommodation of ethno political conflicts. The pessimism of the 1960s, stemming from the focus on necessary and sufficient conditions for democracy, has been replaced by optimism regarding the possibilities for democratic craftsmanship. In other words, there may be no single precondition(s) that are necessary for the emergence of a democratic polity. The most notable feature of recent scholarship on democracy is the widespread sense of optimism that it can be crafted and promoted in all sorts of places, including those where structural and cultural qualities are

---

deemed unfavourable or even hostile. Even Lipset acknowledges this change when he recently concluded in his article *Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited (1994:18)* that “whether democracy succeeds or fails continues to depend significantly on the choices, behaviours, and decisions of political leaderships and groups.” To be sure, this voluntarism applies to the establishment of democracy at large in post-Cold war Africa in general and the institutional and democratic crafting in Post-Mengistu Ethiopia.

Like many other African countries, given the poor record of the Ethiopian political elite in fostering growth, the link between socioeconomic development and democracy is very weak. The nature of regime change in a democratic direction both in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular cannot be explained by socioeconomic factors. On the contrary, Ethiopia’s faltering economy and civil war were the main reasons behind the demand (externally and internally) for democratic change and the transition to democracy. As Marina Ottaway (1997:3) also convincingly argued, the development of democracy in Africa has been “purely political.” Ottaway concludes “if those conditions do not exist—and they do not in Africa—then democracy has to be attained purely through politics. Democratisation in other words, takes on a curious Leninist twist, becoming a process whereby political organisation makes up for the unfavourable underlying socioeconomic conditions” (ibid:4). This argument sets up the scope and significant political actors (preferences, and choices of individuals, historical, external factors etc.) as foundations on which to explore democratisation in Ethiopia.

If we accept the quite plausible proposition that a multinational state is not in any way intrinsically unsuited for democratic government, it seems clear that some democratising multinational states do significantly better in dealing with their internal dilemmas of “self-determination” (and democratising successfully) than do others. The challenges of making democracy work in ethnically diverse societies have long been recognised by political scholars, and there exists a significant body of literature which explores potential institutional mechanisms through which to reduce or alleviate the inherent tensions of nationalism and democracy. As one of the foremost theorists of democracy and ethnic accommodation suggested, “the only solutions to the problems of ethnic divisions or strife that remain are power-sharing and partition or secession” (Lijphart 1977). While he argues

---

that partition should never be rejected outright in cases of chronic ethnic conflict, the considerable disadvantages of partition should always render it the solution of last resort. Lijphart and other institutionalist scholars reviewed in this chapter implied that some form and measure of institutional regulations and representation of “ethnic” and “national” groups is both inevitable and desirable in multinational states that aspire to democratic credentials. Multinational democracy is enriched by an institutional structure that allows for the expression of the politics of difference. Indeed, it can be plausibly argued that even if a multinational country substantially meets the requirements of democracy, it should not be considered fully democratic if its political institutional set-up systematically denies cultural and political autonomy to distinctive groups within its domain that explicitly desire such autonomy and ‘mere formal equality of citizenship (individual) rights is just not enough.’

This study joins others in advocating the design of power-sharing institutions for purposes of peaceful conflict management in countries like Ethiopia. Despite the enthusiasm surrounding power-sharing as a possible solution to the “national question” and reconstructing post-civil war Ethiopia, the power-sharing arrangements and federal experiment have not been succeeded in ending violent conflict in the country. In other words, as will be discussed later, power-sharing attempts have only had partial or limited success in the case of Ethiopia. There also exist serious structural and ideological barriers to the democratisation of the Ethiopian state. The process of democratization in Ethiopia has resulted in weak or what Diamond terms pseudo-democracies. And it is this--pseudo-democracy that gives instability and continued ethnopolitical conflicts.

Finally as argued earlier, power-sharing is certainly not a magic instrument which can make all the problems of a divided country disappear. Since politics is a dynamic and ever-changing process, there will always be questions about the power differential between different groups and their elite representatives. Dominant elites, whether ruling or non-ruling, always have an interest in controlling the outcome of power-sharing arrangements since these arrangements concern the distribution of vital political resources. In some cases elites may appear to share power equitably, but power-sharing can easily be constructed or manipulated in ways that serve the interests of some group(s) to the disadvantage of others. These power imbalances are ignored by most power-sharing theorists because the ends of

---

power-sharing are supposed to be greater in some normative sense, and perhaps also because of a practical concern that an unbalanced form of power-sharing is “the best one can hope for.” As a consequence most power-sharing remedies incline towards hegemonic stability, where their remedial effect is limited by the minimum interests of the dominant ruling group.

Rather than uncritically accept the normative assumptions and prescriptions of power-sharing, we must also focus on the specific interests of ethnic groups and elites, and examine how these interests affect the outcome of power-sharing. Power-sharing arrangements do not take place in a vacuum. In simple terms the elite who are entrusted with the power-sharing process have interests other than sharing power; and the pursuit of these interests can lead to a form of political hegemony which may undermine the broader goals of power-sharing. Any study which attempts to make an objective analysis of power-sharing must therefore step outside a normative framework and consider the way that the more narrow interests of elites influence the power-sharing process. In the following chapters, I analyse the democratisation process and political engineering by employing a modified theoretical framework that has been mainly derived from the institutional approach discussed in this chapter. I will try to find answers to these four main questions: Why and how did Ethiopian power-sharing and democratization come into being? Why and how did power-sharing transform into a hegemonic project? To what extent did democratization and federal institutions constructed by the current regime fail or succeed to accommodate diversities and nationalist claims? But before doing that I will first explore in the next two chapters the historical background for the emergence of nationalism and ethno-nationalist movements in Ethiopia.

## *Chapter Four*

---

### ***Political History: the establishment of centralised government in Ethiopia***

---

#### **Introduction**

This chapter critically reviews the historical development of the modern Ethiopian State that eventually led to centralisation and ethnic domination. Since a vast range of studies of Ethiopian political history exist (Henze, 2000, Pankhurst 2001, Teshale 1995, Zewde 1991, Holcomb & Ibssa 1990, Jalata 1993, Donham & James 1986, Levine, Sorensen 1993), a comprehensive review of its history is beyond the scope of this study. My aim in this chapter is rather to highlight a) the formation of the modern Ethiopian state through expansion and incorporation (so-called “internal colonisation”) of non-Abyssinians into Ethiopian empire state under Amhara hegemonic control; b) the efforts and methods of Menelik and Haile Selassie to establish new governing institutions, alongside European colonisers in north-eastern part of Africa; and 3) consider ethnic identification and rivalries which are relevant in matters of modern day governance. Cumulatively, these historical influences have led to a variety of authoritarianism, domination and ethnic discrimination that continue to structure political behaviour in Ethiopia. So in order to analyse the origin and development of various nationalist movements in Ethiopia (see chapter 5), it is important to see the general historical background on the formation of present day Ethiopia.

#### **The legacy of the past**

The linkages between Ethiopia’s historical legacy, the nature of state-society dynamics and the current experiment with ethnic-based federalism and hegemony are discernible in the character of the Empire-State created and controlled by subsequent northerners (Abyssinians) since its foundation by Menelik in 1889. Until the overthrow of the military junta in 1991, the following features distinguished the Ethiopian State. First, the territorial borders of the state during most of this period were clearly defined, encompassing a multiethnic and socially fragmented society, divided by ethnic, linguistic and regional cleavages. Second, while the Abyssinian state was distinguished by the existence of a weak centre and a relatively autonomous periphery, the modern Empire state that followed was just the opposite and distinguished a by strong centre and a weak periphery (Keller 1988, Harbeson 1988, Clapham 1988). The post-Menelik Ethiopian empire state also became dependent on the use of coercive power and



dependence on particular sub-state formations such as segments of the Amhara [mainly Shoan] and Amharised elite to retain its control and authority (Clapham 1969; 1988; Holcomb & Ibssa 1990; Markakis, 1974; Tareke 1996). This dependence on the military power and political goodwill of the Amhara elite required the extension of concessions to those very forces which were least amenable to penetration, further reinforcing their autonomy and influence. At the same time, however, continuous efforts were made by the state to use the many internal divisions and conflicts within the different ethnic groups to gradually and incrementally extend its authority (Holcomb & Ibssa 1990).

Third, the state's use of Amharic and Christianity to sustain and expand its control and gain internal legitimacy identified it as a partisan actor in the perception of Ethiopia's many regional, ethnic, religious and sectarian majority and minorities, including the Oromos, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The Eritreans, Tigreans, Somali, Sidama, and Afar (just to mention a few) minorities, also bore the thrust of state-sponsored Amahara territorial, social, political and economic expansion. Thus the stage was set in the latter part of the twentieth century for an internal contestation of power, as well as a questioning of legitimacy in Ethiopia (Keller 1988, Harbeson 1988, Jalata 1993).

Fourth, external actors played a vital role in deciding the outcome of this ongoing struggle between the ethnic groups and powerful sub-national actors to protect or advance their respective spheres of interest/authority. These external interventions resulted to a considerable extent from Ethiopia's physical and geo-strategic location. Not only was Ethiopia located on trade routes (the Red Sea), but its location at the crossroads of colonial expansion, invited external manipulation (Keller 1988, Jalata 1993, 1998). These external interventions worked in accordance with the regional and global environments, to either strengthen the Ethiopian Empire state (and groups in power) or to weaken it (Jalata 1993, Harbeson 1988, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988, Markaksis 1987).

Finally, at different historical junctures the Ethiopian State faced serious challenges not just to its authority and legitimacy but to its very existence. These challenges had on various occasions either internal or external roots, and very often there was a close linkage between domestic and external determinants. Although the Ethiopian State managed to survive most of the threats posed to its existence (except a few years of

Italian colonisation), changes in the internal and external environments finally led to its displacement by a non-Amhara political order in 1991. Since then the Tigrean political power has been hegemonic in Ethiopia, after almost a century of marginalisation.

### **The Origins of a Multi-Ethnic Structure**

All African states, with the possible exception of Somalia, are characteristically reminiscent of what M. G. Smith (1969:427) has called the “differential incorporation of collectives” of ethnic groups lumped together in geometrically delineated polities determined solely by European colonising powers.” Or as pointed out by Michael Crowder (1979) the colonial power lumped “together under the same administration groups of mutually incompatible peoples.” The Berlin conference provided the forum for the arbitrary partitioning of Africa by European powers without due consideration to ethnic affinities that cut across national boundaries. It is an action often referred to as the primary cause of some contemporary problems in African states i.e. ethno-political and/or communal conflicts, irredentism and secession.

Although Ethiopia was not [externally] colonised, it cannot claim to be an exception to the phenomenon of the creation of artificial nation states in Africa. As discussed below, unlike many states in Africa, Ethiopian state formation developed on its own without a colonial imposed structure. Yet the European colonial powers both influenced and defined its borders (Jalata 1993, Harbeson 1988 Sorensen 1993). Like many other African states, Ethiopia is a conglomerate polity of diverse socioeconomic entities. Richard Pankhurst (2001) has described Ethiopia “as a Museum of culture, religious, language, and modes of production.” Historically, the composite nature of Ethiopia’s ethnic diversity was a consequence of the institutional difference in the incorporation of diverse indigenous socio-cultural units (Jalata 1993, Donham & James 1985, Holcom & Ibssa 1990, Levine 2000). I have used the term “conglomerate polity” here practically in the same sense, related to the plurality of ethnic groups in a polity like Ethiopia, where each entity has its own distinctive history, language, customs, religion, and had a traditional indigenous system of governance prior to the incorporation to the Ethiopian Empire (Holcom & Ibssa 1990, Levine 2000, Jalata 1993).

The country is populated by more than 80 ethnic (solidarity) groups, with an estimated population of 65 million in 2003, with a growth rate of 2.7% a year. Ethiopia is the third most populous nation in the continent after Nigeria and Egypt. Despite the fact that

Ethiopia has a multitude of ethnic groups, only seven of them have a population larger than one million (see appendix 1). The Oromo constitute the largest population group (40%),<sup>87</sup> followed by Amhara (30.1%), Tigrean (6%), Somali (6%), Gurage (4%), Sidama (3.4%), and Woliata (2.5%). And only three of them (Amhara, Tigrean and Oromo) have attained pre-eminent positions in Ethiopian political history (Levine 2000, Henze 2000). Thus the mutual interaction among these three has shaped the whole development of Ethiopia's political destiny. As we shall discuss in chapter seven, since 1991, ethnicity was taken as the sole criterion on which to draw the new administrative map (see chapter 6).

Apart from the ethnic division, another element of diversity is religious pluralism; Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Animism or traditional belief systems. Since the early middle ages, Abyssinia/Ethiopia was known in the outside world as the only Christian Kingdom in Africa (Levine 2000, Henze 2000). Christianity was introduced as early as the fourth century on the doctrine of Saint Mark and Ethiopia had an established church heritage, which predates that of Europe. The second major religion in the country is Islam, which spread through the Arabian Peninsula after 610 A.D. Other indigenous religions include traditional beliefs, which are mainly practiced in the southern regions of Ethiopia, on the borders of Sudan and Kenya. About 45% of the Ethiopian populations are Christian, of which many belong to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Amharas, Tigreans are predominantly Christians. Among the Oromo, the population ratio is evenly split between Christianity and Islam, and a small percentage of the Oromo still adhere to the traditional religion. While in the north, Christianity is the dominant religion, Islam is predominant in the south. Moreover, Somalis and Afar are exclusively Muslims. Small numbers of Ethiopians still follow traditional beliefs.

Religion has played a decisive role in Ethiopian history through the centuries; Christianity was seen as the most profound expression of the national existence of traditional Ethiopia. Thus the Ethiopian Orthodox (or Coptic) church had long been a bulwark or agent of the Empire until 1974 (Henze 2000, Holcomb & Ibssa 1990). This religious difference widens not only the social distance between the north and south, but in most cases, affects both the internal and external behaviour of the Ethiopian State.

---

<sup>87</sup> It is important to note here that Oromo writers and activists estimate their numbers at 50-60 percent of the total population. See Jalata (ed.) (1998), Leta (1999).

The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution lays down general principle to separate religion and state. Accordingly, the government shall not interfere in the affairs of religion; similarly, religion shall not interfere in the affairs of the government (Federal Constitution, 1995:100). The constitutional right of individual freedom of conscience and religion are provided for by the constitution, which includes the rights to worship, change, exercise and propagate one's religion, individually or collectively, in public or private (ibid. Art. 27 (1)). However, recent developments in Ethiopia may very well prove a critical turning point in Ethiopia's ability to uphold the secular requirement of the Ethiopian State. These developments include the demand for institutionalisation of Sharia court as part of the federal judicial system (e.g. in Somali and Afar regional states), the constant and often brutal religious disturbances in the south, including growing religious intolerance among certain religious groups.

Language is another divisive factor. The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic, yet it is the natural tongue of only a third of the population. There are more than 70 different languages spoken in Ethiopia, most with several dialects. Many scholars categorise these languages into four major language groups: the Semitic language of the northern and central highlands mainly Amharic and Tigrigna, the Cushitic language of the lowlands and of the south-western, central and south eastern high lands, mainly Oromiffa, Afar, and Somali, the Sidama languages of the central and southern highlands; and the Sahara-Nilotic of the periphery areas (Levine 2000).

While Amharic remains the *de facto* language of the state, under the general provisions of the first chapter of the new Ethiopian Constitution, Article 5 provides both for the equality of languages and for their practical application in government. The general principle laid down is that, "all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition." This means that efforts towards language development, the preservation of its literature, the provision for a script, the further study of each language among others, will be carried out both with state blessing and support to the possible extent (Article 39 (2)). According to the 1995 constitution article 5 (3), the Federal State in all its official dealings shall employ Amharic as its language. But member states of the Federation are allowed by the constitution to determine their respective working language.

## A Brief historical background: expansion and hegemony

Despite the nationalist rhetoric of 3000 years old history<sup>88</sup> regarding the formation of national state in Ethiopia, some scholars<sup>89</sup> have claimed that the modern history of Ethiopia begins in 1855, with the rule of Emperor Tewodros II (1855-1869), and the establishment of centralised governance in the northern part of the country also known as *Abyssinia*.<sup>90</sup> By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Abyssinian state, located in today's northern part of Ethiopia, which had splintered into many small principalities rule by largely autonomous kings and princes or chiefs, was unified. This process of building a modern Ethiopian nation-state was followed by emperors: Yohannes IV (1869-1889), Menelik II (1889-1913), and Haile Selassie I (1923-1974).

Put rather differently as Teshale (1995:31) noted "Tewodros II initiated, Yohannes IV elaborated, Menelik II consolidated, and Haile Selassie I completed the process of transformation from parcellized sovereignties to centralized sovereignty." Prior to Tewodros, the state that existed for centuries in the northern Ethiopia, was closely tied to the Amhara people, who with the ethnically-related Tigrean people, played the key role in its organisation and expansion (Holcomb & Ibssa 1990; Zewde 1991).

Tewodros started to reunite the Abyssinian State and set out to create a centralised system through uniform administration, taxation, and a national army. He also put an end to Oromo dominance in the Abyssinian heartland<sup>91</sup> and brought the end of the

---

<sup>88</sup> The writing of history in Ethiopia, to use Gebru Tareke's word, "has been a contested terrain" as recently as the past few decades. Disagreements have been budding between nationalist-hegemonists and cultural pluralists "where the first group traced the lineage of the modern to the ancient Axumite civilization, thereby laying claim to some three thousand years of history", writes Tareke, "the latter group dismissed that claim as historical mythology" see Gebru Tareke (1996: 217-218). The most detailed scholarly exposition of this tradition is Donald Lavine's (2000) *Greeter Ethiopia* in which he argues that Ethiopia is united by two millennia of interaction by its constituent peoples, shared pan-Ethiopian cultural traits, and the "creative incorporation" of alien peoples and cultures into Ethiopian traditions. See also Paul Henze (2000).

<sup>89</sup> In a review of the scholarly literature on Ethiopia, Teshale (1995:xxiii) argues that Ethiopian studies has until very recently been dominated by a combination of the Orientalist-Semitic and Aksumite paradigms. The combined weight of these 'hegemonic' paradigms has produced a history of Ethiopia that "is written as the narrative of the ruling elites of the Ge'ez civilisation" and is therefore profoundly unrepresentative of the great diversity of Ethiopia's peoples. From the early 1970s, a number of younger 'leftist' scholars (some emerged out of the Ethiopian student movement) both inside and outside Ethiopian have critically addressed these paradigms and started to produce works that begin to deal with the many histories of Ethiopia. The author follows these 'paradigms'. I include here Teshale in addition to Zewde (1991) Tarke (1991), Hassan (1990), (Jalta 1993), (Holcomb & Ibssa 1990), (Sorensen 1993), Markakis (1987) among others.

<sup>90</sup> But it has origins in the first century A.D. at Aksum. On the Aksumite and the Abyssinian state, see (Zewdu 1991, Markus 1987, Henze 2000, Levine 2000).

<sup>91</sup> During the 1500s the eastern Afar and Somali (both Muslim and supported by the Ottoman Turks), and the southern Oromo all challenged the Abyssinian kingdom. In 1527, Ahmad Gran, lead Afar and Somali warriors in a holy war against Abyssinia and toppled the kingdom. The Portuguese, desperate to check the Muslim advance, sent troops to support Abyssinia and killed Gran in battle in 1543. At the same time, the

*Zemana Masfenat* (the era of princes) though, under Tewodoros, many provincial kings, princes and chiefs under Tewodros. His effort to break down the regional powers, and his attempt to bring religious unity within his domain - since for him the state was inseparable from the Christian church - was not very successful. Regional nobles revolted continually throughout the provinces (Shoa, Tigray, Wello etc) and, according to historians, Tewodros spent much of his time in vain running up and down to maintain peace and security (Zewde 1991, Markus 1987). His attempt to reform the church also met with strong opposition when he tried to impose a tax on church lands to help finance government activities (Zewde 1991, Pankhurst 2001).

In addition to his conflicts with regional rebels and rivals, Tewodros also encountered difficulties with external powers, among others Egyptians and Turks who dominated the Red Sea and occupied the Ethiopian coast. Tewodros wanted to capture the Eritrean capital Massawa from the Egyptians to restore access to the sea which had been lost three centuries earlier. In order to do so he requested British assistance, but when the British government was slow in its reply to Tewodros's request he arrested all British representatives in Ethiopia.<sup>92</sup> Following this the British requested immediate release. When diplomacy did not work, they sent a British army. Tewodros saw that he had no chance to defeat the modern British army supported by the emperor's local enemies and therefore released the prisoners. He then attempted to negotiate with the British army. When this offer was refused, instead of surrendering he committed suicide.

With the death of Tewodros, the empire lapsed into its usual disintegrative and chaotic course. Each local warlord asserted his independence and there was no real central power to hold the empire together. Out of this power struggle and another competition between the Amhara and Tigreans<sup>93</sup> kings and nobilities to capture the imperial throne *Negusa nagast*, Bezbeze Kassa of Tigray with the help of British managed to triumph

---

Oromo began a century-long expansion into northern and central Ethiopia. Taking advantage of the war weariness of both Muslim and Christians, the Oromo reached Gojjam. The enclaves they created there generated substantial Oromo-Amhara interaction and influence over the next several centuries. Emperor Asman Giorgis (enthroned in 1721) welcomed the Oromo into his army, his administration, and his court as a means of strengthening his own hand against the traditional Amhara nobility, which eventually led to serve fighting within the Abyssinian. See Tilahun (1995:37-38)

<sup>92</sup> Tewodros thought that the Christian world including the British ought to support him in his struggle against the Moslems but the British were more interested in having good relations (alliance) with Turkish and Egyptians because the Suez canal was to be opened.

<sup>93</sup> Between Menelik of Shoa, Takla Giorgis of Gojjam (after the death of Tewodros), Hobab of Lasta, and Bezbeze Kassa of Tigray.

over Amhara kings<sup>94</sup> and proclaim himself king of Ethiopia under the assumed name Yohannes IV (1872-1889). Yohannes followed a more cautious approach towards the policy of unification by accepting “the existence of virtually independent rulers provided that they recognised his overall suzerainty and paid him some occasional taxes.”(Pankhurst 2001:164). This was substantially different from Tewodros because it amounted to a conscious toleration as he did not attempt to re-establish a fully centralised monarchy and “regard himself as *primus inter pares*, a *negusa nagast* (king of kings) ... not an undisputed autocrat” (Zewde 1991:43). Yet regional kings and/or provincial dynasties continued to resist Yohanne’s consolidation of power.

The most serious challenge of II to Yohannes IV’s rule internally came from the Amhara king - Menelik II of Shoa - and externally from the Egyptians, Italians and the Sudanese (Mahdist) (cf. Zewde 1991). As mentioned earlier the British ended Tewodros’s reign and Yohannes was relieved of pressure from both British and Egyptian, when the two states became involved in their own conflict, resulting in British occupation of Egypt. His relief was not to last, however, when Italy, seeing its chance and encouraged by the British, took first Assab from the Egyptians and then began to penetrate the hinterland through Eritrea.<sup>95</sup> The Italian military encroachments into the highlands met with diplomatic resistance, culminating in a military engagement in 1887 at Doagli, where the Ethiopian forces defeated the Italians. Italy moved onto a virtual war footing, and began to support Yohannes’ rivals in an effort to undermine his position, including Menelik, the King of Shoa, who aspired to be Emperor (Zewde 1991, Holcomb & Sissai 1990). On October 25, 1887 Menelik signed a secret agreement with an Italian representative, which promised Menelik the option to buy 5,000 Remington rifles in return for his neutrality in the upcoming battle between Yohannes and Italy. Less than a year later, Italy drew up a treaty, which offered its support for Menelik’s bid to become emperor in return for territorial concessions. Following Yohannes death at the hands of the Mahdists<sup>96</sup> in March 1889, Menelik

---

<sup>94</sup> When the British came to rescue the prisoners (the Napier expedition) they left most of their weapons with Kassa in appreciation of his aid and hospitality. See Pankhurst (2001:162).

<sup>95</sup> The Italian occupation of Massawa and other parts of Eritrea must be seen in relation to the [double sided] British colonial policy, which gave a role to the Italians. As Bahru wrote “Italian colonialism in the Horn of Africa combined the vigour youth with the desperation of the later-comer. This distinctive feature arose from the late arrival on the colonial scene: Italy became unified only in 1871. Italy’s thrust was abetted by the British, who, themselves unwilling to get involved in Ethiopia, wanted someone to guard their interests in the region against their ancestral rivals, the French.” Zewede (1991:56).

<sup>96</sup> The Mahadists (Sudanese) struck several times until Yohannes was forced to lead his army against them in a great battle at Metemma in 1889 where he lost his life.

signed the document on May 20 to gain Italian support against rival claims to the emperorship.<sup>97</sup> The Treaty of Wichale (Uccialle) recognised an extension of the Italian sovereignty into the areas west and south of Massawa, including Asmara.

Over the next few months, Italy expanded its colonial territory well beyond the territory's provisions, without encountering resistance (Negash 1987:2). By the fall of 1889, Italian forces had moved to the Mareb River; although Menelik protested he did not militarily contest the Italian actions (Marcus 2001:115) On January 1, 1890, Italy officially declared its possessions as the colony of Eritrea. Desirous of more territory, Italy invaded and occupied Tigray province in December 1894 while Menelik was involved in slave and cattle raids in the south (Getahun 1974:233). The increased military tensions with Italy united the otherwise disparate elements of the Ethiopian Empire, and following a short war, Ethiopia with its new French weapons defeated Italy at the historical battle of Adowa (in Tigray) in March 1, 1896. The humiliation inflicted upon the Italians at the Battle of Adowa was not forgotten.<sup>98</sup> One of the first military actions of the Fascist regime of Italy was to invade Ethiopia and attempt to establish a colony, almost a half century after the scramble for Africa had finished. The Italians occupied Ethiopia by invading and occupying Ethiopia from their base in Eritrea in 1936 until 1941, when the British-led Allied force drove them out and restored Haile Selassie to power.

The result of Adowa was that all of a sudden, most European great powers were beating at the door of the Ethiopians in order to negotiate borders and to give the Ethiopian's arms and other aid. Menelik was suddenly at a par with the rulers of Europe and Ethiopia assumed a status that its real strength and power did not warrant. Menelik played the situation well. He found that he had won the hearts of many common Ethiopians, the modern arms left by the Italians, and the respect of foreign governments. He used these assets to cement his position, expand his Empire, and reduce the power of the local kings; first, naturalised Tigreans and then Gojjames were defeated "at the Battle of Embabo on June 6, 1882." Zewde (1991:62) notes "The Embabo victory was

---

<sup>97</sup> Menelik signed the treaty in order to receive more Italian arms and to induce Tigreans to follow Yohannes as Emperor. See S. Zewde (1991).

<sup>98</sup> But Menelik did not attempt to pursue his advantage militarily. The Addis Ababa Peace treaty, signed on October 26, 1896 between Ethiopia and Italy, accepted the Mareb River as the boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Thus, Menelik willingly parted with a large portion of Eritrea to secure his claim to the throne and despite holding the upper hand in 1896, accepted Italian control over parts of Eritrea they had seized in contravention of the Treaty of Wichale.



Menelik's passport with no need of visa." With the Gojjames cleared away, "the Battle of Embabao made Menelik the only serious candidate for the succession to Emperor Yohannes IV". Thus after the death of Yohannes, Tigreans' "Sensibilities were...hurt when the heir of Emperor Yohannes... was dispossessed by Shoa in 1889 [and] a permanent grievance against Amhara domination became the hallmark of Tigrean provincialism". From the death of Yohannes IV, the Amhara ascended again to the position of ruling group of the traditional Ethiopian Empire (Abyssinia), and expanded Ethiopia maintained that supremacy in one form or another for well over a century until the fall of the Derg in May 1991<sup>99</sup> when they were again replaced by a Tigrean-dominant government.

Again it is important to underscore that the conflict within the Abyssinian core has found much more demonstrable expression in the perennial rivalry between Amhara and Tigreans, later joined by other ethnic groups against Amhara domination (and after 1991 against Tigrean domination) after the incorporation of the latter groups into the Ethiopian Empire state. Tigrean resentment against Amhara hegemony which had been manifest in various forms over a century found a new invigorated expression in the formation of the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front in 1975, leading to a deadly violent conflict. The Eritrean, Somali, Oromo, Afar war of liberation, and the ethnic armed struggle movements also opposed and finally helped topple the Derg in 1991 (discussed in greater detail in chapter Five).

### **Centralisation and expansion**

After successfully establishing control over the Abyssinians and the Italian colonial power,<sup>100</sup> Menelik (using military, technological, and administrative expertise provided

---

<sup>99</sup> Throughout the years, the Amhara rulers reinforced their pre-eminent position through the use of different legends, symbols and institutions. The most important of these included the fourteenth century national epic, *Kibrä Nägäst* (Glory of the Kings), which described how Ethiopians, or more precisely the Amhara and Tigreans, became rightful successors to the "God-chosen" Israelites of the Old Testament by virtue of the Solomonic ancestry of the kings and by their taking possession of the Zion (Ark of the Covenant). The Kibre Negest were also linked formally the Ethiopian state with the Christian Orthodox Church, cf. Markakis (1974), Levine (2000), Holcom & Sisai (1990).

<sup>100</sup> After the Defeat of the battle of Adowa in 1896, the Italians concluded a treaty recognising all of Ethiopia's borders with the exception of Eritrea where they established a colony that lasted until WWII. Through a series of mutual treaties signed in 1902, 1907 and 1908, Britain and France recognised him as the king of Ethiopia and agreed to respect Ethiopia's territorial boundaries. This was a significant victory in diplomacy because it symbolised the recognition of Ethiopia as an indigenous African state outside of the European state system and might have deterred European ambitions to colonise Ethiopia.

by the Europeans), vastly expanded the frontiers of Abyssinia. He spread its tentacles in all directions south and, south east over areas inhabited by Oromo, Somali, Afar, and a large number of other ethnic groups, including the Gurage, Sidamo, Hadya, Kambata, Wolayita, Gamo, Kaffa, and Omitics Gimira which he effectively conquered, thereby more than doubling the Empire, both in size and population (see Map 1). As Teshale wrote “In the Menelikan campaign of territorial conquest of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Christian Ethiopian power was revived with indomitable vigour that made the Ethiopia of 1900 larger in size and more heterogeneous in ethnic composition than what it had been just a quarter century earlier” (Teshale 1995:39). Throughout the conquest, he faced resistance with the only exceptions of the Oromos of Shoa who, before the conquest of the other territories, became part of the Empire through an arrangement with the Shoan Oromo confederation. Several of the Shoan Oromo chieftains later played a significant role in the drive for the conquest of the southern territories.<sup>101</sup> This indicated the beginning of the formation of a ruling class alliance as opposed to ethnic solidarity.<sup>102</sup>

To sum up, contemporary Ethiopia is the creation of Menelik II, who established its political boundaries (through local conquests and international diplomatic manoeuvres with European great powers) and central control over a wider territory than any of his predecessors. At the turn of the century when Europe was busy establishing colonies in the region, Ethiopia alone remained an independent and sovereign nation-state under his leadership. His diplomatic skills and European recognition of the Ethiopian State as an African Empire State helped him to strengthen the country’s sovereignty. Thus the expanding Ethiopian Empire came up against the colonial ambitions of the Italians, the French and the British. Following the defeat of the Italians at the Battle of Adowa in 1896 the Horn of Africa was divided into the states of Eritrea, Djibouti, British Somaliland, and Italian Somaliland, and the boundary between Ethiopia and Kenya was set. The state boundaries that were drawn portioned many of the peripheral ethnic groups, most of which were pastoralist, among several states: the Somali among 5, the Afar 3, and the Boran-Oromo 2.

---

<sup>101</sup> Among the Oromo chieftains of Shoa, who later became great military leaders in Menelik’s army, Ras Gobena and Fitawrari Habte Giorgis. Ras and Fitawrari are traditional military titles roughly equivalent to “General.”

<sup>102</sup> The military success was at times coupled with the political skill of negotiating the submission of the local rulers. Such submissions facilitated the integration of the local rulers into the Amhara-Tigray ruling class from which they greatly benefited afterward.

Immediately after his coronation Menelik began an attempt to promote national unity and introduce administrative and political reforms. But we must keep in mind that even if one considers just the land within the current borders (i.e. without Eritrea), the country has only rarely been united. It certainly was never united in a “national” sense, where unification sprung from the ‘will of the people’. Despite the (pan-Ethiopian) nationalistic rhetoric of unity that developed in the post-Menelik empire state, Ethiopia has more often been fragmented into many different regions (Markakis 1987). If one considers the broad scope of Ethiopian history, this is in fact closer to reality than the myths of unity.<sup>103</sup> Dawit Yohannes, (Amhara National Democratic Movement) a spokesperson for the EPRDF and Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia, introduced the new federal system by stating:

The EPRDF is challenging the political environment of Ethiopia...History has been used as a veil, covering up differences within Ethiopia. People have believed that we have a unity in this country, but this has never existed. What they call unity has been a geographic entity dominated by one ethnic group. An Amhara peasant had never heard of an Eritrean, likewise an Afar nomad had never heard of a Nuer, let alone seeing one...At the stage Ethiopia is now you cannot force people to form a unity (Tronvoll 2000:18).

In any case, in late 1880s, Menelik established Addis Ababa<sup>104</sup> as the first permanent capital of Ethiopia. He also hired foreign advisers and concluded an agreement with a French firm to construct a railroad from Addis Ababa to Djibouti<sup>105</sup> Moreover; Ethiopia acquired its first modern bank, postage stamps, and a national currency. The first modern roads were constructed, the basis of a telephone and telegraph system installed, and a rudimentary cabinet established (Zewde 1991, Araia 1995).

Araia (1995) outlines four characteristics of Menelik’s state building. First, Ethiopia became more united than under previous regimes, mostly because the state apparatus was more organised. Second, whenever Menelik conquered a region, he left military garrisons there as a permanent presence to maintain control. However, it is important to note here that during Menelik’s reign state power manifested itself in two different ways: direct and indirect rule or as noted by Teshale (1995:43):

The Menlikan conquest took two distinct forms, with two different outcomes, depending upon the degree of resistance from the local population. In areas like Wallaga and Jimma, where military resistance against Menelik’s forces was mute, the incorporated regions were left with their previous

<sup>103</sup> It is within this context that the Ethiopian state can be said to have been at least partly colonial in nature.

<sup>104</sup> The indigenous name of Addis Ababa is *Finfinne* which literally means spring waters in Oromiffa.

<sup>105</sup> The new transport system enabled Ethiopia’s land-owning class to export cash crops, primarily coffee, for sale on the global market

socio-political arrangements, and a tributary relationship was established between them and the central administration. Direct armed occupation and the dismantling of the indigenous status-quo were found unnecessary.

Third, Menelik himself was recognised by the European powers as a sovereign leader, which was quite unusual for African leadership of the time. Fourth, Menelik produced a highly developed and well-armed military organisation. When Menelik died in 1913, Ethiopia was becoming a centralised state with modern bureaucracy.

### **The establishment of Absolutist Rule under Haile Selassie I**

After Menelik, Haile Selassie I rose to power first as a regent (1923-1929) and then as emperor (1930-1974). He undertook a novel policy of state centralisation, modernisation, Amhara domination and re-established the monarchy and the Orthodox Church as the dominant central institutions. In other words, state centralisation and ethnic domination reached the highest stage under Haile Selassie. Like his predecessors he enlarged the Ethiopian state through incorporation of Eritrea first via a federation with Ethiopia and then as a province of Ethiopia (see, Ch.5).<sup>106</sup> While Menelik delegated power in a quasi-representative manner in the form of regional chiefs etc., Haile Selassie was the architect of absolutist political order in Ethiopia (Herbeson 1988, Zewde 1991). This argument here seems to be contrary to the Polish writer Kapuscinski's (1983:23) insight into the ruling methods of Haile Selassie and his real power.

In fact, the contrast that has existed between the world-wide reputation of Emperor Haile Selassie and the state of affairs within Ethiopia must strike most forcibly any person interested in the country. He was widely regarded as an absolute monarch with semi-divine status. This was far from the case. He always had to contend with a number of conflicting power groups—the church, the central and provincial aristocracy and the army. He kept his position by balancing these forces and by playing them against each other, at which he was very competent. But the imperial position, in spite of all efforts at centralization, was never really strong enough to ignore them.

While recognising the weakness of the Emperor's power vis-à-vis the nobility and the church, as discussed below I argue that Haile Selassie was more successful than any previous ruler in transforming Ethiopia into an absolute monarchy. He set up a modern public administration through the organisation of a central government, a parliament, a national army or a standing modern army replacing the ragtag mass levies controlled by regional warlords; a uniform centrally administrated fiscal and tax system which laid

---

<sup>106</sup> It is worth noting here that Haile Selassie did not come to power in an easy secession. Instead, he had to fight to attain control of the monarchy against the designated heir to the throne Lij Iyasu, who was a grand son of Menelik and Zewditu, Menelik's daughter (see Markus 1996).

the groundwork for the rationalisation of the economy, a salaried bureaucracy; a similar administrative and judicial practice throughout the country and restructured provincial administration. As a modernising autocrat, Haile Selassie expanded transport and communication, modern education, public health and introduced a national budget. On the international scene, Haile Selassie traded on his image as an enlightened absolute ruler. He had Ethiopia join the U.N. and advanced its claim towards Eritrea. He courted the U.S. in order to ease Britain out of the picture on the Horn to build up his army (a vital tool to ensure his control of the country) and this gain legitimacy internationally. He gave the U.S. rights to an important communications and intelligence gathering base, the Kagnev Communications Station. He also became a leader of the African movement as he joined with the leaders of many African countries in openly denouncing South Africa and attempting to set up some sort of regional African organisation. This was to result in the OAU that placed its headquarters in Addis Ababa. Increasing centralisation of state power in the name of modernisation was first of all achieved through the adoption of the country's first written constitution in 1931, (which was modelled on the Prussian one of 1848 and the Japanese of 1889). The implementation of the 1934-1935 Provisional Administration and Ministerial power and Duties Proclamations effectively established the beginnings of a modern bureaucracy and division of the country into thirty two "*Ghizats*" (*provinces*). The constitution formalised the emperor's pre-eminent authority over the nobility and the Orthodox Church that had traditionally been influential in Ethiopian politics. A bi-cameral deliberative chamber consisting of a Senate and a House of Deputies was created. Members of the Senate were appointed by the Emperor and those of the House of Deputies were elected by the nobility and landed gentry. The upper chamber was for the upper nobility (Masafent) and the lower for the lower echelon (Makwanent).<sup>107</sup> Beyond this, the parliament was without any power and met to do business only when the emperor so pleased. In other words as Ernest Luther (1958:45) argues the parliament played no more than a decorative role on the Ethiopian scene.

---

<sup>107</sup> Article 31 and 32 states that the members of the Senate shall be appointed by his majesty the emperor from among nobility who have for a long time served his Empire as princes or ministers, judges or high military officers "temporarily, and until the people are in position to elect themselves, the members of the chamber of Deputies shall be chosen by the nobility (*Mekunnet* and the local *chiefs Shumanoch*) (Perham 1969:429).

The constitution further stipulated that supreme authority rested with the emperor and that no law could be put into force without his confirmation or initiation (Clapham 1965; Markakis 1974, Markus 1996). Under the new arrangement, the authorities of the executive, the legislative and the judiciary were to be embodied in the person of the emperor. The constitution further declared:

The emperor determines the organisation, powers and duties of all ministers, executive departments and the administration of the government and appoints, promotes and transfers, suspends and dismisses the officials of the same.

In effect, the emperor kept legislative, judicial and executive authority and separation of functions was practically non-existent as the king was the chief judge, law maker, head of government and state. With the creation of a regular army, local traditional armies were discarded. Thus regional power was reduced. Efforts towards creating a regular army started in 1933 with the opening of a military school in Holta. But it was only in the post-liberation period that Haile Selassie managed to replace the private armies of regional lords with a professional army. After the liberation, the British government agreed to provide at its own expense a military mission for raising, organising and training the emperor's special army (Hiwet 1975:87). The ethnic and social composition of the army was quite diversified, having Oromo, Tigrean and Gurage officers in addition to Amhara. Muslims, however, were left out of the highest command (ibid:255). Loyalty to the emperor was as anywhere else a precondition for a career.

In sum, the constitution was used by Haile Selassie as a means of facilitating the centralisation. Within a short period of time, the Emperor had concentrated in his own hands all real and formal authority (Clapham 1969 and Markakis 1974). The Italian invasion of 1936 interrupted Haile Selassie's state centralisation and modernisation.<sup>108</sup> However, after liberation the emperor restarted his centralisation policies and embarked upon rebuilding the country. He reorganised the administrative divisions of the country (from the Italian divisions on ethnic-based regions into non-ethnic regional based regions), created a Ministry of the Interior, appointed supporters of his reform policies as governors of the provinces and staffed all important positions in the central government from the Amhara and [Amharised] elites (mainly Shoan).

---

<sup>108</sup> The effects of the occupation on Ethiopia were deep and long lasting. The Italians instituted many harsh racial separation procedures and made it policy to favour the muslim Oromo and Somali over the hostile, Christian Amhara. This added to the conflicts that were to rage after the Italian left. While they provided economic improvements to Ethiopia, their attacks on the educated class left few to administer it after the war. This destruction insured that any changes to the feudal system would have to be redrawn. Reformers would find it more difficult to overcome the more deeply entrenched imperial system.

Clapham (1969) has illustrated statistically the number of Shoans occupying highest positions since 1941 and concluded that “the proportions of Shoans have never been on decline from the peak of 77 percent in 1959.” Moreover, most Ambassadors abroad since the liberation have been Shoans, whereas almost a quarter have been Eritreans. As a source of patronage he also concentrated schools and facilities in Addis Ababa, and perhaps favoured Shoans “on ground of loyalty since they naturally tend to be more committed to a basically Shoan regime” (Markakis 1974:77). This patronage not only enabled them to establish political, social and economic dominance over non-Amhara people in a multi-ethnic Ethiopian Empire State, but also placed them in a favourable position *vis-à-vis* ethnic rivals such as the Tigraeans—the other element in the Abyssinian confederacy – and the Oromos, the newly incorporated majority in the Ethiopian Empire State.

Clapham (1969:29) states that “although Eritrea has been by far the best represented of the provinces outside Shoa, sharp rises in the numbers of Eritrean high officials in the central government have followed both the Federation in 1952, and its ending with the ordinary administrative system ten year later.” In other newly conquered areas however, many ethnic groups (especially non-Christians) were excluded both from power and holding high public offices.<sup>109</sup> Instead the new settlers (*Neftegna*) of northern origins and newly appointed bureaucrats played a considerable role (Zewde 1991). Yet in terms of the development of the national economy these regions had contributed significantly through the export of coffee and other goods, such as qat. In other words, these regions contributed to state revenues and directly to the process of centralisation in terms of taxation (Markakis 1974, Holcomb & Ibssa 1990, Jalata 1993).

Above all, as I mentioned earlier, both Menelik and Haile Selassie used land and land policies as a means of gaining political supremacy and patronage thereby bringing about structural changes affecting the living conditions of the majority of the Ethiopian population—the peasantry. In this regard, while the land policies affected all Ethiopian

---

<sup>109</sup> While it was true that some of the newly conquered groups (for example the Oromos and Gurages) and to some extent the Old Abyssinians (Tigreans) were represented with few people around the Emperor’s government, the majority of nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were excluded from representation in local self-government not to mention in the affairs of central government. Especially in the areas where the majority of ethnic groups are predominantly Muslims and/or indigenous religion, the settlers from the north (Abyssinians and to some extent Amharised and baptised individuals play a considerable role in the administration of these regions. As will be discussed in chapter five lack of manpower in current self-governing regional states must be seen in this state discriminatory policy of the former regimes.

peasants it is argued that these policies had differential effects in terms of north and south, Christian and Muslim, Abyssinian and non-Abyssinians etc.

It is important to note here that the problems of land tenure in the Amhara and Tigrean (Abyssinian) regions are of a different nature from those of the Southern provinces because over 90 percent of the Amhara and Tigreans own lands in the northern provinces (Markakis 1974). In the conquered areas, however, most of the land was taken first by Menelik and then by Haile Selassie. Land reform was therefore the main requirement and an important element in the Ethiopian student movement and one of the issues which led to the Ethiopian revolution. As we shall see later in this chapter, Haile Selassie's land grant system came under considerable attack, but before going into this discussion and challenge to Haile Selassie's rule first I will briefly discuss the reform of the constitution and continued authoritarianism in post-liberation era.

### **The 1955 Constitutional reform**

In 1955 the constitution of 1931 was reformed in some of its fundamental sections: civil and political rights, which include religion freedom, elections to parliament, and the guarantee that no one could be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law. It also provided for the formation of four bodies: the Crown council, the Council of Ministers, the Senate, and the Chamber of Deputies. The Crown Council served as an advisory body to the emperor, the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, was made responsible for the day-to-day administration of the government. While there was no change in the election of the Senate, the new constitution provided popular election to the Chamber of the Deputies. Accordingly, the first electoral law was issued on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1956 and as Clapham (1967:142) wrote "the 1957 election for the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house) was the first election, which created the beginning of some of an independent power bloc next to the Emperor." However, these elections were contestations between aristocracies. As Abbink (2000) wrote: "this meant in practice that candidates with social standing, wealth and a good network were mostly likely to stand and to win. It was not yet democracy..." (p.158).

In general terms the new constitution continued to preserve the absolute authority of the emperor and parliament was just a symbol or as Zewde stated it "was designed to give Ethiopian government an even more impressive facade of modernity." In practice, the



emperor concentrated all powers in his hands. In other words, the constitution was largely viewed as an expression of a democratic facade with little genuine power. It entailed no substantive dilution of the power of the emperor and also lacked many of the power elements embodied in Western-Style constitutions and/or constitutional monarchy.<sup>110</sup>

Clapham (1969) gives four major reasons for the revision of the constitution: (1) it was part of the emperor's effort to provide a formal basis for further centralisation and rationalisation of his political and bureaucratic power; (2) it served to forestall international criticism of the incorporation by Ethiopia of Eritrea, where an elected parliament and modern administration had existed since 1950; (3) it improved the emperor's image abroad (especially Ethiopia's new patron the U.S.); and (4) it placated the growing educated elites that expressed concern that Ethiopia lagged behind many African countries that had adopted "liberal" constitutions on the eve of independence.

In short, one could argue that actually the 1955 constitution of Ethiopia "legalised" the traditional principle of divine emperorship, vesting sovereignty in the person of the emperor, who alone exercised "supreme authority" over "all the affairs of the Empire" (Art.26). This exclusive power led the emperor to use the state exclusively as his own.

As Jackson and Rosberg note:

Haile Selassie's prolonge, if briefly interrupted, rule, which began in 1930, is a fascinating African examples of traditional "patrimonialism" as defined by Weber".  
 ...The patrimonial office lacks above all the bureaucratic separation of the "private" and "official" sphere. For the political administration, too, is treated as a purely personal affair of the ruler, and political power is considered part of his personal property... The office and the exercise of public authority serve the ruler and the official on whom the office was bestowed; they do not serve impersonal purposes (Jackson and Rosberg 1982:121).

Similarly, Clapham drew the following portrait of Emperor Haile Selassie's rule:

He combines his appeal to divine right with an intense personal grasp of power, in much the same way as symbols and controls are combined in the emperorship itself...  
 Highly personalized control is the essence of his style...high on Haile-Selassie's list of essential skills is his ability to play on the aims and characters of other in order to secure their dependence on himself—for example, by appointing antipathetic rivals to complementary posts, or encouraging officials to appeal direct to the palace over the heads of their superiors. Information services work in a similar way, through rival

---

<sup>110</sup> The bicameral Ethiopian parliament played no part in drawing up the 1995 constitution, which far from limiting the emperor's control, emphasised the religious origins of imperial power and extended the centralisation process. The Senate remained appointive, but the Chamber of Deputies was, at least nominally, elected. However, the absence of a census, the near total illiteracy of the population, and the domination of the countryside by the nobility meant that a majority of the candidates who sought election in 1957 were in effect chosen by the elite. Moreover elected bodies had no real power, since all power rested in hands of the emperor (see Zewde 1991, Harbeson 1988).

---

politicians reporting on one another's activities, so that the Emperor stands at the centre of a web of competing intelligence networks (Clapham 1968:115-116)

Neo-patrimonial rule was very common in post-colonial Africa and Haile Selassie was a typical African example.<sup>111</sup> In this system, relations link ruler not with the "Public" (the ruled) but with the patron. This patronage and clientelism transform political domination into a type of hierarchy. Under such conditions the head of state (i.e. the emperor) dominates political and cultural life. Strategic positions in the police, the military and the bureaucracy are filled by individuals loyal to him, especially close relatives and those attracted by the spoils of office, with a loyal armed force used to bolster personal rule when legitimacy is weak. Because of their patrimonial character most African administrations diverge so widely from the Weberian hierarchy, objectivity and discipline, that the term "bureaucracy" is according to Sandbrook (1985:116) misleading.

To summarise, under the slogan of modernity, centralisation helped the emperor to achieve a position of precarious dominance, wielding a power both over the central administration and over regional government, which none of his predecessors had been able to achieve. Centralisation was achieved by forming a new bureaucracy in which power was concentrated in the emperor's hand. The promulgation of the 1931 and the revised constitution of 1955 show this clearly. The revised constitution essentially provided for the establishment of the chief organs of government. These were the parliament, the ministries and the emperor himself as the sole source of power (Markakis 1974:201-202, Clapham 1969, Keller 1988). The Emperor set up a government that combined traditional and modern features. Traditional structures like the Crown council and the senate were used to appease conservative forces and minimise opposition to his modernisation programs. Modern institutions like central ministries, departments and civil service were established to carry out a program of centralisation and economic development. This dual structure generated conflicts over the pace of change between the old nobility and the new generation of educated Ethiopians. His efforts to resolve the contradictions between the traditional forces and

---

<sup>111</sup> Following Weber, Callaghy argued that the African patrimonial state has four essential features. First, a highly centralised executive authority is personalised, most commonly around a presidential, monarch or military leader who attempts to control the state. Second, legal rational doctrines are blended in an attempt to "routine power." Third, personal rule is supported by cadres rooted in patron-client networks and fourth; the state provides the major avenue of upward mobility status, power and wealth. Callaghy (1987:89).

modern were unsuccessful. Particularly in the late 1960, these contradictions intensified as both competed for dominance and this led to the *coup* attempt in 1960.

### **Centralisation, Socio-economic contradictions & revolt against the absolutist state**

Perhaps as Przeworski (1991) has argued, the stability of any regime depends not so much on the legitimacy of a particular system of domination as on the presence of a preferred alternative. The process of centralisation and modernisation of the Empire not only exacerbated existing antagonisms but also created new ones. In the following section I shall attempt to show how the modernisation process accentuated the oppression of different classes and nationalities and led to opposition to the regime that served as a prelude to the 1974 revolution.

### **The Early Challenges**

The history of Ethiopia leading up to the 1960s, especially from the time of independence in 1941, is full of palace intrigues and plots to assassinate the emperor. Only a few of these conspiracies appear to have had national ramifications. Nevertheless, when they are compounded with regional oppositions and revolts, they presented real challenges to the imperial regime. In the 1940s, the provinces of Tigray and Gojam were reported to be in a state of revolt, partly in opposition to the ongoing centralisation process and partly in resistance to the government's attempt to survey land to determine ownership and tax responsibility. The Tigrean peasant rebellion, popularly known as the *Wayane* movement, was the first and one of the most significant and remarkable peasant revolts against the Haile Selassie regime (cf. Tareke 1996).

While Haile Selassie brought this regional revolt under control by means of a strong and well organised army assisted by British forces that used their airforce, he by no means managed to eradicate the Wayane's influence. In fact until 1974 the idea of this movement had spread to many parts of the country, particularly to Bale and Gojjam and after 1974 to the creation of the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) (Tarake 1996). Hence the undemocratic and forceful solutions of Haile Selassie to the basic problem of the Ethiopian peasantry, his assimilationist (Amharisation, Christianisation) policies did not achieve their intended goals but created a time bomb (Hiwot, 1975:8).

Sporadic uprisings also occurred in southern parts of the country throughout 1950s and 1960s. Like the Wayane rebellion the southern rebellion mainly among the Bale Oromo was related to the question of land and to the cultural domination imposed by the central

government (Tarake 1996). As mentioned earlier, the people of the south were victims of both Menelik's and Haile Selassie's expansion that paved the way for the domination of Christian-Amhara *Neftegnas* (settlers) and also exposed the peasants of Bale to exploitation by landlords. This revolt must be seen as a logical continuation of the challenges and confrontation that Haile Selassie's government faced since 1941. As Gebru Tareke (1996:125) noted "The Bale uprising was set off by a patent combination of grievances stemming from maldistribution of political and administrative powers, land alienation, taxation, ethnic hostility, religious discrimination, and ecological imbalance."

The Bale Rebellion was the first revolt outside the core Abyssinian society against the Emperor. Despite the fact that the revolts in Bale had a loosely unified leadership it was without a definite political programme. But the major goal of the rebellion was clear: to oust the Amhara (*Neftegnas*) ruling class from the province by declaring *holy war* "Jihad" (Nicholas, 1979:27).<sup>112</sup> The war itself was not long lasting; though armed resistance was waged for a relatively long period of time because it operated in vast frontier region, enjoyed the support of dissatisfied peasants and the leader received military support from Somalia (Zewde 1991:216, Tareke 1996). More importantly, the Bale rebellion was the first sign of organised Oromo discontent against land confiscation and Amhara domination that later led to the formation of the Mucha Tulema movement in the 1960s and the Oromo Liberation Front in the early 1970s (see chapter 5).

### **The 1960 attempted Coup d'état**

While earlier revolts were more or less ethnic, regional or based on religion, a much greater non-ethnic challenge was the *coup d-etat* on Tuesday, December 13, 1960. The emperor was actually out of the country on a visit to Brazil when the leader of the imperial bodyguard, the chief of internal security and the police commissioner took control of the palace and key positions in the capital, arrested top government officials, and declared the establishment of a new progressive government. A proclamation appointing the emperor's eldest son, Asfaw Wossen, crown prince, as the head of government, and Ras Imru, the emperor's cousin, as prime minister, was read over the

---

<sup>112</sup> According to Gebru Tareke the primary goals of the Bale rebellion "were the retention of repossession of land and the reassertion of ethnocultural identities" (see Tarake 1996:125).

radio. The proclamation stressed the backwardness of the country compared with the new African states and pledged that the new government would be committed to rapid economic development and to raising the standard of living of the people (Hess 1970:133-41).

Most of the rebel leaders came from the nobility and they had a strong connection to the palace. The planner of the movement was believed to be Girmame Neway, a brother of Mengistu Neway who commanded the imperial body guard. Girmame was educated in the United State and was considered a radical intellectual who hardly fitted within the structure of the feudal autocracy. His zeal for reform and disrespect for the conservative autocracy above him brought him into conflict with the nobility, who arranged for his banishment to one of the provinces as district governor, from where he planned to overthrow the system violently.

The coup appeared to be hastily planned and the leaders failed to assess properly the responses of the army and the air force commanders who were not contacted about the plot but expected to join the rebels at some later stage. The latter two however, remained loyal to the emperor and fighting ensued between the rebel forces and the army on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Within twenty-four hours, the whole episode was over, the coup was crushed, its leaders either dead or captured alive to stand trial and more than two thousands soldiers and civilians along with some of the influential nobles had been killed (Clapham 1969:25-26). Despite its failure, the 1960 attempted coup d'etat was, however, important in many respects: (1) it was the first of its kind to challenge the imperial regime right at its centre in such an organised manner; (2) it revealed the power bases of the imperial regime which included the nobility, the church, and the armed forces; (3) it influenced the subsequent development and growth of political consciousness in Ethiopia, both in the armed forces and among the intelligentsia—two major forces that greatly influenced the course of future events. As Clapham pointed out, "...political awareness in Ethiopia has grown considerably, in large measure as a result of the coup itself" (ibid.497). Similarly Richard Greenfield wrote:

There have been coups, revolutions and political assassinations through Ethiopia's long history but the abortive revolution of 1960 was different in one vital respect. Its leaders sought not merely to displace the then national leaders but to reform and remould the whole system and motivation of government. It may be said that in December, 1960 Africa's wind of change reached even the remoteness of the Ethiopian plateau...few observers would deny that this attempted revolution marked the awakening of a new political consciousness in Ethiopia. If no more than a beginning to be overshadowed by events to come, nevertheless, it is already a psychological landmark in the political

---

thinking of the growing number of Ethiopians who are aware of Africa and of the outside world (Greenfield 1965:2).

The years that followed the failure of the attempted coup d'état saw major reforms. Haile Selassie directed his attention to the military and more than doubled land grants to military and police officers that supported him. To reduce the power of the landed nobility, he attempted to impose a new form of taxation that would have weakened their power. This was met with hostility and revolt in some areas and was allowed to lapse. But above all the emperor attempted to co-opt many of those who might be sympathetic to the coup by speeding up the modernisation process. For one thing, high government posts were given to young, educated people from both noble and common backgrounds. The parliament began to assert its authority increasingly and even began criticising the government. The emperor retreated from day-to-day administration and occupied himself with foreign affairs. This enabled the cabinet, composed of educated university graduates, to play an increasingly dominant role in the internal administration and development of the country. These changes were made possible largely due to the shake-up caused by the attempted coup d'état of 1960 (Clapham 1969:25-26).

