

Genocide in Tigray; Why Ethnic Federalism Has Failed in Ethiopia and
Paved the Way for the Country's Impending Balkanization

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“And what is [a] genuine national-state? It is a state in which all nationalities participate equally in state affairs, it is a state where every nationality is given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music and its history. It is a state where Amharas, Tigres, Oromos, Aderes [Harari], Somalis, Wollamos [Wolaytas], Gurages, etc. are treated equally. It is a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally.”—Walleligne Mekonnen, *On the Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia*.

Abstract

This essay examines how the fundamental weaknesses in Ethiopia's ethnic federal structure, the self-serving political motivations of various actors, and the geo-political reality of the country have mired Ethiopia in a cyclical pattern of revolt, repression, war, and heightened ethnic suspicion. This paper emphasizes the experimental nature of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism and supports a critical analysis of its internal motivations and resulting consequences. Ethiopia, according to the provisions of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, should be a relatively peaceful nation since ethnic-based discrimination is explicitly prohibited in the country's founding documents¹. However, the current Tigray Genocide demonstrates that Ethiopia's ethnic federal structure is incapable of protecting democratic pluralism, basic human rights, and meaningful political participation in the country. This essay finds that the conflict between self-rule and centralized rule, as well as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's unquestionable governmental failures since 2018, have propelled Ethiopia towards balkanization. This essay also finds that unless the regional right to self-determination, as granted by the Ethiopian constitution, is genuinely promoted, then the Horn of Africa may lose one of its most stabilizing forces to the destruction of civil war.

Introduction:

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia stands at a crucial juncture in its political timeline: will it face a gradual internal decolonization and pursue genuine democracy, or will its current civil war lead to the eventual bloody balkanization of the country? With recent reports of atrocious human rights abuses within the Tigray region becoming public², and with calls from

¹ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

² "Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone." *Human Rights Watch*, 6 Apr. 2022, [https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/06/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia-western-tigray-](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/06/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia-western-tigray)

motivations and 150 years of ethnic conflict, have exposed the failures of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia and thrust the country towards violent disintegration.

First, I will present Ethiopia's historical legacy of "internal colonization"⁴ and how this has influenced ethnic tensions in the country, today. Next, I will explain how competing ideological views regarding the Ethiopian state have complicated effective governance in the country as well as the widespread protection of human rights. And finally, I will demonstrate how ethnic federalism's inability to reconcile national self-determination with the central government's desire for "democratic centralism"⁵ has propelled the country towards balkanization.

Literature Review:

There is diverse scholarly literature regarding African state-building in the 20th century. Beginning in the 1960s, African independence movements saw the gradual adoption of representative democracy for African people on the continent and the emergence of federalism in Africa's larger countries. Federalism relates to the formal division of power between two governments in the same political system. Federal structures aim to balance some degree of self and shared rule between the national government and its constituent states/regions/provinces. According to Alfred Stephan in his book *Arguing Comparative Politics*⁶, federal structures can theoretically take two forms: "coming together" federalism and "holding together" federalism⁷. "Coming-together" federalism refers to the mutual decision, as made by a parliamentary vote, to form one united state through the pursuit of common interests and shared institutions. "Holding

⁴ Østebø, Terje, and Kjetil Tronvoll. "Interpreting Contemporary Oromo Politics in Ethiopia: An Ethnographic Approach." *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2020.1796255>, 614.

⁵ Colburn, Forrest D. "The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Masking and Unmasking Tragedy." *World Politics*, vol. 43, no. 4, 1991, pp. 572., <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010537>.

⁶ Stephan, Alfred. *Arguing Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

⁷ Ibid.

together” federalism, however, refers to the top-down implementation of shared rule for the sake of preserving the country’s territorial integrity and mediating civil conflict.

According to Dr. Wondwosen Teshome’s analysis in *Federalism in Africa: The Case of Ethnic-based Federalism in Ethiopia*, many proponents of federalism worldwide equate it with democracy and, as such, encourage its application in large, multi-ethnic states. Members of this view include Ivo Duchacek, who wrote, “democracy and federalism are always found together [and] federalism is a territorial dimension of democracy”⁸. This claim is based on the belief that the political decentralization of large multi-ethnic states will promote the fair political representation of disaffected groups. In Ethiopia’s case, these disaffected groups include the diverse ethnic populations in Ethiopia’s regional provinces. Each of these ethnic groups has their own cultural heritage, national identity, and unique political desires. So, one view held in the scholarly literature is that federalism, and its resulting political decentralization, promotes the socio-political desires of diverse groups within the same political system. Proponents of this view are Robert Gurr and Barbara Harf (1994)⁹, Seyoum Hameso (1997)¹⁰, Mwangi Kimenyi (1997)¹¹, Arend Lijphart (1997, 2002)¹², John Coakley (2005)¹³, Michael Hechter (2000)¹⁴, Brenden O’Leary (2002)¹⁵, Will Kymlicka (2006)¹⁶, and Eghosa Osaghae (2006)¹⁷.