Ethiopia never returned to pre-1960 palace politics. The seeds of political consciousness that the coup leaders germinated had taken root in the minds of the young intelligentsia, army officers, workers and peasants. The ancient regime had to go and a new order must rise on its grave. Subsequently student movements were strengthened and started to demonstrate their feelings. Their aim was basically to make the masses conscious of their burden.

### **Revolts of the Students and the Leftist force against emperor**

The leftist forces were the early champions of the Ethiopian revolution. Since 1960 it was the intelligentsia, mainly University students, who played an important role in articulating demands regarding land distribution and national (ethnic) equality. For example, the students were the only organised group that mobilised public support against the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie (Markakis 1974, Keller 1988). The coup not only marked the birth of the student movement, but also forced students to reconsider their role under the imperial feudal regime and thereby increase their political consciousness. There are, however, a number of related factors that also contributed to the emergence of student movement and its deepening political consciousness. The first was the arrival of large numbers of U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers (USPCV) in the early 1960s to teach in Ethiopian schools. Their presence

helped break the hierarchical values that subordinated students to their teachers. Most importantly the USPCV brought with them the notions of democratic rights such as freedom of speech and assembly, and freedom to form and join political parties that were totally unknown under the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie. The students began using such values in their struggle against the autocracy.

The second factor is also related to the arrival of some two hundred or so scholarship students from different countries of Africa, mainly independent or in the process of struggling against colonialism, who brought to Ethiopia more radical ideas from national liberation movements<sup>113</sup> and by the late 60s the socialist and anti-imperialist ideologies emerging in Africa. These students had a great influence in awakening Ethiopian students to the relative economic and political backwardness of their country.

The third important factor that ESM equally benefited from was the Ethiopian University Service Program (EUSP) that sent students after their junior year to the provinces to serve for one year, mainly as teachers. This programme enabled them to spread information in the provinces concerning the ESM. Consequently, elementary and high school students were able to take part in the ESM. Moreover, upon returning from rural areas the student spread words about the harsh and miserable life condition of the rural population in general and the peasants in particular. In this, the Addis Ababa University students played a major role. As John Markakis (1974) observed they were “the only group within the modernizing sector to manifest over and sustain opposition to the regime.”

Finally, since liberation, Ethiopian student were sent abroad in great numbers for education. Upon returning they contributed organisationally and intellectually through publications since they could express their view about Ethiopian socio-economic and political conditions much more freely than home students. Despite a brief period of inactivity after the 1960 coup, they were out in the streets from 1965 to encourage the masses to engage in class and national struggle. When the parliament debated a bill that would regulate tenancy, the students demanded radical redistribution of land and marched in the streets of the capital under the slogan of “Land for the Tiller.” In reaction the emperor banned the student newspaper *Struggle* and through a proclamation restricted student demonstrations. However, the students ignored the

---

<sup>113</sup> It is quite clear, that the African liberation movements of the 1950s and 60s have greatly influenced the ESM. The International students for example brought with them the theories of liberation movements and ideas of the people like Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Mao Tse Tung have been widely circulated on campus.

proclamation and continued demonstrating against the emperor both in Ethiopia and abroad. Moreover, the students were even more radicalised with clear Marxist overtones in their attitudes to social class and the national question.

As we shall discuss in the next chapter, the national question was the major element (besides the land issue) which became both a unifying and divisive factor for the Ethiopian left. Because of this, the nationalities versus class question became the divisive one in the interpretation and application of the principle of 'self-determination including secession.' Accordingly, one group held that the national and class struggle were dialectically connected and that the end of class exploitation would inescapably lead to the end of national oppression. Another group thought the struggle for self-determination ought not to be contingent upon class struggle and assigned primacy to national suppression (Tareke 1996, Clapham 1988, Keller 1988, Marakxis & Ayele 1978, Markakis 1987). This split even became much greater after the revolution and resulted in deadly conflicts among the leftists and set the stage for the formation of ethno-nationalist movements (see chapter 5). This antagonism (between those who held '*pan-Ethiopian nationalism*'/centrist and another group with "ethno-nationalist views), sometimes apparently irreconcilable groups, even continues today (see chapter 8).

Despite severe government measures, such as detention of student leaders and mass deportation to the torrid Gibe river valley in 1972, the students continued their opposition to the regime (Zewde 1991:226). They never retreated despite escalated government repression. Rather such government repression "contributed toward raising the level of political consciousness of the average student and enhanced the feeling of alienation from the regime" (Balsvik 1985:286). Finally the student confrontation with the government grew in intensity in the period leading to the 1974 revolution.

If students were the products of the emperor's education policy, the movement was equally the inevitable consequence of a regime that refused to reform itself. The student movement and the politics of the left begot certain important features. The first was the ascendancy of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which after 1974 became the creed of both the government and oppositions. This ideological ascendancy of the left gave the group of officers that seized political power in September 1974 no other option but to emulate the leftist discourse and eventually parade as the only true left.



## Conclusion

Although its roots can be traced to the Aksumite Empire, modern Ethiopia was essentially created in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Abyssinian Empire, which had splintered into many small principalities ruled by largely autonomous kings and princes and chiefs, was unified. The new Empire, in competition with European empires, expanded southward during the Scramble for Africa establishing Ethiopia's present boundaries. A direct outcome has been the co-existence of over 80 disparate ethnic groups or nationalities within a state dominated by the Amhara and Amharaised elite until 1991. Although its expansion was internally driven (and was in competition with the European imperialists), external actors played a great role by contributing military know-how and other forms of support.

Abyssinian expansion into the southern half of the country fostered both material, ethnic, religious, and cultural inequality between the Amhara and the rest of the Ethiopian population. The compulsory use of an official language such as Amharic in education and administration has been a powerful vehicle of domination or exclusion of subaltern groups and a cause of resistance. Such an immense privilege of a single language, in a country where at least 80 different indigenous languages are spoken, exemplifies the asymmetrical power relations.

The rise of Haile Selassie marked the emergence of an autocratic monarchy with a degree of control over each province using both patron-clientelist network and coercive measures, unprecedented in Ethiopia. Haile Selassie instituted a standing army (militarization), bureaucratisation and a standardised fiscal system for centralisation of power. The 1931 and 1955 revised constitution of Haile Selassie was written not so much to guarantee civic liberties but to bring the nobilities and local chiefs under the full control of the monarchy—the mythology of *divine right* to rule over Ethiopia. The era of Haile Selassie rule also saw Ethiopian plural society function relatively successfully in terms of the dual objectives of the maintenance of law and order and the achievement of a certain type of economic growth. The outbreak of the Second World War, specifically the period of Italian occupation, marked a significant shift in ethnic relations in Ethiopia. The Italian occupation led to rising nationalist sentiment especially among the Tigrean and Oromo, but also the post-Italian period and the incorporation of Eritrea marked the period of struggle between the centre and periphery.

---

The Italian occupation and the installation of culture and linguistic rights to the indigenous population also destroyed the myth of Amhara superiority, thus implanting the seeds of nationalism among the native population.

As Haile Selassie moved into the post-war political framework, the intelligentsia, regional and ethnic groups began to engage in more active politics. The competition to gain maximum power in order to safeguard their interests took on a new dimension. As the prospect of the return to power of Haile Selassie after the war drew nearer, the non-Amharas no longer saw their future in Ethiopia as temporary but a permanent one of ethnic domination. Thus, the Tigrean and Oromo elites felt that it was crucial for them to take every possible initiative to secure political and cultural rights, especially with regard to the position of their community vis-à-vis the Amharas in the new political setting of post-war Ethiopia.

The personalised leadership worked effectively when the emperor was young and energetic. Such qualities overcame the resistance of the Shoan nobility to his ascendancy and held a volatile Empire together for nearly half a century. With advancing age and increasing governmental complexity, Haile Selassie became a weak sovereign without effective control of the state he crafted (Gilkes, 1975). A new generation of educated Ethiopians had taken over control of the state and military bureaucracy in the early 1960s. This group of imperial functionaries displaced the aristocracy and the church that traditionally served as pillars of power for the monarchy. The newly emerging leadership faced opposition from two sources. On the one hand, it had to deal with the conservative feudal class that was fast losing influence in the government. On the other hand, it came under increasing pressure from University teachers and students, the urban working class, labour leaders and mid-level army officers. These radical strata viewed the monarchy as an anachronistic institution incapable of delivering land reform or pulling the country out of economic underdevelopment. Intellectual and Marxist-oriented student organisations began to agitate for 'land to the tiller' and 'self-determination including and up to secession' for oppressed nationalities," and the abolition of the monarchy. Such public discontent eroded the monarchy's legitimacy. And finally the failure of the aging emperor to solve the war in Eritrea, to cope with prolonged drought and famine, or to reform a grossly explosive feudal-like system, led to a revolution. The Provisional Military

Administrative Council of Ethiopia (PMAC) originally a 120 men military council, popularly known as the Derg seized power in September 1974.

The rise of the revolutionary regime raised new hopes among non-Amharas about land reform and the national question and therefore they readily extended their full support to the revolution. However, the revolutionary regime failed to feel the pulse of nationalistic politics which, at that time, was almost ultra nationalist in character. This state nationalism was immediately challenged by another nationalism—*ethno-nationalism and regionalism*. The next chapter is devoted to provide a full explanation of both the revolution that followed the collapse of the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie, state-society conflicts in general and the rise of ethno-political movements in particular.

## *Chapter Five*

---

### ***The Rise and Fall of the Military Regime (1974-1991): the failure of Accommodation and conflict in Revolutionary Ethiopia***

---

#### **Introduction**

The Ethiopian revolution, which erupted in 1974, resulted in the overthrow of the absolutist regime of Haile Selassie and the establishment of a revolutionary regime (Derg). Within a few months of capturing state power, the new regime declared socialism to be the organising principle of the state and society. As Keller (1988) has observed, “the rhetoric had all the common traits of Afro-Marxism: the primacy of ideology, the key role of the vanguard party, consolidation of the state goal of revolutionary change.” To live up to the socialist rhetoric, the Derg took strong policy measures such as land reforms, the establishment of mass organisations, and provisions on the attainment of equality of Ethiopian nationalities. All of these were issues, in particular the “land reform” and the “national question”, which the former regime failed to resolve.

While the post-imperial regime undertook the most popular reform measures, it failed, however, to improve both economic and political conditions in the country. Economically, it is argued that the Derg’s misguided agricultural policies exacerbated problems that had existed before 1974 while spawning new crises (e.g. forced mass relocation of thousands of peasants and the famine of the mid-1980s) in its struggle to consolidate power (Keller 1988, Harbeson 1988, Clapham 1988). Politically, the National Democratic Revolutionary Programme (NDRP), introduced in April 1976, claimed to increase autonomy and/or self-determination to the “nation and nationalities and peoples”<sup>114</sup> of Ethiopia, but instead resulted in increased nationalist conflict. In line with Stalin (1975) and Lenin (Low 1958) the Derg viewed the program as the only solution to the “national question” and accordingly reconstructed the Ethiopian Empire state (Harbeson 1988:125). However, as Araia (1995:119) explains, “the Derg, while reducing the question of nationalities to that of regional autonomy, unleashed a total war against nationality fronts.” With slogans such as ‘Down with Bureaucratic

---

<sup>114</sup> Concessions were granted to the different nationalities in internal affairs such as official permission to speak their own language and display their own culture (in accordance with the ideology of socialism), which the former regime denied. Moreover, a national literacy campaign was launched to provide for education in Oromiffa, Tigriyna and Afar, but the medium of instruction was still Amharic.

Capitalism and Imperialism' 'Death to feudalists and Reactionaries,' 'Revolutionary Motherland or Death' and 'Everything to the War Front,' the Derg advanced from the 'defensive' to the 'offensive' and intensified state of terror. As a consequence of the intensification of state violence the civilian population was forced to side either with the Derg or the nationalist fronts involved in counter insurgency (Keller 1988; Iyob 1993; Markakis 1987; Clapham 1988, 1998).

As argued earlier in chapter three, ethno-political conflicts in Ethiopia must not be seen as *primordial hatred* of the Amharas, but rather *constructed* as a response to increasing state terror and the continued Amhara hegemonic project. It is in this context that the non-Amhara elite started to *reconstruct ethnic identity* (instead of the class identity of the pre-revolutionary era) through the strategy of political education and mass mobilisation. In doing so, ethnic identity transformed into ethno-nationalism and rural guerrilla war (Clapham 1988).

In late 1980s, the Soviet Union<sup>115</sup> (Ethiopia's patron since the late 1970s) backed off from its support to the Ethiopian military, shifting the balance of power to the advantage of the insurgents. In 1991, Mengistu's regime collapsed and the historical failure of the Ethiopian state to accommodate its diversity is finally apparent in the radically different direction taken by ethnic-based coalition fronts— such as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) since 1991 (see chapter 6 & 7).

This chapter focuses on the rise and fall of the military regime, which is fundamental to understanding the emergence of the current regime (EPRDF) and its attempt to find an alternative way of solving the "national question" i.e. the accommodation of diversity through power-sharing and an ethnic based federal system. In other words, this chapter deals with the nature, extent, process and consequence of military rule on nationalism and conflict in Ethiopia, inter alia how the Derg sought to solve the class and national antagonism ("national question") and why it failed. The chapter is divided into four parts. In the first part, I introduce the main causes of the Ethiopian revolution. In the

---

<sup>115</sup> Following the expulsion of Soviet advisers from Somalia, in November 1977, the USSR began a massive airlift of armaments and advisers to Ethiopia. The Soviet military intervention in Ethiopia achieved its purpose: it repulsed the invading Somalia army from Ethiopia and it strengthened the Mengistu regime. On November 20, 1978, Moscow and Addis Ababa codified their new close relationship with a 20-year friendship treaty. It was not until the Gorbachev era, when the "new political thinking" (*glasnost & perestroika*) precipitated a careful review of foreign commitments, that the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship began to deteriorate.

second part, I present a short summary of the Derg's political and economic reforms concentrating on two of the most salient and important issues for this study: "land reforms" and the response to the "national question." In the third part, I discuss the opposition and confrontation between the regime and civilian groups. The fact that the military government denied democracy to the masses while it preached revolution and socialism generated considerable opposition to its rule from radical groups such as the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) (better known as MEISON). Paradoxically, the Derg and these two leftist groups had on paper identical political and economic objectives (Ottaway 1978:199). In 1977-1978, the conflicts deteriorated to the point of mutual annihilation.

It is only by understanding the full weight of the military subjugation of the people that we can analyse the reconstruction of national identity in revolutionary Ethiopia. How the ethno-nationalist movements emerged and mobilised against the Derg is the subject of the last section of this chapter in which I describe the Eritrean nationalist movements (which the regime inherited from Haile Selassie), the Oromo, Tigrean, Somali and Afar liberation fronts—all of which emerged in post-revolutionary Ethiopia. It was these nationalist movements that assumed state power after the collapse of the Mengistu regime in 1991.

### **Revolution: Origins and Causes**

Studies of revolution are many and scholars assign economic, political, and social conditions as the causes of revolution. One of such scholars who discusses contemporary revolution and political order is Samuel Huntington (1968).<sup>116</sup> Huntington sees revolution as primarily a political event with political causes and characteristics. He argues that revolution is an autonomous event political in nature and with purely political roots. The essence of revolution according to him is the expansion of political participation. Revolution is an important feature of political modernisation; for implicit in modernisation is mobilisation<sup>117</sup> and institutionalisation, the introduction of previously excluded groups into politics against existing political institutions. Huntington contends that revolution requires political institutions that cannot cope with

---

<sup>116</sup>For other discussions on this subject, see Tilly (1978), Skocpol (1979) Lenin (1971).

<sup>117</sup> It is around the theme of mobilisation that Huntington explains the movement of revolutions from moderate to radical phases: moderate lose out because they are unable to cope with the novel participation of new groups in politics. They are not ruthless enough to stop it, nor radical enough to lead it. Radical leadership emerges because it can do the latter.

the demands for participation in politics made by new assertive groups and classes demanding entrance into politics and political power. “Ascending or aspiring groups and rigid or inflexible institutions are the stuff of which revolutions are made” (ibid.:275).

In short, revolution is the violent destruction of the existing order by groups mobilised at such a rapid speed that this order cannot assimilate them. “Revolution is the extreme case of the explosion of political participation. Without this explosion there is no revolution” (ibid.:266). The complete revolution also involves a second stage: the establishment of a new political order. He writes:

The most significant result of the great revolutions is either precisely in the political sphere or directly related to that sphere. A full-scale revolution involves the destruction of the old political institutions and patterns of legitimacy, the mobilization of new group into politics, the redefinition of the political community, the acceptance of new political values and new concepts of political legitimacy, the conquest of power by a new, more dynamic political elite, and the creation of new and stronger political institutions. All revolutions involve modernization in the sense of the expansion of political participation; some revolutions also involve political development in the sense of the creation of new patterns of political order (Huntington 1968:308).

Huntington builds his analysis around Lenin’s contention that the decisive factor in revolutions is the nature of political organisation not the stage of social or economic development or social forces (Lenin 1971). Furthermore, like Lenin, Huntington finds the political party to be the essential requirement of modern revolution. Moreover, while his explanations of revolution (contrary to Lenin) are purely political, nevertheless, he use economic, social, and psychological factors in explaining revolutions. He cites the significance of sustained economic growth followed by sharp economic decline, as well as the psychic and social frustration produced by the gap between expectation and actuality (ibid:55-56). According to Huntington revolution requires in addition “the alienation of many groups from the existing order” (ibid.:277). Thus to Huntington, the two groups whose alienation is necessary for revolution are the urban-middle class intelligentsia and the peasants.

### **Origins and causes of the Revolution in Ethiopia**

As many have noted about the Ethiopian revolution (e.g. Keller 1988, Ottaway 1978, Clapham 1988, Donham 1999, Markakis & Ayle 1978, Telahun 1993, Halliday and Molyneux, 1981, Harbeson 1988, Clapham 1988) it tended to be depicted as a broad popular movement, strongly agrarian in terms of both social composition and political

agenda, progressive, egalitarian and nationalist.<sup>118</sup> These scholars hold that the revolution was justified against the normative backdrop of the autocratic, oppressive, inequalitarian, feudal (economically depressing land tenure arrangements), and ethnocratic old regime and landed elite. They pushed their own interests at the expense of serving the needs of the rank and file; a corrupt system and its leadership (the emperor) who presumed to play a leadership role among modernising African nations while perpetuating the backwardness of his own; and the incapacity of the traditional political regime to support real economic development.

Put differently, as Halliday and Molyneux (1981:83) note:

The fundamental causes comprised the 'structural' crises of the regime. It lies in the failure of the regime to resolve the agrarian crisis, to develop the country's productive forces in such a way as to improve the population's living standard.

Having appropriated a substantial portion of peasant production (in particular in the conquered and forcefully incorporated South<sup>119</sup>) the ruling feudal oligarchy led an extravagant life style. They wasted peasant production by conspicuous consumption (Tareke 1996:12). The peasant used to surrender much of their production to this parasitical class and to the state. As a result a large segment of the population suffered from poverty, disease, unemployment and injustice (Clapham 1988, Keller 1988, Markakis 1987).

Though, when the case is made for the nature of economic and social deprivation it is quite clear that as Huntington noted earlier this group's aspirations for revolution. Their alienation, and hence their revolutionary motives, are real and grounded in economic, ethnic and socio-political grievances. Grievances of course, are basic to rebellion as is oxygen to combustion; few would dispute this (Gurr 1973, Tilly 1978). But fluctuations in grievances account for the outbreak of collective protest as poorly as fluctuation in the oxygen content of air explains the incidence of fires. More important are the politically significant resources people have at their disposal to act upon their grievances. Like any move to unseat incumbent authorities' violent redress any revolt depends on a favourable distribution of social chances. They require (at least

---

<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the popular protests and the military coup, as in many other developing countries, in particular Africa, are characterised as primarily corrective and carried out in the name of social justice and economic reform or reconstruction, and ethnic reconciliation.

<sup>119</sup> This is to argue that the Ethiopian revolution has both class and ethnic dimension (see also Markakis 1987, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988, Herbeson 1988).



momentarily) an opportune balance of tactical forces in the immediate political arena. So what was this immediate political arena (causes)?

### **Immediate factors**

Although the grievances mentioned earlier continued until the early 1970s, three types of immediate (national and international) factors triggered the Ethiopian revolution in 1974. These are: (i) Famine (ii) Oil price rise; and (iii) Sector Review Policy on Education. While famine in itself was not new or unusual in Ethiopia (Zewde 1991), what fuelled it into a political crisis or upset people was the emperor's (and his officials') attempts to hide the famine while the news of thousands of dead people and livestock circulated the world headlines (Glikes 1975:15). At the height of the famine, in 1973/74, top government officials publicly downplayed the situation and claimed that the famine was "not serious [enough] to warrant a request for international assistance" (Hiwet 1977). The second important reason for public outrage was the rise of gasoline prices; sharp increases in living costs and inflation. Tax drivers, for example, were one group that joined the strike as the government prevented them from increasing fares to cover the cost of increased gasoline prices. They attacked city buses, private and government cars. The third immediate cause was related to the government's educational policy developed with the co-operation of UNESCO and World Bank. This policy was known as Educational Sector Review (ESR). Students saw in the new educational policy a conspiracy against the interests of the rural masses seeking upward mobility through higher education (Ottaway 1978:33, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988).

While these have been the immediate causes for the revolts against the Emperor it must again be noted that the contradiction that led to the outbreak of the revolution were structural in nature and had been maturing throughout the years. In 1974 years of student agitation culminated in protests by teachers, unions, tax drivers, religious groups and the military who joined the students in mass demonstration.

Due to increased public protest the government promised to respond to the immediate problems mentioned above.<sup>120</sup> But not surprisingly no response was made to the demands for structural change. On their part the protesters transformed their demands from the immediate to structural change. As Markakis and Ayele (1978:90) note:

---

<sup>120</sup> The government for example promised to increase military wages, dropped the ESR and reduced fuel prices (see, Halliday & Molyneux 1981 Clapham 1988).

The people's demands became political, ranging from the dismissal and punishment of corrupt officials to a call for constitutional government. The concession from the Prime Minister and the emperor did not however, curtail the advancement of the revolution. At this historical juncture while the students and other radical forces were strenuously struggling for restoring a people's government that represented different section of the society by deposing the monarchy, the military intervened and thwarted the revolution and declared its seizure of state power on September 12, 1974.

The students and teachers demanded "land reform" (*land to the tiller*) and democracy. The Ethiopian armed force firstly demanded increased in their salary and better living conditions for the soldiers (corporate demand <sup>121</sup>), but later on they had a political agenda (Ottaway 1978:1-2; 45; Halliday & Molyneux 1981; Clapham 1988). The Ethiopian Muslims too marched throughout the capital's street to highlight their oppression and to support their petition for equal rights. In short, what started as a revolt transformed into revolution when the military became involved in the protest. Moreover, since there was no party, as noted by Lenin and Huntington, the military captured state power or stole the revolution from the revolutionaries.

As discussed below, what followed was reform with repression. The Derg were successful in bringing about a number of changes (political and socio-economic reforms), as the following section attests. But despite this change the progress achieved in terms of economic development and solving the national question or accommodating diversity was limited.

### **The Derg's Radical Social and Economic Changes**

From 1974 onwards the military regime undertook a series of revolutionary reforms whose purpose was to eliminate the socio-economic structure of the old regime. The first and most far-reaching reform was the nationalisation of land that brought an end to feudal relations in rural Ethiopia (Keller 1988, Markakis & Ayele 1978).<sup>122</sup> Ottaway (1977:29) asserted that

---

<sup>121</sup> In exploring the cause of military intervention Nordlinger (1977:65) for example has pointed out that "[t]he defence or enhancement of the military's corporate interests is easily the most important interventionist motives. Over the past decades, changes of government through coups d'états have been quite common in African politics. In fact the transfer of power through military has been much more frequently than have elections as a form of regime change. The endemic political instability and military intervention has naturally been the subject of a flood of scholarly studies and publications which generates a variety of interpretations and explanations of the cause and outcomes of African coups. See for example, Luckham (1971, 1985, 1994), Nyong'o (1986), Decalo (1989), Nordlinger (1977), Clapham (1988), Keller (1988), O, Kane (1993).

<sup>122</sup> The land reform eliminated land ownership that allowed for the sale, exchange and inheritance of land instead proclaimed a system of user-rights (usufruct rights). Moreover, it restricted landholdings to less than ten hectares and vested ultimate ownership of land in the government.

“...more than a land reform, the measure should be called a land revolution....It simply opened the floodgates of rural discontent, allowing the peasants to take over the land and encouraging them to organize into “peasant associations.”<sup>123</sup>

In the southern part, where the Revolution was enthusiastically received, the peasants spontaneously took land by throwing the landlords (*Balabates*) from the land. And most landlords had fled the south (Tiruneh 1993, Keller 1988).

The land reform was also followed by a similar proclamation on urban land and on housing. In the proclamation of July 1, 1975 provision was made for organising urban residents into “Co-operative Societies of Urban Dwellers” (*Kebele*). Markakis (1987:241) comments that the land and housing reforms “shattered the material base of the ancient regime, eliminating the possibility of restoration, and bourgeois succession by preventing capital accumulation.”

For an agrarian country like Ethiopia, land reform has major economic, social and political significance. The revolution first of all brought down the monarchy and undermined the power of the ruling elite by means of land reform, thus doing away with traditional exploitative structures of government and the class system (Rahmato 1992, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988). However, control of economic activities did not improve the Ethiopian economy in general and agricultural productivity in particular. For example, state collectivisation and the general control of prices, conflicted with the farmers’ self-interests.<sup>124</sup> “Like the Russian peasants who claimed they were for the Bolsheviks who allocated them land, but against the Communists who forced them to collectivise, so too in Ethiopia” (Chege 1979:374). Moreover, while the original intention of the PAs was to promote the well being of the peasants, instead the associations turned out to be structures of control. As the measures of control increased, the initial fervour of the land reform was gradually replaced by disillusionment.<sup>125</sup> Put

<sup>123</sup> The PAs were set up by students from the University and high schools who were sent out under the “*Zemecha program*” or “Development through Cooperation campaign” for two years (Tiruneh 1993)

<sup>124</sup> The major form of surplus extraction was the compulsory sale of grain by farmers at substantially less than open market prices. This was done through the monopoly of the government owned Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) that set the price for agricultural commodities and then forced farmers to sell pre-determined amounts of cereals to it at official prices. The AMS, in turn, sold the grain in urban areas at below market prices through *kebeles*. A major consequence of this policy was that it reduced farm gate prices, thereby lessening farmers’ incentives for increasing productivity (see Mengisteab 1990, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988).

<sup>125</sup> Kidane Mengisteab (1990) also identified the failure of the Derg’s policy to free the peasant from exploitation and poverty. He found contradictions in the Derg’s policy and argued, that while it is true that landlord exploitation ended, the Derg tried to extract surpluses before the economic conditions of the peasants had shown any improvement. The result was a general decline in agricultural output.

differently, association leaders, having the critical role of intermediaries between state and society became increasingly self-centered and authoritarian, resembling the former landlords (Lefort 1983:249, Keller 1988).

### **Resettlement and Villagisation programmes**

Resettlement and Villagisation programmes were another policy of the Derg that in theoretical terms had its own logic, but in practice turned out to be another disaster (Lirenso 1990:136, Clapham 1988, Cohen & Isaksson 1987, Pankhurst 1992). Officially the resettlement programme was declared an effort to relocate peasants from areas in the north suffering from recurrent drought and famine caused by population pressure and ecological imbalance and to resettle them in the apparently fertile regions in the south and west (Lirenso 1990, Pausewang et al. 1990).

The refusal of many peasants to resettle, however, did not alter the eagerness of the government to enforce the programme. In its final phase, resettlement became a human rights disaster. By the end of 1986 an estimated 700,000 out of an anticipated 1.5 million were resettled. International donors, political opponents, NGOs and many others strongly criticised these programmes as undemocratic and counter productive to economic growth. As stated by Cohen and Isaksson (1987:106-07), even the Ethiopian government accepted that the resettlement programme “was hastily conceived, poorly planned and executed, and resulted in considerable hardship.” But the criticism of the opponents of the process went beyond the criticisms that the government acknowledged (ibid.:197).

This is understandable since the resettlement programme was far from being the well-meaning or effective response to hunger that the government officials claimed. It was also a part of a military security strategy to contain the movement of “armed intruders”.

According to Mengistu:

The people are like the sea and the guerrillas are like fish swimming in that sea. Without the sea there will be no fish. We have to drain the sea, or if we cannot completely drain we must bring it to a level where they will lack room to move at will, and their movements will easily be restricted (quoted in Dawit 1989:297).

Like resettlement, the villagisation policy of the military government was also disastrous.

It sought to bring scattered homesteads and households together into centralised villages in order for the government to promote the rational use of the land and to easily reach peasants in the distribution of social services such as electric light, schools, clinics, agricultural extension services and clean water. The program had similarities with the later phases of the *Ujamaa* villagisation program in Tanzania in 1970s (Keller 1985:8, Cliffe & Saul 1980). Here also, while the government publicly presented villagisation as a means to modernise rural life and reform traditional agriculture it became another avenue to maintain a close watch and control after the domestic struggle for power intensified. (Lirenso 1990:136, Clapham 1988, Cohen & Isaksson 1986, Pankhurst 1992).<sup>126</sup>

In sum, during the overthrow of the imperial regime, the Derg enjoyed the support of the peasantry. However, as discussed above, like other groups (see below) they also turned against the regime.

### **The Struggle for a post-revolutionary order (1974-1979)**

On June 28, 1974 the military officially announced the formation of the Derg (Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army) with 120 members, none above the rank of major. They elected major Mengistu Haile Mariam as chairman and major Atnafu Abate as vice Chairman, both outspoken proponents of far-reaching change. However, because of insecurity and lack of confidence, three days after assuming formal state power in September 1974, they appointed Lt. General Aman Andom, as chairman (and Mengistu first and Major Atnafu second vice-chairman) of the Derg and head of the state.

Despite his standing, Aman was almost immediately at odds with a majority of the Derg on three major issues: the size of the Derg and his role within it, the Eritrean insurgency and the fate of political prisoners. Aman claimed that the 120-member Derg was too large and too unwieldy to function efficiently as a governing body, and proposed that the Derg be reduced in size and changed in composition by including senior officers and civilian experts. He opposed the death penalty for the former government and military officials who had been arrested since the revolution began. Finally, as an Eritrean, he urged a peaceful solution to the Eritrean problem. But the majority of the Derg members

---

<sup>126</sup> In March 1990, Mengistu admitted the failure of his government to eradicate famine and the failure of agricultural production. However, like the imperial regime, Mengistu blamed its failure to eliminate famine on man-made obstacles and ecological imbalance or "natural calamity" (See Dawit 1989).

wanted to continue the earlier policy i.e. militarily crushing the liberation fronts. This chauvinist policy toward nationalities by the hardliners of the Derg (*pan-Ethiopian nationalist*) soon transformed into full civil war and to its final collapse in 1991. Aman himself was killed (along with two other Derg members who had supported him) on November 23 a week after he resigned his position. The same evening the Derg executed 59 former senior officials who were in their custody (Scholler and Brietzke 1976:17).

The process of change up until this time was by and large bloodless (seemingly confirming the motto of *Yalemenem Dem Ethiopia Tikdem*/without bloodshed Ethiopia first). That motto was however shattered on 23 November and marked the end of the peaceful phase of the revolution. Five days later, Brigadier General Tafari Banti,<sup>127</sup> became Chairman of the Derg and head of state. But he too never managed to consolidate his power before the struggle for power between him and his supporters on the one hand and the hardliners led by Mengistu on the other broke out. According to Halliday and Molyneux (1981: 114):

The central policy issue in the conflict seems to have been Teferi Benti's desire, indicated in a speech on January 30, to reach some reconciliation with the EPRP, even though the latter had by now launched an urban guerrilla campaign against the PMAC.

This power struggle ended with the elimination of Teferi and six other associates at a major shootout on February 3, 1975, at the Grand (Menelik) Place in Addis Ababa. With the death of Tafari and his supporters (mainly Oromo officers) in the fighting, most internal opposition within the Derg had been eliminated. It left Mengistu as the sole vice chairman and responsible for the armed forces. In November 1977, Atnafu Abate, Mengistu's last rival in the Derg, was eliminated, leaving Mengistu in undisputed command (ibid.:114). Hence as with many other military dictators elsewhere, Mengistu soon turned Ethiopia into a one-man dictatorship (Keller 1988, Clapham 1988). During his first year in power Mengistu prohibited the people from conspiring against "*Ethiopia Tikdem*" (Ethiopia first), to engage in any strike, hold unauthorized demonstration or assembly or engage in any activity that would disturb public peace and security. As the result of this, Mengistu quickly found himself under considerable pressure from civilian groups, particularly from the civilian left to step down and turn power over to a people's government (i.e. civilian government) (Ottaway 1978, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988).

---

<sup>127</sup> A Shoan Oromo and like Aman non-Derg member, but more popular among the military and not tainted by the problems associated with the old regime.

While the execution of former officials in the early days could have been partially motivated by the Derg's desire to appear as a revolutionary force in the face of the leftist movement that had been advocating a radical change, all its subsequent actions were clearly geared towards the elimination of all forms of opposition. Yet the biggest and worst massacres were to come from of a concerted campaign, which came to be known as the "Red Terror."

### **Opposition to the military Junta: The Struggle for civilian and democratic governance**

As mentioned above, after the Derg dethroned the monarchy in September 1974, the main demand of the civilian opposition was the establishment of a "provisional people's government" that would represent all sections of society, including the military. The civilian opposition argued for a broad-based government that could make radical social, economic and political reforms that it had been demanding for a long time. The Derg, however, rejected the idea of an alternative civilian leadership and created a state controlled by the military. Furthermore, they argued that it alone was capable of implementing revolutionary programmes, such as the socialist path to development, and preventing the break-up of the country along regional ethnic and religious lines. This policy of exclusion set the stage for civilian-military conflicts and the beginning of protracted struggle to dominate the Ethiopian state.

The civilian opposition to military government fell into three (major) political blocs. The first front of resistance to the military came from the aristocratic class or conservative bloc. This group emerged after the military executed members of the ruling class, expropriated their assets and unleashed a sustained campaign of persecution against the landed class. The second front belonged to the leftists. It consisted of students and a substantial number of intellectuals who wanted a progressive, socialist-oriented civilian government to replace the monarchy. This group considered itself the vanguard of the popular movement. It saw the army's usurpation of state power as a betrayal of the people's desire for an elected government and demanded an unconditional transfer of power to a civilian administration. The third and most influential challenge to the Derg came from nationalist movements, referred hereafter as *ethno-political movements*. This bloc consisted of regionalist (Eritreans,) and ethno-nationalist movements such as the Somali, Oromo, and Tigrean .

### *The conservative challenge to military rule*

At the time the Derg came to power, most of the aristocrats, landlords and even most of the local chiefs were arrested and most of them eventually executed. This had greatly minimised the danger of counter-revolutionary opposition to its rule. But a few of those who managed to escape organised an opposition party—the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) - in London. EDU's objective was to overthrow the military government that it characterised as “fascist” and establish a constitutional monarchy with democratic rights for the people. The EDU program envisaged a transitional administration that would repeal all Derg laws, negotiate the Eritrean problem, grant amnesty to political prisoners and Ethiopian exiles abroad and modernise the economy. The party claimed that it was a reform-oriented pan-Ethiopian party committed to liberal democracy, market-oriented economy and private land ownership. All these programs were in sharp contrast to the socialist agenda of the military government and also to the leftist opposition groups (Mulatu & Yohannes, 1988). According to Hagai Erlich (1983:73):

The EDU enjoyed the active support of Saudi Arabia and Sudan cooperated from the start with the Eritreans, although as Ethiopian nationalists their ideology prevented them from supporting separatism. They favoured a “federal system for Ethiopia” in which “the right of the Eritrean people to determine democratically their own destiny, coupled with the according of proper weight to interests of the rest of Ethiopia, “would be implemented.”

As a party, EDU advocated political and military means to overthrow the junta. Politically, it launched domestic and international campaigns to undermine the Derg by exposing its repressive rule and the abysmal human rights situation in Ethiopia. Their efforts to isolate the regime paid off when regional states, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan and North Yemen, backed EDU as a moderate alternative to the Afro-Marxist regime in Ethiopia. Arms and equipment began to flow to the EDU through the Sudan, from where guerrilla forces launched attacks on Tigray and Gondar provinces. The fighting went on throughout 1977 and 1978 and EDU controlled substantial territory in the north western part of the country (Mulatu & Yohannis 1988).

The Derg condemned the EDU as a pro-monarchist and feudal political party that was struggling to reinstate the oppressive and unjust imperial administration (also as CIA and Imperialist collaborators) (Ibid.). Moreover, EDU's close relationship with the ancient regime was used both by the Derg and the leftists to discredit it as working towards restoring the imperial regime and the oppressive system of land relations. The anti-EDU propaganda and the fact that the organisation was based outside the country



diminished its effectiveness in becoming a national front capable of mobilising the mass of the people against military rule (*ibid.*). In its effort to undertake military activities the EDU established itself in the Northern provinces of Tigray, Gondar, and Gojjam where peasant support to the Derg was less. But here too they came into conflict not only with the Derg but also with the emerging Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF). As Young (1997:114) notes:

The much smaller and poorly equipped TPLF, with its programme of nationalism, popular government, and land redistribution, and its involvement of the peasant in implementing these reforms, contrasted favourably with the noble-led rebels (i.e. EDU) and the "Black Bolsheviks" of the EPRP.

Although the EDU had both better resource and external backing the organisation lapsed into obscurity, largely due to internal factional struggles and the TPLF driving them out of Tigray. The remainder escaped into Gondar and Sudan, where they remained until the total collapse of the military regime. (*ibid.*:40). After 1991, despite the EDU appeal for a platform of democracy, individual ownership of land and a federalist structure to cope with the "national question," the party failed to compete with ethno-nationalist parties (see, Ch.8).

### **The Leftist Challenge to military rule**

As indicated earlier, the leftist forces were the early champions of the Ethiopian revolution and democratic aspirations (Ottaway 1978, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988). Since the late 1960s they played an important role in articulating the demand for land reform and autonomy for ethnic groups. Although the leftist forces agreed with the radical military leaders on some of the most important political issues in Ethiopia at that time (the land and the national question) they actively opposed the military takeover of power. Once that happened, antagonism between the two forces transformed Ethiopia into a deadly conflict.

Chief among critics of military rule was the (EPRP) and MEISON (Keller 1988, Tiruneh 1993). While both share some socialist ideology<sup>128</sup> they took diametrically opposed positions on the national question and on the strategy for dealing with Derg. First of all, rather than challenging the vanguard role of the military, MEISON collaborated with the Derg.<sup>129</sup> Its leaders were credited with direct influence on the process of change including the official declaration of the National Democratic Revolution Program (NDRP) in April 1976. The main aims of this program were:

<sup>128</sup> The EPRP and grew out of the split in the Ethiopian Student Movement (see chapter four)

<sup>129</sup> In fact MEISON became the advisor to the military junta and its leader Haile Fida the advisor to Mengistu.

...The complete elimination of feudalism bureaucratic capitalism and imperialism from the country, to build a new people's Ethiopia on solid foundation through the concerted collaboration among anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist forces and to pave the way for transition toward socialism. To this end a People's Democratic Republic will be established in Ethiopia under proletariat leadership in close collaboration with farmers and support of the petty bourgeois, anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist forces, to guarantee to the Ethiopian people their right to freedom, equality, unity, peace and prosperity as well as self-determination at various levels and unrestricted human and democratic Rights (Ethiopian Herald, 21 April 1976).

MEISON therefore favoured controlled or 'guided democracy'<sup>130</sup> and was prepared to give the Derg some time to return to barracks.<sup>131</sup> The EPRP on the other hand, from the very beginning, was stuck in the position of implacable opposition to military rule. While not completely rejecting the possibility of reform of the regime, the EPRP demanded the immediate formation of a civilian government and pressed uncompromisingly for a genuine 'peoples democracy' (Keller 1988, Ottaway 1978, Markakis and Ayele 1978).

Like many African leaders (Bratton and van de Walle 1997), both Mengistu and MEISON challenged EPRP on the validity and propriety of a democratic form of government for Ethiopia. It contended that the mass of the people were illiterate and would not be represented in such a government. Such a democracy would be only another form of minority rule. EPRP responded however, that the progressive forces were far broader and more representative than the military since they had led the popular movement.<sup>132</sup> Moreover the Derg held that Ethiopia's main problems were economic and not political and therefore a multiparty system was a luxury Ethiopia could ill-afford. The EPRP rejected the distinction between politics and economics, arguing that unless the right to organise (which is the instrument for defending

---

<sup>130</sup> This form of democracy regards society as a whole with common goals and interests. Individual interests and rights are protected as long as they conform to that of the national interest as perceived by the elected rulers. In these democracies, the attainment of the *general will* (as espoused by Rousseau) is paramount and it is the sole duty of the state to see to its achievement. Political leaders are elected as in any democracy, but since they decide what the common interests of the people, are they sooner than later use whatever means possible to force their wishes on the majority. An elite ruling class is created which uses fair and unfair means to perpetuate itself in power (cf. Ottaway 1978)

<sup>131</sup> MEISON's leadership believed that the Derg was internally divided and that the radical core within it could be guided to push through the revolutionary process came up with what was called the strategy of "critical support." They believed that the Derg took measures that they believed to favour the interests of the peasants and working people as in the 1975 land reforms and nationalisation of private property.

<sup>132</sup> For instance, Lenin (1971:290-91), in the *State and Revolution*, called for the establishment of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" that would smash the repressive apparatus of the old state and allow for the participation of the workers in the affairs of the state. Such a state exercises its dictatorial power to suppress the reactionary forces while it extends proletarian democracy to the working class and other oppressed classes. But the state replaced the imperial regime in Ethiopia was not such a proletarian state, albeit it claimed the working class ideology. The fact that it denied democracy to the masses while it preached revolution and socialism generated considerable opposition to its rule from radical groups.

economic interests) is given to the people, the economic problems of the masses cannot be resolved (Ottaway 1978).

The ‘national question’ was another point of contention. In line with Lenin and Stalin both groups recognised the right of nationalities to self-determination (*including secession*) (see chapter three). But, while EPRP agitated for the immediate exercise of these rights, particularly with regard to Eritrea, MEISON and the Derg rejected it. When the Derg called for the alliance of all progressive forces and launched the “National Democratic Revolution” that would pave the way for the establishment of ‘scientific socialism’ and the ‘people’s democratic republic’ the EPRP rejected this. For example, in the November 1975 issue of *Democracia*, the EPRP stated that “feudal imperialist and fascist forces are one and the same; any tactical alliance with these forces would absolutely be unacceptable, since such temporary alliance seriously impedes the pace of the revolution” (*Democracia* no.15, 1975).

The verbal battle between MEISON and the EPRP, which had raged during most of 1976, escalated in late 1976 into open warfare. A new era of terror and counter-terror followed. In September of 1976, there was an attempt to kill Mengistu and gun down members of the Derg and its allies. Following that Mengistu lost no time in declaring war against EPRP—the “Red Terror.” What followed were indiscriminate killings, mainly of youngsters suspected of being EPRP supporters (Keller 1991, Halliday & Molyneux 1981). Bereket Habte Selassie described the result of the Red Terror as follows:

This sort of terror can only be seen as a morbid expression of the corruption of power, as the following examples of its excesses should amply demonstrate. For the Derg, killing “anarchists” was not enough; their bodies had to be desecrated and left lying in the streets with placards saying “Anarchist” or “Enemy of the people” stuck on them. Relatives were forbidden to take the bodies for customary burial, and any display of grief was forbidden on pain of arrest and possible execution. Young children of the people arrested or killed were left without care, and their neighbours, who would customarily have taken them temporarily, were forbidden to do so. The fate of children was not even openly discussed—people whispered about it in the night (Bereket 1980:42).

Having crushed the EPRP, Mengistu turned in the second phase of Terror to MEISON and those members of the Kebeles whose loyalty he suspected. Furthermore, in response to the political vacuum that would be left as a result of the purging of MEISON, in 1978 the Derg promoted the union of several existing Marxist-Leninist organisations (whose Amharic acronym was EMALDESH). The new organisations’ duty was to support government policies through various political activities (Keller

1988). The creation of EMALEDEH symbolised the victory of Mengistu and a final consolidation of power after overcoming both internal and external forces. By 1978 all civilian opposition had been destroyed or forced underground. The EPRP had been driven out of the cities and into the mountains of the central highlands, where it tried unsuccessfully to wage guerrilla war. Moreover, as Tiruneh (1993:214) writes "to make worse, EPRP's most important base which was situated in Tigray (Assimba) was attacked and destroyed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front in May 1978."

Growing human rights violations prompted the US, Ethiopia's superpower patron, to counsel moderation. However, the Derg continued to use extreme measures against its real and perceived opponents to ensure its survival. As Edmond Keller cogently observed:

From the Derg's perspective, what was at stake in the political crisis was its very survival. It felt it could not compromise with either those who could remove it from the vanguard role in the revolution or those who would balkanize the state (Keller 1988:200).

When he assumed office in early 1977, President Carter curtailed arms sales to Ethiopia because of its human rights abuses. In response, Mengistu severely curtailed relations with the US, ordering all military personnel and most embassy staff to leave the country. Turning away from "American Imperialism," Mengistu sought aid and arms from the Soviet Union. With Soviet support the Derg then intensified its struggle against nationalist movements.

## **Ethnonationalist Challenge: Conflict and the Collapse of the Derg**

### **Eritrean nationalism and the Emergence of the Eritrean Liberation Front**

One of the first challenges to the "national question" the military regime faced was the Eritrean question that the regime inherited from Haile Selassie. The Eritrean war of liberation lasted 30 years (1961-1991) and was one of the longest civil wars in Africa. After defeating the Derg, in 1991, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) declared a provisional government in Eritrea. Two years later, following a referendum in which some 98% of the Eritrean population voted for independence, the independent State of Eritrea was declared. Eritrea's independence is a striking accomplishment given the rarity of successful secession (cf. Iyob 1995, Connell 1993, Cliffe and Davidson 1988). Prior to Eritrea's victory, only Singapore (1965) and Bangladesh (1971) had

successfully broken away from already established states in the Cold War era despite dozens of secessionist wars since 1945 (Mayall & Simpson 1992, see also Ch. 3).

Any investigation of Eritrean secession must be viewed within the context of the colonial borders that provided a justification for Eritrean secession (Iyob 1995, Selassie, 1980, Cliffe and Davidson 1988). Hence the Eritrean case is different from most nationalist struggles in Ethiopia. Moreover, it is important to note that the Eritrean war of liberation was regional rather than ethnic, a direct result of the colonial experience. The territory experienced a separate administration during the colonial period. As Mayall and Simpson (1992) state, this last factor plays an important role in precipitating secession in the developing world. They argue that separate colonial administrations “reinforced an existing sense of separateness amongst ethnic groups that were subsequently forced to inhabit the same political space, but never reconciled to it” (ibid.: 11). As discussed in chapter three, in terms of actual recognition by the international community, the only people or nations that have been allowed to exercise self-determination are those that inhabit former colonial territories.

Eritrean separatism had its roots in World War II, when Eritrea was temporarily entrusted to British military rule—following Italy’s surrender—until its fate could be decided by the United Nations General Assembly. Italy’s fifty years rule not only fixed an external boundary, but also served to initiate the dismantling of internal boundaries separating the various Eritrean populations. It also produced far-reaching economic changes. A small wage-earning class emerged, reliant on Italian manufacturing construction and agricultural projects. A tiny elite of educated functionaries as well as an expanded commercial class also appeared (Leonard 1988:78-81). Concomitant with these developments, Eritrea became increasingly urbanised. Thus Britain’s eleven-year administration of Eritrea “created the framework for the political expression of Eritrean nationalism” (Pool 1983:180).

In 1948 the Allied powers sent a commission of investigation to determine Eritrea’s political future. Reaching no consensus, the Allies referred the matter to the United Nations, who in early 1950 sent a commission to Eritrea.<sup>133</sup> On December 2, the UN

---

<sup>133</sup> The commission returned with two separate reports complete with no less than three separate plans for Eritrea’s future. The majority group offered two separate proposals for Eritrea’s future. Burma and South Africa advocated a federal arrangement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, while Norway recommended

General Assembly adopted a resolution whereby Eritrea would “constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown.”<sup>134</sup> This was of course in contrast to other Italian colonial possessions (Libya and Somaliland), which became independent.

Yet, the conditions of the federation represented a compromise between absorption and independence, and created fertile ground for the spread of a separate Eritrean identity. The Eritrean government maintained control over domestic affairs and the federal government controlled defence, foreign affairs, currency and finance, trade, and communications. An Imperial Council comprising equal numbers of Eritrean and Ethiopian members was to be established. Most importantly, the federal resolution directed that a constitution based on the principles of democratic government be drawn up.

The Eritrean Constitution provided for a unicameral legislature that elected a chief executive; established independent judiciary complete with a Supreme Court and an Eritrean Code of Justice; permitted political parties, trade unions, and a free press. Eritrea had its own flag and its official languages were Tigrinya and Arabic. A legislature was duly elected in March 1952. However, the absolutist and divine right of Haile Selassie was, in this democratic system, envisioned in the new Eritrean Constitution and the UN Commissioner to Eritrea, Eduardo Matienzo, suggested that Ethiopia revise its 1931 Constitution to bring it more in line with that of Eritrea (Iyob 1995, Connell, 1993, Selassie 1980). Yet as discussed in chapter four the 1955-revised Constitution did not provide for political parties, nor did it anywhere mention the federation with Eritrea or federal provisions. Eritrea’s open political sphere and years of intense political activism made it a poor, and from the perspective of the Ethiopian government, a dangerous match. A truly autonomous Eritrea could not be tolerated because it would undermine imperial control in other parts of Ethiopia. Not only were the two components of the federation incompatible, but also the federal arrangement itself was so incomplete as to be virtually unworkable. The biggest omission was the lack of a truly federal government (Keller 1988, see also, Ch. 3).

---

complete and immediate union. The minority group recommended that the UN directly administer the territory as a trusteeship for not more than ten years, after which Eritrea would gain its independence (Selassie 1980, Iyob 1995).

<sup>134</sup> Resolution 390 A, General Assembly: 7th Session, Supplement no. 15 (A/2188), pp. 74-75

The differences between Eritrea and Ethiopia extended to their respective views on the federal relationship. Most Eritreans (mainly Christians) seemed willing to give the federation a chance, but they had expectations of running their own affairs. Haile Selassie on the other hand intended from the very beginning to absorb Eritrea. During the federal arrangement the Ethiopian government first harassed the independent parties (and forced some of them into exile) and then turned to a unionist solution (Iyob 1995, Connell, 1993, Selassie 1980).

Tedla Bairu, the former head of the Unionist party and the president of Eritrea, resigned in mid-1955 because Andargatchew (the emperor's representative) continually interfered in Eritrean politics. New elections were called in 1956, which were contested without political parties (political parties had been banned in August 1955), and had the effect of packing the National Assembly with members willing to kowtow to Addis Ababa. The Assembly approved a series of measures aimed at stripping Eritrea of its distinctiveness: Amharic replaced Tigrinya and Arabic as Eritrea's official language; the Ethiopian flag replaced the Eritrean flag; the Ethiopian code of justice replaced the Eritrean code; and the Eritrean government was renamed the Ethiopian Administration. Finally, the Assembly voted on November 14, 1962 to abrogate the federation, and Eritrea became Ethiopia's fourteenth province (Iyob 1995, Selassie 1980, Gilkes 1975, Cliffe and Davidson 1988).

The Muslim community, which had overwhelmingly supported independence and had approached the federation wary of Ethiopian intentions, had its fears confirmed by the discriminatory practices of the Imperial government and its pervasive bias towards Christianity (Gilkes 1975:196). The small Christian intelligentsia and working class also mobilised early, alienated from Ethiopia by the Imperial government's dismantling of the federation, the ban on Tigrinya and the suppression of the trade union movement (Markakis 1988:54). The experience of federation also led sizeable numbers of Christians to identify Ethiopia with "oppressive absolutism" (Erlich 1994:10). Even among one-time unionists, a "considerable majority" no longer favoured close ties with Ethiopia (Gilkes 1975:195).

### **The demise of Ethio-Eritrean federalism & the emergence of the Liberation Front**

As Eritrea slowly disintegrated as an autonomous entity, armed struggle broke out in 1961 with the formation of the Muslim-dominated Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF)

(Markakis 1987, Selassie 1980, Iyob 1995). The ELF displayed a strong sectarian bias from its inception, blaming the Christians/unionists for delivering Eritrea into Ethiopia's hands. It portrayed itself as a pan-Arab, pan-Islamic organisation fighting to free Eritrea's Muslims from Christian domination and persecution. This partially reflected its Muslim make-up, but it also stemmed from the ELF's need for external military and financial assistance. The Arab world was a natural choice for this role.<sup>135</sup> Thus, the weaponry and training supplied by the Arab states helped transform the ELF military effort from low level '*shifita*' (bandit) activities into a serious threat to Ethiopia's control of the lowland areas. As the Eritrean resistance gained strength, the imperial government reacted with increasing force.

By the time of Haile Selassie's overthrow in 1974, there can be little doubt that an Eritrean national consciousness had emerged, albeit a fractured one. All segments of the population supported independence, including the highland Christian population. But the flood of radicalised Christian youth into the ELF exposed sharp divisions not only over how to achieve liberation, but how to define the identity of the new Eritrean political community. As mentioned above, the ELF defined itself in Muslim terms and looked to the Arab states of the Middle East for support; identifications that excluded Christians. It adopted a zonal military structure, reflecting ethnic and territorial divisions. In 1965 the ELF created a Christian zone to accommodate the large numbers of Christians joining the nationalist movement. However, the zonal structure encouraged factionalism, impeded cooperation between zones, and greatly exacerbated sectarian tensions (Markakis 1987). Several groups broke away, notably Muslim fighters from the Red Sea district and a largely Christian group led by Issaias Afwerki, that would eventually coalesce to become the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The EPLF espoused a *secular nationalism* and emphasised *Eritrean identity* over ethnic and religious identity. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the two dominant Eritrean liberation forces sporadically fought each other as well as the Ethiopian government forces. By the mid-1980s, the EPLF had vanquished the ELF and had become the only significant armed resistance movement on Eritrean soil (Connell 1997:205).

---

<sup>135</sup> The ELF could expect little support from the newly independent African states; Haile Selassie enjoyed enormous prestige in Africa and the OAU headquarters was in Addis Ababa. But the ELF could easily appeal to the radical pan-Arab, non-Aligned convictions of Syria, Libya, South Yemen and Iraq, by portraying itself as an Arab-Muslim revolutionary movement confronting a conservative Christian regime allied with the U.S. and Israel.



## **The Derg and the Eritrean Question**

With the collapse of Haile Selassie's regime, the Eritrean liberation movements faced a new adversary, the Derg. When the Derg took power, the two Eritrean fronts were on the outskirts of Asmara and controlled large sections of the Eritrean countryside. A lull in the fighting occurred as the Eritreans waited to discover the new leadership's intentions. General Aman made two trips to Eritrea where he told the population that independence was no longer necessary now that the old, corrupt imperial system had been swept away, and promised local government reform (Selassie 1980, Iyob 1995, Markakis 1987). Although his message made few converts in Eritrea, his hard-line/centrist colleagues led by Mengistu Haile Mariam found it to be conciliatory and as discussed above he himself was eliminated by the hardliners. The hardliners' position differed very little from that of the former imperial government. Both characterised the Eritrean movements as the tools of outside powers and therefore refused to consider a non-military solution. Those who showed willingness to compromise were dealt with harshly.

The war for Eritrean independence exacted a heavy toll on the Eritrean (as well as the Ethiopian) population. The Mengistu regime had one of the most abysmal human rights records in the world and its actions in Eritrea contributed heavily to that record. The regime engaged in widespread arbitrary arrest and detention of anyone suspected of sympathising with the liberation fronts and execution without trial and torture, especially of captured fighters (US state department 1984:118; 1987:103). The Second Division continued its scorched earth tactics in the Eritrean countryside. Devastation was particularly widespread during the failed 1982 Red Star offensives (Connell 1997). Saturation bombing campaigns sometimes including the use of napalm and cluster bombs, 'not only caused direct psychological damage to people, animals and material infrastructure, but damaged the very social, economic and even psychological fabric of society' (ibid.).

Attacks on civilians became especially severe following the EPLF's taking of Afabet in 1988, which marked the beginning of the end of the Ethiopian military effort. The air force mercilessly bombed many towns under EPLF control (using cluster and phosphorous bombs), often also targeting residential areas where thousands of civilian were killed (ibid.). Mengistu's regime also exploited the famine that affected Ethiopia in

the 1980s to pressure the Eritrean population, a policy of “surrender or starve.” Relief became as an integral part of the [government’s] “pacification program”(Dawit 1989:189).

To sum up, the shared experiences of war and famine combined with the social and political policies of the EPLF moulded Eritrea’s diverse groups into a single political community. Repeated Ethiopian offensives against the EPLF’s base never managed to dislodge the rebel force, though the Ethiopian army came close. The EPLF’s military powers, borne from years of battle experience, eventually began to turn the tide of the war in the late 1980s, and the weakened Ethiopian state was drained by the constant war and the withdrawal of Soviet support. While most of Eritrea and much of the rest of Ethiopia was in rebel hands by the end of the 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Union and a final military campaign by the EPLF and EPRDF forces toppled the Mengistu regime. EPLF tanks captured from Ethiopian forces joined columns of EPRDF troops in Addis Ababa. The new Ethiopian government took power, a Transitional Government of Eritrea was announced and the EPLF proclaimed plans for conducting a referendum on independence. As mentioned above in 1993, the Eritreans overwhelmingly voted for independence and Eritrea was [re]born as an independent and internationally recognised state on April 27.

The good relationship between the new TPLF-led government in Ethiopia and the government of Eritrea continued until Eritrean tanks rolled across the border into Ethiopia, thus unleashing the beginning of a costly war for over two years (1998-2000). On the surface it seemed to be a border dispute, but as will be discussed in chapter eight, it had much more complex causes. Moreover, even though the war is now over, both regimes try to undermine each other’s authority by supporting opposition groups.

## **Somali Nationalism and the Challenge to the Ethiopian state**

Nowhere has African adjustment to the postcolonial period entailed more destructive consequences than in the Horn. The conflict over Ethiopian claims to the Somali-inhabited Ogaden, an extensive inland area between the Ethiopian mountains and the Somali rangelands, is rooted in the specific conditions of a region where an African empire and African nation pursue irreconcilable objectives. Ethiopian rulers vow to maintain the territorial integrity of their empire-state and repudiate the notion that Somali-speaking people, regardless of their current jurisdiction, should be allowed the right of self-determination. Somalis insist that empirical criteria, not the judicial ones preferred by Ethiopia, objectively establish the socio-economic and cultural orientation of the Ogaden Somalis that forms the basis for their nationalists identification with Somalia (Charles Gesheker 1985:1).

The second group which came to challenge both Haile Selassie and the military regimes was the Ogadeni/Somali nationalist movement.<sup>136</sup> As we saw in chapter four the Somali people were brought forcefully under Ethiopian rule between 1887 and 1895. It was also during this period that European colonial powers (France, Britain, and Italy) divided Somaliland among themselves. Consequently, a section of Somali people was forced to reside in the Ethiopian region, in the northern frontier district of Kenya, and in Djibouti. More strikingly, this arbitrary designation of international boundaries had resulted in the haphazard partition of clan families and grazing lands across the new borders (Markakis 1987, Lewis 1989, 1993).

A turning point of colonial redefinition of the Somalilands was the post-Second World War period. The British invaded northern Somalia in March 1941. They embarked upon a lightning campaign, which retook the whole region from Italy and restored Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne in Ethiopia. The British then placed the former Somaliland colonies and the territory of the Ogaden, Haud and Reserved Areas under a military administration that lasted until 1948. In 1948 Britain returned part of the Ogaden to Ethiopia under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union. The other parts were transferred in 1954 and 1956. Britain's rearrangement of the borders with Ethiopia, which included the secession of Ogaden to Ethiopia, gave birth to the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Although they lacked a centralised, hierarchically organised political structure, the unifying factors of a common language and ethnic origins, Islam, egalitarian legal and political institutions to resolve disputes, and nomadic husbandry as their dominant pattern of existence distinguished the Somali way of life and ethos from that the feudal Christian state of the Ethiopian highlands (Markakis 1987, Gilkes 1979 Lewis 1989; Samatar 1987, Laitin 1979). Before the closure of the border between Ethiopia and Somalia, the nomads moved freely back and forth as seasons dictated. Such a free movement across the political boundary, either in search of better pasture or a market for their livestock, which were exported through the southern ports of Mogadishu, Kismayu and Barbara in Somalia, forged a close economic link between the Ogaden nomads and those in Somalia. This economic linkage reinforced the two people's ethnic

---

<sup>136</sup> As will be discussed later in chapter seven, the Ogaden nationalist like the Oromo nationalist movement continued to challenge the Ethiopian state under the EPRDF leadership.

and cultural ties. In an interview Captain Ghebre Hiwet summed up these ties in this way:

The day-to-day lives of the Ogaden Somalis are so attached to Somalia that even if they get primary education in Ethiopia they then go for higher education to Somalia and get jobs there. Some even hold very high government posts. They observe rules and regulations made for the Somali public. They normally cross the border when they need legal help to settle disputes—or else mediators are sent from Somalia. They do not believe themselves Ethiopians, in fact the hatred they have for the Amhara is monumental. During the many operations that Ethiopia conducted to suppress popular revolts in the Ogaden, there was such inhuman treatment of the population that children grow up with a deep imbedded hatred of the Amhara.<sup>137</sup>

The closure of the Ethiopia border disrupted the free movement of the nomads, which led to frustration and anger with the Ethiopian ruling class and which expressed itself in Somali nationalism. The imperial regime had contributed in other ways to the rise of nationalism in the region. It made no serious efforts to develop the area, except for a few schools and hospitals. It offered only agricultural schemes for the resettlement of the Ethiopian army (Markakis 1987). And yet the regime forced the nomads to pay livestock taxes.<sup>138</sup>

With the advent of the independent state of Somalia in 1960, the imperial regime expanded its military garrisons in the Ogaden. The building of an air base, roads and wells had disruptive effects on the nomadic way of life of the people. Commercial farming, which was begun around the Wabi Shebele River also severely restrained the nomads' grazing land and access to water. Moreover, as discussed below, the Ogaden/Somali example makes it clear that conflict constellations can be additionally influenced by ethno-political links and constellations within and between the surrounding states. In this connection, a significant role is played by the Somali state, which sees itself as protector-power of the Somali nation.

### **The Somali nation and Greater Somalia**

“Somalia is a truncated nation with a single national language, a common ancestry and a clear cultural and even physical differentiation from its neighbours—the only such case in all Africa” (Zartman 1995:81). In addition to these characteristics, all Somalis are

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Richard Greenfield “The Fate of Harar and the Ogaden,” *West Africa* (December 1977), p. 247. A longer excerpt from this interview is found in Greenfield Richard (1983:106-107).

<sup>138</sup> There is nothing new in taxation of society and the extraction of the tax revenues has been the central process of state-building process in Europe for example. But I argue here that what makes a clear difference is the absence of service delivery in the Ethiopian case. This of course led time and again to resistance.

adherents to Islam. Most experts on Somalia at least until very recently consider the Somalis to be a nation, perhaps the only genuine nation in Africa. Somalis consider themselves to be ancestors of a single individual, despite the various clan divisions. Because the Somali nation is larger than the actual state of Somalia, an important concern for Somalia, even before independence, has been the condition and future of Somalis residing in the neighbouring territories. The Somali Constitution and Somali national symbols reflect the general desire for a greater Somalia, which would include those territories in Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya inhabited by Somalis. A section of the Constitution urges Somali politicians to support the efforts to build a Greater Somalia “The Somali Republic Shall promote, by legal and peaceful means, the union of Somali territories...” (Lewis, 1988:179). The five points of the star on Somali’s flag represent each of the constituent territories of Greater Somalia.<sup>139</sup>

There are six main clan-families: the Daarood, Hawiyya, Isaaq, Dir, Digil, and the Rahanwin. The first three of these clan-families are the largest and most politically significant. The Ogaden clan (which is the Daarod clan family), mostly located in the Ethiopian region named after them, has played a very important role in Somalia’s politics, domestic and foreign. As it is the clan with the largest Somali population outside Somalia, it has a very keen interest in any policies that seek to incorporate the Ogaden region of Ethiopia into a Greater Somalia. Since the Ogaden make up a sizable part of the Daarod clan-family, any politician seeking to gain the support of the entire Daarod clan-family has had to appeal to the Ogaden (Touval 1996 116). It is important to note here that the Ogaden region (currently known as region 5, Somali regional state) consisted of approximately 3.6 million people of several different clan and clan families of which the Ogadeni are the largest group. Another clan-families are the Issa,<sup>140</sup> Gadabursi, the Absame, Jidwak, Isaaq, and Dhulbahnate.

---

<sup>139</sup> Though many have argued support for “Greater Somalia “ this was one issue that united the vast majority of them [the Somalis] ... (Somerville, 1990:46). Interest in pursuing Greater Somalia varied, both over time and among the differing clans and clan families. Because of the conflict between and the particular distribution of different clan and clan families, any successful efforts towards a Greater Somalia would have critical distributive consequences for Somali politics. Especially in a democratic system where numbers count, increasing the strength of a particular clan or clan family, which would be the result of incorporating any particular part of a neighbouring territory into Somalia, would significantly alter the balance of power within the Somali politics. Therefore, despite the initial enthusiasm for a Greater Somalia, and despite the common bond of Somalis to those outside Somalia, interest in irredentism was not consistent. It is important to note here that clan affiliations have influenced the politics of Somalia in many ways. Most obviously, the politics of patronage and the distribution of resources have been dominated by clan ties.

<sup>140</sup> It is worth noting here that the Issas after the independence of Djibouti (French Somaliland) were not unanimously enthusiastic about merging with Somalia. Joining with Somalia might lead to a lowering of

## Post-Independence Somalia and Ogaden<sup>141</sup> Irredentism

Nomadic resistance to Ethiopian intrusion in their way of life dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. But this resistance had lacked organisation and leadership. Such organisation came in the 1960s with the emergence of the Somalia Republic. In 1960 the former Italian colony and, a few months later, British Somaliland became independent and formed the Somalia Democratic Republic. However, despite a strong desire for unification of all Somalis, the French, Kenyan and Ethiopian segments could not join the two larger groups and Somali nationalists' dreams of unity remained unfulfilled. Since independence in 1960 the goal of achieving a Greater Somalia was one of the issues that united the vast majority of Somalis throughout the Republic's existence. As Neuberger notes:

The best-known case of irredentist aspiration in Africa is the Somali endeavour to achieve a Greater Somalia by adding the Somali-inhabited territories of Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Kenya (the former Northern Frontier District) as well as the state of Djibouti to the Somali nation-state. This Somali case contains all the ingredients of "classical" irredentism, including ethnic fragments across the borders and organized nationalist movements struggling to achieve unification with the "mother country" (Nyberg 1991:98).

Shortly after Somalia's independence in 1960s, Somalia declared that it would not be obliged by all boundary agreement made by colonial powers. It also rejected Article III paragraph 3 of OAU's Charter that obliged member states to respect each state sovereignty and territorial integrity (Zewade 1991:181). In an attempt to achieve the goal of Greater Somalia, successive Somali leaders supported the secessionist Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and the so-called Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF) under the guise of promoting "self-determination" for ethnic Somalis, since both the UN and OAU recognised self-determination as a legitimate basis for struggle.<sup>142</sup> It is worth noting here, however, in light of the UN and OAU's warning against "Greater Somalia" project on the one hand, and nationalist sentiments of their domestic constituency on the other, the first civilian leaders followed a Janus-faced

---

living standards as the standard of living in Djibouti was significantly higher than in Somalia. More importantly, the annexation of Djibouti by Somalia would lead to a significant reduction of the Issas' political influence, as the Issas were dominated in Djibouti, but could never wield much power in Greater Somalia. Indeed, "their [the Issas] primary concern is the unification of the Issa, the unification of the rest of Somalis is of secondary interest." (Latin 1976:32). Moreover, the annexation of Djibouti would lead to conflict with other non-Somali ethnic group—the Afar.

<sup>141</sup> Ogaden is also called Western Somalia by many Somalis in order to avoid the clan connotation of the word "Ogaden" and because there are other (non-Ogaden) Somali clans which are also part of the region.

<sup>142</sup> Somali government attempted to internalise the dispute through recourse to the UNs and the OAU's anti-colonial orientation by portraying Ethiopian control over the Ogaden as "black colonialism." But Africa's newest countries, their own integrity potentially at issue over disgruntled minorities' demands for self-determination, proved collectively more sympathetic to Ethiopia's insistence on the sanctity of colonial border.

policy of publicly denying support for irredentism while covertly providing assistance to co-ethnics abroad. By 1964 the militarization of the Ogaden dispute culminated in heavy fighting between the two countries, in which Ethiopia's larger forces and superior air power quickly won the upper hand. Somalia was obliged to seek a cease-fire and to suspend its support for guerrillas, though the goal uniting with the Ogaden was not yet abandoned (Latin 1979, Tareke 2000, Lewis 1988, Markakis 1990).

The election of Igal as Prime Minister in 1967, however, heralded a profound shift in Somalia's foreign relations. Somalia repudiated the use of force as a means to revolve the nationalist question, and sought rapprochement with her neighbours. The issue of "Western Somalia" would be recast as one of "autonomy" rather than "liberation", and would remain more or less dormant until Said Barre revived it at the beginning of the 1970s (Latin & Samatar 1987, Latin 1979, Markakis 1990). Following his arrival in power as the head of a military coup d'état in 1969, General Siad Barre relied increasingly upon the support of the secret police and the military, which was dominated by the Daarood clan-family.<sup>143</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Daarood family had ethnic kin in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and consequently had a vested interest in national unification. So Somalia's leaders would tend to pursue policies of *active* irredentism in response to the preferences of the new government's narrow base of support. Consistent with this prediction, Somalia's foreign policy took on a decidedly more aggressive tone in the post-coup period. In just a few short years, Barre's generals and clan allies embarked on a military solution to the "Greater Somalia" issue. Barre worked hard to build up Somalia's military capability, and his government assumed direct control over the welfare and training of Ethiopian refugees in Somalia.

With Barre's blessing, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and the Somali-Abo Liberation Front (SALF) maintained offices in the Somali capital and from 1976 onwards co-ordinated their military activities within eastern Ethiopia (Dornboos & Salih 1991, Tareke 2000). According to Gebru Tareke (2000:639),

The Somali state had been training and organizing dissident peasants from eastern and Southern Ethiopia ever since the collapse of the 1963 revolt in Bale, which Somalia had partially inspired and sustained. In early 1975 the state reorganized the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which had led the Bale rebellion, and about six months later founded the Somali Abo Liberation Front under the leadership of some veterans from the 1960s.

<sup>143</sup> Whereas earlier Somali governments had co-opted elements of various clans to widen their power base, Siad Barre's government was known as "MOD" *Marehan*, (his own clan), *Ogaden* (his mothers clan), and *Dulbahante*, clan of his son-in-law.

By 1977 the guerrillas, joined by the regular Somali army, equipped and trained by the Soviet Union intensified their war against the Ethiopian forces in Bale and Ogaden and crossed the border in Ethiopia.

### **The Ogaden (Ethio-Somali )War**

As noted earlier, by 1977 the new military government in Ethiopia faced a greater challenge in the north as Eritrean nationalist movements intensified their war. The government then deployed Ethiopian troops from the Ogaden to Eritrea. Having observed this, the Somali National Army invaded Ethiopia in June 1977, starting the Ethio-Somali war. "One of the biggest wars between African states in contemporary times and its repercussions were felt far beyond the continent" (Tareke 2000:635). The Somali armed units and the guerrillas occupied vast tracts of the Ogaden and forced the Ethiopian army into the fortress of Jijiga, Harar and Dire Dawa for almost eight months. By August 1977, the Somalia National Army had captured all the ground inhabited by Somali-speaking people and in fact some parts of the land inhabited by the Oromos.

The Mengistu regime, desperate for help, turned to the Soviet Union because its former patron the U.S. halted military aid due to the Derg's poor human rights record (Harbeson 1988, Keller 1988). The Soviet Union turnaround immediately affected the course of the war. Starting in late November, massive Soviet military assistance began to flow into Ethiopia (Brind 1983/84, Steven 1979, Schwab 1985, Webber 1992). Moreover by the end of the year, 17,000 Cubans troops deployed in Angola had arrived to assist Ethiopia. With this external support, the Ethiopian army drove back both the Somali National Army and the guerrillas to the border. Thereafter the situation had significant international repercussions that resulted in a major realignment of power in the Horn of Africa.<sup>144</sup>

The Soviet military intervention in Ethiopia achieved its purpose: it repulsed the Somalis from Ethiopia and strengthened the Mengistu regime. On November 20, 1978,

---

<sup>144</sup> When the Soviet Union allied with Ethiopia, Washington switched to Somalia. After helping Ethiopia to win back the Ogaden while putting down the revolt in Eritrea, the Soviet believed they had earned a debt of gratitude. Mengistu became one of the Soviet's staunchest allies in Africa, providing the Soviet not only with consistent diplomatic support but with air and electronic surveillance stations in Eritrea and a naval re-supply and repair complex in Dahlak Islands. But the price of his loyalty was high. Between 1982 and 1985, alone, Ethiopia received more than a quarter of all the overseas assistance provided by the East bloc through COMECON four-times more aid than any other African countries (Szajkowski 1989:153). The Soviet spent upwards of \$10 billion in weapons and training just to keep Mengistu in power (Bartholet 1990:45).



Moscow and Addis Ababa codified their new close relationship with a 20 year-friendship pact (Brind 1983/84, Webber 1992, Keller 1988, Clapham 1988).

The defeat of the Somali army and the guerrillas was a costly affair for Barre regime both politically and economically. First it led to a massive flood of refugees from Ethiopia to Somalia. The vast exodus of refugees and the guerrillas became economically and politically a burden to the Somali government. Second, the catastrophic defeat led to unsuccessful coup attempt by the Majerteen and Isaq clan against the Barre regime. It led to the end of "Greater Somalia" or Somali nationalism. Since then the major political and social developments in Somalia have been increasingly defined in terms of clan and sub-clan, a notion Barre purported to have blurred. Likewise, Somali interests in the Ogaden reflect the priorities of individual lineage rather than an overarching "national" interest. As a result the Somali government subsequently forbade the WSLF and SALF to use its territory to launch attacks into Ethiopia. In other words, as Peter Woodward notes:

The importance of that defeat cannot be over estimated, for it was a defeat for a long standing ambition, which lay at the heart of Somalia's self-identity. Instead of achieving the addition of a third star for the Somali national flag the dream has been crushed. Instead of successful expansion, Somalia began in the wake of its failure on the path to an implosion of clan rivalry as early friction and tensions multiplied (Woodward 1996:69).

The WSLF itself, weakened by factionalism and shrivelling of support from Mogadishu, ceased to be a major player. By 1989 the WSLF had ceased to be an effective guerrilla organisation within Ethiopia. Barre's decision to restrict WSLF led to the formation of a WSLF splinter group, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Meanwhile, Ethiopia had started training and equipping the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) (Majertan clan) and later the Somali National Movement (SNM) (Isaq-clan), both of which began launching raids inside Somalia against the Barre regime. An agreement to end hostilities was signed in April 1988 between Mengistu and Barre. Despite this agreement Mengistu continued his support to the SNM and SSDF. In addition to this Barre lost the support of the two most important clans—the Ogadeni and Dulbahante - which left Barre with his own Merehan-clan as his only power base. Finally, this power base also dwindled as armed opposition grew and Somalia turned into a state of Hobbesian 'anarchy', recently labelled as collapsed states (Zartman 1995, Cliffe & Luckham 1999).

Siad Barre's fall in January, and Mengistu's in May 1991, again triggered a major shift in the Ethio-Somali conflict. First, hundreds of thousands of Ogadeni refugees in Somalia trekked across to Ethiopia, including the WSLF fighters. Second the Somali clan-fractions splintered Somalia into a handful of clan-based territories and led to state disintegration. Thus Somaliland at independence was still *de facto* state without any form of international recognition. This of course killed not only the dream of greater Somalia, but also unity among fighting factions in Somalia and also killed clan cooperation.

With the collapse of the Somali state and regime change in Ethiopia, the final stance toward irredentism was buried, at least for now. As will be discussed in the next chapter the new EPRDF government invited the Somalis into the new political process, and permitted the development of political parties. The new policy of devolution of power also led to a fusion of three former administrative territories into one, ethnically homogenous Somali regional state (region five). Here the ONLF emerged as the largest single group in regional government, followed at a distance by the WSLF, then a huddle of minor clan parties. The ONLF and WSLF (the two most important movements) suddenly changed their policy and accepted self-government within Ethiopia hoping to eventually use article 36 of the Ethiopian constitution which gives the right to self-determination (including secession) of nation, nationalities and people of Ethiopia (Nehum 1997, see Ch. 6).

### **The emergence of Oromo Nationalism**

Nationalistic, 'anti-colonial' sentiments also emerged on an expanded scale among other subordinate groups, more notably the numerically superior Oromo. The Oromo are the single largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia, constituting between 45 and 50 percent of the total population. The rise of Oromo nationalist movements provides us not only with another interesting case in our study of ethno-political movements and the collapse of Mengistu regime, but also of the continued "stateness problem" (Linz & Stepan 1996) in post-Mengistu Ethiopia. In other words, the unsolved "Oromo national question" continued to present a challenge to the new Tigrean-dominated Ethiopian state (see chapter 8).<sup>145</sup> As Patrick Gilkes observed:

---

<sup>145</sup> With their high population, great landmass, and rich natural resources, the Oromo are in a pivotal position to influence the course of events not only in Ethiopia but also in the Horn since their land borders

“The question of the Oromo is obviously relevant. There has been an upsurge of discussion on Oromo history, culture, the right to self-determination and the concept of Oromia in recent years. Some of the five main Oromo groups now speak of the need for an independent Oromo state, and with the present government’s stress on self-determination these ideas are rapidly gaining wider currency” (Gilkes, 1994:7).

In line with the Somalis, the Tigreans, and the Oromo elite tried to mobilise Oromos in the course of their struggle for autonomy or for the formation of the Oromia state. This Oromo nationalism is based on ethno-linguistic criteria (Jalata 1993, 1998). Baissa Lemmu (1998:99) argues that “most of the Oromo people shared a common republican system of government until the Shoan conquest in the late nineteenth century”, and Holcomob (1991:4) contends that the cultural and political system of “*gada*<sup>146</sup>” “organised the Oromo people in an all-encompassing democratic republic.” But, in the past, the Oromo were not organised under a single state. Mohammed Hassan’s (1990) major historical revision describes the development of a number of distinct Oromo states. Lewis (1993) also notes the variety of political forms that existed among Oromo groups prior to the Abyssinian conquest. Cultural and linguistic commonalities existed, but the Oromos have been distinguished by their pursuit of diverse economic strategies, regional differences and religious affiliations (although the Oromos practised their own indigenous religion most have adopted Islam or Christianity).

Although a numerical majority, they have remained politically subordinated. Having said that, it is important to note that according to some historians, there has been interaction between the Oromos and Abyssinians since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and that the Oromo were well established in the centre of Abyssinia before the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Zewedu 1991, Gudina 1994). For example, those who “settled in Wello not only controlled the then imperial seat at Gonder but were able to found the Yejju dynasty that dominated the whole area for almost a century before the rise of Menelik (Gudina 1994:925). Yet Oromo nationalism advocating self-determination must be seen in the context of the post-Menelik state-building process and the consequence of Abyssinian expansion or the so-called *internal colonisation* (cf. Jalata 1993, 1998). The proximate cause of nationalist struggle was intrinsically related to ethnic oppression and other grievances (see chapter four). Its roots are to be found in recent times and are politically instigated, not primordial.

---

on all the major cultural and linguistic entities of the region. It is noteworthy that both the Tigrean minority and the Amhara fear of an autonomous Oromia has lead to an uncertain future for the Ethiopian state, as we know it today, but also the fear of losing the economic fundament of the country.

<sup>146</sup> The Gada system is a participatory form of government which guided the religious, social and political and economic life of the Oromo. In addition, Gada provided the system by which Oromos administered their laws and defended their territory (Melbaa 1980).

In short, what does seem clear is that the Oromo were economically and politically subordinated and their culture was denigrated. Despite the cruel exploitation of the majority of Oromo peasants and the antagonism directed against their culture, some Oromo collaborated with the Abyssinian forces and class interests merged across ethnic lines. Some Oromo obtained high-ranking positions, especially in the military, and several members of the royal family were of partial Oromo descent. To the Oromo masses, however, both Menelik's and Haile Selassie's policies were regarded as cultural and linguistic genocide.

When the military junta took power, many Oromos welcomed the new regime and, in fact, the bulk of the peasantry benefited from the land reform. The Oromo believed that the land reform was the first step toward social justice and equal rights. In fact, the Derg regime was originally seen by some as an Oromo movement, due to the large numbers of Oromo in the military and in the leadership of the Derg itself.<sup>147</sup> However, many of the Oromo members of the Derg were weeded out,<sup>148</sup> often violently, and assessments of the land reform are mixed. For example, Markakis states that peasants in the south gained "control of the land and most of the Abyssinian landlords left the countryside," and that the reforms dissolved "the correlation of class and national divisions" (Markakis, 1987:261). However, Baxter (1983:134) contends that many of the *neftenya* landlords remained in Oromo areas despite land reform and the Derg used armed northern peasants to control Oromo areas. Similar to Markakis, Lefort (1983) sees the land reform as largely beneficial, while, Clapham (1988) regards it as successful in its aims but disastrous in its effects, as it guaranteed land to peasants but kept them impoverished.

In any case, as discussed earlier, despite the benefits that may have resulted from its initial policies, the Derg rapidly alienated itself from the general population through its violent and repressive actions and its brutal implementation of policies of collectivisation and villagisation. Its monopoly on agricultural prices was achieved

---

<sup>147</sup>While the Oromo-nationalist appealed to the peasants for ethnic solidarity, the Derg appealed to the same peasants for solidarity in their class interest, pointing to land nationalisation. The Oromo political movements provide perhaps the best examples of where ethnicity or nationalism sharply clashed with class as a result of land nationalisation.

<sup>148</sup>Then there were the usual fears about the Oromo, and some Derg members simply thought the Oromo were gaining too much power. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Terferri Benti who replaced General Aman, was in fact eliminated by hard-liner Amhara centrists, because of his moderate attitude to the civilian opposition and to the peaceful solution of the "national question".

through the state marketing boards. Resistance to these policies traversed ethnic lines, although ethnicity became one of the major modes of mobilising opposition.

### **The Mobilisation of the Oromo Nationalist movement**

Even though many scholars traced Oromo resistance to the establishment of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1973, the Oromo rebellion can be traced back to the resistance of the 1880s and 1890s during Menelik's conquest. This first stage of resistance actually ended with Menelik's victory over Oromo (Jalata 1993, 1998, Sorensen 1993). The second period lasted from about 1900 to 1964. During this period, the struggle against the Abyssinians took various forms. There were numerous and widespread peasant uprisings in various parts of Oromia.<sup>149</sup> The uprisings were widespread but generally uncoordinated.<sup>150</sup> However, this has changed with the birth of the Macha-Tulema Association (MTA) in the mid-1960s and later the formation of the Oromo Liberation Front. The creation of the MTA marked the beginning of a new era in the Oromo resistance movement (Hassan, 1998:183). According to Bulcha, this association was:

The first Oromo Organization with roots in both urban and rural areas. Mass meetings were held in many parts of the Oromo country and taboo topics such as exploitation of the Oromo peasantry and suppression of Oromo language and culture were raised and discussed....The continued expansion of the association worried the Ethiopian security, who had always doggedly followed its leaders to every mass meeting. What especially worrisome was the fact that they [the leader] addressed meetings in the language of the Oromo, which had been proscribed in public... (Bulcha 1993:10).

The MTA was organised by the newly emerged Oromo elite that tried to involve Oromo masses in the cities to promote the development of Oromo areas by raising funds from members. Within three years the organisation had three million registered members and operated from eight regional offices (Jalata 1994, Bulcha 1993, Hassan 1998). By 1966, the preoccupation of the association with the creation of Oromo identity and the issue of land distribution had become a cause of some disquiet to the imperial government (Markakis 1987:260, Jalata 1998). Its leader was Tadesse Biru a police general and an assimilated and devout Christian. During the 1960 abortive coup d'etat, as a police

<sup>149</sup> In 1928 and 1948, the Raya Oromo rebelled against Haile Selassie's government. Both uprisings were suppressed with the assistance of the British Air Force. In 1958, the Dawee, Kara Qorree and Dhumugaa rose up against the regime and hundreds were massacred.

<sup>150</sup> It is worth noting that in 1935, Oromos formed a confederation and petitioned the British government for the establishment of an independent Oromia. They also appealed to the League of Nations for membership though this was rejected. Note also that the Italian occupation of Ethiopia temporarily changed the social order, with the Italians favouring the Oromos and other non-Abyssinian ethnic groups.

commando he had taken his chance with the loyalist forces and later was rewarded with the position of deputy head of the Territorial Army. According to Habte Selassie:

Because of his past loyalty, and also because he had an Amhara name, Prime Minister Aklilu Habte Wolde took him [Tadesse Birru] for an Amhara and told him in private that in the recruitment and promotion of soldiers, care should be taken to restrict the number of Oromos (Selassie 1980:81).

However, the coup appears to have shattered his blind devotion to the imperial regime (as was true of many other assimilated Oromos) and he soon began organising an Oromo movement. According to Sealssie (1980), Tadesse was so shocked by the blatant discrimination involved in the incident that he relinquished any ‘devotion to the emperor’. It must be noted, however, that this organisation did not “support the idea of creating an Oromo state; rather it fully accepted the “territorial integrity of Ethiopia” (Hassan 1998). What the organisation opposed was the identity of an Ethiopia that excluded the Oromo and the ‘cultural and political hegemony’ of one ethnic group (ibid:205). Put differently, the organisation became a way of expressing national identity and grievances against the regime, including protesting the ban on the use of the Oromo language at public events. Moreover, they tried to bridge religious and regional differences among the Oromo by reviving the Gada system (Legese 2000) as a unifying framework and focusing on the notion that various groupings of Oromo are all ‘kin’ with a common familial past (Jalata 1998, Hassan 1998).

The organisation quickly gained wide support from the few civilian intellectual and military elites in the Oromo community, and thus gained some political power (Jalata 1998). The politicisation along ethnic lines began to cause the government much concern. In 1966, the association was banned and its leaders arrested on the grounds that they incited *ethnic antagonism*. Thus, in 1966, the explosion of a bomb in a cinema hall in Addis Ababa was attributed to Tadesse Biru and Mamo Mezimer, a young army officer (Hassan 1998). With Tadesse’s arrest, the movement fell into obscurity until the young militant Oromos organised the OLF, which surfaced only after 1974. The organisation was dedicated to the “total liberation of the entire Oromo nation from Ethiopian colonialism” (Baxter 1978:290-91; 1983:140).

In short, the rise of a new nationalism within the Oromo community based on linguistic identity ultimately resulted in the emergence of the MTA and later the OLF. The second phase of this nationalism witnessed the replacement of peaceful organisation by military revolt. Thus the demand for equality and better conditions for the Oromo was

superseded by that of self-determination, including secession (Hassan 1998:214). To achieve this goal, Oromo dissidents formed the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in January 1974.

## **The formation of the Oromo Liberation Front and the struggle for Oromia**

Again, the objective of the front was ‘national self-determination’ for the Oromo people, liberation from exploitation and oppression and the realisation of the democratic revolution by establishing a ‘People’s Democratic Republic of Oromia’ (Jalata 1993:177). The Oromo nationalists share with the Somali and Afar nationalist movements the so-called colonial thesis—that the Oromo problem is “colonial” (i.e. internal colonisation) and the only solution to this problem is armed struggle. According to one Oromo scholar and activist,

Ethiopian justification for the colonization of the Oromo and other peoples was based on mystical claims: the recreation of their medieval empire that was disintegrated by the Muslims and Oromos and the imposition of their God-given responsibility to rule and to disseminate their “Christian civilization” to the so-called pagans. The Ethiopian and their supporters never mention that they colonized the Oromos and other peoples to exploit their economic resources and labour. Even their contemporary scholars call the colonization of Oromia the ‘reunification’ of the Ethiopian Empire. Yet Oromia was not part of Ethiopia before its colonization in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and Oromos have always been historically, culturally, and linguistically different from the Ethiopians (Jalata 1998:54f).

By the time OLF came into its own in the early 1974, however, the objective conditions governing political mobilisation in Oromia had begun to change significantly. Most particularly, as was discussed previously, the twin dynamics of land nationalisation and the transformation of power that resulted in the empowerment of both Oromo peasants and elite, especially within the armed forces. Consequently, the new regime’s policies and ideological formulation (which mixed class and nationality) made OLF’s national mobilisation difficult.

Moreover, some of the Oromo elite (even nationalist) were prepared to give the new regime a chance and believed that real change was under way.<sup>151</sup> In other words, the fact that the Oromos were well represented in the military governments and that the peasantry was the major beneficiary of the land reform dampened enthusiasm for a separatist agenda. Thus “from 1974 to 1991, the Ethiopian military regime was able to

---

<sup>151</sup> This is for instance the case of Oromo elite within the civilian left and the military.

contain Oromo nationalism and isolate the OLF from the people, limiting its influence to small areas in Hararghe, Bale and Wallega” (Hassan 1998:214). Until the mid-1980s their actions were limited. Strictly speaking, compared to the Tigrean and Eritrean liberation fronts, the OLF’s challenge to the Derg was relatively small.

In addition to this, one can find at least three other factors that seriously affected the OLF’s mobilisation efforts. First, the movement was unable to build a strong united leadership, and was unable to move beyond a shallow nationalist politics towards a deeper articulation of the needs of the Oromo peasantry. In part, this was because of the high degree of class, regional and religious differentiation among the Oromo, and also the continued existence of powerful assimilated/Amharaised as well as traditional elites. This meant that the OLF remained a more pluralistic and diffuse organisation than for example, the TPLF, with many different loci of power and authority, and differing local forms of organisation. While this plural form of social organisation was democratic, it also meant that building an effective nationalist movement was almost impossible. In addition, the organisation was unable to build upon the concrete experiences of Oromo peasants to build a political programme.

Secondly, the OLF split in 1978 with the formation of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) (Markakis 1987:263). Since then the two movements each claim to represent the Oromo people. Like the Eritrean nationalist the OLF and IFLO fought both the Mengistu regime but also each other. Yet, contrary to EPLF and TPLF, the OLF never attempted to destroy other competing Oromo nationalist movements. Moreover, in the face of the formation of the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organisation (OPDO) by the TPLF from among Oromo prisoners of war in order to outmanoeuvre the OLF, the legitimacy and the right to represent the Oromo became essential. As was mentioned earlier and will be discussed in chapter seven, it was not only the Derg that used ‘divided-and-rule’ tactics but also the TPLF and the Somali government who created ‘puppet’ movements such as the Oromo People’s Democratic Organisation (OPDO) and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF). According to another Oromo scholar and activist:

The Amhara ruling elite undermined Oromo national identity and unity on the grounds that the development of Oromo nationalism would lead to the disintegration of the Ethiopian empire state. The Somali ruling elites undermined Oromo national identity on the grounds that the growth of Oromo nationalism would abort the realisation of the dream of greater Somalia (Hassan, 1998:67).



Finally, we could add two other obstacles to OLF mobilisation. The first is the lack of external support (in addition to external hostility i.e. with Somalia). The second is the geographical dispersion of the Oromo population. Halliday and Molyneux characterise Oromo political opposition to the Derg as:

“...extremely varied...partly because of the diffuse character of those speaking Orominya, spread across twelve provinces, with no cohesive social or political institutions of any kind, and with a high degree of sub-division into clans and dialects” (Halliday & Molyneux, 1981:197).

Despite these obstacles the OLF continued its guerrilla opposition in different parts of the country but did not succeed until the fall of the Derg in 1991. After the victory of EPRDF, the OLF become one of the participant political organisations of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). But as will be discussed in the next chapters, due to its dissatisfaction with the democratisation and power sharing process, the OLF decided to withdraw and since then has waged low intensive war against the Tigrean-dominated Ethiopian state. To the OLF, the new regime under Tigrean leadership is nothing but a continuation of “Abyssinian hegemony” (Leta 1999, See Ch.7 & 8).

### **Tigrean Nationalism & the Emergence of the Tigrean People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)**

Among the different nationalist movements, the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) was next to Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) in its growth and military achievements against the central government. As indicated in chapter three, Tigray is ethnically homogenous—a large majority of its people are Christian Tigringna speakers. Unlike the Eritrean struggle, which was based on the political boundaries of colonialism, the Tigrean rebellion against the Ethiopian state was a classic ethnically based movement. While Tigray has been distant from the modern centre of state power in the south for quite some time, Tigreans still consider themselves a culturally integrate part of the Abyssinian tradition, based on their “...strong sense of history and their perception of themselves as coequals with the Amhara (and on the scene well before them) in leading the Ethiopian empire” (Henze 1985:73). The last Ethiopian emperor of Tigrean dissent was Yohannes IV (1872-1889) and modern-day Tigrean nationalists certainly held on to Yohannes as a symbol of past Tigrean predominance in Ethiopia. Upon the death of Yohannes political power shifted geographically for the last time until 1999. Under both Amhara emperors Menelik and Haile Selassie, Tigrean nobles continued to exercise a degree of local power in Tigray (Young 1997).

Yet, in the period between the end of World War II and the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, Tigray experienced a centralising and pro-Amhara programme similar to that imposed on other regions.<sup>152</sup> Haile Selassie's imposition of money taxes on Tigrean peasants who had previously been subsistence farmers lowered internal barriers (increasing market interactions, for instance) and created peasant grievance against the state. At the same time a growing middle class developed its own resentments against the imperial regime.

The central state's efforts to replace personal means of control with bureaucratic institutions spurred dissensions because it gave the petit-bourgeois functionaries of those institutions a critical role in the development and security of the state, but at the same time it denied them a share in power (Young 1997:54).

So, in the Second Woyene (revolt) the intelligentsia, together with peasants, formed critical components of Tigrean resistance. While peasants complained over taxation, maladministration etc, the Tigrean intelligentsia has blamed the Amhara-dominated state for directing capital investment only to the central regions of Ethiopia, neglecting Tigray, and for marginalising and subordinating the Tigrean intelligentsia under the Amharas (ibid.)

### **The Origins and Development of the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)**

At the time of the 1974 revolution many Tigreans (leftists) welcomed the Ethiopian revolution, but grew quickly disillusioned; first when they were not invited to play any major role (compared to Amhara and Oromo elite) in the new government, and later when independent student groups became the target of mass violence carried out by the Derg.<sup>153</sup> Thus opposition to the Derg polarised around the national question. As discussed earlier, the Derg and even EPRP adhered strictly to the Marxist notion that class conflict superseded ethnic divisions and that the latter would become much less important once a truly egalitarian, class-based revolution took place. However, according to Young (1997:54):

Increasingly Tigrigna-speaking students embraced the view that in a situation where a Shoan Amhara feudal class dominated Ethiopia, the best approach would be to engage in a national liberation struggle. They maintained that the resolution of these contradictions was a prerequisite to class emancipation and thus each oppressed nationality should fight for its own national liberation.

---

<sup>152</sup> He moved quickly to appoint a new provincial administration and established troops in the province under central government command. Traditional forms of tribute were abolished and a new tax system was introduced. Few peasants had pay taxes during the Italian occupation, when much of the province had been out of the control of any effective administration.

<sup>153</sup> The Derg had intensified Tigrean hostilities, arresting indiscriminately, suspecting them being of sympathetic to the Eritrean separatists. This heavy handed government reaction according to Christopher Clapham helped to alienate young educated Tigreans, and to drive people in the countryside. See Clapham (1988.).

In the 1970s long-simmering enmity toward the central state was well established in Tigray (Abay 1998; Young 1997). Deep and sustained poverty in Tigray was blamed on the peripheralising policies of the Amhara dominated centre. Cultural suppression through Amharisation and other policies were also strongly felt, especially among Tigrean elites (e.g. university students and teachers). The peasantry also reacted strongly to the land reform policies implemented by the new government. All of these factors led to the beginning of national mobilisation and armed struggle. Because of Tigray's relative homogeneity, the TPLF cultivated ethnic nationalism fairly easily (Abay 1998:118).

In 1975 a handful of students and young professionals went into the countryside with some basic weapons and formed the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Nevertheless, TPLF was not the only organisation that claimed to fight for Tigrean nationalism and had to compete with other organisations. One such organisation was the *Teranafit*<sup>154</sup> led by Ras Mengesha—the last Tigrean noble ruler under Haile Selassie—that advocated Tigrean nationalism. Also competing for the allegiance of Tigreans against the Derg were the EDU and EPRP<sup>155</sup>. Nevertheless, the TPLF, aided by EPLF, soon became the dominant front in Tigray almost eliminating the three organisations (Abay 1998, Young 1997).<sup>156</sup> It is worth mentioning here that after victory over the above-mentioned organisations, TPLF have had to struggle with another movement—the Tigray Liberation Front (TLF). It was said that this movement was created by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), and came on the scene earlier than the TPLF (Markakis 1987:254, Young 1997:112-113). These two rival fronts had some ideological differences and on issues pertaining to political strategy and tactics. As Young notes:

...Little is known about this small and short-lived organization except that it held that Tigray was a colony of Ethiopia and hence the focus of the movement's struggle was anti-colonialism and independence (Young 1997:112).

Put differently, the TLF defined the Tigray problem as a colonial one and also maintained that Tigray never belonged to Ethiopia. TPLF, on the other hand, did not

<sup>154</sup> According to Young Teranafit was the first significant organisation in the field that brought together infamous local shifta leaders and members of the Tigrean nobility. Young (1997: 100-105, 112-116)

<sup>155</sup> Also they set up operations in Tigray because of the protection the province's distance and isolation from the center offered the group.

<sup>156</sup> It succeeded in large part because of its greater ability to attract peasant followers relative to the other three groups. Tranafit affiliation with bandits and its reputation for lawlessness alienated many peasants, as did the presence of so many non-Tigrean soldiers in the EPRP and EDU.

consider Tigray as a colony, nor was independence preferred as the immediate goal. It claimed to be fighting for Tigrean national autonomy. Independence is the last resort if all other possibilities are exhausted (Young 1997, Abay 1998, Markakis 1987). The difference between the two rebel fronts was resolved with ruthless determination by the TPLF in a sudden attack on its rival, in which several of the TLF leaderships were killed, including its chairman. From then onwards, the TLF disintegrated as a nationalist movement. Afterward, the TPLF was left without a rival, except the government forces in Tigray (Young 1997, Abay 1998).

TPLF repeatedly pointed out that their struggle was against Amhara oppression and for them the Mengistu regime (i.e. the Derg) was nothing but a continuation of this oppression and the objective of their nationalist politics was freedom from Amhara domination. In this context the political strategy, visions and tactics of the TPLF differ vastly from other leftists (EPRP, Meision and Derg). As Young observed:

This is true of both Tigray and Oromo nationalism in the Post-Haile Selassie phase. In particular, class struggle is only secondary to 'national self-determination' and they insisted that the very relevance and recognition of ethnic identity (national problem) is the only thing which will make difference the Derg from its previous regime. However, the shift from autocratic regime to the revolutionary Derg and the anticipated outcome failed to materialise. The Derg's orientation and focus was dissimilar that "cultural homogenisation policies as well as Amhara domination continued respectively. Therefore, the national liberation struggle is unavoidable (and essential) (Young 1997:179).

In this regard the TPLF represented broadly speaking ethno-nationalism, though its leading figures were critical of nationalism. They tried to evolve a more ethnically aware and progressive platform to stand alongside its program of cultural/linguistic rejuvenation and political autonomy. Indeed, if by the time of the end of Haile Selassie's regime Tigray mistrusted the central state, the removal of local people from the by the Derg induced even non-nationalists to support the movement (Young 1997).

The TPLF organisational muscle grew impressively through the 1970s and 1980s, and its base of popular support in Tigray gradually expanded as well. Throughout the late 1970s, as the government forces were preoccupied with major offensives against the Eritrean rebels and the Somali forces in Ogaden, the TPLF consolidated itself militarily, politically and organisationally as well. It started to build up its forces and improved its organisation, and rallied the peasants to its side through political education, mass organisation and programme of social reform, including land reform (Markakis 1987).

They started a struggle under the 'action-repression-action' thesis, whereby selective attacks by highly trained and motivated guerrillas provoke indiscriminate state repression and gradually radicalise the population at large, culminating eventually in a general uprising. At TPLF's first congress this thesis, together with a socialist program of class struggle, was formally accepted as the ideal model of Tigrean national liberation movement (cf. Young 1997, Abay 1998).

So the TPLF employed a classical strategy of guerrilla warfare. The TPLF didn't engage in major offensive with the government forces until the late 1980s. However, from mid-1980s onward, they abandoned hit-and run guerrilla tactics. Instead, they launched conventional attacks with the support of the EPLF. As the war in Tigray intensified the TPLF and EPLF coordinated many of their military actions against the government forces.<sup>157</sup> Tigray like Eritrea started to suffer from the Derg's annual military offensives. The Derg used different kinds of strategies to weaken the activity of the Tigrean rebels. But the consequence of military option or strategy not only affected the rebels but also the civilian population of Tigray. This included large-scale military offensive in the surplus-producing districts like Shire, aerial bombardment of market places and tight control on movement and traders (Young 1997). The continued brutality of the Derg created not only hostility towards government but also famine in the northern part of the country. As state violence and hunger escalated more and more people started joining the rebel force (ibid.).

In March 1988, Mengistu called for urgent measures to be taken against what he called "the terrorists" under the banner of "everything to the warfront" (Ethiopian Herald April 1, 1988). This was followed by a special decree no. 1/1988 of the state council on the emergency situation in Tigray designating the major part of the region as a prohibited area and under a state of emergency (Ethiopian Herald, May 15, 1988). Short lived as it was, the series of security measures implemented in Tigray did not help contain the increasingly deteriorating situation. In February 1989, the TPLF, which by then include at least 20,000 full-time plus an unknown numbers of part-time fighters, launched an

---

<sup>157</sup> In 1983, however, a rift developed between the groups after the TPLF proposed a unification of all anti-Derg elements, including the EPLF. Relations further deteriorated when the EPLF failed to inform the TPLF that it had started secret peace talks with the Mengistu regime. As a result, the TPLF refrained from supporting the EPLF during the governments 1985 counteroffensives. Although there was a brief reconciliation after the EPLF's victory at Afabet, the TPLF-EPLF bad relations continued for the next years. In March 1987, for example, the TPLF refused to be represented at the EPLF's unity Congress.

attack and destroyed a 20,000 strong Ethiopian army force. Ethiopian military units then withdrew from Mekele and the rest of Tigray without a fight. The defeat undoubtedly helped trigger the unsuccessful May 1989 coup against Mengistu. Although government troops subsequently returned to southern Tigray and reoccupied a few towns and villages, the political and military initiative remained with the TPLF (Young 1997).

On March 10, 1989, the TPLF opened its third congress. Apart from passing numerous antigovernment resolutions, the delegates pledged to support the EPRDF, which had been formed earlier in the year by the TPLF and a group known as the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) (from 1994 onward changed to Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)). In time, the EPRDF also included the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (ODORM), both of which had been created by the TPLF in May 1990 from Oromo prisoners of war held by TPLF and from senior military personnel who were taken prison during the war both in Tigray and Eritrea (Young 1997, Lata 1999). As a minority, the TPLF strategy was that the unification of these groups eventually would enable the TPLF to widen its base of support beyond Tigray. It is within this context that critics denounced the EPRDF as nothing more than a TPLF organisation in Amhara and Oromo *mask* (Lata 1999, Vestal 1999, Young 1997).

Put rather differently, the TPLF as a minority ethnic group created these so-called "Democratic Organisation and Movements" such as OPDO and EPDM to launch operations outside Tigray and as a strategy to capture state power. But the formation of these PDO's (and many others after they captured state power) created unrecognisable conflict with the old ethno-nationalist movements such as the OLF, ALF, and ONLF who claimed to represent their respective communities. For example, according to Young (1997:114) the OLF and TPLF

"...relations were further exacerbated in the late 1980s when the TPLF began recruiting captured Oromos from the Derg's army who were then to join the TPLF-created Oromo Peoples Democratic Organisation (OPDO)."

In any case, in August and September 1989, TPLF forces, operating within the framework of this new organisation—the EPRDF moved south into Wello. They overran towns along the main road, routed numerous Ethiopian units, captured Ethiopian army equipment and forced the temporary evacuation of the regional capital

Desse. Knowing that they had lost the war in Tigray and Wello the government offered peace talks with the rebels. However, after three rounds of talks, nothing came out of them.<sup>158</sup> The failure of the talks was due to the uncompromising positions of the parties. The TPLF advocated that EPDM be represented alongside the TPLF delegates and also insisted that the agenda of the talks be the establishment of a transitional government in Ethiopia as a solution to the crisis as a whole, rather than discussing the crisis in Tigray alone. The official Ethiopian government objection was expressed in as follows:

“...for an organization that has consciously and explicitly founded its aims on the basis of a particular region to claim a right to speak on behalf of the people of entire country is transparently presumptuous”(Ethiopian Embassy, Stockholm, press statement 29.03.1990).

To sum up, the origin of the TPLF as a modern expression of Tigrean nationalism can be traced back to the political thinking of Ethiopian students. In this context the question of nationality became a bone of contention with the student movements and was not considered subordinate to class contradictions. The Tigrean nationalists called for self-determination or autonomy. Because of their homogeneity it was easier for the TPLF to raise popular support. For its part Derg's nationalist hardliners contributed to the hostility to the central government. Whereas the EPRP could play a class struggle the TPLF played a nationalistic card. This made it easy for TPLF to destroy and marginalize its opponents in Tigray. Given that Mengistu's position was also intransigent there was no space for a negotiated settlement.

## Conclusion

According to Micheal Hechter (2000) individual political action has been, for most of human history, *indirect political* action. In democratic regimes, individuals hire politicians to represent their interests in government. In authoritarian regimes, individuals deal with government authorities through networks of intermediaries and brokers. When democratic institutions fail or when authoritarian networks become dysfunctional, individuals take politics into their own hands and resort to *direct action*. Direct action includes all public activities undertaken by individual groups, legal or illegal, non-violent or violent, aimed at modifying government policies. The most common forms of modern direct public action in dictatorships include violent protest, rebellion, and/or revolutions.

---

<sup>158</sup> The first of these talks commenced on 4th November, 1989, and the third and the last on March 20th 1990 held in Rome under the mediation of Italy.

---

At least since the Chinese revolution, guerrilla warfare is the most common form of rebellion, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia. Guerrilla warfare is the privileged rebellious technique of military weak groups that enjoy the support of dense communal networks and groups. Guerrilla rebels hence resort to attacks by surprise and are hidden among the civilian population. They generally fight where they live and without civilian support they cannot succeed. Guerrilla activity ranges from sporadic attacks to sustained action once the armed rebels succeed in conquering a territorial position and establish a situation of multiple sovereignties.

As we saw in this chapter, opposition to Ethiopia's military rule has increasingly took the form of national movements against Amhara domination. This became particularly evident after the Derg had crushed the multiethnic based civilian groups. The authoritarian rule of the Derg brought to the surface many of the national contradictions inherent under the previous regime. A centralisation of the Ethiopian empire state, begun by Menelik and Haile Selassie, had confirmed the dominance of an Amhara nationality over subject peoples such as the Oromo, the Somalis, the Afar, and Tigreans and other groups forcefully incorporated by Menelik.

The emergence of an absolutist state and an attendant development of capitalism also created new political forces based on new social classes. It was activity by these classes, principally a small working class and a larger petty bourgeoisie, which resulted in the overthrow of Haile Selassie and the ancient regime in 1974. The lack of adequate political organisation of these classes, however, led to the revolution being carried through by the army; and subsequent moves by the Derg against any potential for independent class action resulted in a predominance of nationalist currents. The negative response to the national question and authoritarianism led to intensification of armed resistance and revolt by such as the OLF, WSLF, EPLF, and TPLF/EPRDF and created a united popular front against the Derg, which finally resulted in sending the dictator into exile.

According to the TPLF, resolving the national question would be possible within a democratic multinational Ethiopia based on equality. Monopolising political power was accompanied by national domination and oppression, which in turn engaged a deep-rooted conflict, hostility and mistrust among nation, nationality and people. The TPLF stated that liberation of oppressed people should involve the right to self-determination.



---

In the words of John Markakis, the fronts claimed to be fighting for self-determination, not secession and that could result in any thing from autonomy, federation, confederation, up to and including independence (Markakis 1987). So independence is regarded by TPLF as an alternative if and only if all possibilities for unity based on equality are exhausted (Selassie 1980:89). Whether such a right can be exercised by all nationalities is still questionable. The issue is then to what extent this policy has been practised and to what extent the TPLF removed ethnic domination and oppression after they replaced the dictatorial regime of Mengistu?

Put differently, the collapse of the Mengistu regime and with it also the century of the Amhara hegemonic project, has also seen developments of power sharing among competing ethnic groups. Power sharing forms of governance are being advanced by the TPLF-led government. In the next chapter we shall take a closer look and make a more detailed investigation of one of the largest ventures namely ethnic-federalism in post-Mengistu Ethiopia and the response of ethnic groups to such state policy.

## *Chapter Six*

---

### ***Top-Down Transition: Federalism and Ethnopolitical Accommodation in Ethiopia***

---

#### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapter, I analysed the extent to which several factors help to explain the collapse of the military regime in Ethiopia. As we saw a number of (both external and internal) factors led to the collapse of the Derg. Externally the end of the Cold war and the policy change of the former Soviet Union were the major factors. Internally, the policy of centralisation in political and economic terms and the armed suppression of political and ethnically based opposition forces had led to popular discontent. The regional movements (except the Eritreans), increasingly established along ethnic lines, became stronger and finally succeeded in gaining popular support, undermining the legitimacy of the Mengistu regime, and leading to its ultimate collapse.

The aim of the next two chapters is to analyse the different policies employed by the Post-Mengistu insurgent (EPRDF) regime to manage the conflicts in Ethiopia and to accommodate its diversity. The policy of ethnic federalism and decentralisation is meant to prevent conflicts caused by centralisation and consequent ethnic tensions that prevailed prior to 1991. Furthermore, decentralisation under a federal system of government is intended to encourage local and regional participation in decision making, thereby improving the accountability and legitimacy of the government at the regional and federal levels and ultimately reducing underlying tensions and minimising conflict. Decentralisation is also intended as a means to democratize the Ethiopian political system. The question is then: (i) What are the key features of ethnically based federalism in Ethiopia? (2) To what extent did the TPLF/EPRDF government manage to accommodate diversity and solve ethnic (identity) conflicts in Ethiopia? What progress has been made in terms of devolution, power sharing and democratisation? What constraints remain? In other words, does the strategy create an enabling environment for the establishment of pluralist democracy by enhancing popular participation in government? The first two questions will be answered in this chapter, while the third question will be assigned to the next chapter.

## **The Ousting of Mengistu and the formation of a Grand Coalition Government: The Transitional Government of Ethiopia**

On 28 May 1991, days after the Mengistu Haile Mariam's sudden flight to Harare (Zimbabwe), the Derg regime fell with the capture of Addis Ababa by the TPLF-led EPRDF and the capture of Asmara by the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF). These events ended decades of devastating civil war in the country and a century of Amhara hegemony (Keller 1995, Lata, 1999). As the victorious agent in the long struggle for national self-determination, the EPLF formed the Provisional Government of Eritrea, and the EPRDF was a core ethnopolitical force in the new Transitional Government in Ethiopia (TGE).

It is worth noticing that before the final collapse of the Mengistu regime the United States sponsored what is now known as the London Conference on May 27, 1991. The meeting was mediated by the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen and was attended by officials of what remained of the Mengistu regime represented by Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinka. The meeting also included the leaders of three major liberation fronts—the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) - representing itself and the coalition (EPRDF). Tesfaye Dinka attempted to include the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF), as one of the political forces in Ethiopia, in the negotiations.<sup>159</sup>

Although the United States did not specifically object to the COEDF's inclusion, it evidently accepted the EPRDF's resistance to this (Lata 1999, Vestal 1999). Meanwhile, as the negotiations proceeded, the EPRDF's army moved closer to the Ethiopian capital and was almost ready to overrun Addis Ababa. The U.S. "recommended" therefore, that the EPRDF's army enter the capital "in order to reduce uncertainties and eliminate tensions" (Lyons, 1991:4) or a Somalia-like scenario would

---

<sup>159</sup> Note that this group is dominated by pan-Ethiopian nationalists and also by Marxist ideology (anathema to the U.S.) and is still antagonistic to the U.S.'s ideological foundations (capitalism and liberal democracy). As we have seen in Chapter Five & Six some of these movements (e.g. the EPRP & Meison) were eliminated or marginalised by the Derg during the Red Terror. Those that survived the terror went underground or into exile. From the late 1980s, in desperate need of allies, the Derg started to [re]negotiate with these pan-Ethiopian groups in order to create a front against ethnopolitical movements and in fact offered them power sharing or inclusion in the government.

occur with the collapse of the state and anarchy”.<sup>160</sup> In this regard, the U.S. played a leadership role, which implicitly supported the takeover of power by EPRDF.

With the EPRDF in control of the capital, the London talks concluded with a promise of a multiparty conference in July 1991. Meanwhile, the EPLF leadership announced the establishment of the Provisional Government of Eritrea (Lata, 1999, Vestal 1999). Many pan-Ethiopian nationalist groups who were not aligned with the EPRDF strongly criticised the U.S. acceptance of the EPRDF’s control of Ethiopia which, in their view, abandoned attempts to reach a political settlement. Even the OLF that participated at the London Conference questioned the impartiality of the U.S.—in particular after the U.S. gave the “green light”<sup>161</sup> for EPRDF to capture the state. The OLF saw this as a return to the “northern hegemony,” once again supported by a superpower (U.S.), reminiscent of the Haile Selassie regime (Lata 1999).<sup>162</sup> The OLF (1991) for example issued a statement the day after the peace conference expressing their shock at Cohen’s recommendation to the EPRDF.

What is disturbing to us is the position of the U.S. government, which did not seem fair. We thought we were called to discuss peace and democracy...Cohen’s actions ended this process.

The OLF remained sceptical that the EPRDF was genuine in its commitment to ethnic self-determination, a scepticism that in important ways was to be realised and, to some degree, become self-fulfilling. The U.S. government on its part, however, maintained that the July 1991 conference in Addis would constitute a political settlement and that the U.S. encourages a democratically oriented government in Ethiopia. As Herman Cohen stated:

---

<sup>160</sup> In Somalia the armed struggle against the Said Barre regime, ended with the departure of the dictator but also ended disastrously. Contrary to the Ethiopian case, the collapse of the old regime in 1991 only increased open hostilities and clan-based conflicts. Since 1991, Somalia has remained a collapsed state without any form of central government. However, it is important to note here that north-western Somalia (the former British colony of Somaliland) remained peaceful since the Somali National Movement (SNM) declared the region independent. Despite its lack of international recognition, Somaliland has maintained its de facto sovereignty, and more importantly, paid attention to establishing the rule of law in its territory. Somaliland’s constitution provides for a House of Elders as a second legislative branch in the national government and for radical decentralisation. Zartman (1995).

<sup>161</sup> Cohen announced at the conclusion of the first day of talks: “the US government is recommending that the forces of EPRDF enter the city (Addis Ababa) as soon as possible to help stabilise the situation.

<sup>162</sup> As we saw earlier, Meles conducted a series of “merger” talks with the OLF, in order to incorporate an Oromo element in the EPRDF. However, the talks faltered, with the TPLF accusing the OLF of “narrow nationalism” (African Confidential 5 1992). And with the formation of the OPDO, the OLF was invited to the talks only after the EPLF insisted on their presence during a pre-conference meeting with the EPRDF and Cohen (Henze 1994).

The transitional Government should be broadly representative of all Ethiopian society, including diverse political groupings, and should, wherever appropriate, utilize the existing civil administrative structure in carrying out its responsibilities

...The U.S. is here serving not only as the U.S. representative but as the conscience of the international community which is saying to them (the EPLF, the EPRDF and the OLF) you must go democratic if you want the full cooperation to help Ethiopia realize its full potential (Cohen's Press Statement of 28 May 1991).

There is little doubt that the U.S. government supported regime change in Ethiopia and was optimistic about a smooth transition to a civilian and democratically based government. From the U.S. view point it seemed that the TPLF/EPRDF-led government would deliver an elected democratic regime in post-Mengistu Ethiopia. Having said that, I believe three other factors made it necessary for the U.S. to accept the EPRDF takeover. First, the military realities on the ground which dictated an EPRDF takeover. Second, the TPLF (the core party of EPRDF) had abandoned its commitment to the Albanian variant of socialism in order to gain international legitimacy and support.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, the TPLF claimed its readiness to share power with other political forces which most donors favoured in post-conflict reconciliation (see Ch.3). And finally the TPLF did not put forward "secessionist claims" but rather put forth the goal of a unified, democratic Ethiopia.

In any case, in light of the global wave of democratisation of the 1990s (Huntington 1991), Cohen stated "no democracy, no cooperation." As he puts it, U.S. support would hinge upon the EPRDF's "holding to their announced commitment to human rights, democracy and due process for all" (Cohen 1991). In return for U.S. and other donors support and conditionalities the TPLF/EPRDF agreed to form a transitional government which would contain broad-based representation of Ethiopia's ethnic groups and to hold "democratic" elections within a year. As discussed in chapter three, in the post-cold war era and the so-called "new world order" the twin criteria for such legitimacy and support were political pluralism and the market economy (Carothers 1999).

---

<sup>163</sup> The TPLF looked towards Albania for a model. Ironically, three weeks after EPRDF's victory the Albanian socialist regime handed over power to pro-liberal elements effectively ending the authoritarian-socialist rule. It is in this context that the Meles Zenawi (TPLF) has abandoned his former Marxist rhetoric and has instead become a main proponent of liberal reforms. Note that the TPLF still followed the principle of what they called "revolutionary democracy" and the principle of democratic centralism (cf. Young 1997:211).

## The EPRDF and the Politics of Ethnic Accommodation

In contrast to the Eritrean and neighbouring Somalia cases, (but like some Post-Cold War democratisations in Africa, especially of the Francophone countries),<sup>164</sup> after military victory the EPRDF organised a National Conference. The TPLF/EPRDF invited most but not all political organisations that had opposed the military government. As one scholar notes “the conference witnessed the highest degree of political pluralism ever seen in Ethiopia” (Gurden 1994:26).

The conference was the first of its kind and assembled twenty seven political organisations to discuss how to solve the problems of the country and reconstruct post-civil war state and society. But it excluded certain prospective partners of the EPRDF. Groups excluded were those that identified with pan-Ethiopian nationalism (centrist) such as the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), the Ethiopian People’s Democratic Alliance (EPDA) and the Tigrean People’s Democratic Movement (TDMP) (cf. Vestal, 1999, Lata 1999). These groups were organised in the late 1990s under the umbrella of the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF) to unite a collection of political parties opposed both to the Mengistu government and to the EPRDF coalition.

The COEDF criticised the conference as a sham and a brazen attempt by EPRDF to legitimise and entrench itself (Kendie, 1994). They argued that the conference did not represent the diversity of political views in the country, and those who participated were handpicked EPRDF lackeys. Instead, COEDF argued that the conference should have been conducted under international auspices (ibid.). They also expressed grave concern over EPRDF’s reconstitution of the country’s armed forces by EPRDF and also claimed that the ethnicization of the Ethiopian state and the independence of Eritrea would lead to the Balkanization of Africa’s oldest state.

---

<sup>164</sup> The definitions of “National Conference” vary from author to author. I am referring here to Gabon, Congo, Mali, Togo, Niger, Zaire, and Chad. Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle (1997) include several other countries in the national Conference category: Comoros, South Africa and Ethiopia. In part as a result of uncertainty, many transitions take place through *Pacts* or power-sharing agreements. Political pacts are a set of negotiated compromises among competing elites with the goal of institutionalising the distribution of power and reducing uncertainty. A number of transitions in Latin America, the Round Table talk in Poland, and convention for a Democratic South Africa process were organised around implicit or explicit political pacts, designed to provide powerful actors with sufficient guarantees so that they would accept the change.

In protest to the resolution of Eritrea and the EPRDF's policy of group rights, another centrist party—the All Amhara Peoples' Organisation (AAPO) - also withdrew from the conference. Moreover, the broad coalition ("*pact*") narrowed considerably, as the TPLF-dominated government in April 1993 ousted five political groups for endorsing a resolution adopted at a conference of opposition groups meeting in Paris that called for dissolution of the council. After the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) withdrew from the Council of Representatives (Lata 1999; Vestal 1999 see also next chapter) the membership of the council was reduced to the representatives of the EPRDF and its satellite parties. The independent ethnic and non-ethnic based movements were completely excluded from the pact that formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), or were forced out over the first two years of the transition (Lata 1999, Vestal 1999). Since then, mutual bitterness and mistrust prohibited any reconciliation between the EPRDF and the independent movements (both pan-Ethiopian nationalist and ethnopolitical movements such as the OLF, ONLF, AAPO).

As we will see in the following sections and also in the next chapter, not only did the EPRDF regime marginalise the political opposition, but also screened the Amhara and Amharised elites in the public administration in order to achieve political supremacy.

As an insurgent group representing only 6-7 percent of the Ethiopian population, Tigrean nationalism was simply not large enough to control the country directly. Therefore, as discussed in chapter five, in order to counterbalance the pan-Ethiopian nationalist/centrist the TPLF has turned principally to ethnopolitical movements. To counterbalance the independent ethnopolitical movements it created the so-called Peoples Democratic Organisation (PDOs) in the hope of constructing a patchwork coalition that would include, most importantly, the Oromo along with smaller but politically important ethnic groups such as Afar, Somalis, Gurage, Hadiya, Wolayta, and Sidama. For the Tigrean elite, control and manipulation of these "puppet" ethnic parties became central to their hegemonic power within the Ethiopian state as a whole (Lata, 1999, Young 1997, Vestal 1999). In addition to these issues as Gilkes (1999:12) correctly notes:

The problem of the TPLF, ..., was that having dropped socialism it had no alternative ideology to fall back upon to build an Ethiopian wide party—even if it wanted to; it isn't, in fact, entirely clear how far it might want to produce something different.

Put differently, the PDO's have been used by the ruling party to impose its hegemonic agenda on a reluctant or even hostile population. It can be argued that this strategy

undermined the national government's strength and legitimacy as it increased PDO's dependence on the central government controlled by the Tigrean minority.<sup>165</sup>

Finally, in spite of the promises of general amnesty, reconciliation and positive integration of the former members of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), as an organisation, the EPRDF denied any rights to WPE members both to participate in the conference and to feature in the politics of the country. In fact WPE members lost all political and civil rights and were not allowed to vote or to stand in elections. This policy of exclusion has been criticised for instance by Africa Watch (1995) that wrote, "The denial of civil rights to a category of people on sole basis of their membership of the WPE is not justifiable. Former WPE members should be held accountable solely on the basis of individual criminal acts".<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, nearly half of Mengistu's army was detained for up to six months and officers and career soldiers were held in detention longer than conscripts, for "re-education." In contrast to the former WPE officials who held a certificate from a re-education centre, those conscripts in "rehabilitation" camps after being sent home were eligible to vote and to participate freely in the political process (Leta 1999, Vestal 1999). In addition to WPE members and military officers, the EPRDF detained several hundred top Mengistu government officials allegedly for committing genocide and other human rights violations.<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>165</sup> This is to argue that the PDO's nationalism depended much less on bottom-up mobilisation of shared national sentiment than on top-down creation of national institutions and identities. So struggles centre on neither the form nor the cultural frame of the regime, but on who has the right to speak for the nation, nationality or people of Ethiopia.

<sup>166</sup> There is a tendency today (and in fact since the mass prosecutions of Nazi criminals in the aftermath of WWII), for both internal and external demands for "justice" or to prosecute those who committed atrocities and human rights violation against the civilian population. Huntington provides a list of arguments, which are based on ethical and pragmatic or political considerations. These are: first, truth and justice required it; second, it is an obligation owed to the victims by the state; third, democracy is based on the rule of law and prosecution asserts that no one is above the law; fourth, that prosecution is essential to the vitality of the democracy system (Huntington 1991:213). However, despite the preponderance, and to some extent uniformity of human rights abuses under military dictatorship, in only a few countries (Argentina, Greece/military leaders) have entire groups attached to the system been punished. In post-Communist countries only individuals have been brought to justice. In the post-cold war African context the debate has been, on the one hand those who argued for "justice" and exclusion of those who committed atrocity and other human rights violation and on the other hand those who still hold that the inclusion of the same people in future decision-making (e.g. power-sharing) as the only way for peaceful settlement, especially if they represent an identity group. This has been the case in Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, Somalia (as opposed to South Africa and Rwanda), where the so-called "war-lords" had violated human rights and committed other atrocities.

<sup>167</sup> In 1993, the EPRDF established a Special Prosecutor's Office to bring to trial all those suspected of participating in the Red Terror.



As I have discussed in my theoretical chapter, the issue of inclusion/exclusion is important in our discussion of ethno-political conflict management (in particular of political power and the question of performance of democracy in divided societies such as Ethiopia). After all, as Donald Horowitz observed:

Democracy is about inclusion and exclusion and the penalties that accompany exclusion. In several divided societies, ethnic identity provides clear lines to determine who will be included and who will be excluded (Horowitz 1993:35).

I will discuss the issue of exclusion and its consequences for the democratisation process in the next chapter, but here I will first discuss the EPRDF's imposed (top-down) federal restructuring of the Ethiopian state.

### **The Formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia**

After five days deliberation, the July 1991 conference adopted a Transitional Charter that was to serve as the Constitution for the Transitional Period of two years and installed both the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and the Council of Representatives (COR). Once again, the politics of ethnicity dominated the new political scene. As a consequence, the Charter gave the different nations and nationalities the right to self-determination including secession. The Charter asserted *inter alia* the right of all-Ethiopian nationalities to self-determination. The identity of each would be preserved, and each would have the right to govern its own affairs within the context of a federated Ethiopia. The proclamation and later the new constitution assigned extensive powers to the regions in terms of administrative, budgetary, planning and political decision-making processes. There is insufficient space here to consider the whole of the charter and only a few relevant articles or sub-sections need be mentioned.

In general the Charter established a legal right for a democratic transition and for the accommodation of diversity. The charter itself consists of 20 Articles within five sections. Under the first section that deals with the democratic rights of the citizens, the Charter granted freedom of conscience, expression, association and assembly. It also affirmed the right of citizens to engage in unrestricted political activities and to organise political parties (Art. 50 (8)). Under Article two, the document approved the controversial provision that affirmed the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination, including the right of secession.

Both the Charter and later the new Ethiopian Constitution adopted Stalin's criteria for definition of nation and nationalities as defined in the Federal Constitution Art. 39 (5) "a nation, nationalities or people [...as] a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory." The historical parallel with the Ethiopian constitution as discussed in chapter three is of that former Soviet Union where Lenin offered self-determination to minority communities to gain their support for revolution, but denied such rights in the post revolutionary period (cf., Connor 1994). The TPLF/EPRDF inclusion of the right to secession in the Ethiopian Charter/Constitution must also be seen in the light of this Marxist-Leninist strategy (solution to the national question), which is more psychological in order to gain support from historically marginalised groups than really to practice such rights (cf., Brietzke 1995).<sup>168</sup> As discussed below only Eritrea has achieved such a right so far despite demands for secession from among others the OLF and ONLF.

In any case, as the charter stipulated, the Transitional Government installed the Council of Representatives (COR), composed of eighty-seven nominated members. As table 1 indicates, the EPRDF allocated 32 of the 87 seats in the COR to itself. It also allocated 12 seats to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the remainder to smaller ethnic and constituent-based parties and civil groups (including one for university professors and one for workers), many of which were created immediately before the national conference convened. Accordingly, all seats on the COR, except one, were occupied by members of organisations. Addis Ababa University declined from the start to use the one seat originally allocated to it. Again, it is important to note here that the role of the TPLF/EPRDF in general and Meles Zenawi, in particular, was pivotal and it was again this organisation led by Meles that distributed the different seats. It also created some other movements in order to have "allies" in the different non-Tigrean regions (Vestal, 1999, Abbink, 2000).

---

<sup>168</sup> Secession requires a two-thirds majority vote of the legislative council of the nationality concerned, followed by a majority vote in a popular referendum, and can follow only upon the transfer of federal responsibilities to the seceding unit, and the division of assets between the two.

**Table 7.1 Seats in COR until June 1992**

Names of Organisations	No. of Seats
• The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)	32
• The Oromo Peoples Democratic organisation (OPDO)	10
• Tigray Peoples Liberation Front	10
• Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Movement (EPDM)	10
• Ethiopian Democratic Officers Revolutionary Movement	2
Oromo Liberation Front	12
Afar Liberation Front	3
Aderc People's Democratic Movement (APDM)	1
Agew People's Democratic Movement (APDM)	1
Benishangual People's Liberation Movement (BPLM)	2
Burji People's Democratic Organisation (BPDO)	1
Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG)	1
Ethiopian Democratic Coalition (EDC)	1
Ethiopian Democratic union (EDU)	1
Ethiopian National Democratic Organisation (ENDO)	1
Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM)	2
Gedeo People's Democratic Front (GPDM)	1
Gurage People's Democratic Front (GPDF)	2
Hadiya National Democratic Organisation (HNDO)	2
Hoyal Nationality Representative	1
Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO)	3
Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front (IGLF)	1
Kefa People's Democratic Union (KPDU)	2
Kembata People's Democratic Union	2
Omitic People's Democratic Movement (OPDM)	2
Oromo Abo Liberation Front (OALF)	1
Oromo People's Liberation Front (OPLF)	1
Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM)	2
University Teachers' Representative	1
Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF)	2
Woolyata Peoples Liberation Front (WPLF)	2
Workers Representative	3
Yem National Democratic Movement (YNDM)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>
Source: Appendix to report of the Norwegian Observer Group on Local and Regional Elections in Ethiopia 21, June 1992.	

Meles Zenawi (TPLF) and Tamarat Layne (EPDM) were named president and prime minister<sup>169</sup> and the new TGE began the enormous task of rebuilding the Ethiopian state that had been devastated by civil war. An appointed Constitutional Conference set about studying different governance models and preparing a draft constitution (see Brietzke, 1995) in order to hand over power to a constitutionally elected government.

The government is committed to this objective...I want to confirm that the transitional government will take all necessary steps to ensure that the transitional period is democratic and successful and that it will create a conducive atmosphere for parties to participate in the constitutional congress." (Meles Zenawi 1992).

If this suggests that the TPLF/EPRDF regime is committed to democracy, this and the next chapter will show that the regime failed to achieve legitimacy for both its democratisation process and its federal restructuring. The process of federalism and the new constitution involved limited debate among the public. It was imposed from the top by the TPLF/EPRDF (cf. Keller, Tronvoll 2000, Vestal 1999, Lata 1999, Abbink 2000).

<sup>169</sup> During the transition period the head of state and chairperson of the Council of Representatives (COR) was Tigrean, the Prime Minister was an Amhara, the Vice Chairperson of the COR was Gurage. The Oromos was represented within the cabinet by the Minister of Internal Affairs and Information. What makes the distribution of executive power important is that the President, Prime Minister, and the two other important cabinet positions (foreign and defence) are held by the EPRDF.

The following section first examines the political restructuring and then whether the nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia are empowered in the way TPLF/EPRDF would lead us to believe. In practice, as I will try to demonstrate, the EPRDF government and the renovated institutional structure have little effect on the overall distribution of power in Ethiopia. The unprecedented expectations that greeted the EPRDF's investiture would not be met, and would over time give rise to even greater popular cynicism about, and disenchantment with, the political system. As Vaughan correctly observed "although the 1991 conference may not have resulted in a one party government its convention reflects to large degree a one party dynamic" (1994:60).

### **Toward the Birth of Ethnic Federalism: Devolution of power & territorial organisation of the Ethiopian Federation**

As discussed in chapter three and four, before 1991 administrative, economic and political decision making was highly centralised. The centralised government under both Haile Selassie and the Derg (with nominal change in the late 80s) was organised into 14 provinces (see map 2 & 3). Provincial governments were under the centralised responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. Other Ministries maintained direct responsibility for their respective services in the provinces. Contrary to the former regimes, the EPRDF set out to establish a federal state structure and decentralised both the administration and political powers by creating regional states. Although this was not the first attempt at creating a federal government in Africa, it was the first time in which the basis of the federal units was to be drawn up according to ethnic constituencies.

#### ***The Formal Administrative Organisation of Ethiopian under EPRDF***

With its political base secured and the National Charter in its hands the EPRDF started a process of restructuring the Ethiopian state that included administrative, political, and fiscal decentralisation as well as territorial re-division of the state. Firstly, based on the Charter, Proclamation no. 7/1992 (and later embraced and legitimised by the new constitution), the EPRDF established two systems of government; namely the central transitional government (federal) and the national/regional self-governments (regional States).

The Central/federal government structure consists of the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR), the appointed Council of Ministers and the House of Federation. The HPR is the highest organ of the country and has the supreme legislative power in all matters assigned by the constitution to federal jurisdiction (Art. 55(1)). It also has important controlling powers; it ratifies the federal budget (Art. 55(11)) and oversees the workings of the federal executive branch (55(17/18)). The House of Peoples Representatives has up to 550 elected representatives<sup>170</sup> though 20 seats are reserved for representatives of the minority groups whose population may not exceed 100,000 (see Table 7.2). The Council of Ministers prepares the social and economic development plans and budget of the federal government. It submits plans and budgets to the Council of Representatives and implements them when approved.

The second chamber is the House of Federation (HoF) which has 117 members (Art. 53). The members of this house are representatives of different nations, nationalities and peoples. Each nation, nationality and people is represented by at least one member and additional representatives for each one million of its population (FDRE constitution Article 61/1&2) (see Table 7.3). Article 62 of the constitution lists the powers and functions of the HoF:

1. The House has the power to interpret the constitution (Art. 62 (1))
2. The House organises the Council of Constitutional Inquiry (Art. 62(2)).
3. The House, in accordance with the constitution, decides on issues relating to the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination (Art. 62(3)).
4. The House promotes the equality of the peoples of Ethiopia enshrined in the constitution and promotes and consolidates their unity based on their mutual consent (62(4)).
5. The House strives to find solutions to disputes or misunderstandings that may arise between states (Art. 62(6))
6. Finally, the House of the Federation orders federal intervention if any states whose violation of this constitution endangers the constitutional order (Art. 62(9)). It must be noted here that in order not to undermine the regional autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution the power of intervention is restricted and defined by another proclamation.<sup>171</sup>

The judicial function is given to the Federal Supreme Court and other courts that are established by the HoPR. As mentioned above, all constitutional disputes are decided by the HoF. The House gives final decisions on constitutional disputes and interpretations

---

<sup>170</sup> The members of the House “shall be elected from candidates in each electoral district by a plurality of the votes cast” (Art. 54 (2)). Each electoral district elects one member. The seat is won by the candidate who has the highest number of votes within the district. The constitution has thus adopted what is called a single seat plurality electoral system. However, the plurality electoral system is complemented by a special representation for “minority Nationalities and Peoples” (Art. 52(2)). Article 54 (3) stipulates that at least 20 of the 550 seats in the House shall be reserved for them.

<sup>171</sup> See the Proclamation no. 359/2003 of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003; A Proclamation to provide for a system for the intervention of the federal government in the regions.

which are proposed to it by the constitutional inquiry (Art. 84(1/2)). Compared to other federal states (e.g. the United State) the House of Federation plays a greater role in constitutional dispute than the Supreme Court. On the other hand, the House is less independent than the Supreme Court of the US.

**(Table 7. 2) Composition of the House of Peoples' Representatives**

	<i>Name of Political Party</i>	<i>Representatives</i>	<i>Ethnic Composition</i>
1.	<b>Members of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)</b>	<b>491</b>	
	Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)	40	Tigre
	Amhara Nation Democratic Movement (ANDM)	144	Amhara
	Oromo People's Democratic Movement (OPDO)	182	Oromo
	Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (SEPRDF)	125	
2.	Afar Liberation Front	3	Afar
3.	Afar People's Democratic Organisation	3	Afar
4.	Afar National Liberation Front	1	Afar
5.	Ethiopian Somali Democratic League	17	Somali
6.	Ogaden National Liberation Front	3	Somali
7.	Western Somali Democratic Party	2	Somali
8.	Benishangul Northern Ethiopia's Democratic Unity Party	5	
9.	Benishangul Western Ethiopia People's Democratic Party	2	
10.	Gambella People's Liberation Party	2	
11.	Gambella People's Democratic Unity Party	1	
12.	Harari National League	1	Harari
13.	Oromo Liberation Unity Front	4	Oromo
14.	Argoba People's Democratic Movement	4	Argoba
15.	Ethiopian National Democratic Party	1	
16.	Independent Members	8	
	Total number of Members of the HPR (Parliament)	546	

**(Table 7.3) Composition of the House of Federation (the House of Ethnic Groups)**

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Ethnic Composition (No. of Representatives)</i>
Tigray	Tigre (4); Kunama (1), Erop (1).
Afar	Afar (3).
Amhara	Amhara (13), Agew (2), Argoba (1), Oromo(1)
Oromia	Oromo (19)
Somali	Somali (4)
Benishanguel/Gumuz	Shinasha (1), Berta (1), Mao (1), Komo (1), Gumuz(1).
Southern Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities/Peoples	Nao (1), Derashie (2), Yem (1), Sidama (3), Kembata (1), Korie (1), Alaba (1), Tembaro (1), Hadya (2), Welayta (2), Konta (1), Ari (1), Gedo (2), Sheko (1), Malie (1), Chara (1), Sunama (1), Zeysie (1), Gidcho (1), Arborie (1), Gleb (1) Gurage (3), Hamer (1), Konso (1), Goffa (1), Dimie (1), Shekoch (1), Basketo (1), Dawiro (1), Bumi (1), Burji (1), Keficho (1), Gaeada (2), Gamo(2), Tesemay (1), Bench (1), Meanet (1), Iyda (1), Bana (1), Diz (1).
Gambella	Nawir (1), Agnwak (1), Nezenger (1), Upo (1), Komo (1).
Harari	Harari (1)
Total Number of Represented Ethnic Groups	60

[Source: <http://www.telecom.net.et/ethfacts.htm>]

Below the High Court, the Constitution states that the regions shall establish State Supreme, High and First-Instance Courts (Art. 78(3)). Article 80(2) stipulates that "State Supreme Courts shall have the highest and final judicial power over State

matters. They shall also exercise the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court. In addition the state high courts shall exercise the jurisdiction of the Federal First-Instance Court (Art.80.4).

The highest executive power of the federal government is vested in the Prime Minister and the council of Ministers (Art. 72(1)). The PM is elected from among members of the House of People's Representatives (Art. 73(1)). Accordingly, (again in theory) the Prime Minister and the council of ministers<sup>172</sup> are accountable to the House of Peoples Representatives in all the decisions they adopt (Art. 76). As stated by Lijphart (1999:114):

In parliamentary systems, the power of the Prime Minister who heads the cabinet can vary greatly from—again using Satori's terminology—a strong 'first above equals' to a medium 'first among unequals', to a relatively weak 'first among equals'."

In general, parliamentary systems of governance guarantee the legislature complete dominance over the executive. Unlike the pure presidential system, the Prime Minister's power remains dependent on the consent of a majority of parliament. Under this system, the prime minister is elected to office by majority vote (Lijphart 1999). In Ethiopia, a political culture characterised by a hegemonic executive has kept parliament weak and ineffective as a check on executive. Nor has it restrained itself from exploiting its political benefits due to the weak opposition in parliament (Lata 1999, Vestal 1999).

Huntington (1970) portrays the process of personalisation and institutionalisation of powers as forces in opposition, with institutions enjoying the historical upper hand: "the interaction and conflict between personal leadership and party institutionalisation produces a tendency toward bureaucratic and oligarchic leadership in one-party systems" (ibid.:32). Of course Ethiopia is no longer a one-party state and therefore Huntington's approach may not be relevant. However, recent events in Ethiopia suggest otherwise. As the next chapter will attempt to show, the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (TPLF) and the TPLF leadership has clearly established a system of hegemonic control and personalisation of political office (see also Lata 1999, Vestal 1999, Herbeson 1998,

---

<sup>172</sup> The Prime Minister is elected from among members of the House of People's Representatives. The PM is the chairman of the Council of Ministers and the commander-in-chief of the national armed forces. As enshrined in Article 77 of the Constitution, the Council of Ministers ensures implementation of laws, and decisions adopted by the Federal parliament, decides on the organisational structure of Ministries and other organs of government responsible to it, co-ordinates the activities of organs of government; discusses and refers draft proclamations to the Lower House, and decides on the general socio-economic and political strategies the country should pursue.



Joseph 1998, Tronvoll 2000). This has ironically been facilitated, rather than hindered, by the relative impotence of Ethiopia's political institutions i.e., parliament and the judiciary.<sup>173</sup>

The implicit assumption that personalistic decision-making and weak organisations must go hand-in-hand everywhere - because they happen to go hand-in-hand in Africa/Ethiopia - is most clearly displayed by Jackson and Rosberg's (1982) classic treatment of the subject:

The African autocrat faces limitations on his rule, but they are limitations of resources and organisational capacity-not of discretionary power. The relative "underdevelopment" of the ruling apparatus available to him, by limited finances, personnel, equipment, technology, and material, as well as by the limited skills and abilities of his offices limits his power. But his discretionary power to direct this apparatus is—in principle unlimited (ibid.:28).

This argument seems to hold for the past and present regimes in Ethiopia. Yet I believe the new institutional typology discussed in chapter three, namely *pseudo-democracy* better captures the post-Mengistu regime than Jackson and Rosberg's classic "personal rule" types and therefore will use pseudo-democracy as a guide to the analysis of the Meles regime in the next chapter.

Finally, there is a president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) who is the head of the Ethiopian state (ceremonial office). The president is nominated by the Council of Representatives and elected by the two houses in a joint secession. He/she is elected for a term of six years, which can be renewed once (Art. 70(4)). The president appoints ambassadors, approves appointments to high office in the army when submitted to him by the prime minister and proclaims laws that are approved by the council of Peoples Representatives etc. (Art. 71(4)). In terms of power sharing, until now this ceremonial office has been reserved for the Oromo ethnic group, while the Tigreans occupy the premiership.

### **The formation of regional States**

In accordance with the proclamation (No. 7/1992), the EPRDF regime reorganised the country into fourteen States or *regional states* (see Map 3). These regional states are:

---

<sup>173</sup> Under normal circumstances, in the parliamentary system the political party with the greatest number of seats in the parliament (in the Ethiopian case the Oromo Peoples Organisation or the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Movement) shall form or lead the executive i.e. assume the premiership. But for reasons discussed earlier this is not the case in Ethiopia. This is a dilemma or legitimacy crisis in post-Mengistu Ethiopia.

1. The State of Tigray	6. The State Benshangul/ Gumuz	11. The State of Gurage/Hadiya/Kambata
2. The State of Afar	7. The State Omo	12. Gambela
3. The State of Amhara	8. The State of Sidama	13. Harari
4. State of Oromia	9. The State Kaffa	14. Addis Ababa.
5. The state of Somali	10. The State Wolayta	

In the 1994 Constitution (which came into effect in August 1995), the map was again redrawn (see Map 4) and the country has been divided into 9 Regions and 2 Special Administrative Areas (the cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). Regions seven (Omo), eight (Sidama), nine (Kaffa), ten (Wolayta), and eleven (Grage, Hadiya & Kambata) coalesced into the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regions (SNNPR) (Vestal 1999, Lata 1999). The constitution assumes a 4-tier structure: federal, regional, zonal, and woreda. The country is divided into regions, the regions into zones, and the zones into woredas. In total there are now 9 regions, 66 zones and 556 woredas, though the zonal and woreda figures change from time to time because of continuous administrative adjustments.

The regional states are divided into zones, woredas and kebeles. They are based on ethno-linguistic identity and the name of five of the states represents their respective majority indigenous ethnic community although in all cases members of other ethnic groups reside there. That is, in the case of the state of Tigray, it designates the Tigre community; in Amhara, the Amhara community; in the case of Afar, the Afar community; in the case of Oromia, the Oromo community; and in the case of Somali, the Somali community. Although the same holds true for the Harari State, the Harari ethnic group does not constitute a numerical majority.

In contrast, the names of the other regions such as the State of Benshangul/Gumuz, Gambela and of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPS) indicate their relations with more than one indigenous ethnic community (see Table 7.4). The diversity is more pronounced in the SNNPS, where over 45 indigenous ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures live in a single state. In addition there are two ethnically mixed urban areas: Addis Ababa (the federal capital and until recently the

capital of Oromia regional state), and the city of Dire Dawa.<sup>174</sup> Both cities were given special status and made accountable to the central government (Lata 1999).<sup>175</sup>

Initially, however, the territorial reorganisation neither produced homogenous regions nor self-government for all the 64 identified ethnic communities.<sup>176</sup> As mentioned above the five major groups (the Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Tigray and Afar) and for a very obscure reason the Harari ethnic group established regional states (Harari)<sup>177</sup> and were entitled to ethnic names. The rest were only entitled to establish self-government at the lowest level of regional governments—i.e. at the zonal and Woreda levels (see below). In terms of homogeneity, the five states do have clear predominant ethno-linguistic groups (Tigray 94%, Somali 95%, Amhara 91%, Afar 92%; Oromia 85%) (CSA 1994). This contrasts substantially with such mixed regions as Gambella and Benishangul, not to mention the forty-five groups of the amalgamated Southern Nation, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR). This intermingling is a result of natural patterns of settlement as well as of considerable migration over time.

During the famine of the mid-1980s, the Derg resettled many people from the northern highlands into other areas (Rahmato, 1992). Moreover, because little attention was given to such factors as geographical areas, administrative capacity, or tax bases (Cohen 1994:1), the result has been substantial variation in population, density and urban/rural split among the new regions. While the largest, Oromia state consists of 18.4 million people, the tiny Gambelle has 162,000 (smaller than some of Oromia's Woredas). While Oromia includes within its borders the country's three largest cities (Addis Ababa, Harar, and Dire Dawa) they are all separate city-regions by proclamation/Constitution), Benishangul has a few small towns and fewer roads to match, Somali is poor and arid, with little infrastructure and a dependence on livestock, while Oromia's soil produces rich farmland and supports an agrarian infrastructure.

---

<sup>174</sup> Dire Dawa is one of the cities is still contested though now ruled by the central government. The city is a commercial city settled by Oromo (the majority) the Issa, Gurage and other people who immigrated from the north such as Amharas and Guragehe. As a result of claims and counter-claims by Oromo and Issa/Gurgura, Dire Dawa is administered by a three man provisional executive council appointed directly by the central government. The chairman is of Gurgura nationality and the two vice chairmen are an Oromo (OPDO) and Issa respectively.

<sup>175</sup> The two Special Administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa have different structures and are considered the equivalent of regions.

<sup>176</sup> The Proclamation (No 7/1992) refers to 64 ethno-linguistic communities (nations, nationalities and peoples).

<sup>177</sup> It is obscure because Harar city has roughly 131,139 inhabitants less than many other ethnic groups such as Sidama, Wollayta, and Gurage etc. Moreover the Harari (also known as Adare) only constitute 9,734 (or 7.4%) the population, while the Oromo account for 52.3 % (68,564) and the Amharas 32.6% (42,781). The remainder (7.7%) are from other ethnic groups (CSA population and housing survey 1994).

In sum, although the new constitution entails a significant level of ethnic autonomy and self-determination, there are clear and important differences between ethnic groups as to these rights. Using Kymlicka's distinction between polyethnic rights, self-government and special representation (Kymlicka 1995:26-33)<sup>178</sup> one could say that the Ethiopian arrangement combines self-government of the major ethnic groups with special representation of minorities within the states.<sup>179</sup> To whom ethno-territorial rights are granted at the local level is one of the most contentious issues. But, before turning our attention to the analysis of these group-rights, we need to focus on the power and duties of the regional states and local settings.

**(Table 7.4) Ethiopia's Regional Population Distribution and Ethnic Composition**

Regions	Population No.	Ethnic Composition %
Tigray	3,136,267	<b>94.98 Tigre</b> , 2.6 Amhara, 0.7 Erop and 0.05 Kunama.
Amhara	13,834,297	<b>94.2 Amhara</b> , 3.0 Oromo, 2.7 Agew/Awi, 1.2 Kimant and 1.0 Agew/ Khemera.
Afar	1,106,383	<b>98.8 Afar</b> , 4.5 Amhara, 0.92 Argoba, 0.82 Tigre, 0.78 Oromo, 0.45 Wolaita, 0.013 Hadiya.
Oromia	18,732,525	<b>85.0 Oromo</b> , 9.1 Amhara, 1.3 Gurage, 4.6 others.
Somali	3,439,860	<b>95.6 Somali</b> , 2.25 Oromo, 0.69 Amhara, 0.14 Gurage.
Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples	10,377,028	18 Sidama, 14.72 Gurage, 11.53 Wolayta, 8.53 Hadiya, 5.22 Keffa, 4.35 Kembata. <sup>180[109]</sup>
Gambela	181,862	40 Nuer, 27.0 Agnuak, 8.0 Amhara, 6.0 Oromo, 5.8 Meshenger, 4.1 Keffa, 2.0 Mocha, 1.6 Tigre, 5.5 others.
Benishangul/ Gumuz	460,459	26.7 Berta, 23.4 Gumuz, 22.2 Amhara, 12.8 Oromo, 6.9 Shinasha, 8.0 others.
Harari	131,139	52.3 Oromo, 32.6 Amhara, <b>7.1 Harari</b> 3.2 Gurage.

[Source: the 1995 Ethiopian Population and Housing Census].

## Powers and Duties of regional states

Like the federal structure, territorial and administratively regional states are in most cases divided into three vertically linked administrative levels from the top, the *zone* (often corresponding to provinces), the *Waräda* (district) and the *Kebele* (Community).

<sup>178</sup> Kymlicka wants to avoid the old and polarized debate between liberals and communitarians: "This argument over the primacy of the individual or the community is an old and venerable one in political philosophy. But it should be clear, I hope, how unhelpful it is for evaluating most group-differentiated rights in Western democracies. Most rights are not about the primacy of communities over individuals. Rather, they are based upon the idea that justice between groups requires that the members of different groups be accorded different rights." (*ibid*:47). Kymlicka observes, however, that "there are more nations in the world than possible states, and since we cannot simply wish national consciousness away, we need to find some way to keep the multinational state together" (*ibid*:186). Kymlicka notes "according to the United Nations' Charter, 'all people have the right to self-determination'. However, the UN has not defined 'peoples', and has generally applied the principle of self-determination only to overseas colonies, not internal national minorities" (p. 27). In the UN statement, the meaning of both *people* and *self-determination* is problematic and subject to considerable argument - what does it mean to be a *people*, and what does *self-determination* imply? (see chapter three my discussion of this important issue).

<sup>179</sup> The proclamation seemed to offer the nations, nationalities and peoples within a region the possibility of establishing their own region. Furthermore, Art. 3(2b) of Proclamation No. 7/1992 stated that the "Self-Governments of adjacent nations, nationalities and peoples may, by agreement, jointly establish one larger Regional Self-Government". In July 1992, 5 southern regions (the regions 7-11) effectively made use of this provision and established a single Southern Ethiopian Peoples Region, as such reducing the number of regions to 10

Moreover, regions have legislative, executive and judicial institutions. At the top Regional Councils, Executive Committees (EC) and Regional Bureaus are the highest political organs at the sub-national level.<sup>181</sup> With the exception of Harari state, all councils of the remaining states are unicameral and are filled by elected officials for a five-year term.<sup>182</sup> The Executive Committees also elect the president and other key executive officials of regional states. The Executive Committee of each regional state consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary and other higher-level officials of regional state elected from the “Peoples Representatives.” The EC undertakes the day-to-day activities of the regional government through a number of technical offices representing agriculture, planning and development, finance, education, health, public works etc.

The judiciary consists of an “independent” court, attorney’s office and police force established under the constitution of each regional state. In practice, the political behaviour of these bodies ranges from independent and highly centralised decision-making processes, such as in Tigray, to those with more severe difficulties i.e. lack of know-how (educated personal), administrative capacity, in frontier regions such as Gambella, Afar and Somali (interview May 2000). According to Proclamation No 7/1992, the regional states were vested with such powers within their geographic areas in all matters that were not expressly assigned to the central government (Negarit gazeta, 1992). The central government was assigned the powers of, inter alia, defence, foreign affairs, fiscal and economic policy, citizenship, building and administering major development establishments, major communication networks, declaration of state of emergency and deployment of the army where situations beyond the capacity of regional governments arose (Art. 9(1)) The regional states, on the other hand, enjoyed

---

<sup>181</sup> The regional executive committee is responsible for policymaking and major administrative decisions. It supervises the bureaux that are counterparts to the ministries in the federal government. The bureaux are independent of federal ministries; even though there are areas in which they co-operate and get technical support. The responsibilities of the bureaux include policy formulation, coordination and overseeing of the activities of zonal and woreda corresponding departments offices, and control of capital and recurrent budgets.

<sup>182</sup> In other words, each region has at its apex a regional council, with council members directly elected to represent each woreda; for example, the Oromia regional council consists of 353 members from 180 woredas. The councils have the legislative and executive authority to direct internal affairs of the region, and are complemented by an independent regional judiciary. The councils implement their mandate through an executive committee and regional sector bureaux which report to it. Thus the Oromia executive committee is chaired by the region’s president, who is directly elected, and consists of 21 members –the 12 zonal administrators (appointed by the council but drawn from the ranks of the civil services) and 9 elected council members.

broad powers in such matters as language, culture, education, health, police and security, social and economic development activities (Art. 52c).

Some powers were explicitly allocated to the regional states as “Special Powers.” In article 10 the regional states had the power: a) to plan, direct and supervise social and economic development programs in accordance with the relevant policy of the central government; (Art.10(b) to establish, direct and supervise social and economic development establishments or enterprises (Art. 10(4c)); to prepare, approve and implement their own budgets (Art. 10(59d)); to employ and administer their own personnel (Art.10(7e)); to acquire, own and transfer properties (Art. 10) subject to the laws and policies of the central government; to borrow from domestic lending sources and levy duties and taxes in their respective region (art. 10(1)). For the sake of clarity, the distribution of responsibilities between the federal and the regional states is presented in table 3 below:

**(Table 7.5) Structure of power and distribution of responsibilities**

<b>Federal Government (exclusive)</b>	<b>Regional States (some shared with Federal)</b>
Defence Affairs Foreign Affairs Economic Policy Conferring of Citizenship  Declaration of state of emergency Deployment of army where situation beyond the capacity of regional governments arise Printing of currency Establishment of uniform standard of measurement and calendar Levy taxes and collect duties on revenue sources reserved to federal government Establishing and administering major development establishments Building and establishing major communication networks including major road linking two or more states	All matters with the exception of those listed in column I Domestic borrowing Administer land and other natural resources Levy and collect taxes and duties on revenue sources reserved to the state. Prepare, approve and implement their own budget Enact and enforce laws on the state civil services and their conditions of work Establish and administer a state police force

Source: The Constitution of the FDRE, 1994

Although the above enumeration shows that proclamation No. 7/1992 provided the regions with wide powers, other provisions of the proclamation made clear that the regions remained subordinated to the central government (Nahum 1997). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that proclamation No. 7/1992 was a milestone in the development of Ethiopian federalism since it created the legal foundations for an ethnically based decentralised state structure.

## Sub-regional divisions and powers

In discussing the division of powers, we should not focus only on regions and the centre (federal government). The power and authority of local government—i.e. zones and woredas - are also important, particularly in terms of the self-government of nations, nationalities and peoples. In the following section I therefore discuss briefly the territorial and administrative hierarchy and powers of the new system.

*Zones* are the main instruments for adjusting boundaries to match ethnicity. A zone does not have its own council. The exceptions are the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) where the zones (all ethnicity based) have elected zonal councils. In other regions, there are also a series of 'special woredas' (for ethnic minorities) which are given zonal status i.e. they report directly to the regional authorities. For the rest, the regional councils appoint zonal executive committees.<sup>183</sup>

The logic behind zones and special woredas is to (1) help cut up large states and (2) give minority groups some measure of developmental and/or administrative autonomy (interview with Kifle Wadajo, Chairman of the Constitutional Drafting Committee, May, 2000). In short, the zone administration is meant to serve primarily as a link between the regional state at the top and the district (woreda) and local levels at the bottom. There are approximately 66 zones and 6 Special woredas.

The second level is the "*woreda*" (district), which is the key or basic local administrative unit in the regional government structure. Administratively it is subordinated to the regional and zonal administration. It has a council and an executive committee and it has a legal mandate to plan and implement development efforts in its respective areas. In other words, the woreda is an institution designed to bring government closer to the people and to ensure grass roots participation.<sup>184</sup> It represents a decentralised and devolved level of formal state structure within the regions. Minority nationalities at the woreda level were guaranteed representation in the Woreda Council regardless of size. The main constitutional powers and duties of the Woreda Council and its executive are:

---

<sup>183</sup> Two other categories of Zone are Special (urban) Zones (e.g. Bahir Dar in Amhara, Adama/Nazerth in Oromia), and Nationality Zones (e.g. Agew Humra in Amhara) & Special Woredas of (Southern Nations), which recognise specific ethnicities and in some cases enjoy a higher political status than surrounding Zones (thus Special Zones in Amhara have their own elected Councils, while Special Woredas in Southern have a strong direct relationship with the Regional Council).

<sup>184</sup> The woreda level administration is a duplication of the regional level in its structure and functioning. It has its own "peoples representatives," a standing committee of executives, and a judicial unit.

1. Preparing and approving the annual woreda development plans and budgets, and monitoring their implementation.
2. Setting certain tax rates and collecting local taxes and levies (principally land use tax, agricultural income tax, sales taxes and user fees); remitting a portion of the local tax take to the zone.
3. Administering the fiscal resources available to the woreda (own source and transfers);
4. Constructing and maintaining low-grade rural tracks, water points and woreda-level administrative infrastructure (offices, houses);
5. Administering primary schools and health institutions,
6. Managing agricultural development activities, and protecting natural resources.

A woreda may consist of 7 to 15 or more kebeles. There are approximately 550 woredas in the country and these institutions of local government have similar organs as well as functions and are subordinated to regional governments. Moreover, research in the regions indicates that most of them do not have an independent financial base and are dependent for their budgets on the region (World Bank 2000).<sup>185</sup> In addition, because of the lack of clear criteria and definition, what constitutes a woreda varies from place to place (e.g. 180 in Oromia to 13 in Harari state)

The Woreda Council is democratically elected but indirectly by the people (from each Kebele in the woreda) and is responsible for the administration of local affairs.<sup>186</sup> However, in practice in the elections conducted so far, the EPRDF controlled nominations at the local level and hence assured that most of those “elected” are members or supporters of the regime (discussed in greater detail in the next chapter). For example in the 1992 election, in the words of a senior American diplomat:

“...party-controlled local organizations elect intermediate organizations, which elect national organisations, which appoint executives, boards, commissions, and other public bodies from social organizations dominated by the party” (Herman Cohen, 1992).

The EPRDF managed to do this because of the head start it enjoyed in possessing a preponderance of politically relevant resources, including cash, communications, organisation and control of the armed forces (Young 1997, Leta 1999, Vestal 1999).

---

<sup>185</sup> While Proclamation no. 41/1993 enables local government to identify its resources, most of the woredas lack the capacity to identify, let alone to mobilise, the resources available to them. In for example Somali, Afar and Gambella they were both unable to identify and collect revenues due to administrative shortages and the lack of systems to assure proper collection (World Bank 2000).

<sup>186</sup> The woreda Council has dual accountability: upward to its respective Zonal and Regional Executive Committees, and downward to its electorate. Woreda Executive Committees consists of around a dozen members, drawn from elected representatives and sector bureau chiefs. Woredas also feature a court, which falls under the authority of the regional judicial apparatus.



Below woreda are kebele (local councils) that are a direct copy of the woreda level structure. There are, however, two major differences: (1) the kebele do not enjoy the same constitutional formality as regions, zones, and woredas, but are in effect the prime contact level for most Ethiopian citizens. (2) All of the local-level government officials, unlike their counterparts at the woreda and higher levels, are unsalaried officials. In most cases, they undertake governmental duties on a part-time basis. The only “official” Kebele officer is the Council Chairman, who receives a small monthly allowance and is in some cases permitted to keep up to 10 percent of taxes collected by the Kebele.

Kebele administrations again consist of an elected Kebele Council (in principle 100 members), a Kebele Executive Committee of 5-7 citizens, a social court<sup>187</sup> and the development and security staff posted in the Kebele. Kebele Executive Committees are answerable to their Woreda Council. The Kebele Council and Executive Committee’s main responsibilities are:

1. Preparing an annual Kebele development plan
2. Ensuring the collection of land and agricultural income tax
3. Organising local labour and in-kind contributions to development activities
4. Resolving conflicts within the community (through the social court).

To sum up, the Ethiopian federal system is formally two-layered, based on the federal government and the regional governments, as in classic federations. Local governments are hierarchically and financially subordinated to regional governments.

As mentioned earlier, while this new government structure (ethnic-based federalism) is seen by the EPRDF as a way of empowering the people to control their lives and resources, it is viewed by opposition political groups as divisive and dangerous. This critique is frequently aired by politicians who claim to give priority to their “Ethiopianness” as opposed to their “ethnic identity,” in defining themselves e.g. the All Amhara Peoples Organisation. The EPRDF’s treatment of ethnicity is also criticised by some ethnic-based groups, such as the outlawed Oromo Liberation Front (OLF),<sup>188</sup> and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). They argue that the EPRDF’s policy does not genuinely articulate the interests of the groups they claim to represent.

---

<sup>187</sup> A social court is an independent organ of the Kebele, with a judge appointed by Kebele Executive Committee and approved by the Kebele Council.

<sup>188</sup> The resulting malaise, produced by an uneven distribution of power coupled with already defined boundaries, and the significant flow of resources from Oromia to the central government to be once again redistributed through the country, continues to create discontent among many Oromos who feel that the rich and fertile soils of Southern Ethiopia are paying for the bulk of the national administration.

Before going into details of the critics and resistance to the top-down ethnic-based federal restructuring in post-Mengistu Ethiopia, it is important to discuss the fundamental change in fiscal decentralisation or the practice of ethnic federalism and revenue sharing in Ethiopia. Officially, the “federal government” recognises the importance of revenue sharing and the powers of individual states (sub-units) to pursue independent fiscal policies (Nahum 1997, Cohen, 1997). In an assessment of the Ethiopian federal experiment, Cohen for example remarks, “at the heart of the coming struggle between the federal government and the regions for definition of structure, organisation, tasks, and roles will be the revenue and budget system (Cohen 1997:147).<sup>189</sup> Therefore the following section focuses on the functioning of fiscal revenue sharing by way of institutional intergovernmental systems on the issues and factors that influence the flow and allocation of public funds, in the context of ethnic-based federalism. Hence I will focus on: (i) the revenue side (tax assignments); (ii) intergovernmental transfers; (iii) intergovernmental relations more generally.

### **Regional Autonomy and Fiscal Decentralisation**

The devolution of power to the regional governments requires fiscal decentralisation—the transfer of fiscal power to sub-national units of governments (Oates 1999, Cohen, 1997).<sup>190</sup> Fiscal federalism deals with the assignment of expenditure responsibilities and of revenue powers, with the design of intergovernmental transfers, and with the macroeconomic implications of sub national (and national) fiscal behaviour. An intergovernmental fiscal system is usually analysed by way of the following questions: Who levies what taxes (revenue assignment)? Who spends the money (expenditure assignments)? Is there an imbalance between the revenues and expenditures of sub-national governments (the so-called vertical imbalance which is usually rectified by intergovernmental transfer), and how fiscal institutions distribute funding between

---

<sup>189</sup> Given that a move towards a more democratic regime can be argued to be the underlying force behind decentralisation policies, the topics of democracy and democratisation practices are left to the next chapter.

<sup>190</sup> In fact scholars in the Consociational school have argued for decentralisation of resources but also that “proportionality” in the allocation of public funds” is essential for successful power-sharing arrangements between ethnic groups (Lijphart 1977, 1993:188-9). By proportionality, scholars usually mean allocation of central fiscal resources to regions or ethnic communities in proportion to their share of the population. The underlying argument seems to be that allocations proportional to population are a natural compromise position most likely to be accepted by leaders of the competing ethnic segments. Such allocation may also seem more self-evident and just to competing ethnic populations.

government units at the same level of governments (the so-called horizontal imbalance which is usually rectified through interterritorial compensation funds).

### Revenue Assignment

In Ethiopia, the Federal constitution (article 96-98) assigns responsibility for revenue mobilisation in the manner shown in table 4. The Constitution defines the objective of revenue sharing and divides resources into three categories: those reserved for the executive use of the central government; those reserved exclusively for the regions and those shared by centre and regions. There are some noteworthy points in the arrangement. First, the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over international taxes, as is the case with all federations, and also the lion's share of the domestic indirect tax base. The share of the regions is concentrated mostly in direct taxes and land use fees. Second, in the case of public enterprises, by far the largest contributors to domestic taxes, the type of taxpayer rather than the type of tax determines jurisdiction. For example, the federal government taxes the income and sales of federal public enterprises and the regions tax regional public enterprises. Third, the formula for sharing joint revenues is not yet settled. So far the federal government has been levying and collecting these taxes and sharing them with the regions on an ad hoc basis. As of now, these are relatively small in value, but their share could become potentially important as the volume of revenues grows. Finally the residuary powers of taxation are not pre-assigned to the federal or regional governments, but are to be assigned by a joint decision of both houses of the federal parliament.

**Table 7. 4. Category of revenues and taxes and responsibility for revenue mobilisation**

Article 96: source of Revenue Federal	Article 97: Source of Revenue Region	Article 98: Source of Revenue Shared
1. Customs duties, taxes, and other payments levied on imports and exports.	1. Tax on income of Regional and private sector employees.	1. Taxes on jointly-owned enterprises
2. Taxes on the incomes of Federal government employees, and Ethiopian employees of international organisations.	2. Fees for usufruct land rights.	2. Taxes on corporation profits and shareholder dividends.
3. Taxes on Federal Government enterprises.	3. Taxes on the incomes of private and incorporated farmers.	3. Taxes on large-scale mining, petroleum and gas operation.
4. Tax on the proceeds of national lotteries and related ventures.	4. Taxes on the profits of resident merchants.	
5. Taxes on the proceeds of road, air, rail, water, and sea transport services.	5. Sales tax.	
6. Rental incomes from Federal Government Houses and	6. Water transport fees within the Region.	
	7. Rental income from State Government Houses and properties.	
	8. Taxes on Regional Government enterprises.	

Properties.	9. Taxes on small-scale mining operations.	
7. Federal license fees.	10. Regional license fees.	
8. Income from Federal monopolies.	11. Royalties on the use of forest resources.	
9. Stamp duties		

Source: Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Proclamation NO 33/92. Megabit Gazette, 52<sup>nd</sup> Year. No. 7 (Addis Ababa) pp. 25-28

The heavy tilt in tax revenue in favour of the federal government can be seen from table 5 which shows the relative federal and regional shares in aggregate revenues. The World Bank estimated that the regional states collected only between 15 and 18 percent of total national revenues between 1994 and 1998 while the federal government collected between 82.73% for 1993/94 and 82.96% by 1997/98 (World Bank 2000). The main reason for the large federal share is self-evidently its predominance in the total indirect tax base, which is far larger than the direct tax base. For instance, the federal government collects 100 percent of import duties and over 80 percent of domestic indirect taxes, which together have a share of over 60 percent in the aggregate tax base. The revenues of the regions are concentrated in direct taxes, which have a share of less than 40 percent in the total tax base and which have been less buoyant than indirect tax. Another noteworthy feature about regional revenues is their skewed distribution across regions. As table 6 shows, over 88 percent of the revenues are concentrated in four regions (the three largest --Oromia, Amhara, and SNNPR, and the relatively well developed Tigray) while the smallest and more impoverished in periphery like Gambella, Banishing, and Afar account for less than 6 percent of the total own revenue of the regions. There is wide dispersion in per capita revenue as well, with a high of Birr 71.7 in Dire Dada to a low of Birr 8.2 in the Somali region as per FY01 figures.

Table 7.5b: Regional Revenue Variations

Regions1/	Per capita own revenue		Revenue share	
	1999/00	Birr 2000/2001	1999/00	Percentage 2000/01
Tigris	21.4	20.8	8.7	9.1
Afar	12.4	12.7	1.0	1.8
Amhara	11.7	11.3	19.1	21.8
Oromia	15.3	15.2	44.1	40.4
Somali	8.0	8.2	3.8	3.6
Benishagul-Gumuz	21.1	24.2	1.6	1.5
SNNP	11.6	11.5	16.5	17.1
Gambella	30.2	35.6	0.8	0.9
Harari	54.2	54.0	0.9	1.0
Dire Dawa	77.8	71.7	3.4	2.7
Total	14.0	13.8	100.0	100.0

[1] Addis Ababa, with per capita own revenue of Birr 580.1 in FY00 and Birr 397.8 in FY01, has not been included in the above table as its disproportionately high values distort the relative shares of other regions.

Source: World Bank 2001

### *Expenditure*

The resulting revenue concentration contrasts with a spending decentralisation process whereby the responsibility for key social functions or the obligations of government in this federal system are the responsibility of regional states, zones, and woredas. The only activities that are the exclusive competence of the national authorities are those associated with defence and foreign affairs. In the areas of economic and social infrastructure, the national government shares responsibility with the states, while the latter have exclusive competence in primary and secondary education and local organisation and services. The result is a pronounced vertical imbalance with mismatches between regional responsibility and revenue generating capacities. For example, in the 1993-1994 fiscal year, out of a total expenditure of Birr, 3,145 (\$39.2) million <sup>191</sup> by the regions, only Birr 807 (\$9.8) million (26%) was generated by the states, with grants and subsidy from the central government accounting for the remainder. Table 6 shows federal and regional shares in recurrent expenditure. As we can see in the next table, sub national governments are responsible for almost 70% of the total consolidated expenditures.

***Regional Transfers:*** Given this expenditure, decentralisation and collection centralisation, a high degree of vertical fiscal imbalance results. In the last few years, regional governments were able to finance, on average, 30 percent of their expenditures from their own revenue sources. The remaining 70 percent was financed by the federal government in the form of a transfer (budget subsidy).<sup>192</sup> On the other hand, there is also a horizontal imbalance as regions have different levels of development. For instance, the primary school participation rate is 83% in Gambella and 8% in Afar; primary health coverage is 62% in Harari and 25% in Somali (World Bank 2000, MEDaC 2000). Benishangul has a few small towns and fewer roads. Somali is poor and arid, with little infrastructure and depends on livestock while Oromia is relatively rich. The constitution states that the federal government may grant funds to regions taking into account the relative development of the region. Both sorts (horizontal & vertical) of imbalances are addressed via a system of financial transfer which takes the form of a

<sup>191</sup> 1 US\$ is equivalent to Birr 8.2 in 2000.

<sup>192</sup> In comparative terms according to the World Bank's data Ethiopia has the highest imbalance coefficient in the developing world, namely 0.52, while Mexico and Malaysia's coefficients are 0.37 and 0.36 respectively (World Bank 2000:25).

block subsidy (unconditional) that regions can spend as they consider most appropriate or according to their own development plans.<sup>193</sup>

The federal transfer is guided by the principle of equity between regions and is, therefore, distributed according to a series of indicators that reflect regional needs. The formula for budget subsidy to each region (so called Federal Budget Grant Formula) has been considerably changed (MEDaC, 1998, World Bank 2000).<sup>194</sup> This formula was first created in 1994/95 and was based on five indicators with different relative weights: population (30%), I-distance<sup>195</sup> (25%) regional tax raising effort (20%), 1992/93 capital expenditure (15%), and size of area (10%). In the fiscal year 97/98 the formula has been simplified into three basic categories: (i) the region's population share (60%). (ii) Its index of a set of development indicators relative to the national index (25%). (iii) the region's projected share of revenue in its budget relative to the planned performance of all other regions (15%). According to this new formula the population index almost doubled, while, the Development Index<sup>196</sup> fell to 25 percent, and the regional revenue-to-budget ration was cut in half to 15%. In 1998-1999, the same formula was used. However, in 2000, MEDaC concluded a research project that led to a new formula, which is to be kept for an interim period of three years, while developing the database and the instruments that would allow the calculation of a more refined formula. The current formula includes the following four indicators:

1. **Population index:** this index present in all versions of the formula (that increased from one-third prior to 1998 to 60 percent in the 1998 formula), has been marginally reduced to 55% and is meant to give more weight and, therefore, more resources to the more populated regions.

<sup>193</sup> While the main reason for using a block grant is to respect regional autonomy, there is the risk of regions being implicitly required to follow federal priorities given their great dependence on the federal subsidy (on average 60%) of their revenues in 2000). Moreover, because the majority of regional parties are members or/and attached to EPRDF (the so called PDO's created by TPLF) there is a wide consensus on development priorities between the federal level and the regions.

<sup>194</sup> The World Bank's Regionalization Study included a detailed description and analysis of the grant formula as it operated up to the 1998. The 1994/95 capital budget allocations to regions made use of the factors of population (30%) development (25%), regional tax effort (20%), previous year budgeted capital expenditure (15%), are 10%. For 1995-96, the capital and recurrent capital and recurrent budgets were merged. The 1995-96 formula included three factors, each weighted at 33,3 percent: population, I-distance (an aggregate of eight indicators), and budgeted state revenues. In 1996-1997, the same formula was applied but the I-distance was calculated on the basis of only five indicators and renamed the "Development Index." Recurrent capital grants were merged as well into a single lump payment to give regions autonomy and flexibility. In the 1997-1998a, the same formula was retained but the weightings adjusted.

<sup>195</sup> The I-distance was an indicator reflecting relative development between regions.

<sup>196</sup> The Development Index for each region was calculated on the basis of six factors: education level, health level, road density, electricity consumption, water coverage, telephones per 1000 people.

2. **Expenditure Need index:** this index has been included to replace a level of development index, used until 1999. This previous index was composed of six factors that were meant to reflect the relative level of development of each region: education level, health level, road density, electricity consumption, safe drinking water coverage, and density of telephones lines. The new index on the other hand, focuses on the level of recurrent or administrative costs in the region.
3. **Poverty Index:** the poverty index, intended to reflect 'variations in food consumption and food insecurity and hence the expenditure requirements for the agricultural sectors', is a new variable in the formula.
4. **Revenue raising effort index:** this index is included to give the regions an incentive to collect their own revenue and not to rely too heavily on federal transfers. In its most recent version, the formula also includes a sector outcome performance indicator in order to reflect budget utilisation. The indicator is formulated by the change in primary school participation rate, number of health centres built and rural roads constructed in the previous two years, compared with the national average.

Table 7.7a gives a comparative picture of the 1998 and 2001 formula for federal grant distribution and table 7b shows the resulting changes in the relative entitlements of the regions.

Table 7.7a. Comparative picture of the 1998 and 2001 formula of federal grant distribution

Variable	Weight in	
	Fy98 formula	FY/01 formula
Index of population	0.60	0.55
Composite Inverted Index of development	0.25	0.20
Index of revenue raising effort	0.15	0.15
Poverty index	0.00	0.10
Total	1.00	1.00

Table 7.7b. The Federal budget grant formula

Region	Aggregate Index (100%)	Population factor (55%)	Poverty Factor (10%)	Expenditure need factor (20%)	Revenue raising effort (15%)
Oromia	27.96	36.70	7.97	12.02	30.50
Amhara	21.40	26.65	13.03	13.44	18.33
SNNP	17.97	20.58	12.98	12.11	19.51
Tigray	8.29	6.04	13.30	9.72	11.3
Somali	8.12	6.04	7.95	17.71	3.10
Afar	5.47	1.97	11.90	15.01	1.28
Benishangul	4.12	0.88	10.93	8.97	4.98
Gambella	3.16	0.34	9.60	6.90	4.22
Dire Dawa	1.97	0.53	5.65	3.07	3.30
Harari	1.54	0.26	6.69	1.03	3.49
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: The Federal Budget Grant Formula in Ethiopia, MeEDaC, March 2000

---

As is shown in Table 7b column 1, three regions (Oromia, Amhara and SNNP) receive over 67% of the total federal transfer. This is explained by the fact that these three regions make up over 80% of the population of the country and that population is still the most important variable in the composite index. In other words, the formula allocates higher shares to those states with large population size, although the shares are not completely equivalent to their share in the total population. The less developed or “emerging” regions receive higher subsidy on a per capita basis than the other regions. For example, the per capita share of regions such as Afar, Benishangual, Gambella, Somali, and Harari are the highest, indicating that the grant system has a substantial redistributive effect. The regions depict a large horizontal imbalance, which is a reflection of their different tax bases. Table 7c below shows the federal transfer to the regions in per capita terms and region’s own resources.



**Table 7.11 Ethiopia: Federal and Regional Share of State revenue, 1993-1998 in US \$**

Region	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Tigray	5,392,683	7,130,488	10,514,634	12,802,439	10,560,976
Afar	867,073	1,187,805	1,353,659	1,793,902	1,342,683
Amhara	11,589,024	14,686,585	16,489,024	19,526,829	21,648,780
Oromiya	26,258,537	30,354,878	40,445,122	42,347,561	41,996,341
Somali	5,289,024	5,745,122	4,902,439	4,602,439	5,856,098
Benishangul	439,024	615,854	664,634	839,024	981,707
SNNP	8,941,463	12,787,805	17,489,024	19,215,854	17,756,098
Gambella	481,707	662,195	597,561	880,488	814,634
Harari	697,561	723,17	924,683	941,463	970,732
Addis Ababa	22,521,951	31,985,366	42,532,927	56,497,561	65,487,805
Dire Dawa	2,462,195	2,231,707	1,798,780	2,186,585	2,198,780
Regional Total	84,940,244	108,110,976	137,730,488	161,634,146	169,614,634
Federal Total	395,524,390	612,963,415	71,801,220	783,725,610	866,646,341
National Total	480,464,634	721,074,390	849,531,707	945,359,756	1,036,260,976
Regional states as % of total	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Federal Gov. as % of national total	<b>82%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>

Total include tax and non-tax revenue, 1996-1998 is based on revenue estimates.

Figure were converted from Ethiopian Birr to US dollars based on rate of US\$ 1=8.2.

Source: World Bank 1998.

**Table 7.12 Regional 2000/01 budget allocation per capita (Birr per capita) \* and budget allocation per type of revenue per percent over the region's total revenue**

Region	Federal Grant	External Loans	External Grants	Own Revenue	Total
Tigray	68 54%	20 16%	14 11%	23 18%	126
Afar	156 71%	33 15%	16 7%	14 6%	219
Amhara	44 60%	11 15%	5 7%	13 17%	73
Oromia	43 58%	10 14%	4 6%	17 23%	75
Somali	76 69%	19 17%	6 6%	9 8%	110
Benishangul	266 70%	59 16%	27 7%	27 7%	379
SNNP	42 53%	16 20%	8 11%	13 16%	79
Gambella	538 74%	104 14%	45 6%	39 5%	726
Harari	335 66%	82 16%	30 6%	61 12%	508
Dire Dawa	82 37%	29 13%	26 12%	83 38%	220
Sub-total	53 59%	14 16%	7 8%	15 17%	90
Addis Ababa	0 0%	29 6%	22 4%	447 90%	497
Total Average	53 48%	15 14%	8 7%	32 31%	106

- Population figures correspond to 1998

- Calculation of regional transfers: Domestic revenues+counterpart funds+Loans and Assistance= Total resource available at Federal level - Federal requirements (recurrent + capital) = Resource available to transfer.

Source: 1993 Fiscal Year Draft Budget Proclamation, MaF, October 2000; Annual

Report on the Ethiopian Economy, Vol. I, 1999/2000. Ethiopian Economic

Association, CSA Statistic abstract 2001 and author's own calculation.

It is clear from the table that all regions, except Addis Ababa, are highly dependent on the federal subsidy. On average, the federal subsidy covers about 60 percent of the regions' revenues<sup>197</sup> and the regions' own revenues cover between 6% (Afar) and 23% (Oromia). In 2000, for example, 71.7 percent of total resources received by the regional states came from the common pool of national taxes, while only 28.3 percent was financed directly by regional revenues. The figure indicates not only that the vertical fiscal imbalance is in general quite large, but also that it is quite asymmetric among regions. If one were to separate the special city administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, the remaining regions of Ethiopia can be divided into four groups: those with ratios consistently near 20 percent to about 30 percent (Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and SNNP), second those consistently exhibiting ratios below 10 percent (Baneshangul/Gumuz and Gambella), third of consistently declining (Somali) and fourth fluctuating (Afar and Harari). The first group comprises the relatively developed regions, while the second group consists of less developed ones. Somali's expenditure levels are rising fast as a result of the equalization process and hence the ratio exhibits a declining trend. These numbers clearly show the influence of intergovernmental transfers and the sub-national impact of the present system of subsidies in terms of shifting resources to the least developed regions.

One could argue that since the vertical imbalance in the new fiscal federal structure is very high, the federal government can clearly enforce its view in the case of disagreement. Moreover, as Grindle found in Kenya and Mexico, devolution can often enhance the control of the centre rather than reducing it, especially when regional states do not have sufficient taxation powers or other means of generating their own revenue (see Grindle 1999:101).<sup>198</sup>

### **Territorial reorganisation and conflicts in post-Mengistu Ethiopia**

As mentioned earlier, while international analysts reacted to Ethiopia's ethnofederal arrangement with optimism (Ottaway, 1994, Keller 1995, Henze 1998), some Ethiopians vehemently opposed the structural change; especially those located in urban

<sup>197</sup> Without taking into account Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa.

<sup>198</sup> In his observations on Gambella John Young for example notes "given the level of development in Gambella and the desire of the EPRDF to reward political allies, a considerable amount of central government money has flowed to the region. Most of it into the state sector. Indeed with few revenue sources and a low level of commercialisation, almost all the financing for construction and state supported development comes from the central government (Young 1999:330).

areas, in particular members of the Amhara elite.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, other non-Tigrean ethnic groups/elites view this *de jure* devolution of power with great suspicion. The Amhara elite view the new federal structure as an attempt by the Tigrean-dominated ruling party to dismantle their hegemonic position within the national government. Most southern ethnic groups, including the Oromo, the Ogadeni, and the Afar for example see the government's regionalisation plan as simply a ploy by the new Tigrean elite to replace the Amharas as head of the national government without actually devolving any real power to the regions.<sup>200</sup> They argue that both the centre and regional states created by this new federal structure continue to be dominated by supporters of the EPRDF (PDO's) who in fact simply serve as intermediaries for national government directives. Thus, while the government has actively encouraged the division of the country into distinct ethnic units, it has simultaneously sought to destroy those ethnic organisations that are independent of the EPRDF (e.g. OLF, ONLF).

According to these critics, what distinguishes the ethnic policy of the EPRDF from its predecessors, then, is simply the language of democracy and ethnic diversity. Behind this *liberal facade*, ethnic hegemony, chauvinism, and authoritarianism remain integral components of the Ethiopian political system (Interview May 2000). Accordingly, democratic political participation continues to be hindered by the TPLF/EPRDF (see next chapter). Also the right to self-determination, and if need be, secession, was guaranteed in the new Constitution, it soon became clear, however, that any attempt by a political party to avail itself of this right was to be met with stern opposition. Theodore Vestal remarks:

...The EPRDF strategy to establish a governing system of ethnic federalism emphasising rights of "nations, nationalities, and Peoples. This high-sounding, cribbed from Lenin, is more Machiavellian than Wilsonian however. If the outnumbered Tigreans who direct the EPRDF/FDRE can keep other ethnic groups divided against each other in ethnozenophias or content to manage affairs in their own limited bailiwicks, then the one governing party can subsume larger matters. Thus, what the EPRDF views as the false ideology of nationalism for a "Greater Ethiopia" can be kept in check and its proponents divided and conquered (Vestal 2001:2).

<sup>199</sup> The Amhara communities objected strenuously to the plan as a blueprint for the Balkanisation of Ethiopia. They resented being obliged to emphasise their Amhara identity at the expense of their Ethiopian identity, conveniently glossing over their political dominance under the emperors.

<sup>200</sup> It is worth noting here that both centrist/pan-Ethiopian nationalist and ethno-political movements such as the OLF argue that the EPRDF's policy does not genuinely articulate the interests of the groups they claim to represent. Part of this contestation revolves around issues of representation. The EPRDF's framework, which draws upon the TPLF's experience with the people of Tigray, assumes that each ethnic group should be represented by a single political organisation.

The EPRDF openly *acknowledges* (Interview May 2000) that it is unwilling to compromise or negotiate on certain issues (e.g. devolution, ethnic parties and ethno-federalism) it perceives as fundamental (Young 1997, Lata 1999). Most importantly, although the EPRDF came to power by force, it refuses to acknowledge as legitimate any opposition parties that advocate the use of force or even those that do not renounce violence. This stipulation would be appropriate if made by a democratically elected government. However, because the EPRDF itself came to power by force and has been unable to hold free and fair elections which encompass genuine and organised opposition. Their stipulation that opposition parties specifically renounce violence and accept the EPRDF's right to set the parameters of political participation or face indefinite detention on charges of inciting violence is controversial. Because the EPRDF regime violates democratic rights "legitimate method of peaceful government change" are not yet appropriate and the EPRDF government continues to be viewed by many as illegitimate. After 1993, opposition groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front continued to challenge the Tigrean dominated Ethiopian state militarily (see also next chapter).

Two other problems related to federal restructuring (local conflict with spill-over) need to be mentioned here: the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the Ethio-Eritrean (border) conflict. Since 1992 an Islamic group called Al-Itihad al-Islami has challenged the EPRDF. The organization led by militant Muslim leader Ahmed Bille Hassen is based in Somalia and has carried out raids in the Somali region of Ethiopia (region 5). It has encouraged Somali people in Ethiopia to fight the Ethiopian government and has declared its intentions of creating an Islamic Somali state including Ogaden. Because of this EPRDF forces have time and again crossed into southern Somalia to fight Al-Itihad. Since 11 September the Ethiopian government has accused this organisation (and the transitional government of Somalia) of terrorist (al Qaeda) connections primarily for its own purposes: to get necessary resources from the US in the name of anti-terrorist struggle in post-11 September US policy). Since Somalia had no central government at this time, Ethiopia's invasion has gone largely unchecked. Ethiopia, with an equal split between Christians and Muslims, hopes to remain a secular state and the government are unlikely to tolerate armed rebellion from Islamic, and/or ethnonationalists.

## Federalisation and communal violence

What about inter-group antagonism? The process of ethnicisation and ethnic-based federalism has, on the one hand, tried to solve ethnopolitical conflict or accommodate its diversity in Ethiopia. On the other hand it has also exacerbated existing antagonisms and interethnic conflict. According to Abbink (1993:172) the “Constitution has tried to reify, to freeze something which is by nature fluid and shifting, ethnic identity,” and in doing so, another observer concludes “runs the risk of interethnic friction and conflict, a risk that has already materialised in much of the southern Ethiopia” (Walle 1994:178). Before going into a discussion of the several incidents of interethnic conflicts in the post-1991 period over territory and on the question of ‘citizenship’ in the newly restructured regional states we need to distinguish types of conflict in Ethiopia. The first conflict, which I have so far discussed, is *group—versus--state—*, which led to the fall of Mengistu and continued, also against the EPRDF government (e.g. OLF, ONLF against the EPRDF). In the majority of cases in the past ethno-political conflicts were against the man in uniform and never became communal (e.g. as happened in Somalia & Rwanda).

In contrast a second conflict can be characterised as “*group-against-group*” or communalism, which lead to the harassment, expulsion and massacres of one ethnic group by another in several regions beginning early 1992. Some of these conflicts were instigated by “ethnic parties” and were a bi-product of ethnic policy (instrumentalist) (Dessalegn 1994:243). However, it would be false to assume that the process of decentralisation alone ushered in regional and ethnic nationalism. After all, interethnic conflict is not new in Ethiopia. In the past, major population groups in the region conflicted with each other due to various factors. For instance there were conflicts over resources between Afar and Issa, Afar and Kereyu (Oromo), Amhara and Oromo, Garre (Somali) and (Borana) Oromo etc (cf. Markakis 1994, Tronvoll 2000).<sup>201</sup> It is also not true (e.g. as argued by many centrist/pan-Ethiopian nationalists) to argue that the EPRDF has been responsible for introducing ethnicity into politics in Ethiopia. As we saw in the former chapter the ethnicisation of the Ethiopian polity predates the EPRDF.

---

<sup>201</sup>This is to argue that conflict between different groups within Ethiopia is common. Between pastoralist groups, these conflicts involve competition to control grazing lands and water supplies, and they increase during drought. My field work in Oromia, and Somali regional state during the 2000 and my personal observations throughout years support this argument.

Yet, the process of decentralisation and ethnicisation did, on the other hand, foster the primordial feelings that the previous regimes had denied or suppressed. Therefore it is correct to argue that the new political establishment has intensely affected inter-group relations, redressing old imbalances while creating new ones. Moreover, some of these conflicts [re] emerged because of unfulfilled promises of self-government and new regional boundaries. This is indeed true in the SNNPR, Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states where conflicts between ethnic and/or identity groups and governance were observed (Tronvoll 2000, Abbink 1997 EHRCO 2002). Moreover, interethnic conflicts concerning regional boundaries were observed between Borana (Oromo) and Gerri (Somali), the Afar and the Issa (Somali), the Gedeo (SNNPR) and the Guji (Oromo) which resulted in the death and displacement of thousands of people (Tornovoll 2000).

Put differently, the crucial problem that the new federal arrangement faces is the difficulty of defining the boundaries of the regional states. This problem could be explained by the incompatibility of culture/ethnic and politico-administrative boundaries, the fluid nature of ethnic identity, contested politico-administrative decisions on regional boundaries, and traditional competitions of ethnic groups over such resources as water points and grazing land. John Markakis has, for example, identified competition for resources in a scarce environment as the major factor that shapes the confrontation between groups and individuals in the Horn of Africa (1994).

Here I only consider very briefly a few cases of these multiple conflicts. These are the conflict between Oromo (Oromia) and ethnic groups from the surrounding states—Somali and Afar; The Issa (Somali) and Afar, the conflict in Gambella—between Nuer and Anuack; in Benishangul-Gumuz between Berta and Gumuz, the Mezenger and Sheko (SNNPR); the Sidama and the ethnic cleansing of Amhara from different regional states and the question of citizenship.

The Oromia region is experiencing conflict with Somali—the conflict between Borana (Oromo) and Garri (Somali), along the central part of the Oromia-Somali border, after the new regional boundaries favoured the Somalis.<sup>202</sup> The longstanding territorial

---

<sup>202</sup> The district was split into two Oromia woredas (Arero and Liben) and three Somali woredas (Liban and Moyale, and Dolo Odo). The main cause of their conflict has traditionally been competition over land resources.

disputes between Garri and Borana over claims to Hudet, Moyalle, Lei and Gof areas (grazing areas and water wells) has, since 1992, become intertwined with the boundary disputes between Oromia and the Somali regional state. There are also the Kereyu (Oromo) and the Afar, the Gujj (Oromo) and Gedeo (SNNP), intraregional conflicts arising from territorial reorganisation. The intervention of several actors such as the regional government and insurgent opposition force (e.g. the OLF in support of the Oromo) have therefore, greatly complicated conflicts and their management between the conflicting groups.

Like the former case the causes of conflicts between the Oromo and the surrounding groups include the unresolved nature of socioeconomic issues that are further complicated by ethnic antagonisms as in the conflict between Gedeo and Guji. Tronvoll (2000:23) for example notes:

The Gedeo people are settled agriculturalists and live in the fertile, densely populated SNNPR region. The Guji, an agro-pastoral people, are their neighbours to the east, in a lowland area that is not so densely populated. Traditionally, the Gedeo and Guji interact peacefully; they intermarry, exchange produce and cooperate in production efforts. In the border areas the people are generally bilingual and Gedeo live within Guji territory and *vice versa*. The Guji are part of the Oromo family, but the Gedeo also have elements of a *Gada* structure, and the two groups have similar types of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. In conjunction with the new administrative entities and border, the issue of where the physical borders between the two ethnic groups should be drawn has aroused immense concern. Since agricultural land is scarce, there have been sporadic outbreaks of conflict over landed resources in this area. Moreover, the border between the Gedeo and Guji is also the same as the border between the Oromia and SNNP regional states, which infuses these borders with even greater importance.

There are similar conflicts between the Issa (Somali) and the Afar. Like the former case, relations between the Afar and the Issa (Somali) have also been complicated by regionalisation. The main reason for conflict between the two groups is, however, competition over scarce and dwindling land resources (grazing land). But after the establishment of the regional states of Somali and Afar, traditional competitions between the two ethnic groups for resources are being transformed into boundary conflicts. The Issa no longer have access to their traditional water points and grazing lands. For example, severe drought affected areas Gedamaytu in Mieso woreda and Adeytu and Uduftu in Afdem woreda are situated in Afar region. These areas are ill defined (share borders with Afar, and Oromia) and this often causes conflict.

The Issa complain that the Afar prevented them from access to water and pasture resources. In this regard a recent report by the UN-Emergency Unit (Sewonet 2002:2-3) asserts that conflict between the Afar and the Issa contributed to the massive cattle death of the Issa. The report further states that the Issa were prevented by the Afar from access to water resources around the Awash River and in Gedamaytu. This exacerbated

the plight of the people and their animals in addition to the long drought in the area. On its part the Afar complain that the Issa have encroached further into the Afar territories and this has been condoned by the various peace committees set up to deal with the problem (Addis Tribune, April 19, 2002).

While the above cases focus on resource conflicts, there are other cases where violent conflicts occurred due to control over the new regional state and/or power/resources sharing. For example, in Benishanugal-Gumuz Region State (BGRS) and the Gambelle, the establishment of regional states caused changes in the patterns of relationships between the ethnic groups of the regions (Abbink 1993, Young 1999). In BGRS, two major groups in particular, the Berta and Gumuz, have been in conflict with each other over the control of the BGRS and with other groups in the region (Young 1999, Tronvoll 2000). As Young explains, while the Berta dominated in the first years after the transition, they became outnumbered when a new political party was established with assistance from the EPRDF in 1998 (Young 1999:335). Since then the Gumuz (Christian) dominated regional government. Young clearly indicates:

Two surprising facts emerge from this distribution of seats: first, the Gumuz with 107,500 people hold more seats than the Berta with 116,000, including that of the chairman. This is partly explained by the fact that representation on the regional council was not strictly by population, but by the election of three representatives from each of the nineteen woredas. Second, the region has 102,000 Amhara and 59,000 Oromo, amounting to 26% of its population, but because of provisions in Ethiopia's electoral laws which require that those running for office must speak one of the indigenous languages of the region, they are seriously underrepresented in the executive, the council and the federal parliament (Young 1999:335).

Besides the conflict between these two groups, there are also in conflict with the Amhara and the Oromo (the other two major population groups in BGRS) (cf. Young 1999). It is worth noticing that in the case of BGRS another underlying factor of ethnic conflict is the competition for control of markets, for control of items of trade and trade routes.<sup>203</sup>

The move to ethnic federalism also created interethnic competition and conflict in neighbouring Gambella regional state between the two major ethnic groups in the region, the Nuer and Anyuaa.<sup>204</sup> Here too the main important causes of conflicts between these two groups include the unresolved nature of socio-economic (resource

<sup>203</sup> The region is rich in natural products particularly gold and other items and natural products such as Animal skins and civet are important sources of contention between the Gumuzi, Shinasha, Oromo, Agaw and Amhara communities.

<sup>204</sup> However, the Anyuaa do not acknowledge the legitimacy of the census claiming that the number of the Nuers is high because the Ethio-Sudanese border is difficult to control and therefore Sudanese Nuers keep infiltrating into Gambella region.



sharing) and political issues (power sharing) that are further complicated by ethnic antagonism. This exacerbated intense conflicts between the various inhabitants of the region. For example in the recent violence (July 2002) between Nuer and Anyuaa about 60 people lost their lives and thousands were forced to flee their homes (EHRCO 2002, IRIN 3, 2002). Reportedly, what triggered the July 2002 conflict was the belief of the Nuer that the regional authorities deliberately failed to appoint another Nuer to the position of the Vice-President of the region a year after the death of the previous Nuer Vice-President of the region. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the conflict indicates accumulated discontent and rivalry between the two groups over the issues of political and resource sharing and language policy. In fact, some Nuer activists complain that being the majority in the region, they should have assumed the leading positions in the regional state. What language should be taught in school is also another cause of conflict between the two groups (cf. Young 1999).<sup>205</sup>

There was also violence in SNNPR between Anyuaa and Mezenger, Sheko and Mezenger. According to EHRCO, the cause of this violent conflict<sup>206</sup> revolves around the demand of the Sheko-Mezenger to be included in the Gambelle regional state. EHRCO's report further notes that since the period of the transition, the Sheko-Mezenger were inclined towards incorporation in the Gambelle regional state but in a referendum which was held in 1993 the majority of the residents of the Yeki Woreda voted in favour of maintaining both the Keficho zone and the Yeki Woreda in the SNNPR. This was not, however, accepted by some activists of the Sheko-Mezenger ethnic groups and the political organisation they established in 2001, the Sheko-Mezenger Peoples Democratic Unity Organisation (SMPDUO) (ibid.). The frustration of the Sheko-Mezenger over their status erupted in a violent demonstration, which was conducted on March 10, 2002. According to the EHRCO, the clash between the demonstrators and the Sheko-Mezenger group led to massacres and serious atrocities by the local government (ibid.).

---

<sup>205</sup> The two major groups claim that their own language should be taught in schools. Since 1995 both languages have been taught. Eventually, however, Nuer teachers are said to have left their teaching positions to join other government posts. Due to this, books in the Nuer language are no longer produced. Currently only the Anyuaa language is taught up to grade 10.

<sup>206</sup> In late 2001 and early 2002 alone the conflicts between Anyuaa and Mezenger in Gog and Abobo woredas and Between Mezenger and Sheko in Yeki woreda (SNNPR) about one hundred people were killed, about thousand houses were destroyed, and more than 5.800 people were displaced (EHRCO 49<sup>th</sup> Report, May 2002).

There are also other conflicts arising from territorial reorganisation in SNNPR such as the Sidama over the status of Awassa, the Gurage and Silte, and other small groups in the periphery (cf. Tronvoll 2000, Young 1999). In an ethnological study of two small groups (under twenty five thousand), the Dizi and Suri of SNNPR, Abbink documents a “very serious breakdown of the ethnic peace [which] has taken place during the past few years. Violent conflicts have increased at an alarming rate, and the shared use of resources, including cultivation sites, brush land, pasture, and trees for beehives has diminished, while intermarriage has almost been halted” (Abbink 1993:178). These cases provide interesting illustrations of the protracted and complex nature of conflicts in Ethiopia that make conflict-prevention and management very complex.

Finally, another problem related to ethnicisation and federal restructuring is the issue of “citizenship”. The relationship between “settlers” and indigenous communities and the conflicts that emerged between them also need to be mentioned here. As I have discussed in chapter four, in Ethiopian history there is a long experience of people migrating largely from the northern part to the south. The expansion of the Ethiopian state from the north to the south, environmental degradation, shortage of farming land and the search of opportunities for business and other economic activities help explain these movements of people within the country.

Patterns of relationship between the regional majority and settler communities changed as a result of the overall changes in the political structures of the country and its underlying ideologies. The formation of the federal system along ethno-linguistic lines on the basis of the principle of self-government and the increased self-assertiveness of ethnic groups, particularly in the initial years of the transition, also led to tensions between the regional majority and settler communities, in particular “Neftenya’s”<sup>207</sup>. Even though the federal constitution clearly stipulates the rights of Ethiopian citizens “to live and work anywhere in the country” (art. 32), problems between regional majorities and settler communities have been observed.<sup>208</sup> The heavy emphasis towards ethnicity in the political dispensation of post-1991 Ethiopia made the problem of

<sup>207</sup> Neftenya or newly arrived settlers from the north were primarily soldiers whom the emperor had wanted to reward for their services by granting them land in the newly conquered territories.

<sup>208</sup> Especially in the years 1991-1993, the politics of encouragement of ethnic rights and autonomy in the countryside led to a chaotic period of violent rivalry and power struggle at the local level. In some areas, such as Arussi, Hararghe and Bale provinces (current Oromia), it sometimes amounted to a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” whereby ‘non-natives’ were harassed and many people were also chased away and/or killed (interview, May 2000).

---

striking the balance between group (nation, nationalities and peoples) and individual rights complicated.

The difficulties in the relationship between the regional majorities and settler minorities could be seen from the viewpoints of representation and displacement. Many of the regional states that adopted their own working languages do not allow people who do not speak the regional language to be elected to regional assemblies (even restricted from some regional positions) even if they had lived there for generations.

Critics argue that, while the argument that the settlers need to learn the local language if they have decided to permanently reside in the regions makes some sense. However, preventing citizens from exercising their right to be elected on grounds of language, does not accord well with the spirit of the constitution (AAPO 2000). In fact, this situation is even more anachronistic in many of the regional towns of the country. Regional towns in Ethiopia are largely multinational in their make-up. The majority populations in some of the southern towns may not be the regional majorities. In the regional city-state of Harari, for example, large sections of the residents of the town are apparently prevented from meaningfully participating in the running of the affairs of “their” town. One could, therefore, argue that managing multinational towns by accommodating the interests of the “settler” population has proved to be difficult and controversial; at times leading to interethnic tensions. In comparative terms we can observe similar problems in the new states of the former Soviet empire where Russian minorities encountered resentment and in the Baltic-states open anti-Russian hostility.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> Some of the problems concerning the Russian minorities were only solved when the European Union (EU) intervened and demanded respect of human rights from the emerging candidates for the EU.

## Conclusion

One of the major tasks for theories of democracy is to reflect on what can be done to prevent conflict between national and ethnic groups from turning nasty. As Roger Brubaker (1998) has persuasively argued, in most cases there are no “solutions” to national conflicts, at least not in the sense of stable equilibrium of power or permanent arrangements that can be rationally endorsed by all sides.<sup>210</sup> However, even if national conflicts may be intractable because there is so little common ground between irreconcilable claims, some arrangements may lead to exacerbating nationalist passions while others allow for a cooling down. Federalism or/and decentralisation has often been used as a way of coping with ethnopolitical conflicts and tensions within a single country.<sup>211</sup>

Post-Mengistu Ethiopia may be one of these phenomena—of *ethnic-based federal* restructuring in the Sub-Saharan African context. Since taking control of the government in May 1991, the TPLF/EPRDF has been strongly committed to an administrative strategy aimed at transforming Ethiopia from a highly centralised unitary state that administered its rural and urban areas through highly administrative deconcentration into a federal government based on substantial devolution within ethnically defined jurisdiction. The main reason for launching such a decentralisation process as discussed in this chapter was political.<sup>212</sup> The key political choice was to see regionalisation as the most suitable form for decentralising power in the Ethiopian context. By opting for so-called ‘national cultural linguistic arrangements’ rather than on geographical lines, the government formulated a policy response to accommodate the various political constituencies in the different regions. In other words, it is fair to say that Ethiopian federalism has a clear ideological base. Federalism was chosen because it was a way of filling an ideological aspiration: granting national groups the right to determine their own affairs within their own territory.

---

<sup>210</sup> Brubaker warns against what he calls the ‘architectonic illusion’, that is ‘the belief that the right grand architecture’, the right territorial and institutional framework, can satisfy nationalist demands, quench nationalist passions, and thereby resolve national conflicts (Brubaker 1998:233-4). He argues that ‘national conflicts are in principle, by their very nature, irresolvable’ (ibid:234).

<sup>211</sup> This is the case for example in India, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, and Russia.

<sup>212</sup> The TPLF’s initial justification for introducing a federal system was the commitment to the principle of national self-determination. Although vaguely defined, this commitment was not merely a result of pragmatic considerations, but definitely an outcome of ideological influences from both the Marxist-Leninist inspired student movement and Tigrean nationalism of the 1970s.

This experiment initially started off as something akin to what Alfred Stepan (2001) has termed a *holding* together federation, as a decision was taken to create sub-national states from a unitary state. But, it has now evolved into a form of *putting* together federation, as the TPLF-dominated central government has created new states but staffed them with EPRDF and the so-called Peoples Democratic Organisations/(PDO's) ("*puppet*") parties and personalities loyal to TPLF/EPRDF as opposed to being 'real representatives' of the regional states themselves and their citizens. What seems a *demarche* in terms of transforming the unitary state to an ethnic federal one, is still stricken with representational crises since the state is regarded as dominated by the Tigrean elite at the core. This is generally viewed as a false or pseudo-federalism by other ethnic groups like the Oromos, the Amharas, Ogadeni, Afars, and Sidama (to mention a few), with regard to building a just and a fairly representative state in a multiethnic society.

In the newly drafted and ratified constitution, the state recognised the "right of self-determination" of Ethiopian nationalities *sui generis*. It is a dramatic shift for an African state, formally at least, to be willing to permit the secession of any segment of its polity. As a matter of course, the EPRDF endorsed the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1993. Yet the state does not seem *de facto* to recognise such a right for the other 65 or so ethnic groups of the country even in terms of self-government, not to mention secession. What appears here as democratic and permissive concerning the 'right of self-determination' is *de facto* restrictive. In comparative terms, the new regime has fragmented the arena of national politics into ethnic regions in the style of the former Soviet Union<sup>213</sup>, whereby the regions would enjoy a limited extent of administrative autonomy but remain strictly under the control of the centre.

Many of Ethiopia's non-Tigreans complain that the TPLF remains in control of the regional politics and administrative apparatus. While members of the EPRDF deny the accusation, it appears that the TPLF has used a variety of means to avoid relinquishing total control over the regions. First, rather than allowing completely open competition for seats on the regional councils, the EPRDF uses its considerable resources to co-opt individuals from the local population who will be loyal to the party. This form of indirect rule makes the local authorities the buffer between the TPLF/EPRDF and the

---

<sup>213</sup> This is to argue that the most prevalent political development in post-Mengistu Ethiopia is the consolidation of a centralised party rule along with the formalisation of a federal system.

---

people. Second, party cadres—many of whom retain offices in Addis Ababa—still wield substantial control in many regions. According to one western diplomat, “these people are EPRDF’s hardliners, and they are terrible administrators” (interview March 2000). For example, it has been alleged that the majority of the advisers to the regional presidents are from Tigray. Lastly, the EPRDF relies on economic measures to influence regional politics. Specifically, the central government still collects most taxes and parcels them out to the regions.

In conclusion one could argue that while the rhetoric of the EPRDF remains democratic (e.g. political parties and periodic elections with universal suffrage may exist), this is more of a *pseudo-democracy* than anything else. In reality the country fluctuates between patterns of democratic action and hegemonic control practices, between multiparty democracy and electoral contestation on the one hand, and ethno-military single party rule on the other. According to the fundamental theory of federalism, centralised party rule and genuine federalism are incompatible because the presence of an all-powerful party inevitably centralises power and undermines regional autonomy. In this regard, it is the aim of the next chapter to investigate this new form of governance—i.e. *pseudo-democracy* in post Mengistu Ethiopia.

## Chapter Seven

---

### *Democratisation From Above: Power-Sharing or Hegemonic Control in Post-Mengistu Ethiopia*

---

#### **Introduction**

This dissertation has advanced two major arguments. The first concerns the institutional arrangements that may be the key to conflict resolution in a divided society. Here I have shown in the previous chapter that the devolution of power to ethnic-based federal states in post-Mengistu Ethiopia as such an arrangement. To illustrate these new arrangements I focused on the creation of autonomous regions and revenue sharing—the component parts of classic federalism (Riker 1964). The second major argument concerns democratisation and power sharing arrangement. As was discussed in chapter three, consociationalists, most notably Arned Lijphart (1991, 1977), propose less anarchic reconfigurations of government within existing states, prescribing formal and informal power sharing between or among the leaders of ethnic blocs. In this chapter I show the trajectory and the outcome of the democratisation process in post-Mengistu Ethiopia which is characterised by power sharing among competing ethnic groups.

I will argue in this chapter that the events of the 1990s—the period after the overthrow of the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam—suggest that the TPLF/EPRDF-leadership was more interested in retaining its power than in bringing about democracy. Like many revolutionary insurgent movements that assumed power after years of sacrifice and struggle, the TPLF/EPRDF was not ready to be sidelined in the name of democracy and elections (Clapham 1995, 1998). As Clapham (1995) remarks:

[Since]...members of the victorious guerrilla army [EPRDF] have, after all, risked their lives in the pursuit of goals, which are readily expressed in terms of democracy and liberation...they consider themselves, ... as the representatives of the people whom they have helped to organise and among whom they have fought. They often retain a particular contempt for those people who have remained in the cities while they have been fighting in the mountains and in the countryside and who have at the very least compromised with the previous regime and very possibly supported it. These people often holding positions in the government bureaucracy, academic life and other comfortable bourgeois professions, are also those who most readily articulate the liberal values of multi-party democracy and-in the eyes of the insurgents- seek to wrest from them by political manipulation the victories, which they have won on the battlefield (ibid.:123).

Despite some measures of political liberalisation, the Ethiopian state has generally remained authoritarian and repressive. According to this study, there are several pitfalls in the attempt to democratise the Ethiopian state. Firstly, human and civil rights were

enshrined in the national constitution, but there have been well-documented violations of them. Secondly, civil society organisations and independence press are allowed to operate, but they have been working under very precarious conditions. Thirdly, the right of association and multiparty democracy are constitutionally guaranteed, but some parties have been declared illegal while those that are allowed to operate are placed under serious pressures. Fourthly, several elections were held, but so far all of them have been seriously flawed. Finally, on paper, there all the trappings of constitutional rule such as the separation of powers that include the existence of an independent judiciary to ensure respect for the rule of law. However, extra-judicial detentions and killings are frequent occurrences, and the executive branch under the omnipotent party controls the other branches of government. Lastly, the country's economy is claimed to be freed from the old style of command. But the ruling party controls it through dubious mechanisms and has simply replaced the class state-controlled strategy with its own party-controlled Business Empire. In this chapter I discuss these issues in turn.

### **Ethiopia's Road to Democracy**

The overthrow of the military regime by the EPRDF, OLF, and EPLF guerrilla forces and the installation of the EPRDF quasi-military government in 1991 were difficult and therefore remarkable accomplishments. The challenge to the leadership of the EPRDF regime was in instituting and consolidating democratic reforms, while strengthening its hold on political power. How did they go about this? I argue that because of their strong commitment to the short-term goal of remaining in power, the leadership of the TPLF/EPRDF regime manipulated the transition process, effectively undermining the actual installation and consolidation of democracy in Ethiopia. As a result, the democratisation process has since stalled mainly because the strategies adopted by the TPLF/EPRDF government to institute democratic change in Ethiopia were in themselves pervasively undemocratic (cf. Joseph 1998, Herberson 1998, Ottaway 1994). For example, as discussed below, two nationally held elections "have been dominated and controlled by the TPLF/EPRDF. The major opposition parties have been denied participation in the process, since the 'political space' is so controlled and restricted by the TPLF/EPRDF" (Tronvoll 2000:17). Moreover, according to Tronvoll, "there are disturbing signs that TPLF/EPRDF suspicion towards all 'opposition' political movements and grounds hinders a peaceful development of democratic ideas and practices" (ibid: 20).



Tronvoll adds that “one should be sympathetic” to the challenge facing the TPLF/EPRDF, because they are attempting to democratise and “transform a culture of violence,” where political change has depended upon military power. Moreover, contrary to TPLF/EPRDF’s expectations, many ethno-political parties (e.g. OLF, ONLF) have begun to demand their version of self-determination, including secession, without even considering their politico-economic viability as independent nation states.<sup>214</sup> Therefore the TPLF/EPRDF regime faces the same dilemma that confronted Mengistu and the Derg administration.

***Elections in Federal Ethiopia: Democratisation or Electoral authoritarianism***

To demonstrate to the public that the EPRDF regime was fundamentally different from the ousted regime of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam in style, integrity and commitment, the Meles regime set up bodies and structures with specific responsibilities towards the realization of the national Charter proclamation 11 of February 8, 1992 that established the electoral structures and regulations for the regional and wereda levels. This proclamation instituted electoral commissions at the regional, zonal and kebele levels under the National Electoral Commission (NEC).<sup>215</sup>

In this proclamation article 3 stated four basic principles which are important in the process of elections that: (i) every Ethiopian who is not deprived by law of his right to elect and to be elected has the right to be elected and vote (ii) no Ethiopian may be coerced to vote or to be elected; (iii) in matters of elections, the votes of electors have equal weight (iv) Elections shall be direct and by secret ballot (Proclamation no 11/1992). Proclamation 11 also specified voter eligibility: 18 years of age, Ethiopian citizenship, two years’ residency in the constituency where the citizens expected to vote. But an important clause stated “except where he/she had left that constituency as a result of political persecution, or to engage in an armed struggle against the previous regime, or to study or work elsewhere.”

<sup>214</sup> As I have discussed many places in this dissertation, the demand of the right to self-determination is part of the rebels’ policy and promises to the ethnic groups that they would no longer be subjugated under an “Amhara identity.” By the 1990s individual citizenship was reduced to that of their ethnic identity and regionalization. Regional polarization in effect laid the groundwork for continued ethnic mobilization and fragmentation.

<sup>215</sup> Alongside the NEC itself, these bodies were to be accountable to the Council of Representatives. The Council defined (1) the powers and duties of these commissions; (2) the eligibility requirements for candidates and voters (3) procedures for voter registration; (4) procedures for candidate’s nominations; and (5) campaigning guidelines.

A key provision of the voting registration procedure was the requirement that citizens state their “nation/nationality”—that is, their ethnicity.<sup>216</sup> Proclamation 11 ordained similar qualifications for candidacy. However, it added more restrictive “positive” qualifications: (i) threshold age 21 (ii) ability to “communicate in the language of the nation/nationality in which he/she seeks to become a candidate;” and (iii) residency in the constituency for five years. Article 37 of the proclamation states that:

“Candidates may be nominated by appropriate individuals and/or political organizations legally and peacefully organized to carry on their activities, candidates, who are to be nominated by political organization which are not legally and peacefully organized will not be permitted to participate in the election process.”

Here the existence of political parties is not sufficient in itself. There must also be recognition of parties or political organisation with diametrically divergent political stands and equally their acceptance and participation in the election process. As discussed below, the ruling party exploited such preconditions against those who were not loyal to the ruling party.

### ***Political parties and their orientation in Ethiopia***

From the time of its formation in 1984 until the fall of Mengistu, the Worker’s Party of Ethiopia (WPE) functioned as Ethiopia’s only political party. The new regime’s (TPLF/EPRDF) policy toward political pluralism in general and political parties in particular is considerably different from that of its predecessors. As a result, within a few short years Ethiopia has witnessed the birth of scores of parties, many of which participated in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and later in parliament. The stimulus for party formation is Article One of the Charter, which gives the unrestricted right of every Ethiopian to participate in any political activity and to organise without infringing upon his rights.<sup>217</sup> Political party registration proclamation No 46/1993 (article 3) defines a political party as:

A social group formed ...by specified persons within the society having a program of its own reflecting its political belief and objective and which participates in country-wide or regional political activities for the purpose of achieving political power through the democratic process.

As explained in the proclamation, the only groups prohibited from forming political parties are those that are:

<sup>216</sup> It is worth noting that some Ethiopians (mainly centrist/Amhara) refused to identify themselves by “ethnicity”; instead they claimed they were “Ethiopians” and this created some problems during registration.

<sup>217</sup> Article one of the Charter states “every individual shall have the right to engage in unrestricted political activity and to organize political parties, provided the exercise of such right does not infringe upon the rights of others”

Organized to advance their political objective by force of arms,” and/or “whose objective is to foment conflict and war by preaching hatred and animosity among nations, nationalities and peoples on the basis of differences in race, religions and the line (art 5).

This was despite the fact that the TPLF/EPRDF itself was able to come to power by force of arms, was not democratically elected and appealed to ethno-nationalism (anti-Amhara) and regionalism. Nevertheless the TPLF/EPRDF banned independent (non-EPRDF affiliated) ethno-nationalist movements such as the OLF and ONLF as legitimate political parties due to their claim to ethno-nationalism (real self-determination including secession) and their refusal to renounce violence to achieve their objective. As discussed below, whatever the principles behind the forming of political parties, several problems have been associated with them. One of the major and continued problems in the country is related to “representational” conflict among different (old and new) movements/parties who each claimed they are the sole representative.

In any case, generally political parties that operate in the country with government recognition could be divided into three broad categories: (1) ethnic parties under the EPRDF umbrella, (2) regional ethnic parties *affiliated* to the EPRDF framework or are strongly allied with the EPRDF. Some of these parties are ruling parties in their respective regional states such as Gambella, Somali and Harari regional states, and finally (3) opposition parties, which are both ethnically defined and multinational parties with countrywide programmes and objectives. The opposition bloc can be further sub-divided into a legally registered opposition, and unregistered or illegal parties such as the OLF, ONLF, AL-Ittihad, and EPRP. Some of these “illegal” groups are involved in armed conflict with the ruling party and operate from outside the country e.g. the OLF, Alitthad and ONLF from Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia while others are based in Europe and the U.S. (e.g. EPRP).

After the 1992 election, the number of parties increased greatly, including parties created by TPLF in previous years. To varying degrees then, formal multi-partism has long been a dominant feature of the Ethiopian political system. According to the National Electoral Board (NEB 2000), 65 legally recognized political parties were active in Ethiopia as at April 2000. Of these 65 licensed parties, 7 operate at the national level while 58 are regional. According to Ethiopia's proclamation for party registration issued in 1993, to receive a license as national, a party should have 1,500 founding

members with 40 percent of them expected to be regular residents of a region and the rest at least permanently living in four regions. A regional political party would have 750 founding members with over 40 percent of them being permanent residents of a region.

The largest and/or strongest regional states such as Oromia, Amhara, Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS), Tigary and the federal capital Addis Ababa are predominantly EPRDF-run state governments. Weak or less important regional states such as; Afar, Somali, B/Gumuz, Gambella and Harari are ruled by non-EPRDF parties. But, as mentioned earlier, these regional parties are affiliated to the ruling party since they are created by TPLF/EPRDF. Therefore in Ethiopia these parties are known as “puppet parties” (Vestal 1999, Leta 1999). As discussed in chapter five the EPRDF was formed in 1989 by the TPLF and EPDM in order to extend their campaign against the military regime. In 1990 the TPLF formed another movement, the Oromo peoples Democratic Organisation (OPDO) from among Oromo prisoners captured by TPLF and EPLF (Leta 1999, Young 1997). The movement was again extended by additional member in 1994 when many small “Peoples Democratic Organisations” (PDO’s) formed the Southern Ethiopia People’s Democratic Front (SEPDF) and joined the EPRDF. Within the coalition, despite being the minority, the TPLF has always been considered to be the strongest and more influential than the coalition partners (Leta, 1999, Young 1997).

Given their large numbers and significance in the formation of political parties in post-Mengistu Ethiopia, only a few have been able to claim legitimacy. At the same time, these parties are not “highly institutionalised”.<sup>218</sup> Mainwaring suggests four

---

<sup>218</sup>A reasonable definition of institutionalisation is S. Huntington’s: “Institutionalization is in the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability (Huntington). Particular helpful is Huntington’s emphasis on institutionalisation as a process and not a singular or sudden event. In the Ethiopian case, it is only now (after almost a decade of transition) that we can even begin to speak of a gradual political institutionalisation. Comparative political theory offers various methods and approaches to the evaluation of party system institutionalisation. Most of these, however, have been derived from the experience of mature democracies. Scott Mainwaring has noted that these theories therefore, are not wholly satisfactory for newer “third wave democracies” (Mainwaring 1998). For example, the social cleavage approach and emphasis on ideological difference in party system formation of Seymour M. Lipset & Sten Rokkan, Giovanni Sartori and others, clearly explain the development of party systems (those in Western Europe) better than others. In many “third wave democracies” social cleavages may be less pronounced and other forms of cleavage (ethnicity, old-versus-new economic interests etc.) may be more salient in party system formation and institutionalisation. Finally theories derived from the experiences of more advanced democracies, in focusing on ideological and social cleavages tend to emphasise more the influence of societal forces in party system formation than elite influence that appear important in newer transitional settings where civil society is weak or non-existent.

characteristics of a well institutionalised party system (i) party stability, both in terms of the number of parties and their vote shares; (ii) strong party roots in society, with ties between parties and organised societal groups, often resulting in constituent party ideology over time; (iii) party legitimacy in the eye's of elites and citizenry; and (iv) parties with a well-defined internal organisation that is not subjugated by the leadership (Mainwaring 1998:69-70).

The Ethiopian political system with few exceptions (e.g. TPLF) falls short on all four dimensions. Regarding Mainwaring's first criterion—the stability of interparty competition and the regularity of patterns of party competition - Ethiopia's party system after two national elections to the House of Peoples Representatives, can be seen at least in rough outline. There is at least some continuity in the parties gaining representation in the House of Peoples Representatives, although parties do come and go. Between the first elections to the local and regional councils in 1992 and the elections of 2000, the EPRDF dominated the elections as “the party in power”. In addition to these coalition parties, 65 parties representing nationalities contested the elections. Moreover, the number of parties is highly volatile, as are their vote share.

Again, parties with few exceptions (TPLF/EPRDF) tend to represent highly personal interests,<sup>219</sup> often devoted to an identifiable ideology (though all claim to promote ethnic interests). With the exception of TPLF the majority of ethnic groups in Ethiopia have more than one political party or movement claiming to be the genuine representative of their ethnic group: one allied with the EPRDF and one independent. This development has created an atmosphere that is not conducive to the emergence of genuinely multi-ethnic national parties or the establishment of viable coalitions among different ethnic parties.

One manifestation of this institutional weakness is the phenomenon of People's Democratic Organisation's (PDO's), so endemic in Ethiopian politics. They enjoy some legitimacy, though declining, amongst the masses though the interests of the parties are often those of the leadership, rather than of the rank and file.<sup>220</sup> Party legitimacy has

---

<sup>219</sup>In this view, this opportunism is exacerbated in a context where politics becomes a veritable market, a veritable investment; such politicians embark on an “egoistic search” to satisfy their personal interests.

<sup>220</sup>This is to argue that in the majority of cases it was TPLF that gave a working ideology to these PDO's and therefore they have no independent ideological bases except to represent their ethnic group. To understand the Ethiopian democratisation experiment and party formations generally one should not

been further undermined by a clash between old and new and/or independent or “puppet” parties (e.g. the OLF vis-à-vis OPDO, AAPO vis-à-vis EPDM, SPDO vis-à-vis the ONLF, ALF vis-à-vis APDO) all of which claim to represent their respective communities.<sup>221</sup>

These PDOs' that emerged in a large number in 1990s were prompted by TPLF/EPRDF (with state patronage) primarily from individuals who wanted to take advantage of the government policy of the representation and participation of nationalities. This inflation of pseudo-PDO's was further stimulated by the perception that they will achieve self-determination if they cooperated or support the policy of ethnicisation of the TPLF/EPRDF regime. The strategy ensured a quasi monopoly of power by the TPLF and its allies or satellite parties in both regional and federal assemblies following the serial elections (cf. Leta 1999, Vestal 1999, Tronvoll 2000).

Put differently, one method the TPLF used to broaden its ethnic representation was to establish “friendly” coalition parties, drawing representation from each ethnic group. In some cases, this pattern of newly established TPLF/EPRDF-affiliated PDO's, challenged older, rival parties to represent ethnic interests. However, the ethnic parties are not necessarily representative of their respective ethnic groups and in almost all cases they failed to build any genuine base of support (cf. Vestal 1999, Leta 1999, Young 1997, Tronvoll 2000)

The hegemony of the Tigrean elite in Ethiopia depends on the maintenance of central control. As discussed in chapter seven, since 1991 the TPLF-led government implemented a program supposedly to preserve national unity while encouraging the spread of ethnicity/ethno-nationalism. The regime presents its ethnic policy as part of a general liberalisation restoring the right of ethnic groups to mobilize. While many ethnic groups, in particular ethno-nationalist movements, may be happy to see these freedoms and/or recognition of identities, this has not necessarily been translated into support for the TPLF/EPRDF regime. Most of the southern people (such as the Oromo, the Somali, Sidama, and Afar to mention a few) understand that the TPLF can manipulate ethnic divisions in the south (interview May 2000). Some scholars and

---

downplay the role of patronage. Central to the Ethiopian debate about governance is generally the struggle for power. In Ethiopia the state is still the source of power accumulation and wealth for those who wield control over the state.

<sup>221</sup> Note that the OLF for example retains considerable political legitimacy in Oromia compared to the other movements/parties such as OPDO, ONC and IFLO.

activists (Lata 1999, Hassan 1998, Jalata 1998) go as far as to suggest that this was a disguised form of continuation of northern domination—this time by Tigreans. They argued that the move should be viewed as a clear expression by the TPLF to control the majority through divide and rule—the same system used earlier by European colonial powers to control the African people (cf. Lata 1999, Hassan 1998, Jalata 1998).<sup>222</sup> In similar vein but from a more centrist perspective, Mekonen Bishaw wrote:

“...The Ethiopian politics began to be ethnicized. Unfortunately, that ethnicization, instead of being directed at the genuine empowerment of hitherto oppressed and exploited groups, became the pretext for pitting one group against another. It soon became the basis for fanning narrow nationalist sentiments and actions, while also manipulating, often underhandedly, ethnic elites and their organizations to fall in line with TPLF/EPRDF’s own pre-charted political and ideological lines. Citizens were told and encouraged to organize politically along ethnic lines only to be harassed, imprisoned, and even summarily executed later for forming or joining the wrong ones. This was particularly evident in the case of the Amhara. Right from the formation of the TGE, the TPLF/EPRDF seemed determined to destroy what it saw to be the Amhara domination of the Ethiopian empire state” (Mekonen Bishaw (1995:10-11))

Rhetorically at least, EPRDF promoted the idea of multiparty democracy and power sharing among competing ethnic groups. But the elections and electoral process discussed below illustrated the measure of power monopoly and skilful manoeuvring of the present government. Polarisation between the three dominant ethnic groups—the Oromo, the Amhara and the Tigray—has remained particularly great. In particular, ethnic federalism, especially the nation, nationality and the right to secession (establishing their own state), have become polarising issues between political parties representing these three ethnic groups. However, it is the contention here that ethnopolitics, though a powerful force in contemporary Ethiopian politics is not the only, nor perhaps the most polarizing issue. The economic reforms (in particular the issue of land privatisation), Eritrean secession, and its post-war relations with Ethiopia are equally divisive and polarise the political actors in Ethiopia.<sup>223</sup>

These issues are contested by three principal political forces; the EPRDF<sup>224</sup>, centrists (pan-Ethiopian nationalist) and ethno-nationalist opposition. While EPRDF was

<sup>222</sup> Also critics argued that both Menelik and Haile Selassie used the divide and rule system (cf. Jalata 1993, 1998, Holcomb and Ibssa 1990).

<sup>223</sup> For instance, while the AAPO and ONC are both against Eritrean secession and other secessions in general they are divided on the issue of land privatisation. While the EPRDF and OLF share the same position on the issue of ethnic federalism and economic reforms (including land issue) they are divided on the issue of the right to secession.

<sup>224</sup> I am very much aware that the EPRDF itself is a coalition of ethno-nationalist movements (created by TPLF). However, for practical reason I distinguish between the EPRDF and other ethno-nationalist such as OLF etc.

conciliatory towards establishing a liberal economy (public sector reforms, private sector development, economic liberalisation and the integration of Ethiopia into the global economy) they are in principle opposed to the establishment of a fully free market economy. They oppose neo-liberal economic reforms and supports state ownership of the land. They supported the secession of Eritrea. Centrists are pan-Ethiopian nationalist who oppose the establishment of the Eritrean state. They oppose Ethiopia's peace agreement with Eritrea. The more radical centrists reject the Eritrean state altogether and call for annexation of Eritrea (the return of Eritrea to Ethiopia). For centrists, economic liberalisation and private sector development are essential for the country's development. The majority of them support the privatisation of the land and all state-owned enterprises.

The ethno-nationalist agenda is focused primarily on "self-determination" or self-government and, in the extreme case, on secession and the establishment of their own state. Ethno-nationalists (e.g. OLF and ONLF) are ambivalent over the issue of economic reform. Their focus falls short of proposing a coherent economic policy program and the question of which economic policy is required. Among ethno-nationalists the moderate camp tends to favour private enterprise and relative autonomy from the state. Most radicals tend to have a more populist agenda and favour redistribution of wealth and social equity, in particular state ownership of the land. On the issue of Eritrea, the ethno-nationalists (except Afar nationalist parties) tend to be the most ideological supporters of Eritrean secession. They believe that they will follow the Eritrean example and achieve independent statehood in the future, if the Ethiopian regime accepts the will of the people.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, Ethno-nationalist parties call for peaceful solution of the border issue, the normalization of relations with Eritrea and regional economic cooperation.<sup>226</sup>

*The position of relevant political actors on the diverse issues:*

Issues	EPRDF (and PDO's)	Centrist (AAPO)	ethnonationalist/ OLF, ONLF
Ethnic federalism	for	against	for
Secession	against	against	for
Economic reform	for	for	for
Land issue/privatisation	against	for	against
Eritrean independence	for	against	for

<sup>225</sup> They believe that the majority of their respective ethnic group will vote for secession in a referendum.

<sup>226</sup> In some case (e.g. OLF) they see the conflict not between Eritrea and Ethiopia but rather between two brothers, the Tigreans and the Eritreans (or Tigreans in Ethiopia and Eritrea).



## The Politics of National and Regional Elections in Ethiopia

### The 1992 Local and Regional elections

As explained in the preceding chapter, regional and national elections were included in the provisions of the Transitional Charter (Article 13) with the consent of all participating parties/movements. The ethno-political movements agreed that regional elections should be held, if possible, within three months (October 1991) of the Transitional Charter.

There shall be a law establishing local and regional councils for local administrative purposes defined on the basis of nationality. Elections for such local and regional councils shall be held within three months of the establishment of the TGE, wherever local condition allow (Art. 13 of the Transitional Charter).

According to the TGE the elections were designed to serve three objectives. In the first place, they would help to resolve ethnic conflicts. Secondly, the elections would mandate regional and local governments and bring an end to the era of non-elected administrators and, thirdly, that elections would ensure political pluralism (TGE 1992:2).

Because of an unrealistic optimism in post-conflict countries like Ethiopia, with underdeveloped infrastructures (logistics and know-how), the election was not carried out according to the timetable mentioned in the Charter. Instead the first election to establish a regional council was held on June 21, 1992. It is worth noting, however, that the transitional government started preliminary (“snap”) elections in kebeles in late January 1992. However, these elections were not formal electoral structures. Rather they were conducted through public meetings where voters selected three-member election committees in each kebele by a show of hands in an open meeting (NDI, 1992:3). These kebele officials then chose woreda committees who were entrusted with conducting the June election within the districts and providing security (Vestal 1999). In other words these elections were not classic direct elections nor did they have conventional campaigns and secret ballots. Those selected at public kebele meetings were supposed to represent members of the leading political forces. But as Vestal (1999) notes “well-disciplined EPRDF cadres secured a majority in the three-member election committees” (p.31).

The kebele elections were then followed by local and regional elections. The local elections were held in May and the regional elections took place in June. Note also that

the elections in Afar and Somali regions were postponed for what the government called “security reasons” but in reality the support for the EPRDF was not well organised in those regions (Lyons 1996).<sup>227</sup> In any case, the 1992 elections were widely viewed as the first test of the TGE’s “real” intentions and received intensive scrutiny from the Ethiopian people and the international community. Therefore, the EPRDF invited international observers, such as the African-American Institute (AAI), members of the United States Congress, human rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and observers from other foreign governments, to observe the elections.

Conditions leading to and during the June elections, however, were not completely conducive to open political participation. The TPLF/EPRDF impeded fair competition in a number of ways during the build up to the elections. For example, the opposition parties, especially the OLF and the AAPO, accused the EPRDF of using its military and administrative power to frustrate opposition candidates and to eliminate them from the election process (Clapham 1994, Leta 1999, Vestal 1999). They also said that their candidates had been harassed and imprisoned while they were preparing to participate in the elections and the offices of some opposition parties were shut down.

It is also worth noting that such claims are not just propaganda of the opposition groups. These allegations were confirmed by external observers such as the US State Department and Amnesty international (AI). For example, during the pre-election period in 1992, OLF and AAPO activists were subjected to what Amnesty International characterised as “widespread arrests and killings” (AI’s 1992:1) and the US State Department described the process as “flawed by irregularities, including fraud, harassment, intimidation, and political assassination” (US State Department 1994:91). Other international observers such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and observers from Norway also confirmed that abuses took place, including attempts to prevent voters known to support opposition parties from registering, preventing those who refused to state their ethnicity or tried to identified themselves as “Ethiopians” from registering (AC June 1992, NDI 1992, Vestal 1999, US State Department 1994:91). Moreover, as stated earlier, the TPLF had created its own organisation in the Oromo region, the Oromo People’s Democratic Organisation (OPDO), to assure

---

<sup>227</sup> Although in the Afar region they took place in the next month.

EPRDF's control of the region through a 'safe' ally. The same tactic was used in other regions: "The EPRDF's central strategy has been to build up supporting parties (such as OPDO in Oromia, EPDM in Amhara and a number of other surrogate parties) to control regional assemblies on its behalf" (AC July 14, 1992). In Oromia for example, the EPRDF sponsored organisation, OPDO, was directly competing with the OLF and other four smaller Oromo Organisations such as the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, the United Oromo People's Liberation Organisation, and the Oromo Abbo Liberation Front for the local and regional elections.

Furthermore, it is worth noting two other issues which are important in this context. First, that many soldiers of the former regime (dominated by Oromo and Amhara) were sent to "re-education" and therefore excluded from the elections. The majority of these soldiers might have voted for the opposition rather than for TPLF/EPRDF. The second issue (e.g. between the EPRDF and the OLF) was the fate of armed combatants after the setting up of the Provisional Government of Ethiopia. The EPRDF declared that their own military force was to become the Ethiopian national army and other forces should be disarmed. The OLF rejected the proposal of unilateral disarmament and this led to military confrontation between the OLF and EPRDF forces in Oromia (Lata 1999, Vestal 1999, Keller 1995).<sup>228</sup>

In short, according to the JIOG, the pre-election environment was tense and opposition parties appeared to be unwilling to participate in the elections "dominated by the EPRDF while in some regions they could not simply organise given the tension created by local supporters" of the former (NDI 1992:29). Nevertheless, final elections for regional councils were held in June 1992. The OLF (one of the major opposition party of the TGE with 32 of the 87 seats in the Council of Peoples Representatives and 2 ministerial posts) then withdrew from the electoral competition. The other major opposition party—the AAPO (formed just before the election) the only party claiming

---

<sup>228</sup> Among the most difficult challenges to the implementation of an internal peace agreement are the inevitable security dilemmas that often thwart demobilisation and the transition to nonviolent political competition. A security dilemma occurs in a situation where one party's (in our case the TPLF/EPRDF) effort to increase its own security reduced the security of the others (e.g. OLF). Conditions following civil wars are structurally similar to international anarchy because institutions and norms are weak or at least contested and parties therefore seek self-help solutions to their security concerns. Theories developed by scholars of conflict resolutions therefore point to several elements of particular importance in understanding post-conflict elections unless the strategies and security dilemmas are managed during the implementation phase, renewed conflict likely will prevent democratisation (cf. Sisk & Reynolds 1998, Snyder & Jervis 1999, Lake & Rotchild 1998).

an Amhara base—had withdrawn from the elections reportedly due to harassment by the EPRDF and some other parties in the governing coalition. The elections were also boycotted by other opposition groups such as the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), the Gedeo People's Democratic Organisation (GPDO), and the coalition named Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG) (Engedayehu 1993).

Although the OLF was not banned as a party (this happened later) and the EPRDF had made attempts to negotiate an agreement (under the mediation of the American former president Jimmy Carter)<sup>229</sup> for future cooperation, the OLF withdrew from the Constituent Assembly in June 1992—leaving the EPRDF with total control of the House of People's Representatives. Four other political organisations that were members of the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalitions (SEPC) also departed because they committed themselves to stand by the decision of the 1993 Paris Conference on so-called "Peace and Reconciliation", which called for the dissolution of the Transitional Government and for its replacement by a new one (cf. 1999, Vestal 1999, Leta 1999).

The subsequent withdrawal of these groups, in particular the OLF and AAPO, from the TGE has been a serious blow to hopes of democracy in Ethiopia (Hoved, 1994:129, Leta 1999, Vestal 1999, Joseph 1998, Ottaway 1995).<sup>230</sup> In the months following the OLF's departure many OLF-leaders have "disappeared" (AI 1993, US Dep. of State 1994:91-93, Lata 1999) and several clashes occurred between the OLF and the EPRDF (AC 8 May 1992: 6-7 & July 1992:6-7). Keller described the situation as a "low intensity civil war" (Keller 1995:630). In any case the well-organised and better-equipped EPRDF forces easily defeated the OLF militia. Amnesty International and African Watch reported that EPRDF forces—particularly forces from the OPDO as well as OLF militia forces - committed grave human rights abuses during the conflict (AI 1993:2; US Department of State 1994:91).

Africa Watch (1995) estimated that 1,500 Oromos had been killed during the conflict and 20,000 OLF militias and Oromo civilians were detained in different camps.

<sup>229</sup> In the months following the OLF's defeat, the EPRDF and OLF have agreed to try to negotiate a settlement through international mediation whereby the OLF can be reintegrated into the coalition government and elections can take place in those areas of Ethiopia where they were canceled in June 1992. However despite several attempt at international mediation a solution to the conflict between these competing groups (OLF and EPRDF) has not yet been reached and OLF continues low-intensive civil war against the regime of EPRDF.

<sup>230</sup> The initial promise of the new strategy was short lived as the broad political pact created at the beginning of the transitional period began to unravel rather quickly and the government coalition narrowed considerably.

Although there were few allegations of deliberate abuses against the prisoners, many were detained for months without charge, and some died in detention of communicable disease or exposure to malaria. Most of the detainees were released in early 1993 without charge, but at least 1,200 of the detainees were eventually charged with criminal activities against the EPRDF or earlier attacks on civilians (including the destruction of several predominantly Amhara villages in the period before the elections).<sup>231</sup> Others were arrested at later dates (EHRCO 1993, Leta 1999).

Since then there has been sporadic violence between the government forces and the surviving elements of the OLF. However, the government has the situation under control and recent attacks attributed to the OLF have been more akin to banditry than representing a confrontation of the armed struggle against the regime and have not posed a serious threat.<sup>232</sup> This may change in the longer-term however. The OLF appears to be moving away from direct confrontation with the government and towards building broader alliances with opposition groups from other regions of the country. For example, the OLF leadership and the ONLF have coordinated their diplomatic, political and military activities in recent years (see Oromiaonline.com & Ogaden.com). Moreover, the Ethio-Eritrean conflict (discussed below) opened the window of opportunity for external support for the oppositions.

### **Election Outcomes**

As mentioned earlier, the regional elections in Ethiopia took place in the presence of international observers and their reports were mixed. The elections were plagued by problems associated with organisation, logistics, and inter-ethnic tensions. Furthermore, these elections were conducted in a country with no tradition of elections, civic education, political party or parliamentary training. Some observers suggest that even with these difficulties and flaws the regional elections marked a step forward (EC 1992). Others were, however, very critical and commented that the elections were flawed and plagued by intimidation by the ruling party and its supporters and that such a flaw “was not lack of civic education but lack of political will at the top” (NDI

---

<sup>231</sup> Some of the massacres of the Neftegnas (Amharas who settled in the areas which Menelik conquered), were however, the result of an EPRDF propaganda campaign against Neftegnas. This state-led propaganda led to government-sanctioned massacres of Amharas in the south and eastern part of the country by among others the OPDO and OLF militia. It was after several massacres of Amharas that Professor Asrat organised the All Amhara Peoples Organisation and in a short span of time he was able to achieve popularity among the Amharas.

<sup>232</sup> The OLF rebellion was for instance suspected of several hotel and railway bombings while the rebels denied targeting civilians yet accepted that there had been a few civilian casualties that involved a military target (e.g. Dire Dawa railways storage).

1991:1992:75). For example, one observer in particular concluded that, "I don't think anyone is calling it a free and fair election," another stated, "The transitional government had not established conditions to facilitate free political competition and choice and as a result several important organizations withdrew from the elections" (Leta 1999, Vestal 1999, Tronvoll 2000). Observers were divided over whether admitted abuses were the result of overzealous regional officials, poor organisation and insufficient preparation or whether the EPRDF intended to manipulate the result. Most observers agree, however, that the EPRDF held elections too quickly and without sufficient preparation in the hope that foreign governments would consider them an act of good faith and begin to release desperately needed aid (Lyons 1992).

In short, the consensus judgment by the international observers is that the TGE could not pass the test and that the elections, at best, indicated how far it had to go in its own understanding and implementation of democratic institutions and processes. They concluded:

Given the shortcomings, the June 21 elections did not contribute directly to Ethiopia's development as a democratic state. At best, the elections were premature, especially for the southern half of Ethiopia. Less kindly judged the elections were ill conceived, dubious to the democratization of Ethiopia. The elections, moreover, exacerbated existing tensions, reinforced the hegemony of the EPRDF while marginalizing other fledging parties and were a central factor in the withdrawal of the OLF from the TGE and the return to war in the Oromia region. Finally, the elections created new "political facts" ...the EPRDF dominated regional and district assemblies...that will remain controversial regions where the elections are mired in doubt and suspicion (NDI/AAI 1992:7).

Since almost all opposition parties did not participate/withdrew from the regional elections the outcome was pre-ordained: the overwhelming victory of the EPRDF and its allies. The EPRDF and its associate parties won 1,099 of the 1,147 regional assembly seats (see table 8.3). Note also that the elections in the Afar and Somali regions were postponed because the support for the EPRDF was not well organised (although in the Afar region they took place in the following month). The EPRDF won the elections with an impressive score, which seemed very high to some observers (ibid.). For instance in Addis Ababa alone, 890 of the 978 seats were allocated to the EPRDF, which was surprising considering that the EPRDF was not very popular in the capital.<sup>233</sup> It also won 81 of the 84 regional seats. In the Tigray region, the TPLF won 99.5% of the council seats (AC 17 July 1992:7). Because of the faults in these elections Lyons concludes: "Instead of working to sustain the initial broad coalition and implicit pact

---

<sup>233</sup> This is not surprising, however, since all WPE personnel were removed and forbidden to stand for elections and therefore many individuals (opportunists) quickly associated themselves with EPRDF.

behind the July 1991 National Conference, the EPRDF backed its ethnic affiliates and created a single-party dominant political system” (Lyons 1996:128).

**Table 8.1 The June 1992 Election Results**

Party	Number of seats	% of seats	Composition of the Cabinet until 1995			
EPRDF Coalition	1099	95.8	Oromo	6	Kambata	1
OPDO	433	37.	Amhara	6	Adere	1
EPDM	279	24.3	Tigre	2	Wolaita	1
TPLF	243	21.2	Afar	1	Gurage	1
EPRDF	81	7.1	Somali	1	Others	2
SPDO	36	3.1				
KPRDO	27	2.3				
GPRDM*	9	0.8				
BPRDM*	17	1.5				
Independents	14	1.2				
Other	8	0.8				
Total	1,147	100				

Source: The National Election Board \* Both the Gambela People’s Revolutionary Democratic Movement and the Beni Shangul People’s Revolutionary Democratic Movement have cooperated closely with the EPRDF although they insist that they are independent of it.

### The June 1994 Constituent Assembly Elections

The real test of a democratisation process perhaps is not the organisation of the first elections, but whether these first elections are followed by others in accordance with an agreed electoral timetable. As will be discussed below, by that standard Ethiopia is faring well—elections took place regularly and dutifully. But their quality has not been improved seriously in the second and third elections under review.

After the regional and local elections, Ethiopia conducted its second post-Mengistu elections in 1994. The objective was to elect a Constituent Assembly, whose task was to ratify the new Constitution. The elections, organised by the National Electoral Board, were held on 5 June 1994 (except for the Somali region), and about 15 million voters had to choose the 547 members of the Constituent Assembly.

Pausewang, who observed the elections for the Norwegian government (quoted in Joreman 1995:72) states that 13,168,559 had voted (87.7% of those registered) at 26,659 polling stations. 39 political parties (508 party candidates) and 848 independent competed for the elections. Of these parties, however, none of the major opposition parties participated in the elections. Some evidently intended to do so but were unable to meet the relatively rigorous registration rules for parties which the TGE announced in February 1994. Others, particularly those who had boycotted the 1992 elections, had announced early on that they would boycott the 1994 elections. Centrist parties took part in the boycott partly because the new constitution promises all ethnic groups the

right to self-determination.<sup>234</sup> In other words, the centrist/pan-Ethiopian nationalist (e.g. AAPO) boycotted because they see the new constitution and the ethnicisation policy of the EPRDF as “Balkanisation” as it promises all Ethiopian ethnic groups “the right to self-determination including secession” (AC 1995). Ironically, many of the ethnic-based parties, such as the OLF, and ONFL, boycotted the elections because of the perception that, in practice the EPRDF is obstructing conditions (such as allowing referenda) which could determine whether or not ethnic groups want to secede, and that therefore secession is not a genuine option.

Overall, voters had a choice between candidates who ran as independents, EPRDF candidates, and EPRDF’s satellite parties (PDO’s). Vestal (1999) notes that “independents provided verisimilitude for the occasion, but many of such candidates were thought to be EPRDF stand-ins” (p. 85).”

With the absence of a strong opposition, the EPRDF and its “satellites” won an overwhelming majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly and ratified the constitution. They secured 484 of the 547 seats. 63 went to independent candidates and other parties that had participated in the elections. In Oromia, the absence of the OLF allowed OPDO to win 173 of the 178 seats, and in Amhara, the absence of the AAPO allowed the ANDM to win all but one of the Amhara seats. In Tigray region, the TPLF won all the seats and in Addis Ababa the EPRDF won 13 of the 14 seats (AC 1 July 1994:3). When the elections finally took place in the Ogaden region, on 28 August 1994, the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) (a party close to the EPRDF) won 7 of the 11 seats, whereas independent candidates won three seats, and the Western Somali Democratic Party won the remaining one. It is worth noting that in this region, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) was campaigning for secession. In mid-1994 for instance it demanded a referendum on self-determination; the ONLF took the example of Eritrea to support its argument. But as soon as the ONLF made that statement, the security forces arrested hundreds of people (Amnesty International 1995). The EPRDF also created the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) to counter-balance the weight of the ONLF. The ESDL is composed of Somali clans other than

---

<sup>234</sup> Opposition parties which draw their main support from the Amhara ethnic group have argued that a draft constitution likely to be approved by the 1994 elected body, could lead to the disintegration of the country by granting the right of secession to its many ethnic groups (African Research Bulletin, June 1<sup>st</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 1994:11470).



from Ogadeni (some of them newcomers from the Somalia Republic in the 70s and 80s). For the 1995 elections however the ONLF decided to end its armed struggle against the Ethiopian government. It praised the new constitution and decided to compete in the elections (AC 3, June 1994:8; and April 1995:3). However, ONLF's peaceful participation in Ethiopian politics was short lived and like the OLF the party has continued to wage low intensive war against the EPRDF government in Somali regional state.<sup>235</sup>

The result of the elections was described as "neither a significant nor an unexpected victory" (AC 35, July 1994). According to the government English language daily, the Ethiopian Herald (June 4, 1994), 148 international and 448 domestic observers monitored the elections. There were no general and comprehensive findings. Observers from different countries each gave their own judgement. For example, the Norwegian group who participated as external monitors for the second time concluded that, although the 1994 elections were an improvement administratively, most voters still lacked meaningful choice. Competitive participation did not occur (Pausewang 1994b). Similarly the European Union (EU) observers, while noting the technical progress that had been made concluded that "[f]or whatever reasons, the main opposition parties did not participate and it was therefore, for the most part, an EPRDF dominated election" (ION, 658, 1995:3). The local observers, were however much more critical of the electoral process and its outcomes. One local NGO, the Ethiopian Congress for Democracy (ECD)<sup>236</sup> reported that:

Many ballots had more symbols than candidates, and consequently election officials had to provide explanations...in the meantime influencing the voter's choice (p.3)...In at least one

---

<sup>235</sup> It is worth noting here that at least three major issues led to the confrontation between the ONLF and the TGE. First, the TGE proposed not to employ people who did not speak Amharic. When the regional government dominated by ONLF refused this (with reference to the TGE's language policy which gives regional states to use local language as official regional language) the TGE blocked both the regional capital and recurrent budget. Second, following the TGE's policy of economic liberalisation, the TGE included three of the most important enterprises in the region and an important income for the regional state (livestock exporting, government Transport Company, and produce marketing enterprises). In the name of privatization, the transport company went to the EPRDF and the two others went to Eritrean and Tigrean individuals with capital. Third, the ONLF suggested that the disputed city, Dire Dawa, (disputed between Oromo and Issa/Somali) as the new capital of the newly emerged Somali regional state which the TGE refused. All these issues started confrontation between the regional state (dominated by ONLF) and the TGE. In February 1994, this confrontation led to fighting between the government forces and the ONLF were the government forces killed among other the mayors and deputy mayors of Kabridhar, and Godey. It also arrested (and some have since disappeared) the top officials of the regional states. The government also moved the regional capital from Godey to Jigijiga (from the hands of Ogaden to other minority clans) and formed 12 other political parties most of them from non-Ogadeni clan (Interview May 2000)

<sup>236</sup> A non-governmental civil association founded on June 24, 1991 and claiming to be non-partisan. In its capacity as observer, ECD organised a total of 69 monitors (10 staff members, 25 volunteers from Addis Ababa and 34 members of local democracy clubs). Constituencies in the different parts of the country were monitored by the group.

---

instance, the electors were threatened with repercussions if they failed to vote (p.4)...Armed individuals were allowed in or near many polling stations...In one instance, the candidacy qualification signatures of one candidate looked similar. This made ECD observers suspect fraud...In one case, officials refused to allow monitors to watch vote counts whereas in another two, observers were briefly detained by the police (EDC 1994:7).

Finally, another local NGO, A-B-GI-Da, which participated as observers found that “the level of competitiveness and inclusiveness...was low,” and for this reason found it “doubtful whether the elected members of the Assembly would satisfactorily represent the range of Ethiopian opinions and the TGE had lost another opportunity to strengthen the base of the transition through competitive elections” (A-B-G-Da 1994).

**Table 8.2 The election outcomes of the June 1994 elections to the Constituent Assembly (by regions)**

Region	No of Constituencies	Won by EPRDF	Won by other candidates	Independents	Remarks
Tigray	37	37	-	-	
Afar	8	3	5	-	
Amhara	137	136	1	-	
Oromia	178	172	-	3	Elections did not take place in 3 constituencies
Somali	-	-	-	-	Elections postponed due intra clan conflicts in the region
Benishangul	10	-	6	1	Election did not take place in 3 constituencies
SNNP	123	96	17	9	Elections did not take place in 1 constituency
Gambella	3	2	-	1	
Harari	3	1	1	1	
Addis Ababa	23	13	1	9	
	(552-7)-515	460	31	24	

Source: The National Election Board & from different statistical reports,

**Table 8.3 The election outcomes of the June 1994 elections to the Constituent Assembly (by parties)**

Parties	No. seats	%	Party	No of seats
<b>EPRDF and allies **</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>Parties not allied with EPRDF &amp; Independents</b>	<b>81 14.9</b>
Oromo Peoples Democratic Organisation (OPDO)	175	32.9	Ethiopian Somali Democratic League	13 2.4
Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)	134	24.6	Southern Omo Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Org.	7 1.3
Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)	37	6.8	Afar Liberation Front	6 1.1
Sidama Peoples Democratic Organisation (SPDO)	19	3.5	Benishangul People's Liberation Movement	5 0.9
Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)	13	2.4	Silti, Azerent Berber, Alichu Worero, Meskan Melga,	3 0.5
Welaita peoples Democratic Organisation	13	2.4	Gumuz People's Liberation Movement	2 0.4
Gamo and Gofa Peoples Democratic Organisation (GGPDO)	13	2.4	Mein Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Org.	2 0.4
Gurage Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Organisation (GPDRO)	12	2.2	Western Somali Democratic Party	2 0.4
Hadiya Peoples Democratic Organisation	8	1.5	Argoba Nation Unity Organisation	1 0.2
Keficho Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Organisation (KPDO)	6	1.1	Kebena nationality Democratic Org.	1 0.2
Gedeo Peoples Revolutionary Organisation (GPDO)	6	1.1	Mareko People's Democratic Org.	1 0.2
Kambatta Peoples Democratic Organisation (KPDO)	5	0.9	Wolene Gedebano Peoples Democratic Movement	1 0.2
Dawro Peoples Democratic Organisation (DPDO)	4	0.7	urju Peoples Democratic Movement	1 0.2
Afar Peoples Democratic Organisation (APDO)	3	0.4	Dizi Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Org	1 0.2
Benchi Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Movement (BPRDM)	2	0.4	Hareri National League	1 0.2
Konso Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Organisation (KPRDO)	2	0.4	Gamo Democratic Unity	1 0.2
Shekicho Peoples Democratic Movement (SPDM)	2	0.4		
Gambella Peoples Liberation Party (GPLP)	2	0.4	Independents	14 2.6
Tembaro Peoples Democratic Organisation (TPDO)	1	0.2		
Yem Peoples Democratic Front (YPDF)	1	0.2		
Dizi Peoples Democratic Organisation (DPDO)	1	0.2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>90.1</b>		<b>54 9.6</b>

1994

1994

Votes

Seats

Total number %

total (544) %

Registered Voters	16,797,143	-
Votes cast	14,698,103	87.5
Invalid votes	329,179	2.8
Valid votes	14,368,924	97.8

Source: The National Election Board 1994

\*\* The 21 organisations listed in table II are only those that are acknowledged as being affiliated with the EPRDF whereas the other non-conformist organizations are increasingly subjected to various forms of pressures and persecution. The EPRDF has made sure that its protégés make their strong presence felt by providing them with monopoly of organizing, mobilizing and politicizing people throughout the various parts of the country.

### ***The 1995 elections***

In May 1995, Ethiopia held its first set of national parliamentary elections that were intended to stand as the democratic culmination of a four-year transitional period. The elections for the federal assembly (the Council of People's Representatives), and for the state assemblies were held on 7 May 1995. They were based on a simple majority vote. According to the National Election Board (NEB) 1,881 candidates from 58 political parties (mostly EPRDF satellite parties) and 960 independents competed for both the national and regional elections in 548 constituencies (Vestal 1999, Leta 1999).

The opposition, gathered in the Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFDPDE), decided to boycott the elections. The parties that form the alliance claim they were victims of harassment on the part of the EPRDF and that they had no access to the media. On its part the then President of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi claimed that he had tried to encourage the opposition to participate. As he expressed in the *Ethiopian Herald* (28 May 1995:1) "One can take the horse to the river but one can't force the horse to drink the water."

With the major opposition boycotting the elections, the EPRDF won an overwhelming majority both at the state and the federal levels. Only the Ethiopian National Democratic Party and a few minor ethnic or regionally-based oppositions challenged the powerful ruling party. Bayne Patros, leader of the Southern Coalition, stated "We don't consider it a democratic election....This is an exercise where the same party and its surrogates are seeking a vote of confidence" (HAB, June 1995). At the federal level the EPRDF won 493 parliamentary seats (AC September 1995:6). At the regional State, in Tigray state, the TPLF took all the seats: 152 seats at the state level and the 38 seats at the federal level. In Amhara, the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)—formally a multi-ethnic movement known as the EPDM, led by the Prime minister Tamrat Layne—won all the seats at both levels (268 state seats, and 134 federal seats). In Oromia the OPDO also won an overwhelming majority: all but three of the 177 state seats (ibid:134). Lyons (1996:134) explains that the OPDO campaigned for the use of the Oromo language and the Latin alphabet, but many voters continued to see the OPDO as an imperialist creation from the North. In Addis Ababa, the EPRDF won all but two federal seats (21/23); the two other seats were won by independent candidates, one of them is an outspoken critic of the EPRDF. At the state level, the EPRDF won all the 92 seats. Addis Ababa was the most open election, since almost all the independent

newspapers, civic organisations and foreign diplomats are based in the capital (Lyons, 1996:137).

In the Southern State, most ethnic groups had their own constituencies but none formed anything close to a majority across the region (ibid:135). The government's allies won almost all the seats. In the Afar elections, which were postponed until 4 July 1995, EPRDF's allies, the Afar People's Democratic Organisation (APDO), won 5 of the 10 federal seats; a clear EPRDF opponent won 4 seats. In the Harari regional state, a chartered city, there was a two-chamber legislature (unlike other states), one reserved for Harari nationals and the other that represented the entire urban population, which is largely Oromo (Lyons, 1996:138). The Harari National League won all seats for the Harari legislature, and the OPDO won 18 of the 22 seats for the Peoples Representative Council (the other four were won by the HNL).

It is worth noting that the "frontier states" (Afar, Harari, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul), have altogether been allocated only 57 of the 548 federal seats (Lyons 1996:137).<sup>237</sup> Therefore, these regions were not crucial for TPLF/EPRDF, which explains in part why non-EPRDF movements were stronger than in other regions (ibid:137). Moreover, 22 ethnic minority groups, especially in the South and West of the country, received one seat each in the Council of Representatives (Rock 1996:98).

To sum up, these elections were to be the cornerstone of the new Ethiopia. However, the elections were not competitive because many opposition parties boycotted and in many cases the political parties were prevented from participating (NIHR Report no.5, 1995:59). The Norwegian Observer Group, for example, dismissed these as 'neither fair, free nor impartial', for several reasons. Firstly the elections cannot be considered competitive, hence it is difficult to assess whether the new government has such a relatively broad-based support as the election results reflected. Secondly, the process leading up to the elections was exclusive in character, preventing many legal political actors in Ethiopia from participating. Thirdly, although the technical performance of the procedure of balloting has improved compared to the two previous elections, in all areas of observation violations of the Electoral law were noted. Fourthly, government structures and bodies acted in such a way as to create apprehension in the rural

---

<sup>237</sup> This was disproportional in relation to their population.

population. This subdued pluralistic thinking and expression, which led to conformity in voting and quelled non-governmental expressions and sentiments (*ibid.p.1*)<sup>238</sup> Despite these criticisms, the elections were concluded and ended up in the creation of two Houses: the Federal Council and the Council of Peoples Representatives. These elections, at least in theory, marked the beginning of a constitutionally based self-administration of 'nations', nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia.

Following the elections, the Council of Representatives formally installed a Constitutional government on 21 August 1995, ending the transitional period (1991-1995). The Council elected Meles Zenawi (TPLF) as Prime minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. He was elected by the party that had the majority in the Councils, the EPRDF. They also appointed Dr. Negaso Gidada, an Oromo from the OPDO as the country's president (who, as stated above, has only symbolic powers). He served as president until he lost support for the re-election from both his own party the OPDO and the EPRDF because of his general disagreement and critique of both the prime minister and the OPDO. He also lost his membership of OPDO. In other words he was excluded from the party following his criticisms of Meles. The Amhara (the ANDM leader) was appointed Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. Besides these three positions the three groups shared with other small ethnic groups the ministerial posts with 4 Oromos, 4 Amharas, 2 Tigreans, 2 Gurages, and one each for Kambata, Somali, Welayita, Harari, and Hadiya ethnic groups. The distribution of cabinet portfolios was more or less the same as in the 1995/2000 cabinets.

Dawit Yohannes an Amhara, and Petros Olango from the Southern region were elected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives respectively, while Almaz Mecko (OPDO) was elected as the speaker of the House of Federation both in 1995 and 2000 for the period of 1995-2000 and 2000-2005. Despite the sharing of executive power among individuals from the major ethnic groups, however, the real power remained in the hand of the TPLF leadership.<sup>239</sup> Critics argued that the nomination of the Oromo as a president was perhaps the hope that their popularity among the Oromos, which was very low since the conflict with the OLF, would rise (AC 22 September 1995).

<sup>238</sup> Norwegian Institute of Human Rights Report no. 5 (1995), p.1

<sup>239</sup> I have been told both by academics and MPs that the Tigrean vice ministers have direct access to the Prime Minister's Office and they are more powerful than the ministers from other ethnic groups.

**Table 8.4 Results of the 1995 Parliamentary Elections**

Regions	Parliament Seats	Percentage	Total number of votes cast
Tigray	38	6,89	1,341,850
Afar	14	2,59	503,483
Amhara	132	24,09	4,690,255
Oromia	165	30,08	5,855,695
Somali	59	59	10.72
Benishangul	5	0.98	191,140
SSSNP	118	21,60	4,204,693
Gambella	1	0,17	114,740
Harari/Diredawa	3	0.59	114,740
Addis Ababa	13	2.29	445,068
Total	548	100	<b>19,466,041</b>

Source: Africa Today 1996:734, Lyons 1996, Rock 1996.

## The May 2000 Elections and the future of democracy in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, attached great significance to the May 2000 elections, saying that "we want May to reflect in Ethiopia as well as overseas, the real image of the country, and to be a day of clarity, transparency, and honesty".<sup>240</sup> Indeed, he had reason to be concerned about Ethiopia's image. His government was accused both by international actors as well as internal oppositions for continued human rights violations and the failure of democratic and economic reforms.<sup>241</sup> But, despite Meles' rhetoric of openness, free elections, respect for human and political rights, the returns of the second national elections show neither further change in the hegemonic control of the EPRDF nor respect for rights. But in 2001 the regime showed signs of internal splits and tensions, specially the division in the TPLF leadership (discussed below).

On 1 October 1999, the National Election Board invited all political parties to register for the 2000 national and regional elections, the second since the promulgation of the new Constitution, which provided for multiparty state councils. Voting took place on 14 May 2000. At stake were all the seats in the lower House, the Council of People's Representatives of the Federal Assembly and the 3,022 seats in the State Councils. Some 50 parties including some 17 opposition parties and 490 independent candidates participated in the elections in which slightly more than 20 million of Ethiopia's 29 million eligible voters were registered to vote. Unlike previous elections, no

<sup>240</sup> Meles commented on elections in Ethiopian Television March 21<sup>st</sup> 2000.

<sup>241</sup> In addition he was also accused of using millions of dollars on armaments and war while the country suffers from hunger and AIDS.

international observers were invited for the 2000 elections.<sup>242</sup> This absence was slightly criticised by the opposition but defended by the government as a matter of sovereignty. For example, the Speaker of the House of the Parliament, Dawit Yohannis, defended the government decision not to invite international observers to monitor the election by saying that “there is no need to invite” them, “the OAU the IGAD have always been among us, and we have never referred to them as external observers” (Interview, Dawit 2000). Opposition parties, on the other hand, demanded the monitors’ presence: “the electoral board cannot execute the election freely, independently and honestly (interview, Gudina ONC, 2000, Demessa Tasra Southern Union, 2000). They told me that all executive and the “so called national election observers are members of the ruling government officials and cadres”. Note also that the Chairman of the Electoral Commission is an uncle of Dawit Yohannes and an EPDF supporter.<sup>243</sup>

Moreover, a former election observer who wishes to remain anonymous, said to me that he fears the next election will be far from free and fair. During the last election “people were told where to put their voting cards in the ballot box, while the so-called guards armed with guns and chewing the “chat” drug sat nearby” (Interview April 2000). But he also criticised the opposition parties for not offering a viable alternative to the ruling party. He is not alone in this criticism. Paul Henz (2001), for example, goes even further and notes “I am very critical of most of the opposition parties in Ethiopia....Opposition does not mean just opposing ....it means coming up with ideas, understanding what is going on in the society an offering plans...The problem with most opposition in Ethiopia has been they spent most of the time to embrace the EPRDF.” Henze’s critique is of course one-sided and lacks a balanced analysis. Furthermore, since he continued to praise the EPRDF as ‘democratic’, and the opposition ‘antidemocratic’ (Henze 1998), I believed he failed to give an objective view on the failure of democratisation in Ethiopia. Such a balanced and more objective judgement I believe came from such scholars as Marian Ottaway (1995, 1999), Richard Joseph (1998), and John Harbeson (1998). In contrast to Henze, while criticizing the EPRDF these scholars have come with a major critique of both the opposition and the Ethiopian patron—the United States in relation to the failure of democratisation in Ethiopia. According to Ottaway:

The TPLF, which had defeated the Mengistu army after many years of fighting, had no intention of surrendering power—hardly a surprising attitude in the wake of a military victory.

---

<sup>242</sup> But the government allowed over 1,500 national observers, including those from the Ethiopian Human Rights Councils.

<sup>243</sup> This allegation was however denied by the board chairman during my interview in April 2000.



But the TPLF knew that it could not win a majority or even make a strong showing in a really free elections, for the country was deeply divided along ethnic lines, and the TPLF represented a small group. Far from trying to overcome the ethnic divisions, the TPLF had encouraged them, first by forming the other ethnic parties in the EPRDF and then by insisting on the division of the country into ethnic regions. Under such conditions, the TPLF could maintain control of the country only by making sure that the ethnic organizations it controlled within the EPRDF won the elections in each region. This approach to governing multi-ethnic country appeared to imitate consciously the model devised by the Soviet Union in the past: [*the division of the country into ethnic republics, enjoying a degree of administrative autonomy but firmly held together politically by the domination of the Communist party*]. . . . The EPRDF-affiliated parties were artificial organizations created from the outside, and thus could not count on widespread support in competitive elections. The logic of the system of the TPLF had created made democratization highly extremely unlikely” (Ottaway 1995: emphasizes added).

She added that:

The opposition parties, in particular the OLF, also had their share of responsibility for the failure of democratisation. The OLF was extraordinarily ambivalent about its ultimate goal—whether it wanted an independent Oromia or a dominant role in a federal Ethiopia. What it certainly did not want was a role subordinate to the TPLF. However, there was a real discrepancy between the OLF’s aspirations and potential and its actual accomplishments. Based on the most numerous ethnic group in the country, the OLF could have been expected to be the major player in the ethnic politics of Ethiopia. In reality, it never realized its potential, in part because of the weak organizational skills and the factional source of external support—by contrast, the TPLF had from the beginning the backing of Eritrean People’s Liberation Front”

Maybe to overcome such a criticism opposition parties tried to put their differences behind them in the 2000 general elections in a bid to defeat the ruling EPRDF. In a bid to tackle their political differences, eight parties have created a coordinating committee for the general election campaign. It was set up on the initiative of Merera Gudiana’s Oromo National Congress (ONC).<sup>244</sup>

The campaign period was marked by a degree of liberty hitherto unseen in the country. For the first time the opposition has had access to radio and television. The electoral campaign was dominated by calls for better economic management, respect for human rights and land reform.<sup>245</sup> The EPRDF and the opposition met and debated alternative policy directions that they pledged to implement if they won the May general elections. Nearly 30 political parties, national and regional with some of them represented in the coalition, introduced their platforms and indicated areas of differences with the ruling

<sup>244</sup> The ONC, which spearheaded the drive to unite the opposition, is a rival to the OPDO, part of the ruling the ruling EPRDF. It also sees itself as an alternative to the armed separatist OLF, defending the rights of the Oromo people.

<sup>245</sup> The current constitution Article 40 (3) reads “The right of ownership of rural land and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of transfer.” Article 40 (4) reads “Any Ethiopian who wants to earn a living by farming has a right, which shall not be alienated, to obtain, without payment, the use of land. The implementation shall be specified by law.”

party as well as among each other. The major parties here were the ruling EPRDF, the AAPO, CAFPDE, the ONC and the EDU.

The differences between these parties range from mechanisms of implementation through fundamental policy options to constitutional reforms. For instance, EPRDF maintains its position on public ownership of land and the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination up to secession. On the land issue, the EPRDF and its supporters argue that a land tenure system that confers private ownership of land by farmers will result in the massive displacement of farmers from their holdings. Indeed the EPRDF's land-policy does not add much to the Derg's 1975 Land Reform Act, except the claim that farmers now have the right to lease and inherit land they own.<sup>246</sup>

AAPO, CAFPDE and EDU on the other hand expressed adherence to the principle of private ownership of land and the repeal of Article 39 of the federal constitution which provides for the right of self-determination including secession. They argue that private ownership of land will encourage farmers to invest in their land and this will enhance productivity. As to Article 39, they say it does not solve the problem of the Ethiopian people. Particularly the AAPO was pushing for a single, indivisible Ethiopian state (unitary state), opposing any ethnically based federalism. Note that AAPO has several times made the point that it is only taking part because it would lose its legally constituted status if it failed to take part in two consecutive elections. The ONC, while it shares similar position with these opposition parties on the question of the right to secede, has a different stance on the issue of land ownership.

While, on the one hand, the government opened up for political discussion, they have also continued to harass, intimidate and detain the opposition during the electoral campaign. Since the state still owns housing, they refused to offer locations for opposition gatherings. On the contrary, they used their cadres to harass those private individuals who rented or offered accommodation by the opposition parties. The opposition complained that the government closed their regional offices, and arrested some of their candidates. Despite these difficulties the opposition took part in the elections.

---

<sup>246</sup> Note also that the policy of user rights was introduced during the final years of the Derg regime.

---

According to observers from EHRCO, local UN staff and diplomatic mission and domestic NGOs, voting was generally free and fair in most areas. Serious irregularities were reported however, in the SNNPRS, particularly in Hadiya zone where there were incidents of election officials instructing voters whom to vote for and candidates campaigning at polling stations and candidates being pressured into quitting. As a result of these allegations the NEB investigated and ordered new elections in 16 constituencies of SNNPRS. The new elections were held in June and were declared generally free and fair.

The election was contested by seventeen opposition parties and as expected the incumbent EPRDF won an overwhelmingly victory gaining 481 seats in the House of Peoples Representatives. EPRDF-affiliated candidates won a further 37 seats, opposition party candidates 16 and independents 13 seats. The EPRDF domination was only challenged to any extent in the SNNPRS region where opposition candidates won a significant number of seats. A notable result was the Minister of Defence losing his seat to an AAPO candidate.

The results announced in mid-June by the National Electoral Board showed that the ruling coalition, the EPRDF, led by the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other satellite parties composed of 24 political organizations, had won a mandate to remain in power for the next five years, as it won 85 percent (479 out of the 550) of the seats in the House of Representatives. Elections in the Somali region, which had been hard hit by drought and severe food shortage, were held on 31 August 2000. The alliance of Somali Democratic Forces (ASDF), the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP), and the Somali Peoples Democratic Party (SPDP) (other “puppet parties”) as well as 156 private candidates contested the 23 seats reserved for the region in the House of Peoples Representatives and the 168 seats in the State council. Some 75 percent of the 1.15 million registered eligible voters in the region cast ballots. The result for this region showed that 19 of the seats went to the Somali Peoples Democratic Party and the other four went to independent candidates. Table 8.4 below reveals the final results of Ethiopia’s 2000 elections.

Table 8. 5 Results of the May 2000 Elections		Seat Won	
		547	
<b>Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oromo People's Democratic Organization</li> <li>• Amhara Nation Democratic Movement</li> <li>• Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Front (see note below) **</li> <li>• Tigray Peoples Liberation Front</li> </ul>	EPDRF	481 (87.9%)	OPDO 183 ANDM 146 SEPDO 112 TPLF 40
Afar National Democratic Party	ANDP	8	
Benshangul Gumuz Peoples' Democratic United Party	BGBDUP	6	
Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia	CAFPDE	4	
Gambela Peoples' Democratic Front	GPDF	3	
Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Coalition	SEPDC	2	
Hadiya National Democratic Organization	HDNO	3	
Oromo Liberation United front	OLUF	1	
Ethiopian Democratic Party	EDP	2	
All Amhara People Organization	AAPO	1	
Oromo National Congress	ONC	1	
Sidama Hadicho Peoples' Democratic Organization	SHPDO	1	
Siltie Peoples' Democratic United Party	SPDUO	1	
Hareri National League	HNL	1	
<b>Non-partisans/independent</b>		13	
	<b>EPRDF seats</b>	<b>87.9%</b>	
	<b>EPRDF-affiliated seats</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	
	<b>opposition seats</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	
	<b>independents seats</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	

Source: Ethiopian National Board (NEB) 2000 and different other sources

\*\*Note: The SEPDF consists of BPRDM (Bench People's Revolutionary Democratic Movement); BPUDM (Burgi People's United Democratic Movement); DDKDO (Denta, Debamo, Kitchenchla Democratic Organization); DPDO (Derashe People's Democratic Organization); DPDO (Donga People's Democratic Organization); DPRDO (Dawero People's Revolutionary Democratic Organization); GDU (Gamo Democratic Unity); GPRDM (Gideo People's Revolutionary Democratic Movement); GPRM (Gurage People's Revolutionary Movement); HPDO (Hadiya People's Democratic Organization); KNDO (Kebena Nationality Democratic Organization); KNUDO (Kore Nationality Unity Democratic Organization); KPDO (Kembata People's Democratic Organization); KPDO (Konso People's Democratic Organization); SOPDM (Southern Omo People's Democratic Movement); SPDM (Shekecho People's Democratic Movement); SPDO (Sidama People's Democratic Organization); TPDO (Tembaro People's Democratic Organization); WPDO (Wolayta People's Democratic Organization) and YPDF (Yem People's Democratic Front).

To sum up, severe irregularities, coercion, and the boycott of the opposition parties characterised the overall election process. Ethiopia's elections, thereby reached the starting point of Schumpeter's electoralist definition. But the actual practice of electoral politics compromises Ethiopia's status as a democracy even in Schumpeter's minimalist definition, since the popular will is difficult to discern by means of election results where abuses of the type discussed above occur. Ethiopia fulfils points one and three in Dahl's list of procedural minima, since elected officials control (at least a substantial portion of) state power and the franchise is universal. But the abuses discussed above and below violate Dahl's second and fourth conditions of the context necessary for democracy. On points five, six, and seven of Dahl's definition that go beyond Schumpeter's conception and enumerate rights that ensure political competition is meaningful, Ethiopia again comes up short.

## Democratization and the Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia

Zanger (2001), Davenport (1999, Davenport and Armstrong 2004), Poe and his colleagues (1999) among others, find that the extent to which a government's institutions are democratic influences the extent to which the government engages in repression or violation of human rights.<sup>247</sup> In her study of civil violence, Ellingsen (2000) reported that regime type had a large effect on violence than did ethnic structure. Put differently, the conventional argument about the institutional structure of the regime is that democracies observe rights such as the integrity of the person at higher levels than autocracy. That is, constraints on executive autonomy and a commitment to judicial due process, which are common characteristics of democratic institutions, serve to limit government's abuse of these rights.

The TPLF/EPRDF-leadership originally promised to implement an ambitious programme of political reforms, enshrining democratic standards and respect for human rights. The Constitution of Ethiopia states that "all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land" (Chapter two) and contains elaborate human and democratic rights provisions (chapter three, article 14-44). In line with these provisions, Ethiopia has ratified most major international human rights treaties.<sup>248</sup> Fasil Nahum, a Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, is one of the forerunners of the new Ethiopian constitution who supported the adoption of human rights as explicated in United Nations conventions. He explains that the international human rights paradigm had a major effect on Ethiopia's post-Mengistu regime. Nahum (1997) claims that the human rights provisions in Ethiopia's 1994 constitution, which make up fully one-third of the constitution, cover a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>249</sup> Nahum (1997:50-51) admits, however, that the implementation of these rights represents a major challenge for Ethiopia.

---

<sup>247</sup> It seems evident that, like democracy, human rights in a broad sense are ideals that nowhere attained. But the rule is that "democracies show higher respect for human rights than do authoritarian systems even if this respect not be completed.

<sup>248</sup> Note that there is no judicial review of the constitution. However, the interpretation of the Constitution is in the hands of the House of the Federation (Article 62 of the FDRE Constitution).

<sup>249</sup> Article 10 of the constitution for example proclaims; 1) human rights and freedoms are inviolable and inalienable. They are inherent in the dignity of human beings; 2) human and democratic rights of Ethiopian citizens shall be respected. Article 13 explains that the fundamental rights and liberties included "shall be interpreted in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international Human Rights treaties which Ethiopia has accepted or ratified.

The protection of human rights would be a welcome attainment for Ethiopia, a nation ruled by oppressive regimes throughout the twentieth century. Human rights, that is governmental respect for freedom of expression and association, for due process of law, for equality before the law, and for the rights of citizens not to be subjected to cruel and degrading punishment (Robertson & Merrills 1996, Vincent 1991). However, as discussed below, there is a huge gap between Ethiopia's written policy position on human rights and its practice.

In retrospect it can be seen that while the EPRDF was putting in place its machinery to maintain power indefinitely, it was also trying to impress the US and other western donor nations. The murky relationship of the EPRDF, and its front organisations (PDO's), made it possible to exert varying pressures, harassment, and even physical abuses of critics from governmental to "private" party sectors. Tightly organised cadres control institutions and mass organisations of public and collective life. The EPRDF has the means to harass and intimidate any opposition that challenges its dominance of institutions or organisations. This capacity was enhanced when the EPRDF army was proclaimed as the 'state Defence army for the Transitional Government,' and internal security was tightly monopolised by the party. So many Ethiopians have learnt that listing human rights does not guarantee their protection.

In other words, the Ethiopian government's actions did not match its proclaimed respect for human rights. On paper, they looked like a dramatic increase in democratisation and respect for human rights, which met with praise from inside and outside the country (Nahum 1997, kinfe 2000, Henze 1998). However, in respect of political rights and civil liberties Ethiopia became less and less free over the decade, according to Freedom House's annual surveys of freedom in the world (see table 8.x). Freedom House today classifies the country as "partly free" with a 5 on a 1 (free) to 7 (unfree) scale.

**Table 8.6 annual freedoms in Ethiopia 1972-2002**

Year	Rating	Year	Rating	Year	Rating	Year	Rating	Year	Rating
1972-73	6 NF	1978-79	7NF	1984-85	7NF	1991-92	6PF	1997-98	4PF
1973-74	5PF	1979-80	7NF	1985-86	7NF	1992-93	6PF	1998-99	4PF
1974-75	6NF	1980-81	7NF	1986-87	7NF	1993-94	6NF	1999-00	5PF
1975-76	7NF	1981-82	7NF	1987-88	6NF	1994-95	6NF	1999-00	5PF
1976-77	7NF	1982-83	7NF	1988-89	6NF	1995-96	4PF	2000-01	5PF
1977-78	7NF	1983-84	7NF	1989-90	7NF	1996-97	4PF	2001-02	5PF
				1990-91	7NF				

Furthermore the independent group Human Rights Watch also noted a marked deterioration of civil liberties in Ethiopia. As shown in the table, human and political rights actually worsened slightly between 1999-2002. Other indicators of institutional quality and ethnic justice also worsened over the last four years (ibid., US State Department 2003, HRW 2003).

### **Democratisation and Ethnic Justice**

The regime claims to support the rights of all ethnic and cultural groups, yet most minority groups have been marginalized in one way or another and those who demand such rights have been accused of being “narrow nationalists.” The southern regions of Ethiopia are where many of these minority groups live, and where the regime uses military might to suppress the struggle for self-government of the many nationalities or ethnic groups.<sup>250</sup>

According to human rights sources International (AI 1999, 2002; HRW 2002, 2003), while human rights abuses are no longer as widespread or severe as they were under the Mengistu government, they continue to occur and abuses against certain groups can be severe. According to the State Department Country Reports (2002, 2003), Amnesty International (AI) (1999, 2002), Human Rights Watch (2002, 2003), and the non governmental Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO (1999, 2002) extrajudicial executions, unlawful detentions, abuse of prisoners, election-related harassment and intimidation, and other serious human rights violations continue to occur in Ethiopia.

In fact, the EPRDF’s methods of subjugation were demonstrated early in the Transition period. It squelched the “centrist” or “pan-Ethiopian” nationalists who opposed Eritrean independence and the ethnicisation of the Ethiopian state. The same methods of subjugation were demonstrated again in the elections where non-EPRDF political

---

<sup>250</sup> One Ethiopian refugee Ochalla Nyikaw from Gambella regional state, who escaped to the United Kingdom in 2000, states “..... The government is fearful of these people because it is fearful of the issue of self-determination being raised. We have seen that the rights of the people as written in the Constitution are not respected and the government is not responding to the needs of the people. I would say that the government is cheating the people. They are using a system of divided and rule. I believe that the constitution is good. Yet, in the case of Gambella and in many other regions, the Constitution remains on paper. It lacks practical implementation. It is the EPRDF advisory people who are taking all of the economic and political decisions, so this has limited the peoples’ development. Furthermore, a curfew has recently been introduced in Gambella, this has strengthened the army’s power and their ability to question anyone. (MRG, London, April 2000).

parties both inside and outside the TGE were denied freedom of speech, press, and association.

In early 1993, the Addis Ababa university (AAU) students demonstrated against the new regime dominated by the Tigrean minority.<sup>251</sup> In response to student protest and Amhara resistance (where several students were killed and/or wounded by the armed forces), the TGE acted harshly, suppressing and discouraging political opposition by firing 42 professors and lecturers without due process. They all signed a letter protesting the use of violence against student demonstration and some of them were fired for expressing anti-government views. Of those fired, 39 were ethnic Amharas, and all could be described as “centrist” opposed to the government’s policy on the secession of Eritrea and the EPRDF’s ethno-federal experiment.<sup>252</sup>

Thus, since the government banned the OLF a decade before, thousands of alleged OLF members or sympathizers had been arrested, and this trend continued in 2002/03. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that the army used military camps for the temporary detention and interrogation of OLF fighters and alleged supporters (ICRC 1996, 2002). As of March 2002 more than 1,700 such prisoners were reportedly held at the Ghimbi central prison alone, half of them were arrested recently and the rest having been there for five to ten years, without charge. Hundreds more were detained in prison and police jails across Oromia state (AI, 2001, 2002, US Dep. of State, 2003, Human Rights Watch 2003, EHRC 2001, 2002). Prisoners who were released or escaped from incarceration reported severe torture while imprisoned.

As in March 2002, there was another violent confrontation between students and government forces in the Oromo region, with some student deaths and many arrests (IRIN 2002). The Oromia state minister for capacity-building, who fled the country in May 2002, denounced the state government for indiscriminately accusing the Oromo people of supporting the OLF (Human Rights Watch 2003). Human Rights Watch’s 1999 World Report highlights the fact that many ethnic groups have been denied the freedoms guaranteed them by the constitution and therefore:

Tensions persisted between the government and ethnic fronts which withdrew from earlier alliances with the EPRDF over their insistence that constitutionally guaranteed self-

<sup>251</sup> Note that the AAU is overrepresented by Amhara students and academics.

<sup>252</sup> The official explanation for firing them was that they were using inappropriately their classroom for political purposes (US Department of State, Country Report 1993:94).



determination rights be immediately exercised in their regions. Sporadic clashes occurred in Oromia and Somali regional states between government troops and fighters from the Oromo Liberation Fronts (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) respectively (HRW 1999 World Report)

On its part the TPLF/EPRDF government generally blames human rights abuses on action taken by local officials and is reluctant to admit any responsibility (cf. Tronvoll 2000). However, the scale of human rights violations cannot be attributed solely to local and regional officials. Anyway, the central government itself continued human rights violations which are well documented by international and local human rights organisations.

### **Judiciary**

Diamond (1999:94) argues that the judicial system and the police are elements that are often overlooked in democratisation studies. In order to be functioning well, the judicial system should be seen as legitimate by a majority of the citizens, it should be accessible for all citizens, it should be independent and ensure basic fairness and, finally it should be efficient. The 1994 Ethiopian constitution is ambiguous as to the independence of the judiciary and the protection of human rights. But in practice, the judiciaries do not function effectively or independently, but are rather paralysed by corruption, infrastructural disabilities, and political interference by the party in power. In other words, it is difficult for a judge to remain independent of political or party ideological influence.<sup>253</sup> The EPRDF in general and the Prime minister (executive branch) in particular attempt to control and manipulate the judicial system. As a result, judges and magistrates have a short tenure in office unless they are prepared to compromise their ethical principles, and support the ruling party's political stance. Government representatives keep a close eye on judges' work and decisions handed down. If a particular judge fails to measure up to what is "required" of him/her by government and party, then the chances are that the judge's appointment will be rapidly terminated.

Judges are frequently dismissed (in spite of an acute shortage of trained court personnel) for what is termed "corruption", "bribery" and "nepotism". Dismissals are considered

---

<sup>253</sup> Under the EPRDF regime, there is a public perception that the justice administered in the courts is influenced by the ruling party, that is intended to uphold the law but to repress interests opposed to the government. Worse still, the Ethiopian judiciary is too sterile, manipulable, and unassertive in its judicial responsibilities to serve as an effective bulwark against the arbitrary use of power against members of the general public. However, on a comparative basis, the courts under the EPRDF have shown themselves prepared to break away from the rigid Mengistu era. The phenomenon of activist judiciary under the EPRDF system is quite remarkable, particularly in destroying the myth or perception of immunity of the government from the public challenge of its actions and policies.

during the course of *gimegame* (assessments) in which “criticism” and “self-criticism” are the order of the day.

The judiciary remained unable or unwilling to stop human rights violations.<sup>254</sup> In May 2001, the federal minister for capacity-building acknowledged that the judicial system was generally backward and incapable of enforcing constitutional guarantees. Often judges refused to release prisoners on bail even when the police or prosecutor had no proper grounds for their detention. Instead, hearings were adjourned for two weeks at a time to allow police to investigate. Occasionally, a court would order the release of a prisoner only for the prisoner to be rearrested and jailed within a day or two outside the court's geographical jurisdiction. For example, police in Addis Ababa arrested a businesswoman, Dinkinesh Deressa Kitila, in early June 2002 on accusations that she had transported OLF documents in her car. She appeared in court several times over two months before the local court ordered her released for lack of evidence. Two days after her release on bail, she was rearrested in another district. As of October, she remained imprisoned (Human Rights Watch 2003).

Another (maybe bizarre) example is the case of Siya Abrah—one of the most prominent ex-TPLF fighter and former Minister of Defence. He was arrested with seven co-defendants in mid-June 2001 after the split in the TPLF Central Committee, of which he was a member. In an unusual move, the court ordered Siya's release on bail, but he was rearrested outside the courthouse. In mid-August, a court gave the police two weeks extension to complete the investigation. The two weeks came and went without charges and release. In late October, almost five months after their arrest, Siya and his co-defendants were charged with corruption or what some would call a politically motivated corruption charge. Bail was denied because the government suddenly amended its “anti-corruption law” to prohibit bail for anyone charged with corruption by the police. The amendment was immediately applied to former colleagues and political opponent of the Meles who had been purged from the TPLF/EPRDF's constituent parties.<sup>255</sup>

---

<sup>254</sup> Diamond (1999:94) argues that the judicial system and the police are elements that are often overlooked within democratisation studies. In order to be functioning well, the judicial system should be seen as legitimate

<sup>255</sup> The amended anti-corruption law was also applied to another prominent dissident politician, Abate Kisho, the former president of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's regional state. Like Siye, he was suddenly arrested for more than four months and was then charged with having used his office to

The final example of the lack of judicial independence and government interference in judiciary is that of Lidetu Ayalew—the General Secretary of the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP). He too was arrested in April 2001 and a court ordered his release in early June but he was rearrested two weeks later and accused by the police of having used his mobile phone to coordinate student protests. The three judges who released him were dismissed from their jobs. He, however, was again released by another court after seventeen days in jail without formal charges. The three cases are selected from among thousands of other cases due to lack of space.

In sum, with a weak and politically controlled judicial power there will be no sanctions against abuses of power, or against delegative or clientelistic practices. True, as opposed to the Mengistu's totalitarian system, we have witnessed a significant degree of, or some of signs of, division of power among the three power blocs (the executive, the judiciary and the parliament) but again the judiciary does not act independently and effectively. Rather they continued to contribute to an increase in the government's lack of legitimacy among the population.

### **Media and free press**

Although the Ethiopian constitution guarantees freedom of the press, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Ethiopia has imprisoned more journalists in the last five years than any other country in Africa and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi ranks among the top six enemies of the press in the world (CPJ, 1998, 2002). Newspapers and magazines critical of the government were shut down and news distributors harassed into carrying only politically correct publications. Supposedly passed to guarantee a free press, the 1992 press law was a set of restrictions on the media with criminal penalties for violations. Among these were “any criminal offence against the safety of the state”, of the administration or of the national defence force. In addition, with the EPRDF or its own non-independent courts determining the meaning of “criminal offence”, defamation or false accusation,” journalists and publishers soon found that almost any criticism of the EPRDF government or its front organisations or their policies would be punished.

---

make illegal purchases. The government also arrested about a dozen businessmen under the anti-corruption law. They, too, were jailed for months without formal charges and their financial assets and businesses were frozen. Several of those arrested had no obvious political ties (see Human Rights Watch 2002, AI 2002, US State Department Country Report 20002).

The budding lively free press was castigated as an anti-government lobby and the free market of ideas was replaced by the EPRDF company store that peddled the official line. By 2002 some twenty editors and journalists on privately owned newspapers had been arrested by the EPRDF government (cf. attacks on the Press in 2002 [www.cpj.org/attacks02/africa02/ethiopia.html](http://www.cpj.org/attacks02/africa02/ethiopia.html)). This was the second highest in the world and showed that Ethiopia surpassed totalitarian regimes such as Cuba, China and Syria in its willingness to throw journalists into jail.

To be fair, it is worth noting that some of the private newspapers are relatively objective (e.g. Addis Tribune, Reporter etc.), while others lack professionalism. Instead of real journalism they use their newspapers for opposition to the government e.g., Agere, and Fanos. In this regard, as Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine observed, this is a major problem in current democratising in countries like Ethiopia. According to Snyder and Ballentine:

In many newly democratizing societies, press laws are biased and capriciously enforced. The middlemen of the market place of ideas—journalists, public intellectuals, and public-interest watchdogs—tend to perform poorly in the initial stages of the expansion of press freedom. Instead of digging out the truth and bellowing the whistle on fallacious arguments, journalists in emerging markets are often beholden to a particular party or interest group, make little attempt to distinguish between fact and opinion, and lack training in the standards of journalistic professionalism (Snyder & Ballentine 1996:24).

Finally, the regime has also targeted long established professional and trade associations. Of these, the most openly attacked have been the Ethiopian Teacher's Association (ETA),<sup>256</sup> the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), and the newly emerged Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO).<sup>257</sup> The EPRDF should heed the warning that 'those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only

---

<sup>256</sup> The ETA protested when the TGE went about restructuring Ethiopian education along lines of ethnic federalism, with teachers' assignments correspondingly following ethnic or linguistic paths, rather than those of high quality instruction. The government dismissed or suspended thousands of teachers who refused to be transferred, detained others, killed some, and by fiat, denied the ETA a peaceful demonstration planned with CETU. When the ETA refused to buckle to this pressure, government security forces ransacked the association's Addis Ababa offices, placed them under EPRDF loyalists, and impounded the association's welfare accounts. Armed security officers broke into and illegally searched the home of ETA president, Dr. Taye Wolde Semayat and arrested him on 30 March at the Addis Ababa Airport on his return from a business trip abroad. He was then charged with planning to violently overthrowing the government and planning and executing acts of terrorism. Using every weapons in its arsenal, notably the media in its control, the government had been vilifying Dr. Taye ever since.

<sup>257</sup> In early May 2001, about two weeks after the police actions involving university students, the police arrested two leading human rights activist, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam and Dr. Berhanu Nega. They were both charged with having incited the students to riot. The government produced no evidence then or since to substantiate the claims. Mesfin was the founder and first president of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO). On the day of the arrest, the government raided and sealed the EHRCO offices. While in prison Mesifn and Berhanu began a hunger strike. This, together with considerable international publicity and pressure, lead to their release.

the unanimity of the graveyard.’<sup>258</sup> The rulers of Ethiopia still have promises to keep before anyone will take seriously their claims of being on the path of “democratisation” and of valuing human rights.

### **Economic reform in Ethiopia**

Like many other African and Post-Communist countries, Ethiopia commenced the process of restructuring its economy simultaneously with the opening up of the political system (dual transition). More generally, following the deep economic crisis and general disillusionment with centrally planned (state controlled) economies, the market system became an appealing alternative to the pervasive inefficiency of command economies. This is not the only case for economic reforms, however. The pressures generated by the demands of western donors also forced the EPRDF to moderate its former socialist policy orientation. The TGE, soon after its establishment, launched a new economic policy that represented a radical departure from the past. The essence of the new economic policy became the transformation of the command economy inherited from the previous regime into a functioning market-based economy (see box 1). Having said that it must be noted that in fact many of these policies adopted by the EPRDF had been proposed by the Derg regime at the end of its reign but were overtaken by events before its implementation.<sup>259</sup>

In any case, Ethiopia is in many respects a transitional economy and since 1992, under the auspices of the structural adjustment programme (SAP),<sup>260</sup> a range of reforms have been implemented. These include the complete liberalisation of prices; the devaluation of the Ethiopian birr; the enactment of a new, more liberal investment regime; the granting of autonomy to public enterprises and undertaking privatisation programmes.

---

<sup>258</sup> The most complete explanation of the association between contentious political challenges and political repression was made by Ted Gurr (1986). Gurr suggested that weak regimes are more likely to use violent repression in response to challenges. His reasoning is that weak regimes have limited material resources and low levels of political institutionalization that constrain their ability to institute policy concessions in response to challenges. If accommodative responses are constrained, then repressive responses becomes more likely. Moreover, political leaders in weak regimes could be more sensitive to perceived threats to their power.

<sup>259</sup> The Derg embarked on a reform program referred to as the ‘mixed economy declaration in 1988’. It embraced the idea of a private sector next to the public sector in the economy.

<sup>260</sup> The Ethiopian government negotiated its first structural adjustment program, the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) with the IMF and World Bank in 1992/93—1994/95. The second phase of the program occurred during the period 1994/95—1996/97. The third phase of the program, the first Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) was allowed to expire in October 1997. The government has adopted a new medium-term adjustment program for the period 1998/99–2000/01. (See Ethiopian Economic Reforms for 1998/99—2000/01). *The Policy Framework Paper* prepared by the Government of Ethiopia in Collaboration with the IMF and the World Bank, September 28, 1999). Adjustment and austerity measures involved severe hardships for ordinary Ethiopians. Despite this, adjustment policies did not meet with substantial organised opposition.

Moreover, sweeping reforms have seen the establishment of more market-determined foreign exchange and interest rates, and the overhaul of hitherto restrictive labour legislation. Underpinning the SAP has been the pursuit of tight fiscal and monetary policies.

All retail prices except petroleum have been decontrolled. Export taxes were eliminated except on coffee where licence fees for exporters were reduced. Measures to revive the private sectors included allowing domestic private participation in freight forwarding and clearing, and in banking and insurance activities. The parastatal monopoly on coffee marketing was effectively abolished by allowing the private sector into coffee trading, marketing and exports. Maximum import duties were lowered from 230 percent to 40 percent, and to a weighted average of 21.5 percent by 1998 (World Bank 2000). The negative list used to determine eligibility for imports through the foreign exchange auction, has been reduced. Exporters of goods and services are now allowed to retain 10 percent of foreign exchange earnings. The government also issued a new labour code that incorporates much international practice in the areas of employment conditions and compensation, eliminated the monopoly power of some official marketing and trade corporations and completed the decontrol of agricultural prices. The investment code was revised four times in as many years and presently allows greater private sector participation, including in public utilities where the state enjoys a de facto monopoly. In addition, a number of modest measures have been taken to promote exports.

On the fiscal side, there were cutbacks in public expenditure, particularly defence expenditure,<sup>261</sup> plus removal of subsidies, along with reforms in taxation and revenue collection. Institutional reforms consisted of public sector reorganization through the retrenchment and redeployment of labour and, more recently, divestiture and privatization of some state-owned enterprises. It must be noted here, however, that the privatisation scheme itself and the running of the economy has benefited the ruling regime and its supporters more than any one else. Here a web of companies associated with the ruling TPLF/EPRDF regime emerged while other “businessmen have either been dismissed or have been forced to forfeit their licenses through loss of business and

---

<sup>261</sup> The war between Eritrea and Ethiopia disrupted this evaluation. Defence expenditure rose again quickly to about 10 percent of GDP on average in 1999 and 2000. Most aid flows were frozen, while the fiscal stance weakened, resulting in cuts in capital expenditure to social sectors and large increases in domestic financing of the fiscal deficit, risking inflationary pressures.

their exclusion from participating in the privatisation scheme” (Pollock, in Hameso 1997:95). The Central committee members of the ruling party and their friends are the dominant share holders in newly privatised companies. Pervasive discrimination and the monopolization of economic sectors by states or parties affiliated to it stifle entrepreneurship (ibid.).

Put differently, the Ethiopian constitution (1995) prohibits political organizations from engaging in profit making activities. Yet many of the influential members of the TPLF are engaged in monetary scandals and fraudulent practices. They have established business enterprises which include manufacturing industries, banks and insurance companies, and whose assets are estimated at between 1 million and 3 million birr. Other sources claim that the TPLF has created a business empire worth 3.3 billion birr. Out of 44 government controlled companies, the TPLF owns 32 of them.<sup>262</sup> Most of these companies were state owned, but were sold by the privatisation agency to the TPLF/EPRDF and others in clientelistic<sup>263</sup> ways below their market prices. In addition to stimulating additional opposition to the TPLF/EPRDF clientelistic/political patronage and party control of the economy have also intensified distribution conflicts, which has further complicated the EPRDF’s efforts to build a broad foundation of domestic support.

Moreover, the involvement of political parties in “private” companies became another inhabiting factor in private sector development. Meanwhile, the privatization programme has been slow to take off. The description of the business environment by the local economics correspondent of the Addis Tribune is relevant even if perhaps biased:

Individuals cannot own land; houses and other properties confiscated by the predatory Derg regime continue to be in the possession of the present government; the official policy of ethnic bias prompts leader to allocate disproportionate amounts of public resources to favored regions; the mixing of politics with business is flagrantly practiced...foreign participation in the banking and insurance sector is banned; directed credit is commonplace; university lecturers and experienced civil servants have been dismissed or forced into early retirement; peasants critical of official economic policy and political thinking have been deprived of their plots of land; commercial farming is eyed with suspicion. (Quoted in Abegaz 2001:195).

<sup>262</sup> The TPLF is alleged to own a large number of agricultural, industrial and financial businesses under the umbrella of the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Tigray (Abegaz 2001:207).

<sup>263</sup> Clienteles/political patronage refer to the practice whereby ruling regimes distribute benefits and rewards to societal groups in exchange for their support. Bienen and Herbst (1996), and Bates (1999). Other African experts occasionally use the concept “neopatrimonial” when describing regimes that engage heavily in clientelism. In neopatrimonial regimes, a ruler with considerable personal prestige bestows rights and privileges on his subjects. The ruler ensures the political stability of the regime by selectively distributing favours and materials benefits to loyal followers that serve as the rulers’ clients. While the Ethiopian regime is not purely patrimonial, the TPLF exhibits these tendencies. On neopatrimonialism in Africa, see Micheal Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle 1997.

Despite the efforts of the TPLF to extend its clientelistic practices towards non-Tigreans, this does not eradicate the impression that the Tigreans continue to receive most of the resources and benefits. In addition to clientelism, neo-liberal economic reforms can also intensify distributional conflicts as well as stimulate opposition to the government. In developing countries, where resources are scarce, the problem is especially severe, since economic reforms mean that fewer state resources will be available for distribution. While many groups are negatively affected by the temporary contraction of state spending, other groups benefit and this exacerbates distributional conflicts.

The government has also adopted agriculture-led industrialization as a central plank of its development programme, with a focus on productivity growth on small farms and labour-intensive industrialisation. The government's longstanding promise to hold a national referendum on land ownership has yet to materialize. Its current strategy of agricultural development-lead industrialization (ADLI) focused instead on long-term leases and such short cuts as supplying fertilizer and improved seeds.

All in all, these reforms combined with the absence of warfare (until it again broke out in 1998) and favourable weather conditions for most of the past decade, produced good economic results.<sup>264</sup> However, Ethiopia still remains one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita income of just 110\$ US in 2001. The structure of the economy remains largely unchanged, with rainfed agriculture generating nearly half of GDP, more than 85 percent of employment, and almost all exports. The country remains dependent on a few primary exports (coffee) that suffer from deteriorating terms of trade, resulting in volatile export earnings. Growth is also constrained by heavy external debt.<sup>265</sup> And the recent war with Eritrea did not help matters (discussed below).

Finally, the EPRDF regime is no different from its predecessors in its approach to famine. Like its predecessors, the Meles regime attributes famine to natural disasters (lack of rains compounded by the farmers' lack of reserve asset enhances their

---

<sup>264</sup> The overall performance of the Economy between 1992 and 2002 has been mixed. Economic growth during this period is quite impressive where real total and per capita GNP on average grew at 5.6%. One notices, however, that performance has been fragile and growth uneven (see Almeyahu 2002b, 2000c).

<sup>265</sup> Ethiopia's external debt stock was estimated about \$5.6 billion in 2000. Multilateral debt constituted 51%, official bilateral debt constituted 46% of which the Paris club members were 30.3% while commercial debt made up the remaining 2%. Significantly, the debt stock in 2000 was nearly 50% of the outstanding debt at end of 1998. The sharp reduction was the result of about \$4 billion debt write-off from Russia.



vulnerability). However, given political negligence and wrong priorities such as the pursuit of war and slow response in identifying and tackling emergency situations, disaster is certain to strike.

Hunger is caused by bad weather, but even more by bad government. Well-governed countries never suffer famine; but of the 25 worst-nourished nations, all are badly governed, some spectacularly so. Little can be done about the weather, at least in the short term, but policies can change." - The Economist- .

It is equally evident that famine and bad polices are linked to poverty and lack of democracy. Following Amartya Sen (1999), I argue that famine and related disasters are not allowed to occur in democratic polities because people have established mechanisms to compel governments to address their needs and pressing problems. Moreover, famine in general and death from famine and starvation in particular happen because of the failure of entitlement of the weaker segment of population (ibid.). Democratic governments are bound by social and political contract to respond to the needs of their citizens. They know that failure or breach of contract on their part brings an end to their stay in power (cf. Rousseau 1990). At the same time, citizens perform their duties according to the contract they consensually entered. Attempts to improve economic welfare or to contain economic decline or reduce poverty are indicative of the positive linkages between economic progress and democratic dispensation

### **The Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict and its consequences for ethnic relations in Ethiopia**

The aim of this section is not to discuss the Ethiopian-Eritrean war as such, but rather how the conflict and its outcome changed the internal and external relations of Ethiopia. By internal I am in particular referring to two main issues. First it split the ruling Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) into two groups. Second it stimulated opposition to the Ethiopian regime, because the Eritreans tried to mobilize opposition groups (such as the OLF and ONLF) in order to undermine the authority of the TPLF-led government in Addis. On its part the TPLF/EPRDF also mobilized against Isaias Afwerki and his government. By external relations I refer to Ethiopia's relationships with its neighbouring countries; in particular to Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia.

### **The Ethiopian-Eritrean Border Conflict**

After a few years of relatively peaceful coexistence the "close political and strategic alliance" between the EPLF and the TPLF was interrupted in May 1998, when the two countries became involved in a border dispute over the "Badame triangle." The border dispute and flare-up of violence (which came as a shock to many observers) evolved

into what the Human Rights Watch (2000) group labelled the “worst war of 1999” and led to the displacement of thousands of people.<sup>266</sup>

Although the two government’s official versions of the events of May 6<sup>th</sup> differ, it is clear that the violent confrontation resulted in thousands of casualties on both sides. The Eritrean official version of the conflict is that the Ethiopian militia opened fire and killed four of their officers who went there to talk about complaints of harassment by Eritrean residents in the disputed area. On its part, the Ethiopian government asserts that the clash occurred when Eritrean troops refused to leave their weapons behind when crossing the border. But for whatever reason, the Ethiopian militia shot and killed the Eritrean soldiers. Irrespective of who did what and how, by late May, the Eritrean government, sent approximately three brigades (9,000) soldiers and 13 tanks into the disputed Badame and Shiraro districts.<sup>267</sup>

While the Ethiopians contend that the Eritrean action constituted an invasion of Ethiopian territory, the Eritrean regime claims that it sent troops into disputed area in an attempt to restore order on land that legally belonged to Eritrea (Eritrean Embassy, Washington D.C. 1999). The Eritrean government based its territorial claim on a number of maps from the Italian colonial period (1890-1941) that allegedly indicate that Badame and Shrarro districts fall within Eritrean territory. In spite of the existence of colonial maps, however, according to Abbink, local inhabitants have always counted themselves as Ethiopian (Tigreans), because they have always paid taxes to Ethiopia and have been politically and judicially administered by Ethiopian authorities (Abbink 1998:552).

---

<sup>266</sup> Pendergast (1999) of the US. Institute of Peace observed that “no regional conflict had produced more concentrated death and destruction since World War II.”

<sup>267</sup> It must be noted here that the border dispute had been simmering since 1993 but negotiations to resolve it had made no headway by the end of 1997. For analyses of the Ethio-Eritrean war, see Abbink 1998, Gilkes & Plaut 1999, Tekeste & Tronvoll 2000, Clapham 2000. It must be also noted here that another related and significant contributory cause of the intensity of the current conflict is related to the issue of economy and political causes. The economic cause came to a head when Eritrea issued its own currency known as the Nakfa. The tension came when the Eritrean authorities proposed that both the Nakfa and the Birr be used as legal tender in both countries. Ethiopia rejected parity as disadvantageous to its trade and argued that the Nakfa/Birr rate should be market-determined. With the currency’s introduction, Ethiopia required the settlement of all its trade with Eritrea in hard currency (except for border trade valued at below 2,000 birr). The Ethiopia decisions “came as a shock and rebuff to the Eritreans” (Glikes and Plaut 1998:14). On its part Ethiopia had to pay in dollars for its use of the port and this, together with disagreements over its administration, led Ethiopia to divert an increasing amount of trade through Djibouti. Some scholars therefore explain the roots of Ethio-Eritrean war not only as a border dispute, but first and foremost as due to economic factors and indeed these have a significant role in many conflicts (cf. Sambanis & Collier 2002, Collier, 1999, Nafziger et al. 2000).

The day after the Eritrean government deployed their armies in Badame, the EPRDF's Council of Ministers issued a declaration against the Eritrean invasion. The Council demanded an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Eritrean forces from occupied Ethiopian territories (Ethiopian Embassy Washington DC 13 May 1998). In subsequent weeks, the Ethiopian regime declared war and the fighting spread to several other fronts along the 620 mile-long border including Zalambessa, Buré, and Alitena, resulting in the closure of the border. Consequently, Ethiopia no longer had access to the Port of Assab. The effective closure of the Port was initially problematic because it served as Ethiopia's main commercial outlet to the outside world. Ethiopia then began to divert its shipping and trade to Djibouti.

As tit-for-tat retaliatory measures continued by both countries, tensions escalated further when both sides upped the ante by launching air strikes on urban areas (Asmara and Mekelle). During one of the raids on Mekelle, the Eritrean air force inadvertently hit a local elementary school as well as a number of other civilians. Both sides continued the air war in the following days and weeks.

In addition to the bombings, the expulsion of Eritreans by the Ethiopian government beginning on June 12<sup>th</sup> further exacerbated tensions between the two countries. Both the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments have engaged in heavy propaganda, accusing the other side of forced expulsions, human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing. Whereas the Eritrean government is alleged to have expelled approximately 40,000 Ethiopians, the Ethiopian government came under fire for expelling over 50,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin, many of whom had lived in Ethiopia their entire lives.<sup>268</sup>

In a recent report, Amnesty International (1999) stated that:

In a clear breach of international law 54,000 Eritreans have been forcefully expelled from Ethiopia. They had their citizenship removed and were forcefully expelled under cruel and degrading conditions between June 1998 and February 1999.<sup>269</sup>

The U.S. and Rwandan governments led intensive peace negotiations but failed to persuade Eritrean authorities to accept a proposed peace plan in mid-1998. Eritrea rejected it on the basis of a provision returning the civil administration of Badame temporarily to the Ethiopian government. Eritrea subsequently presented its own peace

---

<sup>268</sup>On the expulsions from Assab, see "Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Conflict." *Africa Research Bulletin*, 35 (1998:13459). On the expulsion of Eritreans from Ethiopia, See Natalie Klien (1998). The Ethiopian government justified the expulsions on security grounds.

<sup>269</sup>Amnesty International, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Human Rights Issues in a Year of Conflict*, available at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

plan. The plan focused on binding demarcation of the border by the UN Cartographic Office within six months. During the interim period, the Eritrean government proposed internationally observed demilitarization of the disputed areas and unspecified ad hoc arrangements for their temporary administration. No one, however, responded formally to the Eritrean initiative. Finally, the most important peace initiative drafted in 1998 was proposed by the OAU in early June and subsequently revised during the months of November and December. In the proposal the OAU adopted the US-Rwandan peace provisions, which contained the controversial provision regarding the administration of Badame by Ethiopia. Instead, the Eritrean government viewed the proposal as a set of talking points that were open to negotiation (Embassy of Eritrea, Press Release, November 9, 1998).

During the eight-month respite, however, fragile peace was punctuated by sporadic skirmishes and extensive troop mobilization. By the end of the summer of 1998, both sides had amassed a total of 560,000 troops along the de facto border: 260,000 Eritrean and 300,000 Ethiopian (Michaelson 1999). Taking advantage of the lull in fighting both countries also engaged in a fierce arms race. Eritrean purchased most of its munitions from Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria and Romania. Qatar and Libya are also reported to have bankrolled some of Eritrea's purchases (Gilkes 1999:9, Michaelson 1999:9). Ethiopia, on the other hand, primarily looked to China and Russia for weapons, including high-tech fighter planes (ibid.). Ethiopia also benefited from refurbished fighter planes (MiGs) supplied by Israel. In both cases, technical crews from Russia, Ukraine and Latvia served as mercenaries, since neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea had pilots capable of flying high-tech fighter planes, such as Sukhoi-SU-27s and MiG-24s (Michaelson 1999:9).

To the dismay of the international community, the armed peace ended on February 6, 1999, when Ethiopian forces launched a new ground offensive along the Mereb-Setit front in Badame and Shiraro ("Operation Sunset"), deploying helicopter gunships to support its ground forces. While casualty figures remain disputed, it is estimated that the conflict resulted in tens of thousands of casualties—perhaps somewhere between 50,000 and 300,000—because of the trench warfare nature of the fighting and the use of heavy

artillery and tanks.<sup>270</sup> The Eritreans later lost a key battle in Badame during the final days of February, which forced Eritrean troops to retreat from the area and establish a new front line. As a result of Ethiopia's Operation Sunset in Badame, the Ethiopian government finally accepted the OAU framework on February 2000. The Badame defeat also led to a series of additional agreements drafted by the OAU,<sup>271</sup> which contained increasingly specific provisions regarding cease-fire arrangements, troops withdrawals, release and repatriation of POWs and civilian detainees. It also entailed provisions for a boundary commission with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the border. The peace was followed by the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation—United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). With only very small incidents of violations of the cease-fire provisions, peacekeeping has been so far successful.

Finally, on April 23, 2002 the Hague based Ethio-Eritrean Boundary Commission (hereafter BC) gave its final and binding ruling on delimiting the border. First the Ethiopian government asked for a detailed legal clarification of the status of Badame. When they discovered that Badame was to be allocated to Eritrea the Ethiopian government rejected the BC verdict. Since then the situation between the two countries has been very tense. In a recent interview to BBC the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi stated that he accepted the Commission's ruling as final and binding but that he would not accept the specific ruling. It should be noted that the second phase of the BC's activity was to undertake demarcation that was consistent with the delimitation ruling. However, because of the Ethiopian position on the status of the symbolic town of Badame, the demarcation process has been delayed several times. The big dilemma for the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi is now what to do next. On the one hand, as mentioned above, he is committed to the Algiers peace agreement. On the other hand, opposition to his regime is increasing, in particular (after the split within TPLF) from his own core region of Tigray over the border demarcation in general and the status of Badame in particular.<sup>272</sup>

---

<sup>270</sup> Indeed the Ethio-Eritrean war is perhaps a mixture of WWI and the Iran-Iraq war—a mixture of old fashion warfare and high-tech warfare.

<sup>271</sup> On 12 December 2000 in Algiers Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a comprehensive peace agreement ending the border conflict.

<sup>272</sup> The Ethiopian government officials stated at that time that Badame was part and parcel of Tigray and an disputable territory of Ethiopia and was invaded by the Eritreans. In 1999 Badame was won back after a huge and costly human sacrifice that saw hundreds of thousands people dead and/or wounded. Under the new peace agreement Badame was granted to Eritrea.

### *The Consequences of the Ethio-Eritrean War*

Besides the massive loss of life and displacement of very large numbers of people in both countries, the conflict has also had other internal and external consequences of which only a few are mentioned here. The first consequence is that the expulsion and human rights violations by both countries has led to deepening antagonism between the people of the two countries (in particular the Tigres on both sides) who have lived relatively peacefully even during the long civil war. Second, after the hostilities stopped and the ceasefire was implemented, both regimes began to undermine each other by arming opposition groups (in Eritrea and Ethiopia) and rival Somali factions (inside Somalia). In doing so both countries continue to undermine the attempt at peaceful solutions to ongoing conflict in Somalia. At the regional level another consequence of the war was the change in US policy and its celebration of the so-called “New African” leadership (cf. Ottaway 1999). Based on their long observation of the regional dynamics of the Horn of Africa, Lionel Cliffe (1998), John Markakis (1998) among others note that the conflicts in the region whether intra-state or interstate are linked in a regional “security complex.” According to Lionel Cliffe (1998:1), “interaction between the region’s states not only constitutes complicating contextual factors that intensify internal conflicts, but that such conflicts are intermeshed in such a way that ‘solutions’ to any one country’s problem in isolation are extremely difficult” and that “the task of peace-making is thus complicated in two ways: it has to be a two-tier process, and there has to be simultaneity in settling two or more disputes” (ibid:2). So the changes of alliances and support and empowerment of each others opposition (my enemy’s enemy is my best friend) in the region is not surprising to long term observers such as Markakis and Cliffe.<sup>273</sup> Perhaps it is true to say that the only country that gains from the Ethio-Eritrean war is the Islamist regime in Khartoum that had previously been isolated both regionally and internationally due its Islamist policy.<sup>274</sup>

A final consequence of the war has been deep divisions within the TPLF’s Central Committee. The division started when the peace plan regarding the Ethio-Eritrean

---

<sup>273</sup> In the past there was support by the Somali government to the Ethiopian opposition, the Sudanese government to Ethiopian opposition, the Ethiopian government to the Somali and Sudanese opposition etc.

<sup>274</sup> My argument is based on the current observation of Sudanese regional and international relations, in particular to the change of its relations to the neighboring countries, and to the United States of America. Moreover, the Kenyan (and US) brokered peace process is now moving forward between the Sudanese government and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). For the current peace progress see for example the Machakos agreement.

conflict was put on the table. In the debate as to whether to accept this peace proposal the committee was divided sharply into two groups. The one group accepted the technical arrangement while the other rejected it. The second group feared that economic sanctions would be imposed on the country and therefore voted for the proposal.

### **Conclusion**

The past decade witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number and percentage of electoral democracies in the world. More governments today have been chosen via free and fair elections than at any time in history. Despite this, there has been a considerable variation in the relative success of elections in meeting the broader goals of democratization and human rights from country to country. One of the most salient important features of the Ethiopian polity during the first decade of the post-Mengistu decade is the absence of democratization. To be sure, from the early 1990s, Ethiopia experienced a series of dramatic antiauthoritarian breakthroughs, and the polity at the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is far more open than the Haile Selassie and Mengistu system. Still, the first decade of the post-Mengistu Ethiopia period cannot be considered one of democratization; indeed, as we saw in this chapter the dominant wave of political change has moved in the direction of authoritarian restoration.

Ethiopia's failure to advance to democracy has not happened because of elections, but rather despite them. Elections should, and often do, help forge democratic politics. That elections alone do not necessarily create democracy has been noted and explicated by many contemporary scholars (Karl 1995; Diamond 1999). But elections are the absolutely indispensable ingredient; they are a necessary condition for democracy. The presence of elections in post-Mengistu Ethiopia has made the polity far more democratic, at least in light of several important definitions of democracy, than it was during the Haile Selassie and Mengistu era. But the elections themselves have been conducted in ways that have restricted their capacity for engendering democracy.

Ingredients other than elections that may also be important for democracy have also been absent or have been corrupted in a manner that has blocked democratization. The result has been "electoral authoritarianism" rather than democracy or what Diamond described as pseudo-democracies. Put differently, as the third wave of democratization receded, it certainly left its mark on Ethiopia. However, it failed to bring greater

---

democracy to the country, instead ushering in an era of Ethiopian pseudo-democracy. Ethiopia now lays claim to a vast array of democratic- looking political institutions and, for the first time in the country's modern political history, a multiparty government and opposition. At the same time, Ethiopia has held four regular competition but important elections since the EPRDF came to power. Ethiopian civil society is more active than at any time in the nation's history. Yet despite these advances, the TPLF/EPRDF regime has not devolved real power to elected officials. To the contrary, many of the changes undertaken during the 1990s have strengthened the TPLF/EPRDF, and helped ensure its survival even in the face of domestic and international pressure for democracy.

Clearly, the changes implemented by the regime were examples of political liberalization rather than democratization. Despite the democratic claims of the regime and sympathetic international and domestic actors, the measures were carefully designed to control change from above and to ensure that the reform process would not assume a momentum of its own. Under pressure from among others the international donor community the regime opened up the political system. But the regime used minimal alterations to satisfy these demands without ceding substantial power. Consequently, the TPLF and Meles Zenawi in particular remain the ultimate arbiters in Ethiopia, just as the Worker's Party and/or Mengistu was before the third wave.

The end of the military regime generated tremendous expectations (both domestically and internationally) that Ethiopia would finally abandon its authoritarian course. And in fact it started as a promising system when the TPLF/EPRDF embarked on its "grand coalition" government and restructuring of the Ethiopian state. A few years later, however, the TPLF/EPRDF entourage has begun to crack down on domestic opposition in ways reminiscent of the former regimes. The regression has affected the independent media in particular, an area in which some of the more dramatic advances had taken place. The regime has likewise become much less tolerant of public demonstrations, violently terminating protests by students and political oppositions. This reversion underscores the fragility of civil societies/political parties' advances when the system remains authoritarian and capable of crushing civil society, if necessary.

The alternative, perhaps more cynical but more likely, interpretation is that the hopes of the TPLF's commitment to democracy were overly optimistic. They were based on very



---

little information generally about the TPLF political strategy/ideology. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, the Albanian communist party was the role model for the TPLF. In this scenario, the changes seen in the first years of EPRDF rule followed the pattern of Lenin—purging those with uncertain loyalties and establishing their own leadership style. Once they established control and consolidated their power, the TPLF/EPRDF was able to tighten restrictions on the opposition.

In the *First New Nation*, Lipset (1967) asserted that toleration of opposition was the hardest thing for a new democracy to learn. A generation later, Lawson (1993) argued that constitutional opposition is a necessary condition for democracy. And of course Dahl's (1971) definition of polyarchy, the prerequisite for democracy, is built around contestation and competition, characteristics of political opposition.<sup>275</sup>

As this chapter has demonstrated, many of the impediments that the Ethiopian opposition, the media and the civil society faced during the era of Haile Selassie and Mengistu are still alive today. Cases of arrests, harassment, threats, intimidation and death exist today, to the point where the private newspapers are now beginning to force journalists to conform to the government line. This is a dangerous trend that needs to be halted if the limited democratic gains are to be consolidated.

---

<sup>275</sup> I acknowledge that even though opposition is an essential part of democratic government, it does not evolve automatically. Even in long-established constitutional democracies, governments do not like opposition. Where there is no history of having to tolerate opponents, suddenly having to suffer criticism, face procedural delays, and even see projects fail must be especially hard to take.

## *Chapter eight*

### *Conclusions and Summary*

---

The cataclysmic developments which followed the end of the Cold War have brought to the forefront, once again, issues of coexistence in multiethnic or divided societies as well issues of state formation. The tragic events in the former Yugoslavia, the conflict in the former Soviet Union, and the continuing instability in Africa have regenerated the debate on how to cope with intrastate conflicts. Many scholars in this discussion advance both theoretical and empirical claims that seem to suggest power-sharing arrangements and particularly federalism might be of great use. In Ethiopia the EPRDF established an ethnically based federal structure after assuming power from the authoritarian regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. This study sets out to analyse the development of ethno-political conflicts and the attempt to accommodate such conflicts by democratic means in Ethiopia. In the African context Ethiopia provides a terrain for exploring the relationship between institutional design and ethno-political conflict management. In this concluding chapter, the empirical and theoretical arguments are summarised and further scrutinised, and the chapter raises a number of suggestions for future research.

As shown in chapters one and two, studies of ethnicity and nationalism have grown significantly in recent years. Despite the popularity of the notions of postmodernism, globalisation, market liberalisation or perhaps because of their popularity, ethnicity continues to be crucial, and to constitute one of the most prominent important elements of modern society. As Horowitz (1985) almost two decades ago puts it “The increasing prominence of ethnic loyalties is a development for which neither statesmen nor scientists were adequately prepared.”

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, it was widely anticipated that threats to international peace and security would be substantially reduced and that the world at large would benefit from what came to be known as the “peace dividend”. The final triumph of the neo-liberal democratic model was seen by some as evidence of the “*End of History*” (cf. Fukuyama 1992). However, there was early evidence to suggest that this would not be the case coming in the form of the instability following on from the

---

collapse of Communism. The collapse of Communism saw hitherto concealed conflicts erupt around issues of governance and self-determination, ethnic divisions, and territorial disputes. In addition, the end of superpower patronage has created a vacuum whose inevitable results would include the spread of violence and the emergence of disparate groups—ranging from ethnic politics to nationalist movements claiming independence or succession.

This is not to argue that there were no intrastate wars or conflicts in the past, on the contrary. As our case study has shown, and as Ted Robert Gurr and his team based at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management have uncovered, there was a sharp increase in the total magnitude of violent conflict within societies from the 1950s to the 1980s (Gurr et al. 2000). What the authors refer to as "societal conflicts" represented roughly three times the magnitude of interstate war during most of the last half century, increasing six-fold between the 1950s and the early 1990s. What is new however is the sharp increase in the total magnitude of violent conflict within societies in the 1990s (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 2000). The vast majority of groups engaged in contemporary armed conflict define themselves on the basis of their identity, whether of a national, ethnic, religious or cultural character. In fact, self-determination is considered the primary cause of contemporary warfare by the Minority at Risk Project. In other words, the majority of these wars are about statehood, governance, and the role and status of nations and nationalities within states.

As reviewed in chapter two, there have been two main scholarly approaches to ethnicity and conflict. On the one hand, ethnicity is considered a primordial or inherited group characteristic that some scholars would argue as being biologically based. On the other hand, ethnicity has been conceptualized as an instrument, a contextual, fluid and negotiable aspect of identity, a tool used by individuals, groups, or elites to obtain some larger, typically material end. Although the distinction between these two seemingly opposing views may at first appear academic, "the extent to which scholars see ethnicity as immutable and innate versus socially constructed influences beliefs about the types of political systems that can best ameliorate conflict along ethnic lines" (Sisk 1996:13). I have argued in this study that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and can in fact describe different sides of the same coin. This has given rise to 'constructivist' approaches to ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. As Lake and Rothschild (1998) concluded

“ethnicity is not something that can be decided upon individuals at will, like other political affiliations, but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society and therefore it can only be understood within a relational framework.”

To be sure, as we have seen in this study, ethnic identities usually carry a “class” component (see chapter four). Inscriptive characteristics are complemented by a socioeconomic status, and with it a corresponding set of resentments or perceived privileges. The point is that such conflicts are often not *merely* class-based and, as such, probably less amenable to compromise. Ethnic conflict, as is often remarked, is different from socioeconomic conflict. Power is not simply a means to an end, but an end in itself, a mark of group status.

### **Decentralisation and Conflict Management in plural societies**

Although societal conflicts owe their origins and persistence to many factors, not all of which can be peaceably resolved, my review of the literature in chapter three suggests that democracy might help lessen ethnic conflict and contribute to more peaceful settlements than other forms of ethno-political conflict regulation. Based on this argument, the study analysed various relationships between democracy and conflict resolution. Scholars argue that cultural heterogeneity tends to impede a nation’s chances of democracy, because ethnic, religious, and linguistic problems tend to lead to cleavages that are difficult to resolve. This argument has been contested in this study, and the literature review suggests that the most effective way of mediating conflict is through political institutions that are both inclusive and authoritative i.e. consociational or power-sharing democracy. Conflicts are thereby channeled through representative bodies toward the centre. They are broadened in scope (i.e. nationalised), institutionalised, and ultimately, if things go right, amicably settled. As Horowitz (1985:684) argues “there is no case to be made for the fortuity of democracy or the inevitability of uncontrolled conflict. Even in the most severely divided societies, ties of blood do not lead ineluctably to rivers of blood.”

This is not to argue that democracy resolves all conflicts. Rather, as discussed in chapter three, democracies have an especially good record of ethnic accommodation (cf. Gurr 1993, 290-92, 2000). Furthermore, this suggests that elite choices, decisions and strategies are the primary factors accounting for the origins, trajectories and outcomes

of democratic transitions (Rustow 1990, Anderson 1999). Within this broad framework, transitions which proceed by pact-making are the ones most likely to produce successful transitions, though not necessarily “consolidation” (Diamond 1999).<sup>276</sup> If this is indeed the case, (contrary to modernisation theory which condemns plural societies to undemocratic rule simply because of their plural composition) I argued that there is a chance for both accommodation and democratisation in plural and developing countries like Ethiopia.

### **Ethiopia: ethno-political conflict and ethno-federal accommodation: Main Findings**

Ethiopia continues to puzzle scholars and observers. It is a country unique in Africa in having a 3000-year history with an indigenous state which was never colonised (except for five years of Italian occupation) by external force. Indeed, Ethiopia is one of the few ancient nations in the world which managed to survive into the present when other kingdoms fell away in the face of European colonialism. Yet, as we saw in chapter four, present day Ethiopia was formed through conquest (so called internal colonisation) and subjugation of the minority nationalities. Such militaristic expansion entailed political oppression and economic exploitation of the conquered nationalities. With the forceful confiscation of land, the vast majority of the conquered people were converted into landless peasants. Moreover, Ethiopia was governed by authoritarian regimes that pursued the creation of a centralised state. Ethiopia’s modern history can therefore be viewed as an ongoing struggle between centralising and centrifugal forces.

During the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie this drive to centralisation was coupled with efforts to transform multiethnic Ethiopia into a modern nation state. Like many other post-colonial states (particularly Sub-Saharan African), in this nation state there was no place in the nation state for the ethnic diversity that characterised Ethiopian society. The pursuance of the aim of creating a nation state was based on the propagation of language, culture and religion (Orthodox Christianity) of one ethnic group—the Amhara—and the corresponding denigration of all other languages, cultures

---

<sup>276</sup> This is to argue, that inert, invisible structure do not make democracies or dictatorships, people do. Structural factors such as economic development, cultural influences, and historical institutional arrangements influence the formation of actors’ preferences and power, but ultimately these forces have causal significance only if translated into human action. Individuals and the decisions they make are especially important for explaining divergent outcomes that result from similar structural contexts (the importance of agency has figured in theories of democratisation (or the so-called *Transitologist*). See for example Anderson (ed) 1999, Rustow 1970, Huntington 1991.

and religions. As a result of centralisation and ethnic homogenisation policy under Amhara hegemony, and the regime of Haile Selassie was increasingly confronted with regional and ethnic tensions and conflicts. In this context the principal source of conflict was the “national question.” But it is a mistake to view the national question as a matter of ethnic rivalries. Instead, this study has shown a cross-cutting pattern of national and class allegiances in the pre-revolution era.

Because the class and national questions were left unanswered by the regime of Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian revolution raised two fundamental questions. As we saw in chapter five the imperial regime came to an end with the deposition of Haile Selassie by the military (Derg) in September 1974. Soon after taking over power, the Derg started a programme to convert the Ethiopian empire into a Marxist Leninist state. The adoption of a Marxist-Leninist ideology resulted in the theoretical recognition of the right to self-determination of all “nationalities” in Ethiopia (Clapham 1988:199) and the liberation of the peasantry from the landed aristocracy. In other words, the revolution brought a new sense of hope and the expectation that the nationalities question would be resolved on the bases of equality and consent. However, what appeared to be a radical break with Haile Selassie’s policy was not implemented. Ethiopia remained a centralised state in which there was no place for regional or ethnic self-government. This dichotomy between theory and practice, the authoritarian framework of the new regime, and the entrenched chauvinism of “the unitary of the motherland” of the Amhara (and Amharised elite) hardliners was significant in mobilising regional and ethnic liberalisation movements.

As I have already indicated the Derg inherited the Eritrean liberation Front from the imperial regime. In chapter six we have analysed the struggle and the emergence of new nationalist movements and the national liberation front they waged. We have also seen how the Ethiopian revolution accelerated the national question into geopolitical settings—the Ethio-Somali war and the Soviet Union’s involvement in the Horn of Africa. Soviet involvement in internal and regional conflicts helped to facilitate the survival of the regime and made the regime opposed to resolving the national question in a peaceful fashion.

Until the end of 1980s, the Soviet Union continued to supply the Mengistu regime with arms. The armament programme accelerated the militarisation of the Derg and worsened the political and economic situation of the country. In neighbouring Somalia, the United States supported the Siad Barre dictatorship. At the height of the Cold War, the two superpower shifted alliances. The Soviet Union along with Cuba retreated from the Horn of Africa. Mengistu stood alone and in the end suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the forces of nationalist liberation fronts— the Eritrean Peoples Revolution Front (EPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF comprised a broad front of ethnic parties opposing the Derg. The various ethnic parties were formed by the TPLF as an alliance against the Derg and state capture.

As discussed throughout chapters six and seven, a fundamental political shift occurred in Ethiopia after the collapse of the military regime. Because centralisation and the suppression of Ethiopia's ethnic groups had been largely unsuccessful in the past, the EPRDF decided to decentralise Ethiopia's adoption of an ethnic federalist government resulted in sovereignty being divided between the central government and the newly created regional states. As in other federal countries, the central government of Ethiopia retains power in a number of areas e.g. defence and foreign policy. Regional states, however, assume authority over other areas. Therefore, rather than trying to suppress ethnic differences, the regime that followed the Derg decided to "experiment" by embracing differences and/or even ethnicising them.

In addition, it has enacted a constitution that allows nations and nationalities the right to secede and establish a separate state.<sup>277</sup> In other words, the EPRDF formulated a federal system that recognises the autonomy of ethnically defined regions. At the core of the federal system is to be the recognition of democracy and democratic principles in the election of officials and in the resolution of disputes over authority and control over regional, social, economic and political issues. However, as we saw in chapter six and seven, what at first appeared to be a *démarche* in transforming the unitary state into an ethnic federal one, is still stricken by representational crises as the state has continued to be dominated by the Tigrean elite.

---

<sup>277</sup> A separate Eritrean state was created in 1993 after two years de-facto state.

Scholars writing on democratisation processes have suggested that the transition to democracy is not the same than as the consolidation of democracy. Joseph and Harbeson (1998) argued that during the 1990s, Ethiopia adhered to one of the requisites for democratic transition: elections. As was shown in chapter seven, however, other scholars had their doubts over the future of democracy in Ethiopia. For although open and free elections were necessary conditions for the transition to democracy, the extent to which democracy would be consolidated bringing benefits to marginal sectors of the population was unclear. Elections were held in 1992, 1995 and 2000, but as we saw in chapter seven elections were not enough to claim that the country was a consolidated democracy, nor were they sufficient to ensure the stability of Ethiopia's democracy.

In a recent book Linz and Stepan suggest that "for a democratic transition to be completed, there are tasks that need to be accomplished, conditions that must be established, and attitudes and habits that must be cultivated" (1996:5). These scholars provide an analytical framework in which the presence of certain behavioural, attitudinal, and constitutional characteristics will determine the degree to which a democracy can be said to be consolidated. Following Linz and Stepan's framework, I conclude this dissertation by attempting to answer the following question: how far, or how close, is Ethiopia from consolidating its democracy?

Following Linz and Stepan's framework, the first condition of a consolidated democracy is that "Behaviorially, a democratic regime is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actor spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objective by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state" (1996:6). Chapters six and seven showed that Ethiopia's political and economic sector in post-Mengistu Ethiopia, including the creation of ethnic-based regional states and political parties, advocated democratic principles and pressured for self-government, thereby helping to create a democratic federal system. For the first time in Ethiopia's history, Ethiopian political actors attempted the creation of a democratic state. Thus, it can be claimed that as far as this behavioural condition is concerned, it seems that Ethiopia might be close to accommodate its diversity by democratic means.



The second condition suggested by Linz and Stepan is that “attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces” (1996:6). In chapter seven this study demonstrated that levels of support for the EPRDF and other “puppet” parties were low. Among the four ruling parties (the TPLF, ANDP, OPDO and SEPDO), that might represent the collective political interests of the nationalities, only the TPLF have legitimacy at the grassroots. In other words, the only political party with popular basis for support and legitimacy is the TPLF. When ethnic variables were used to analyse support for the political institutions, this study found low support for the current government by Amharas. However, Ethiopians who identified themselves as non-Amhara were more supportive of ethnic federalism than those who identified themselves in non-ethnic terms (i.e. Amharas and Amharised elites). Why is it that Ethiopians demonstrate such low support for the EPRDF government and for ethnic-based federalism?

Ethiopia did not have a history of political to build on from parties to build on from the Haile Selassie and Mengistu era, which were rather organised around specific personalities and managed by elites. As we saw in chapter six and seven, the majority of the parties in power (regional as well as national) were created by TPLF in fostering state capture and hegemonic control over the Ethiopian empire state. The TPLF/EPRDF marginalised the old nationalist movements such as the OLF and ONLF. It is no surprise that Ethiopians expressed far less support for these “puppet” political parties and that internal party operations have not been democratic. Typically, the TPLF has been dominated the EPRDF, two factors that reduce their accountability to their constituents.

Additionally, the parliament has been weak and dominated by the executive branch, inhabiting its ability to act independently. The judicial system is characterised by high levels of dependency on the executive branch of control by the centre. The government, represented by the executive and the Prime Minister Meles, has long been the epicentre of a centralised governmental bureaucracy. Moreover, the government has been dependent on the TPLF cadres who in addition to advising Meles on the functioning of

the central state also control regional states. Corruption within the state bureaucracy is a major problem, and there are serious questions over the accountability of government.

As argued by Mesfin

The fundamental problem of democratic change in Ethiopia, as in many Third World countries, is related to the nature of the state. As long as the state in Ethiopia is prized as the major avenue of accumulation of wealth, privilege and status, there may be less chance for peaceful and democratic change, and greater possibility for recurrent violence. The violence experienced in the overthrow of the last two regimes may have largely been a function of fusion of class power and state power—the state serving as a direct instrument of the government (1993:33).

In sum, following Linz and Stepan's claim about attitudinal conditions, the finding of this study is that Ethiopia is far away from consolidating its democracy. Nonetheless, federal engineering continues envision a new Ethiopia. The establishment of federal states, the protection of ethnic interest, and individual and group rights; a democratic system strengthened by a more participatory civil society; the reduction of the legitimate role of the military in a democratic society; and socioeconomic and agrarian reforms, if put in practice, could be conducive to democratic consolidation and a reversal of these low levels of attitudinal support.

The third condition proposed by Linz and Stepan is that, "Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and non-governmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process" (Linz and Stepan 1996:6). This dissertation does not directly address matters of constitutionality. That said, chapter seven provides some examples of how some non-governmental forces, particularly ethnic organisations (traditional forms of conflict management) have followed democratic procedures to solve political problems affecting the country. It was demonstrated that national groups with different political agendas were able to negotiate and reach consensus over issues that for some appeared contradictory.

Unfortunately, forces that have traditionally resorted to non-democratic procedures still survive in the country, and Ethiopians do not know to what extent their rights will be protected in the future. While the TPLF-dominated central government claims to be guided by principles of democracy, development, and minority rights, it continues to maintain a tight grip on society and potential political opponents. The government has instituted ostensibly democratic structures at the local regional and national levels, but in reality, party cadres (mainly Tigreans) remains in control. I have argued in chapter

three that a [non-democratic and] centralised federal structure is inappropriate in multinational states, even when the political regime is itself democratically constituted. The EPRDF regime is a highly centralised unitary state with only a measure of administrative devolution. The pyramid of power is built from top down, not the other way around. As such, the political and economic realities of the Ethiopian state violate the constitutional provisions of the Ethiopian federation both in letter and spirit. As a result, the very idea of federation has been compromised. Democratisation in Ethiopia has not been accompanied by institution building. The constitutional framework of the federation is lags behind the political and economic realities: the present-day pseudo-federal arrangement does not appear to satisfy expectations placed on the nation state and on individual nationalities within Ethiopia. A transition to a “true federation” would require a radical transformation of EPRDF, both in terms of ideology, and political organisation.

In theory, the post-Mengistu federation is based on the doctrine of shared sovereignty. In practice, however, the center’s usurpation of most powers and continued reliance on administrative command methods has denied the regional states any meaningful sovereignty. TPLF’s philosophy of federation continues to demonstrate (with Leninist at heart of it) a strong affinity to the doctrine of exclusive sovereignty at the center. The EPRDF is a highly centralised, party that has far formed a major obstacle to the democratisation and federalisation of Ethiopia. To be sure, Burgess (1993) and King (1982) argue forcefully that a federation cannot be genuine if it is a result of or maintained by coercion from above. In addition, federal governments have to be subject to the law and committed to the principle of constitutionalism. On this basis, the Ethiopian federal system, like the Soviet and Yugoslav federations, cannot be considered a genuine federation. While the Soviet and Yugoslav federations were controlled by the communist party, the Ethiopian federation is controlled by TPLF/EPRDF from the centre and the various ethno-regional parts had marginal *de facto* independence from the centre. An essential problem regarding the reform of the Ethiopian state structure thus pertains to the future organisational structure and political role of the EPRDF in a federal Ethiopia. It remains to be seen how these issues are dealt with; hopefully Ethiopians will meet these challenges.

---

Finally, several significant theoretical conclusions, including a new model of authoritarianism and evidence of the limits of some models of democratic transition, flow from the Ethiopian case. The most important is the prototype of the authoritarian variant that has developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: pseudodemocracy. A direct consequence of an international environment favouring democracy, this type allows authoritarian leaders to implement superficial changes. Ethiopia has joined the club of pseudodemocratic countries, its government armed by the dominance of a single party.

What are the implications of this analysis for future research? At the empirical level, and in the specific case of Ethiopia it might be useful to explore the future of this ethno-political experiment from different angles. For example, rather than look at specific elections, to take as a point of departure, the issue of human rights per se. An alternative might be to examine the whole issue of the cohesion of this hegemonic elite. Is it stable over time? What cracks and fissures exist within the ruling party? Another route might be to compare Ethiopia with other institutional arrangements in other pseudodemocracies where the political structures do not take ethno-political movements into account. Is the Ethiopian model more capable of defusing ethno-political conflicts than, for example, Nigeria?

At the theoretical level, this thesis has examined a number of issues such as the nature of ethnicity. Other theoretical concepts have been discussed but there is no space here to deal with all these. This thesis has argued that ethnicity is contextual and not innate. But, given that this thesis is a “single case” (though methodologically legitimate) it would be useful to see whether other cases fit with the arguments I have made.

---

## *Bibliography*

---

### **Published books and articles**

- Abay, Alemseged (1998) *Identity Jilted or Re-Imagining Identity*, NJ Larencevile: Red Sea Press.
- Abbink, Jon (1997) "Ethnicity and Constitutionalism in Contemporary Ethiopia" *Journal of African Law* 41: 59-179.
- Abbink, Jon (1993) "Ethnic Conflict in the Tribal Zone: The Dizi and Suri in Southern Ethiopia" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31(4): 675-682.
- Abbink, Jon (1995) "Breaking and Making the State: The Dynamics of Ethnic Democracy in Ethiopia" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 13(2): 149-165.
- Abbink, Jon (1998) "Breifing the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Dispute," *African Affairs* 97(389): 551-565.
- Abbink, Jon (2000) "Organization and Observation of Elections in Federal Ethiopia: Retrospect and Prospect", in J. Abbink & G Hesseling (eds.), *Election Observation and Democratization in Africa*, New York: Macmillan.
- Abebe, Zegeye & Pasewang Sigegfried (1994) *Ethiopia in Change: Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, London : British Academic Press.
- Abegaz, B. (2001) "Aid and Reform in Ethiopia" in Shantayanan D., David D. & Torgny H (eds.) *Aid and Reform in Africa*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Adhana, Haile (1994) "Mutation of Statehood and Contempoary Politics" in Abebe Zegeye and S. Pausewang (eds.), *Ethiopia in Change: Peasantry, Nationalism and Democrac*, London & New York: British Academic press.
- Africa Watch (1991) *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*, New York: Human Rights Watch.
- Ake, Claude (1997) *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Ake, Claude (2000) *Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Alexis, Heraclides (1991) *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics*, London Cass.
- Ali, Said (1998) "Afar Ethnicity in Ethiopian Politics", in Salih, M. & Markiks J. (eds.), *Ethncity and the State in Eastern Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Almond, G. & Verba S. (1963/1982) *The Civic Culture*, Prenceton: Princeton University Press.
- Alter, P. (1989) *Nationalism*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Alvesson, M and Kajs koldberg (2000) *Reflextive Methodlogy: New Vistas for Qualitiative Research*, London: Sage.
- Amartya, S. (1999) "Democracy as a Universal Value" *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3): 3-17.

- Anderson, Benedict. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Arai, Ghelowdewos (1995) *Ethiopia: The Political Economy of Transition*, University Press of America: USA.
- Armstrong, J. (1995) "Towards a Theory of Nationalism: Consensus and Dissensus", in Periwal S (ed.) *Nations of Nationalism*, Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Armstrong, J. (1996) *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Asmeron, Legesse (2000) *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System*, Lawrenceville & Asmara: The Red Sea Press.
- Asmerson, Legesse (1973) *Gada, Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, New York: the Free Press.
- Ayittey, George (1992) *Africa Betrayed*, New York: Library of Congress.
- Ayittey, George (1998) *Africa in Chaos*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Ayob, M. (1996) "State-Making, State Breaking and State Failure: Explaining the Roots of Third World Insecurity", in de Goor et al. *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*, Hampshire: Mcmillan Press.
- Baissa, Lemmu (1998) Contending Nationalisms in the Ethiopian Empire State and the Oromo Struggle for Self-Determination in Asafa Jalata (ed.), *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, Lawrenceville: NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Balsvik, Rønning (1985) *Haile Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution 1952-1977*, East Lansing. African Studies Centre, Michigan University.
- Balsvik, Rønning (1994) "An important Root of the Ethiopian Revolution" in Abebe Zegeye & Pausewang Siegfried (eds.) *Ethiopia in Change: Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, London: British Academic press.
- Barkin, S. & B. Cronin (1994) "The State, and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations", *International Organization* 48 (1):107-130.
- Barry, Brian (1991) *Self-Government Revisited: Democracy and Power: Essays in Political Theory*, Clarendon Press.
- Barth, Frederik. (1969) "Introduction" in F. Barth (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organizations of Cultural Differences*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Bates, Robert (1981) *Market and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bates, Robert (1983) *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Bates, Robert (1993) "Urban Bias: A Fresh Look", in Ashutosh Varshney (ed.) *Beyond Urban Bias*, London: Frank Cass.
- Baxter, P. (1978) "The Oromo: Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem", *African Affairs* 77 (308):283-296.

- Baxter, P. (1983) "The Problem of Oromo or the Problem of the Oromo?" in Lewis I. M. (ed.), *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa*, London: Ithaca Press.
- Bayart, Francis (1993) *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, Longman: London..
- Bayart, Francis (1999) *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, London: James Currey.
- Beetham, David (1994) "Conditions for Democratic Consolidation" *Review of African Political Economy* 2 (60): 157-173.
- Beetham, David (1994) "Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit", in David Beetham (ed.), *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, London: Saga Publications.
- Befekadu, Degefe and Berhanu Nega (eds.) (2000) *The Ethiopian Economic Association Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy, Vol. I*. Addis Ababa.
- Bell, Daniel (1975) "Ethnicity and Social Change" in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.
- Benjamin, Reilly (2001) *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bloomfield, D. and Ben Reilly (1998) "The Changing Nature of Conflict and Conflict Management" in Peter Harris and Ben Reilly (eds.), *Democracy and Deep-rooted conflict*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
- Bova, Russell (1997) "Democracy and Liberty: the cultural connection" *Journal of Democracy* 8 (1): 112-26.
- Brass, P. (1991) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi/Newbury Park. London: Sage Publications.
- Brass, Paul (1974) *Language, Religion, and Politics in India*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Brass, Paul (1985) *Ethnic groups and the state*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm.
- Bratton, M. & N. van de Walle (1997) *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transformation in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Breuilly, J. (1993) *Nationalism and the State* (Second Edition), Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brietzke, P. H. (1995) "Ethiopia's Leap in the Dark: Federalism and Self-determination in the New Constitution" *Journal of African Law* 39 (1): 19-38.
- Brind, Harry (1983/84) "Soviet Policy in the Horn of Africa" *International Affairs* 60 (1): 75-95.
- Brown, M (ed.) (1993/2000) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Princeton: Princeton University press.
- Brown, Seyom and Bosewell Terry (1997) "Ethnic Conflict and Political Violence: A Cross Analysis" *Journal of Military Sociology* 25 (1): 111-130.
- Brubaker R. & Laitin D. (1998) "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence" *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 423-52

- Brubaker, R. (1996) *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buchanan, Allan (1991) *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce*, Westview Press, Boulder.
- Buchanan, Allan (1993) *National Self-determination and Secession*, Oxford University Press.
- Calhoun, Craig (1997) *Nationalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Calhoun, Craig (1993) "Nationalism and Civil Society: Democracy, Diversity and Self-Determination" *International Sociology* 8 (4) 387-411.
- Callaghy, Thomas. (1987) "The State as a Lame Leviathan: The Patrimonial Administrative State in Africa," in Zaki Ergas (ed.) *The African State in Transition*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Carothers Thomas (1999) *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Carothers, Thomas (1997) "Democracy without Illusions" *Foreign Affairs* 76 (1): 85-99.
- Carothers, Thomas (2002) "The End of the Transition Paradigm" *Journal of Democracy* 13(1) 5-21.
- Cassese, A (1996) *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal*, Cambridge University Press.
- Chandra, Kanchan (2001) "Ethnic Bargains Group Instability and Social Choice Theory" *Politics and Society* 29 (3) 337-362.
- Chazan, Naomi (ed.) (1991) *Irredentism and International Politics*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Chazan, P. et al. (1999) *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Boulder: Lynne Rienner
- Christopher, Christopher (1996) *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Clapham, Christopher (1969a) *Haile-Selassie's Government*, London: Longman.
- Clapham, Christopher (1969b) "Imperial Leadership in Ethiopia" *African Affairs* 68 (271): 110-120.
- Clapham, Christopher (1975) "Centralization and Local Response in Southern Ethiopia" *African Affairs* 74 (294): 72-81.
- Clapham, Christopher (1988) *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clapham, Christopher (1994) "Ethnicity and the National Question in Ethiopia", in Woodward & Forsyth (eds.) *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa*, Aldershot, Dartmouth,
- Clapham, Christopher (ed.) (1998) *African Guerrilla*, Indiana University Press.
- Cliffe, Lionel (1984) "Conflict in the Horn of Africa" *Review of African Political Economy* 11(3): 1-7



- Cliffe, Lionel and Davidson B. (eds.) (1988) *The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace*, Nottingham: Spokesman
- Cliffe, Lionel and John Saul (eds.) (1980) *Socialism in Tanzania*, East African Pub.
- Cliffe, Lionel, & Luckham, Robin (1999) "Complex Political Emergence and the State: Failure and the fate of the state" *Third World Quarterly* 20 (1): 27-50.
- Cohen, John and Dov Weintraub (1975) *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: the Social Background to a revolution* The Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V.
- Cohen, F. S. (1997) "Proportional versus Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies" *Comparative Political Studies* 30 (5): 607-630.
- Cohen, John and Nils-Ivar Isaksson (1987) "Villagisation in Ethiopia's Arsi Region" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 25 (3): 435-464.
- Cohen, John (1995) "Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia" *Northeast African Studies* 2 (2): 157-188.
- Collier, D. & Adcock, R. (1999) "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choice about Concept" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:537-65.
- Collier, D. & Levitsky S. (1997) "Democracy with Adjectives" *World Politics* 49 (3) 430-451.
- Collier, D. (1991) "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change", in D.A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul (eds.), *Comparative Political Dynamics Global Research perspectives*, New York: Harper.
- Comaroff, John and Comaroff Jean (1992) *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- Connell, Dan (1998) *Against all odds: a chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution*, Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Connor, Walker (1984) *The national Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University press.
- Connor, Walker (1994) *Ethnonationalism: the Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Connor, Walker (1999) "National Self-Determination and Tomorrow's Political Map" in John Courtney et al, *Citizenship, Diversity and Pluralism*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Conversi, Daniel (2002) *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, London: Routledge.
- Crummey, Donald (1969) "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer" *Journal of African History* 10 (3):457-69.
- Daalder, H. (1974) "The Consociational Democracy Theme" *World Politics* 26 (4): 604-21.
- Dahl, Robert (1971) *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dahl, Robert (1989) *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Daniel, Gamachu (1994) "A Nation in Perpetual Transition: The Politics of Change in Administrative Divisions" in Marcus H. G (ed.), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*, A Paper Presented to 12<sup>th</sup> Int. Conference on Ethiopian Studies, Vol. II
- Daniel, Kendie (1992) "Which Way the Horn of Africa: Disintegration or Confederation" in *Pre-Proceedings of the Six Michigan State University Conference on Northeast Africa*. Holiday Inn, East Lansing (23-25 April 1992), pp. 156-169.
- Daniel, Moynihan (1993) *On the 'Self-Determination of Peoples Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Darkwah, R. H. (1975) *Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire*, London, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Davenport, C. and Armstrong, D. (2004) "Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights: A Statistical Analysis from 1976-1996" *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (3): 538-554.
- Davidson, Basil (1992) *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, London: James Currey.
- Davis, Horace B. (1967) *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Davenport C. (1999) "Human Rights and the Democratic Proposition" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43 (1): 92:116.
- Dawit, Wolde Giorgis (1989) *Red Tears: war, famine and Revolution in Ethiopia*, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press.
- De Waal, Alex (1998) *Famine Crimes*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Dessalegn, Rahmato (1984) *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, Uppsala: Nordiska Africainstiuet.
- Dessalegn, Rahmato (1992) *The Dynamics of Rural Poverty: Case Studies from a District in Southern Ethiopia*, Monograph Series 2/92, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Deutsch, Karl (ed.) (1966) *Nationalism and Social Communication*, Cambridge, Mass.
- Di Palma, G. (1990) *To Craft Democracies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Diamond, Larry & Marc Plattner (1994) (eds.) *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry (1992) "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered", *American Behavioural Science* 35:450-99.
- Diamond, Larry (1999) *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry and M. F. Plattner (eds.) (1999) *Democratization in Africa*. Baltimore & London, The John Hopkins University Press.
- Donham, D. & James, Wendy (eds). (1986) *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*. London: James Currey.
- Donham, D. (1999) *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press. Oxford, James Currey.

- Doornbos, M. L. Cliffe, A. Ahmed & J. Markakis (eds.) (1992) *Beyond Conflict in the Horn. The Prospects for Peace, Recover and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan*, The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
- Dorothy, Solinger (2001) "Ending One-Party Diminace: Korea, Taiwan, Mexico" *Journal of Democracy* 12 (1): 34-42
- Duchacek, Ivo (1970) *Comparative Federalism: The Territorial Dimensions of Politics*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Eckstein, H (1992) *Regarding Politics: Essays in Political Theory, Stability and Change*. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Elazar, Daniel (1987) *Exploring Federalism*, Tuscaloosa, Al: University of Alabama Press.
- Elazar, Daniel (1997) "Contrasting Unitary and Federal Systems" *International Political Science Review* 18 (3): 237-251.
- Elazar, Daniel et al. (1994) *Federal Systems of the World: A Handbook of Federal, Confederal and Autonomy Arrangements*. London: Longman Current Affairs.
- Elazar, Elazar D. (1996) "From Statism to Federalism – A Paradigm Shift" *International Political Science Review* 17 (4): 417-29.
- Eley, Geoff & Suny Ronald (1996) *Becoming National A Reader*, New York, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Eller, J. and R. Coughlan (1993) "The Poverty of Primordialism", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16 (2): 183-202. Repruded in Hutchinson and A. D. Smith (eds.) *Ethnicity*.
- Ellingsen, T (2000) "Colorful Community or Ethnic Witches: Breew Multiethnicity and Domestic Conflict During and After the Cold War" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44 (2):228-49.
- Ellingsen, T. & Gleditch P. (eds.) (1997) *Conflict and Environmen*, Dodrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Engedayehu, W. (1993) "Ethiopia: Democracy and the Politics of Ethnicity", *Africa Today* 2:29-52.
- Eriksen, Thomas (1993) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London, Boulder: & Colorado: Pluto Press.
- Eriksen, Thomas (1996) *Ethnicity, Race, Class and Nation*. in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.) *Ethnicity*.
- Erlich, Haggai (1986) *Ethiopia and the Challenge of Independence*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Esman & Rabinowich (1988) *The study of ethnic politics in the Middle East Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press*
- Esman, Milton J (2000) *Ethnic Pluralism: Strategies for Conflict Management*, Bonn:Centre for Development Reserach.
- Esman, Milton. J. (1994) *Ethnic Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Etzioni, A. (1992/3) "The Evils of Self-Determination," *Foreign Policy* 89:21-35.

- Evera, Stephan van (2001) "Primordialism Lives!" *APSA-CPI*, 12 (20-22).
- Faisal, Nehum (1997) *Constitution for A Nation of Nations: The Ethiopian Prospect*. Lawrenceville, NJ & Asmara: The Red Sea Press.
- Figueiredo, R. and Weingast B (1997) "Endogenous Political Extremism and the Institutions of Peace" in Jack Snyder et al. (eds.) *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*. Columbia University Press.
- Firebrace, J. and S. Hooland (1986) *Never Kneel Down: Drought and Liberation in Eritrea*. Trenton & New Jersey: The Red Sea Press.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent (1991) *Rationalitet og magt. Det konkrete videnskab*. Bind 1. København: Akademisk Forlag.
- Fouad, Makki, Nationalism (1996) "State Formation and the Public Sphere: Eritrea 1991-96" *Review of African Political Economy* 23 (70): 476-489.
- Franck, Thomas M, (ed.) (1968) *Why Federations Fail*, London: University of London Press.
- Fukui, Katsuyoshi & Markakis John (eds.) (1994) *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: James Currey.
- Fukuyama, Francis (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press.
- Furnivall J. S. (1948) *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, Cambridge University Press.
- Gadaa, Melbaa (1988) *Oromia, and Introduction*, Khartoum: Private Publication.
- Gebru, Tareke (1996) *Ethiopia: Power and Protest: Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century*, Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press.
- Gebru, Tareke (2000) "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited" *The International Journal of African Historical Studie* 33 (3): 635-667.
- Geertz, Clifford (1963) *Old Societies and New States: The Question for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, Glencoe Illinois: Free Press.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretations of Cultures; selected essays*, New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford (1994) "Primordial and Civic Ties" in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.) *Nationalism: Oxford Readers*, Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Geertz, Clifford (1996) Primordial Ties in Hutchinson, J. and A. D. Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity*.
- Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nation and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Gellner, Ernest (1994) *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ghai, Y (ed.) (2000) *Autonomy and Ethnicity: Negotiating Competing Claims in Multiethnic States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Gilkes, P. & M. Plaut (1999) *War in the Horn of Africa. The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

- Gilkes, Patric (1975) *The dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia*, New York:St. Martin's Press.
- Glazer, Nathan & Daniel Moynihan (eds) (1975) *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge, Mass.
- Glickman, Harvey (ed) (1995) *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa*, Atlanta, Ga.: African Studies Association Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geofferey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- Greely, A.M. (1974) *Ethnicity in the United States*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Greenfeld, Liah (1992) *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Greenfield, Richard (1965) *Ethiopia: A New Political History*, New York: Praeger.
- Greenfield, Richard (1983) "Greater Ethiopian Nationalism as a Destablizing Factor in the Horn of Africa", *Analysen aus der Abteilung Entwicklungsländerrforschung*, pp. 106-107.
- Grosby, S. (1994) 'The Verdict of History: The Inexpungeable Tie of Primordiality - A Response to Eller and Coughlin", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17 (1): 164-71.
- Gudina, Merara (1994) "The New Directions of Ethiopian Politics: Democratizing the Multiethnic Society" in Marcus H. G (1994) *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*.
- Guillermo, O'Donell (1994) "Delegative Democracy" *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1):55-69.
- Gurr Ted (1993) *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethinopolitical Conflict*, Washington: Institute of Peace Press.
- Gurr, Ted & B. Harff (1994) *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.
- Gurr, Ted (2000) *People vs. State: Minorities At Risk in the Twenty Century*, Washington DC: US Peace Institute Press.
- Gurr, Ted and Will H. Moore, (1997) "Assessing Risks of Ethnorebellion in the Year 2000:Three Emperical Approaches" *American Journal of Political Science* 41(4):1079-1103.
- Gurr, Ted Robert (1971) *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Haggard, Stephan & Robert R. Kaufman (1999) "The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions" in Lisa Anderson (ed.) *Transitions to Democracy*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Halliday, Fred & Molyneux, Maxine (1981) *The Ethiopian Revolution*, London: Verso.
- Hameso, Seyoum. (1997) *Ethnicity in Africa: Towards a Positive Approach*, London: James Curry.
- Hammon, Jenny (1999) *Fire From the Ashes: A Chronicle of the Revolution in Tigray, 1975-1991*, Lawrenceville N.J. & Asmara: Red Sea Press.
- Hannum, Hurst (1996/1990) *The Rights of Minorities, Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Harbeson, John (1993) "The Future of the Ethiopian State after Mengistu" *Current History* 92 (574):208-212.
- Harbeson, John (1988) *The Ethiopian Transformation: The Quest for the post-imperial state*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Harbeson, John (1998) "Is Ethiopia Democratic? A Bureaucratic Authoritarian Regime" *Journal of Democracy* 9 (4): 62-69.
- Hardgrave, S. (1993) "India: Dilemmas of Diversity" *Journal of Democracy* 4, pp.54-68.
- Hassan, Mohammed (1990) *The Oromo of Ethiopia: a History 1570-1860*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hassan, Mohammed (1996) "The Development of Oromo Nationalism" in Baxter, P.T. W., Hultin, Jan & Triulzi, Alessandro (eds.) *Being and Becoming Oromo*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Hassan, Mohammed (1998) The Macha-Thulama Association, 1963-1967 and the Development of Oromo Nationalism, in Jalata A. (ed.) *Oromo Nationalism*.
- Heater, Derek (1994) *National Self-Determination: Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy*. London: Macmillan.
- Hechter, Michael (1973) "The Political Economy of Ethnic Change" *The American Journal of Sociology* 79 (5):1151-78.
- Hechter, Michael (1975) *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hechter, Michael (1992) "The Dynamics of Secession" *Acta Sociologica* 35:267-83.
- Hechter, Michael (1995) "Explaining Nationalist Violence" *Nations and Nationalism* 1(1) : 53-68.
- Held, David (1989/1998) *Models of Democracy* (second edition) Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hélène, Carrère d'Encausse (1978) Determinants and parameters of Soviet Nationality Policy" in Jeremy R. Azrael (ed.), *Soviet Nationality Politics and Practices*, New York: Praeger Press.
- Henry, Bienen (1978) "U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changing Africa", *Political Science Quarterly* 93 (3): 443-464.
- Henry, Bienen (1982) "Soviet Political Relations with Africa" *International Security* 6(4): 153-173
- Henze, P. (1994) Ethiopian and Eritrean Transition: The Impact of ethnicity in politics and Development, opportunities and Pitfalls" in Marcus H. G. (ed.) *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*.
- Henze, P. (1991) *The Horn of Africa: From War to Peace*, London: Mcmillan Press.
- Henze, P. (1998) "Is Ethiopia Democratic? A Political Success Story" *Journal of Democracy* 9 (4): 40-54.
- Henze, P. (2001) *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia*. London: Hirst and Co.

- Herbst, J. (2000) *State and Power in Africa: A Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton University Press.
- Hermann, Giliomee and Charles Simkins (1999) *The Awkward Embrace: One Party Domination and Democracy*, The Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Hoben, Allan (1973) *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia: The dynamics of Cognate Descent*, Chicago University of Chicago Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780-Programme, Myth, and Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Holcomb, Bonnie & Sisai Ibssa (1990) *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of A Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*, Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press.
- Holden, Barry (1993) *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, 2nd ed., London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Horowitz, Donald (1991) "Irredentas and Secessions: Adjacent Phenomena, Neglected Connections", in Naomi Chazan (ed.) *Irredentism and International Politics*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Horowitz, Donald (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Horowitz, Donald (1990) "Ethnic conflict Management for Policy Makers", in Montville Joseph (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Press.
- Horowitz, Donald (1993) Democracy in Divided Societies," *Journal of Democracy* 4 (4): 18-38.
- Horowitz, Donald (2001) *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, University of California Press.
- Horowitz, Donald (2002) "The Primordialists," in Daniele Conversi (ed.), *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Theory of Nationalism*, London: Routledge..
- Horowitz, Donald (1997) "Self-Determination: Politics, Philosophy, Law" in Will Kymlicka and Ian Shapiro (eds.) *Ethnicity and Group Rights*, New York: New York University Press.
- Hovde, R. L. (1994) "Democracy and Governance in Ethiopia: A Survey of Institutions, Issues and Initiatives in the Transitional Period" in Marcus, H. G. (ed.) *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies, Paper of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Ethiopian Studies*.
- Hroch, M (1995) "National Self-determination From a Historical Perspective", in Periwal S. (ed.) *Nation of Nationalism*, Central European University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel (1968) *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel (1970) "Social Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems" in Samuel Huntington & Clement Moore, *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Societies*. New York: Basic Books.
- Huntington, Samuel (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Huntington, Samuel (1993) "The Clash of Civilizations" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3):22-49
- Hutchinson J. and Smith A. (eds.) (1996) *Ethnicity*. Oxford: Oxford University press.

- Hutchinson, J. & Smith A. (eds.) (1994) *Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald (1997) *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Iyob, Ruth (1993) "Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31( 2): 257-276.
- Iyob, Ruth (1995) *The Eritrean Struggles for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism 1941-1993*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, Robert (1990) *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations
- Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg (1982) "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood" *World Politics* 35:1-24.
- Jalata, Asafa (1998) *Oromia Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse: The Search for Freedom and Democracy*. Lawrenceville, NJ & Asmara: The Red Sea Press.
- Jalata, Asafa (1993). *Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethno-National Conflict*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publisher.
- James, Wendy et al. (2002) *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and after*, Oxford: James currey.
- Jenkins, R. (1995): Nations and nationalisms: towards more open models, *Nations and Nationalism* 1 (3): 369-390
- John, Stuart Mill (by Geraint Williams) (1975/1861) *Considerations on Representative government From Utilitarianism, on Liberty*. London: Every man.
- Joireman, S. F. (1997) "Opposition Politics and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: We Will All Go Down Together" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35 (3): 387-408.
- Joseph, R. (1997) "Democratization in Africa After 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives" *Comparative Politics* 29:363-382.
- Joseph, Richard (1998a) "Is Ethiopia Democratic? Oldspeak vs. Newspeak" *Journal of Democracy* 9 (4):55-61.
- Joseph, Richard (1998b) "Africa, 1990-1997: From Abertura to Closure" *Journal of Democracy* 9 (2): 3-17.
- Joseph, Richard (ed.) (1999) *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Kalyvas, Stathis (2001) "New and Old Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54 (1-2): 5-25.
- Kaplan, R. (1994) "The Coming Anarchy" *The Atlantic Monthly* 273 (2): 44-76.
- Karatnycky, Adrian (1999) "The Decline of Illiberal Democracy" *Journal of Democracy* 10 (1): 112-25.
- Kassim, Shehim (1985) "Ethiopia, Revolution, and teh Question of of Nationalities: The Case of the Afar," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 23 (2) 331-348.
- Kaufmann, Chaim (2001/1996) "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," in Michael E. Brown (ed.) *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* (revised ed.), M.I.T. Press



- Keller, Edmond (1981) "Ethiopia: Revolution, Class, and the National Question" *African Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 321, pp. 519-549.
- Keller, Edmond (1988) *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University press.
- Keller, Edmond (1992) "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (4): 609-624.
- Keller, Edmond (1995) "Remaking the Ethiopian State", in I. William Zartman (ed.) *The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Keller, Edmond (1995) "The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33 (4): 621-634.
- Keller, Edmond (1998) "Regime Change and Ethno-Regionalism in Ethiopia: the Case of the Oromo", in Asafa Jalata (ed.) *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, NJ: The Red Sea press.
- Keller, Edmond (2002) "Ethnic Federalism, Fiscal Reform, Development and Democracy in Ethiopia" *African Journal of Political Science* 7 (1): 21-50.
- Keller, Edmond (1996). "Structure, Agency and Political Liberalization in Africa" *African Journal of Political Science* 1:202-16.
- Khalif Mohammed & Doornbos Martin (2002) "The Somali Region in Ethiopia: A Neglected Human Rights Tragedy" *Review of African Political Economy* 29 (91) 73-94
- Kinfe Abraham (1994) *Ethiopia From Bullets to the Ballot Box*. Lawrenceville: Red Sea press.
- King, G., Keohane, O. and Verba, S. (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University press
- King, Preston (1982) *Federalism and Federation*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kirgis F. (1994) "The Degrees of Self-Determination in the United Nations Era," *American Journal of International Law* 88 (2): 304-310.
- Kohn, Hans. (1945) *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study on its Origin and Background*, New York: Mcmillan.
- Kymlicka, Will (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will and Ian Shapiro (eds.) (1997) *Ethnicity and Group Rights*. NYU Press, New York
- Laitin, David (1985) "Hegemony and Religious Conflict," in T. Skocpol et. al., *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lake, David A. and Donald Rothchild (eds.) (1998) *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lata, Leenco (1998) "The Making and Unmaking of Ethiopia's Transitional Charter," in Asafa Jalata (ed.) *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*.

- Lata, Leenco (1999) *The Ethiopian State at the Crossroads: Decolonization and Democratization or Disintegration?*, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Lata, Leenco (2003) "The Ethiopian-Eritrean War" *Review of African Political Economy* 30 (97):369-388.
- Lawson, Kay (1993) *The Human Polity*, 3rd ed., Houghton Mifflin.
- Leftwich A. (1996) *Democracy and development theory and practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lemarchand, R. (1994) *Burundi: ethnocide as discourse and practice*, Cambridge University Press.
- Lemkin, R. (1947) "Genocide as Crime Under International Law" *American Journal of International Law* 41 (1):145-151.
- Lemma, Baisa (1998) "Contending Nationalism in the Ethiopian Empire State and the Oromo Struggle for Self-determination", in Asafa (ed.) *Oromia Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*.
- Lenin, V. (1930[1915]) *The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination* in *Collected Works XVIII*, London.
- Lenin, V. I. (1971) *The State and Revolution, Selected Works*, New York: International Publishers.
- Levine, Donald (1974/2000) *Greater Ethiopia: Evaluation of Multi-Ethnic Society*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lewis, Arthur (1965) *Politics in West Africa*, London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Lewis, I. M. (1989) "The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary nationalism" *African Affairs* 88 (353): 573-579.
- Lewis, I. M. (1993) *Nationalism and Self-determination in the Horn of Africa*, London: Ithaca press.
- Lijphart Arend (1971) "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" *American Political Science Review* 65 (3): 682-93.
- Lijphart Arned (1984) *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-one Countries*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend (1969) "Consociational Democracy" *World Politics, January 21*: 207-25.
- Lijphart, Arend (1977) *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend (1979) "Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 12 (3): 499-515.
- Lijphart, Arend (ed.) (1992) *Parliamentary Versus Presidential Government*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. (1996) "The Framework Document on Northern Ireland and the Theory of Power-Sharing" *Government and Opposition*, 31 (3): 267-74

- Lijphart, Arned (1990) "The Powersharing Approach" in Montville Joseph (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Press.
- Lijphart, Arned (1999) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty Six Countries*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lind M. (1994) "In Defense of National Liberalism" *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (23):87-99.
- Lindstrom, R. and Moore W. (1995) "Deprived, Rational or Both? Why Minorities Rebel Revisited" *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 23:167-190.
- Linz Juan & Alfred Stepan (1996) *Problems of Democratic Consolidation : Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset S. (1959) "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53: 69-105.
- Lipset, S. (1960) *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, Garden City: Doubleday.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin (1994) "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited" *American Sociological Review*, 59: 1-22.
- Lloyd, Ellingson (1977) "The Emergence of Political Parties in Eritrea, 1941-1950" *The Journal of African History*, 18 (2): 261-281.
- Lorwin Val R. (1972) "Segmented Pluralism: Ideological Cleavages and Political Cohesion in Small European Democracies" *Comparative Politics*, 3(2):141-75.
- Low, Alfred (1958) *Lenin on the Question of Nationalities*, New York Bookman Associates
- Lustick, Ian Steven (1979) "Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control" *World Politics* 31:325-44.
- Lustick, Ian Steven (1994). Liberalism and Nationalism; Can They Be Joined?" *Journal of International Law and Politics* 27 (1): 265-279
- Lyons T. (1996) "Closing the Transition: the May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34 (1)121-142.
- Mainwaring, Scott (1998) *Party System in Third Wave of democratization*, Standford: Stanford University press.
- Mansfield, Edward D. & Jack Snyder (1995) "Democratization and the Danger of War" *International Security* 20: 5-38.
- Marcus, H. G (1983) *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States 1941-1974: The Politics of Empire*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.
- Marcus, H. G (1994) *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*, Paper of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Ethiopian Studies, Lawrenceville, Red Sea Press.
- Mark, Webber (1992) Soviet Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Final Phase," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 30 (1) 1-30.
- Markakis John (1974) *Ethiopia: An Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, Addis Ababa & New York: Oxford University Press.

- Markakis, John & Nega Ayele (1986) *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*, Trenton N.J.: Red Sea Press.
- Markakis, John (1987) *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, Cambridge University Press.
- Markakis, John (1988) "The Nationalist Revolution in Eritrea," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 26 (1) 51-70.
- Markakis, John (1998) *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: Sage Publication.
- Markakis, John (2003a) "The Horn of Conflict" *Review of African Political Economy* 97:359-362.
- Markakis, John (2003b) "Autonomy of a conflict: Afar & Ise Ethiopia" *Review of African Political Economy* 97:445-453.
- Markakis, John and Salih Mohamed (ed.) (1998) *Ethnicity and the state in East Africa*. The Nordic Africa Institute.
- Mayall, J and Simpson (1992) "Ethnicity Is Not Enough: Reflections on Protracted Secessionism in the Third World" *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. 33:5-25
- Mayall, James (1990) *Nationalism and International Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Mayall, James (1991) "Non-Intervention, Self-determination and the 'New World Order'" *International International Affairs* 67 (3): 421-429.
- Mayall, James (1993) "Self-Determination Reconsidered: Should there be a Right to Secede?" *The Oxford International Review* 4:1
- Mazrui, Ali (1975) *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: the making of a military ethnocracy*, Beverley Hills: Sage Publications.
- McAdam D. and Snow D. (1996) *Social Movements: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization and Dynamics*, Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Press and David Snow. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Press
- McGarry, John (2002) "Democracy in Northern Ireland: Experiments in self-rule from the Protestant Ascendancy to the Good Friday Agreement" *Nation and Nationalism* 8 (4):451-474.
- McGarry, John (ed.) (2001) *Northern Ireland & the Divided World: The Northern Ireland Conflict and the Good Friday Agreement in Comparative Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford university Press.
- McGarry, John and Brendan O'Leary (1993) *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, London: Routledge.
- McKay, James (1982) "An Exploratory Synthesis of Primordial and Mobilizational Approaches to Ethnic Phenomena" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5: 395-420.
- Melson, R. and H. Wolpe (1970) "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism" *American Political Science Review* 44 (4):1112-1130.
- Mengisteab, Kidane (1990) *Ethiopia: Failure of land reform and agricultural crisis*. New York: Greenwood Press

- Mengisteab, Kidane (1997) "New Approaches to State Building in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism" *African Studies Review* 40 (3):111-132.
- Mesfin, Araya (1990) "The Eritrean Question: An Alternative Explanation," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 28 (1):79-100.
- Michael E. Brown (ed.) (1993/2000) *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*. M.I.T. Press.
- Michael, Chege (1979) "The Revolution Betrayed, 1974-79," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 17(3):359-380
- Mill, Stuart (1861/1958) *Consideration on Representative Government*, New York: Liberal Arts Press.
- Miller, David (1995) *On Nationality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Montville, Joseph (1990) *Conflict and Peace Making in Multiethnic Societies*,. Lexington: Lexington Press.
- Moore Barrington (1966) *Social Order of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Moore, Margaret (1998) *National Self-Determination and Secession*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, W. and Gurr T. (1998) "Assessing Risks of Ethnorebellion in the Year 2000: Three Empirical Approaches", in Susanne Schmeidl and Howard Adelman (eds.) *Early Warning and Early Response*, Colombia: Colombia University Press.
- Nahum, Fasil (1997) *Constitution for a nation of nations: the Ethiopia prospect*, Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Nairn, Tom (1977) *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*. Second edition, London, New Left Books.
- Nairn, Tom (1988/1997) *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, London, Verso.
- Negash, Tekeste & Kjetil Tronvoll (2000) *Brother at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean and Ethiopian War*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Nelson, Joan M and Stephanie J. Elington (1992) *Encouraging Democracy: What role for conditioned aid?*, Washington DC: Overseas Development Council.
- Newman, Paul (1991) Does Modernization Breed Ethnic Conflict? *World Politics* 43: 451- 478.
- Nordlinger, Eric (1977) *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*, Harvard, Mass.: Harvard University.
- Norwegian Institute of Human Rights (1992) *Local and Regional Elections in Ethiopia*, Report of the Norwegian Observer Group, Human Right Report No. 1, Oslo:NIHR.
- O Brian, Patrick & Armand Clesse (eds.) (2002) *Two hegemonies: Britain 1846-1914 and the United States 1941-2001*, Ashgate.
- Olukoshi, Adebayo, O. and Laakso Liisa, 1996, "The Crisis of the post-Colonial Nation-State Project in Africa" in *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*, Olukoshi, Adebayo, O. and Laakso, Liisa, Nordisk African Institute

- Osaghae, E. (1999) "Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Faltering Prospects, New Hopes" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (17) 1: 5-28.
- Osaghae, E. (2003) "Ethnicity and Democratisation in Africa" in J.M. Mbaku and J.O. Ihonvbere (ed.) *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa: The Continuing Struggle*, Westport: Praeger
- Ottaway Marina (1999b) "Ethnic Politics in Africa: Change and Continuity", in Richard Joseph (ed.), *State, Conflict, Democracy in Africa*, Lynne Rienner Publisher
- Ottaway Marina (ed.) (1990) "Introduction: The Crisis of the Ethiopian State", in Ottaway, M. (ed) *The Political Economy of Ethiopia*. New York: Praeger.
- Ottaway, Marina (1997) *Democracy in Africa: the Hard Road Ahead*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Ottaway, Marina & Ottaway David (1978) *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution*, New York: Africana Publishing Co.
- Ottaway, Marina (1976) "Social Classes and Corporate Interests in the Ethiopian Revolution," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 14 (3): 469-486.
- Ottaway, Marina (1977) "Land Reform in Ethiopia 1974-1977," *African Studies Review* 20 (3): 79-90.
- Ottaway, Marina (1978) "Democracy and New Democracy: The Ideological Debate in the Ethiopian Revolution," *African Studies Review* 21(1):19-31.
- Ottaway, Marina (1995) "The Ethiopian Transition: Democratization or New Authoritarianism" *Northeastern African Studies* 2 (3): 67-84
- Ottaway, Marina (1999a) *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Ottaway, Marina, (1994) *Democratisation and Ethnic Nationalism: African and Eastern Experience*. Policy Essay No. 14. Washington DC: ODC.
- Pankhurst, Richard (2001) *The Ethiopians*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Pateman, R. (1998) *Eritrea, Even the Stones are Burning*, Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Pausewang, S. (1994) *The 1994 Election and Democracy in Ethiopia*, Human Rights Report, 4, Norwegian Institute of Human Rights.
- Pausewang, S. et al. (2003) *Ethiopia Since the Derg: A Decade of Democratic Pretension and Performance*. London: Zed Books.
- Pausewang, Siegfried & Tronvoll, Kjetil (eds.) (2000) *The Ethiopian Elections: Democracy Advanced or Restricted?* Oslo: Unipub Forlag: University of Oslo
- Perham, Marjorie F. (1969) *The Government of Ethiopia*, London: Faber & Faber.
- Peter, Uvin (1999) "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda", *Comparative Politics* 31 (3): 253-73
- Poe, Steven et al. (1999) "Repression of the Human Rights to Personal Integrity Revisited: A global Cross-National Study Covering Years 1976-1993" *International Studies Quarterly* 43:291-313.

- Poluha, Eva (1998) "Ethnicity and Democracy- A viable Alliance?" in Marikakis, & Salih Mohamed (ed.) *Ethnicity and the state in East Africa*, The Nordic Africa Institute
- Pool, David (1983) "Eritrean Nationalism" in I.M Lewis *Nationalism and Self-determination in the Horn of Africa*, London: Ithaca Press
- Prunier, Gerard (1995) *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, London: Hurst.
- Przeworski, Adam (1991) *Democracy and Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, New York: Cambridge University press.
- Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi (1997) "Modernization: Theories and Facts" *World Politics* 49:155-183.
- Rabushka, A. & Shepsle K. (1972) *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ragin, Charles (1987) *The Comparative Method*, Berkeley: University of California.
- Ray, James L.(1997) "The Democratic Path to Peace." *Journal of Democracy* 8 (2): 49-65.
- Renner, Michael (1996) *Fighting for survival: Environmental decline, social conflict, and the new age of insecurity*, New York: WW Norton.
- Reynolds, Andrew and Timothy, Sisk (eds) (1999) *Elections and Conflict Management in Africa*, United States Institute of Peace: Washington DC.
- Riker, William (1962) *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, New Haven: Yale: University Press.
- Riker, William (1964) *Federalism, Origin, Operation, Significance*, Boston: Little Brown and Co.
- Riker, William (1975) "Federalism" in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (eds.) *Handbook of Political Science*, New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Robert, Hess (1973) "Italian Imperialism in Its Ethiopian Context," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6 ( 1): 94-109.
- Robertson, A. H. & Merrills J.G. (1996 4<sup>th</sup> ed.) *Human Rights in the World*, Manchester University press.
- Rock, June (1996) "Ethiopia Elects a new Parliament" *Review of African political Economy* 23 (67): 92-102.
- Roeder, Philip G. (1991) "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization" *World Politics* 43 (2):196-232.
- Rothschild, Donald (1997) *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Rothschild, Josph (1986) *Ethnopolitics. A Conceptual Framework*, NY:Columbia University Press.
- Rubenson, Sven (1966) *King of Kings:Tewodros of Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa:Oxford University press.
- Rubenson, Sven (1976) *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, London: Heinemann.

- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne Huber Stephens & John D. Stephens (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Cambridge University Press.
- Rummel, R. (1996) *Death by Government*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Pub.
- Rummel, R. (1997) "Is Collective Violence Correlated with Social Pluralism?" *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (2): 469-482
- Rustow, Dankwart A. (1970). "Transition To Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model " *Comparative Politics* 2 (April 1970): 337-64.
- Ryan, Stephen (1990) *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*, Aldershot: Dartmouth
- Salih, Mohamed (2001) *African Democracies and African Politics*, London: Pluto Press.
- Salih, Mohamed and Markakis, Johan (1998). "Introduction", in Markakis, Johan and Salih Mohamed (ed.), *Ethnicity and the state in East Africa*, The Nordic Africa Institute
- Samatar, Abdi Ismail (1992) "Destruction of State and Society in Somalia: Beyond the Tribal Convention" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (4):625-641.
- Sambanis, Nicholas (2000) "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature" *World Politics* 52 (4): 437-83.
- Sambanis, Nicholas and Collier, Paul (2002) *The Journal of Conflict Resolution Special Issue on "Understanding Civil War"* 46 (1).
- Sandra Fullerton Joireman (1997) "Opposition Politics and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: We Will All Go Down Together," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35 (3): 387-407.
- Sandrbook, R. (1985) *The Politics of Africa's Economic Stagnation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Sartori, Giovanni (1995) "How Far Can Free Government Travel?" *Journal of Democracy* 6 (3):101-11
- Sartori, Giovanni (1997) *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*, New York. New York University Press.
- Schabas, William (2000) *Genocide in International Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schatzberg, M. (1999) "Alternative Causalities," in Political Legitimacy, *African Studies* 37 (1): 25- 52
- Schedler Andreas (1998) What is Democratic Consolidation? *Democratization*, 9 (2): 91-107.
- Schils, E. (1957) " Primordial, personal, sacred, and civil ties" *British Journal of Sociology*, 7:113-45.
- Schmitter Philippe C (1995) Transitology: The Science or Art of Democratization, in Josph S. Tulchin (ed.) *The Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Schmitter Phillipe C. and Terry Lynn (1991) "What Democracy Is...and Is Not" *Journal of Democracy* 2 (3):75-88.
- Schock, Kurt. (1996) "A Conjunctural Model of Violent Political Conflict" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 40 (1): 98-133



- Scholler, H. and Brietzke P. (1976) *Ethiopia: Revolution, Law and Politics*, Munchen: Afrika-Studien nr. 92.
- Schumpeter, Joseph (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Schwab, Peter (1985) *Ethiopia: Politics and Economics and Society*, London: printer .
- Scott, G. M. (1990) "A Resynthesis of Primordial and Circumstantial Approaches to Ethnic Group Solidarity: Towards an Explanatory Model" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13 (2) 147-171.
- Selassie, Bereket (1980) *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa* New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Sen, Amartya (1999) "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy* 1 (9):3-17.
- Shils, Edwar (1957) "Perimordial, Personal Sacred and Civil Ties" *British Journal of Sociology* 7:113-45.
- Shin, Doh Chull (1994) "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research" *World Politics* 47 (1):135-170.
- Simons, Anna (1997) "Democratization and Ethnic Conflict: The Kin Connection" *Nation and Nationalism* 3 (2):273-289.
- Sisk Timothy D. (1996) *Power sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts*, Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Skocpol, Theda (1979) *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Anthony (1981) *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Anthony (1983) *Theories of Nationalism*, New York: Holmes and Meier.
- Smith, Anthony (1986) "State-Making and Nation Building", in John Hall (ed.) *States in History*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Smith, Anthony (1987) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Smith, Anthony (1988) "The myth of the Modern Nation and the myths of nations" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11(1): 1-26
- Smith, Anthony (1991) *National Identity*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Smith, Anthony (1995) *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, Anthony (1998) *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations*, London: Routledge.
- Smith, M. G & Kuper Leo (eds.) (1969) *Pluralism in Africa*, Berkeley, University of California Press
- Smith, Zeric Key (2000) "The Impact of Political Liberalization and Democratization on Ethnic Conflict in Africa: An Emperical Test of Common Assumptions" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38 (1): 21-39.

- Snyder, Jack & Jervis, W. (1999) Civil War and the Security Dilemma, in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder (eds.) *The international Spread of Ethnic Conflict*, Princeton: Princeton University press
- Snyder, Jack (2000) *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, New York: Norton.
- So, Alvin (1990) *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency and the World System Theories*, Newbury Park: London and New Delhi: Saga Publications.
- Sorensen John (1991) "Discourse on Eritrean Nationalism and Identity" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29 (2):301-317.
- Sorensen John (1993) *Imagining Ethiopia Struggle for History and identity in the Horn of Africa*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University press.
- Sorensen, J. (1998) "Ethiopian Discourse and Oromo Nationalism" in Asafa (ed.) *Oromia Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, N.J: Red Sea Press
- Spears, Ian S. (2000) "Understanding inclusive peace agreements in Africa: the problems of sharing power" *Third World Quarterly* 21(1):105-118.
- Spears, Ian S. (2002) "Africa: The Limits of Power-Sharing in Africa" *Journal of Democracy* 13(3):123-36
- Stack, John F. (ed.) (1986) *The Primordial Challenge*, California Press. Pages.
- Stalin, Joseph (1975) Marxism and the National Question, in Franklin B. (ed.) *The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings 1905-52*, London: Croom Helm.
- Stalin, Joseph (1994) "On Nations and Nationalism" in Hutchinson, John & Smith, Anthony D. (eds.) *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Steiner, J. (1981) "Review Article: The Consociational Theory and Beyond" *Comparative Politics* 13:339-54.
- Stepan, Alfred (2000) "Russian Federalism in Comparative Perspective" *Post Soviet Affairs* 16 (2): 133-177 .
- Stepan, Stepan (2001) *Arguing Comparative Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Steven David (1979) "Realignment in the Horn: The Soviet Advantage" *International Security* 4 ( 2): 69-90.
- Suberu, R. T (2001) *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
- Szeftel, Morris (1998) "Misunderstanding African Politics: Corruption and the Governance Agenda" *Review of African Political Economy* 25(76):221-240.
- Szeftel, Morris (2000a) "Between Governance and Underdevelopment: Accumulation and Africa's Catastrophic Corruption" in *Review of African Political Economy* 27 (84): 287-306
- Szeftel, Morris (2000b) "Clientelism, Corruption and Catastrophe" *Review of African Political Economy* 27 (85): 427-441.
- Tadesse, Medahane & Young, John (2003) "TPLF: Reform or decline?" *Review of African Political Economy* 30 (97):389-403.

- Takkele, Taddese (1994) "Do the Amhara Exist as a Distinct Ethnic Group?" in Markus (ed.) *New Trends in Ethiopia Studies*.
- Tariq, Ali (2003) *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, London & New York: Verso
- Taylor, Charles (1994) *Multiculturalism*, Princeton: Princeton University
- Tekeste, Negash & K. Tronvoll (2000) *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War*, Oxford, Athens: James Currey, Ohio University Press.
- Terrence, Lyons (1996) "Closing the Transition: the May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34(1):121-142.
- Teshale, Tibebe (1995) *The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 1896-1974*, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Thompson, Willian (1996) "Democracy and Peace: Putting the Cart before the Horse" *International Organization* 50 (1): 141-74.
- Tilly, Charles (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- Timothy, J. & Mark J. Gasiorowski (1997) "Institutional Design and Democratic Consolidation in the Third World" *Journal of Comparative Studies* 30:123-55.
- Tiruneh, Andargachew (1993) *The Ethiopia Revolution (1974-1987): A Transition from an aristocratic to a totalitarian autocracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tronvoll K. and Aadland Ø. (1995) "The Process of Democratisation in Ethiopia" *Human Rights Report, 5*, Norwegian Institute of Human Rights.
- Tronvoll, Kjetil (2000) *Ethiopia: A New Start? A Report by Minority Rights Group International*, London.
- Tunde Zack-Williams (2002) "Introduction: Africa at the Millennium", in Tunde Zack-Williams, Diane Frost and Alex Thmson (eds.) *Africa in Crisis*. Pluto Press.
- Turton, David (1997) *War and Ethnicity: Global Connections and Local Violence*, San Marino: University of Rochester Press.
- Vail, Leroy (1991), "Ethnicity in Southern African History," in Leroy Vail *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, London: James Currey.
- Van den Berghe, P. (1971) "Ethnicity: The African Experience" *International Social Science Journal* 23 (4): 507-518.
- Van den Berghe, P. (1978) "Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological perspective" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1(4): 401-411.
- Van den Berghe, P. (1987) Ethnicity and the Socio-biology debate, in J. Rex and D. Masson (eds.) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Van den Berghe, P. (1990) *State Violence and Ethnicity*, Niwot, Colo: University of Colorado.
- Van den Berghe, P. (1991) *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, New York: Elsevier.
- Vaughan, Sarah (1995) Ethnicity and the prosepcts for democratization in Ethiopia in Louise de la Gorgendiere, Kenneth King, Sarah Vaughan (eds.) *Ethnicity in Africa*. Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

- Vauhan, Sarah (1994) *The Addis Ababa Transitional Conference of July 199:its origins, history and significance*. Centre of African Studies, *Edinburgh University, occasional paper no. 51*.
- Vestal, T. (1999) *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State*. Westport, Connecticut & London: Preager.
- Vincent R. J. (1991) *Human Rights and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Waleligne, Mekonen (1969) "On the Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia" in *Struggle* (organ of USUAA), 17 November 1969, Addis Ababa, 5(2):4-7
- Watts R. L. (1999) *Comparing Federal Systems*, Montreal & Kingston, McGill University Press.
- Wheare, K. C. (1964) *Federal Government*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Wiseman, John (ed.) (1995) *Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Sharan Africa*, London: Routledge.
- Wood, Peter (1996) *The Horn of Africa: State Politics and International Relations*, Palgrave: Macmillan.
- Woodward, P. & M. Forsyth (1994) *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its Alternatives*, Aldershot, Sydney.
- Wunsch, J.S., and Olowu, D.(eds) (1990) *The Failure of the Centralised States: Institutions and Self-governance in Africa*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Wunsch, James, S. and Olowu Dele (1990) *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- Yin, Robert (1984) *Case study research design and methods*, Beverly Hills, Calif. Saga.
- Yin, Robert K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Second Edition. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Young, Crawford, (1993) *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Young, Crawford. (1998) *Ethnic Diversity and Public Policy*, UNRISD, Macmillan Press.
- Young, J. (1997a.) *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray Peoples Liberation Front, 1975-1991*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Young, J. (1997b)"Development and Change in Post-Revolutionary Tigray" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35 (1): 81-99
- Young, J. (1999) "Along Ethiopia's Western Frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in Transtion". *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37 (2)
- Young, John (1996a) "The Tigray and Eritran Peoples Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34 (1):105-120.
- Young, John (1996b) "Ethnicity and Power in Ethiopia" *Review of African Political Economy*, 23 (70): 531-542.

Young, John (1997) *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: the Tigray People's Liberation Front 1975-1991*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Young, John (1998) "Regionalism and Democracy in Ethiopia" *Third world Quarterly* 19 (2):191-204.

Young, John (2000) "The Tigray People's Liberation Front" in Clapham, Christopher (ed.) *African Guerrillas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zack-Williams T, Frost D and Thomson A (eds) (2002) *Africa in Crisis: New Challenges and Possibilities*, London: Pluto Press.

Zakaria, Fareed (1997) "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" *Foreign Affairs* 76:22-43.

Zartman, I. William (ed.) (1995) *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Zewde, Bahru & Siegfried Pausewang (2002) *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*. Uppsala: Nordiska Africainstitutet.

Zewde, Behru (1991) *A History of Modern Ethiopia (1855-1974)*, Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press.

## Unpublished Sources

1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Abiotawi Democracy, (Amharic Weekly, Organ of the EPRDF)

Abiyu Gelata (2000) Ethiopian System of Domination and its Consequences, [Http://www.oromo.com/articles](http://www.oromo.com/articles).

Addis Tribune, (English Weekly, Private Paper) Addis Ababa

Addis Zaman (Government owned Amharic Daily) Addis Ababa

Africa Confidential (1995) Vol. 36, no.11, May 1995, Vol. 40, no.12, June 11, 1999

Africa Watch (1991) *Evil Days: 30 years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*, New York.

African American Institute (1993) Final Report of the African-American Institute on the Ethiopian Local and Regional elections Observation Mission, Submitted to the Agency for International Development, October 10, 1993.

Amnesty International (1995) *Ethiopia: Accountability Past and Present: Human Rights in Transition*, London, International Secretariat, June 26, 1995.

Amnesty International (1993-2003) *Ethiopia*, London.

Clapham, C. (2000) War and State Formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Paper presented to the 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, November 2000, Addis Ababa.

Cohen, H (1991). Press Release on the London Conference (28 May 1991).

Cohen, Herman (1991) "Ethiopia in Transition: How the International Community Can Help," *Ethiopian Review*, November 1991.

Cohen, Herman (1991) United States Information Service, Press Release, May 1991.

Cohen, Herman (1992) Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs African Subcommittee, April 11, 1992, June 18, 1992; and September 17, 1992.

Committee to Protect Journalists (1997). *Attacks on the Press in 1997*, New York, March 1998.

CSA (1997) *The 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia Results at Country Level*, Vol. I Statistical Report (Addis Ababa).

DEU (1995) *The Donor Election Unit's Report*. Addis Ababa.

EHRCO (1995). *Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Ethiopia: Rhetoric and Practice*, Addis Ababa.

EHRCO (2000a). EHRCO's first report on the May General Elections: Problems of the registration process. Ethiopian Human Rights Council.

EHRCO (2000b). *The May 2000 Elections, A Report*, Addis Ababa.

EHRCO (2000c). 35<sup>th</sup> Special Report: Series Destructions Resulting from Ethnic Governance, (September 2, 2000). Addis Ababa.

EHRCO (2002). Report on the zonal, woreda, and kebele election held on December 23 and 30, in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional States. Ethiopian Human Rights Council.

Election Commission (1992) Transitional Government of Ethiopia, *Bulletin, Nos, 2, 3 4, 5 6, 7, & 8.*

EPRDF (1989) A Democratic Alternative for Ethiopia, October 1984.

EPRDF (1990) Programme of the EPRDF for the Smooth and Peaceful Transition in Ethiopia, 10 March 1990.

EPRDF (1991) News Bulletin 1 (1) & 2.

EPRDF (1995) Program for Development Peace and Democracy, in Amharic.

EPRDF and OLF (1992) *Joint Declaration*, 20 February 1992.

EPRP (1975) *The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party Program, August 1975.*

EPRP (1979) „On the National Question“ *Abyot., Special Issue*, September 1979, 23-26.

EPRDF (1991) On Revolutionary Democracy in News Bulletin 1 (7)

Ethiopian Congress for Democracy (ECD (1994)

Ethiopian Herald, 21 April 1976

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1994) *Constitution, ratified by the National Constituent Assembly, 8. December 1994.*

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, Central Statistical Authority (1998) *The 1994 Populations and Housing Census of Ethiopia: Results at Country Level, Vol. I. Statistical Report: Results for each regional, Vol. II. Analytical Reports.*

Human Rights Watch (1995). Ethiopia: The Curtailment of Rights

Human Rights Watch (1997) Ethiopia: Accountability of the Past and Present: Human Rights in Transition.

Human Rights Watch (1994-2003) World Report—Ethiopia: Human Rights Development, New York

Human Rights Watch/Africa (1997). Ethiopia: The curtailment of rights, Report, 9, 8 (A), New York, December.

ICJ (1995). Press Release: Ethiopia bars ICJ Representatives to OAU Meeting. Geneva.

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN).

Linz, J. (1997) Democracy, Multinationalism and Federalism, Paper read at Juan March Institute.

### **Official Publications**

OLF (1990) Democratic Resolution of the Oromo National Liberation Struggle and of Other Conflicts in the Ethiopian Empire, Central Committee, 18 April 1990.

OLF (1992) Statement of the Oromo Liberation Front Delegation Testifying Before the US House of Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on Africa, 17 September 1992.

Proclamation No. 24/1992 “A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of the Constitutional Commission”, *Negarit Gazeta*, 18 August 1992.

Proclamation No. 24/1996 “Federal Judicial Administration Commission Establishment Proclamation” *Federal Negarit Gazeta*, 15 February 1996.

Proclamation No. 251/2001, “Consolidation of the House of the Federation and the Definition of its Power and Responsibilities Proclamation”, 6 July 2001.

Proclamation No. 46/1993, “Political Parties Registration Proclamation”, *Negarit Gazeta*, 15 April 1993.

Proclamation No. 7/1992, “A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of National/Regional Self-Governments”, *Negarit Gazeta*, 14 January 1992.

Special Report: Human Rights Violations in North Omo. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Indian Ocean Newsletter

The Indian Ocean Newsletter Walta Information Centre

The Transitional Charter of Ethiopia, *Negarit Gazeta 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1992*

Tobia (Monthly Private Journal in Amharic) Addis Ababa

TPLF (1981) National Struggle against Oppression in *Tigray in Struggle: Information Bulletin of the TPLF*, April 1981, 8-10.

- TPLF (1983) People's Democratic Programme of the TPLF, adopted by the Second Organisational Congress, May 1983.
- TPLF (1983) Peoples Democratic Program of the Tigray Liberation Front.
- TPLF (1986) „Exposing the Derg's Top Secret“ in People's Voice, Special issue, No. 2, October 1986.
- TPLF (1988) Joint Communiqué of the TPLF, EPDM and the EPLF, Joint Statement, A Proclamation of National Oppression and Different Stands and Common Goals; *People's Voice* 10 (3) August 1988.
- TPLF (1988) TPLF statement for a Peaceful Solution in Ethiopia, Review of African Political Economy, 16 (44) 72-73.
- TPLF (1989) Formation of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.
- TPLF (1990) Communiqué on the Recent Declaration of the OLF, 20th August 1990.
- TPLF (2000). TPLF's Popular Struggle 1975-1991 (Unofficial translation from Tigrinya).
- Transition Period Charter of Ethiopia, *Negarit Gazeta*, 22 July 1991.
- Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1992) A Proclamation to Define the Sharing of Revenue between the Central Government and National/Regional Self-Governments TGE, *Nagarit Gazeta* 33
- Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1992) Ethiopia's Economic Policy during the Transitional Period (November 1992)
- Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1992) The Transitional Charter of Ethiopia, *Nagarit Gazeta* 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1992
- Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1992) Transitional Charter of Ethiopia, *Nagarit Gazeta* 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1992
- United States, Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2001: Ethiopia, Washington.
- Urgent Action, AFR 25/04/98, International Secretariat, Amnesty International, London, 16 February 1998.
- US Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 1999. Ethiopia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999.
- US Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 1999. Ethiopia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2000.
- US State Department Country report for 1997 on human rights practices in Ethiopia, Washington, 30 January, 1998.
- Vestal T (2001) Human Rights Abuses in Ethiopia: New Light on the Slippery Slope, A Paper presented at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Nashville, TN, 16-19 November 2000, published in Pan-Ethiopian Forum, Ethiopia Policy Institute, 2000/2001.
- Vestal T. (1994). Testimony to US House of Representatives, Africa Subcommittee in Hearing on Ethiopia, Washington, 27 July 1994
- World Bank (2000). Ethiopia: Public Expenditure Review Volumes I and II, August 31
- World Bank (2000). Ethiopia: Transitions in a Poor Economy, June 30.
- World Bank (2001). Woreda Studies. Addis Ababa: World Bank.