⁸ Duchacek, Ivo “Antagonistic Cooperation: Territorial and Ethnic Communities.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 1977, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pubjof.a038469>.

⁹ Gurr, Ted Robert, and Barbara Harff. *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*. Westview Press, 1994.

¹⁰ Hameso, Seyoum. *Ethnicity in Africa: Towards a Positive Approach*. I University, 2001.

¹¹ Kimenyi, Mwangi. *Ethnic Diversity, Liberty and the State: The African Dilemma*. Edward Elgar, 1998.

¹² Lijphart, Arend. *Democracy in Plural Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

¹³ Coakley, John. *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*. Frank Cass, 2005.

¹⁴ Hechter, Michael. *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

¹⁵ McGarry, John, and Brendan O’Leary. “Federations and Managing Nations.” *Elgar Handbook of Civil War and Fragile States*, 2002, pp. 401–427., <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781006313.00032>.

¹⁶ Kymlicka, Will. “Federalism and Secession.” *Democracy, Nationalism and Multiculturalism*, 2006, pp. 108–126., https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203313923_chapter_7.

¹⁷ Osaghae, Eghosa E.: ‘Ethnicity and the State in Africa’, 2006, Afro Asian centre for Peace and Development Studies, Ryukoku University.

Although there is common agreement that federalism can help promote the fair political representation of various groups in large multi-ethnic states, there is still vast scholarly literature that opposes it. As J.I. Elaigwu explains in “Ethnicity and the Federal Option in Africa”¹⁸ for the Nigerian Journal of Federalism, federalism could easily divide a nation's regional groups and foster the kind of factionalism that could destroy the newly democratic African republics. Proponents of this view include Claude Ake (1996)¹⁹, Awolowo-Dosunmu (1994)²⁰, Tagowa Wonotanzokan (1994)²¹, and Osita Agbu (2004)²². When discussing federalism in Nigeria, these scholars contend that federalism serves to “divide and rule”²³ the country, rather than alleviate the country’s sectionalism and promote stability.

Despite these concerns, Africa now has at least 10 countries with formal and informal federal structures²⁴. Of the many federal democratic states in the world (USA, Switzerland, Ethiopia, Germany, Nigeria, Canada to name a few), a small number have pursued some form of ethnic-based federalism. This is due to the belief that ethnic federalism is the most effective tool to ameliorate the difficulties arising from vast diversity and conflicting views of national identity. Proponents of this view are John Cohen (1995)²⁵, Patric Chabal and J.P. Daloz (1999)²⁶, Paul Henz (1998)²⁷, and Kidane Mengisteab (1997)²⁸. Many of the political issues advocated by

¹⁸ Elaigwu, J. I.: ‘Ethnicity and the Federal Option in Africa’, 1994, The Nigerian Journal of Federalism.

¹⁹ Ake, Claude. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Brookings Institution, 1996.

²⁰ Awolowo-Dosunmu: ‘Observations on Nigerian Federalism’, The Nigerian Journal of Federalism, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1994.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Teshome-Bahiru, Wondwosen, and Jan Zahorik. “Federalism in Africa: The Case of Ethnic-Based Federalism in Ethiopia.” *SSRN*, 21 Nov. 2008, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1305115.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Cohen, John: “*Ethnic federalism*” in *Ethiopia*, Northeast African Studies, pp.157- 188, 1995.

²⁶ Gerhart, Gail M., et al. “Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 6, 1999, p. 162., <https://doi.org/10.2307/20049597>.

²⁷ Henze, Paul B. “Is Ethiopia Democratic? A Political Success Story.” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1998, pp. 40–54., <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1998.0062>.

²⁸ Mengisteab, Kidane. “New Approaches to State Building in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism.” *African Studies Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 1997, p. 111., <https://doi.org/10.2307/524968>.

indigenous groups relate to the specific desires and values of their communities, and thus, promote a stronger subnational political consciousness within multicultural nations. This is due to the increasing demands for ethnic autonomy and the growing importance of mediating inter-ethnic conflict in diverse states.

Background: Ethiopia's Imperial Legacy of Territorial Expansion and its Impact on Present Day Ethnic Conflict

While not the sole influence behind Ethiopia's cyclical pattern of ethnic conflict and civil war, the country's massive size is a significant influencing factor. Ethiopia's territory spans approximately 1.22 million square kilometers²⁹, roughly twice the size of France. This essay will demonstrate how the country's large size relative to its African neighbors is both a result and a factor of Ethiopia's historical instability. Through European colonization, and Ethiopian imperialism as well, Africans on the continent were grouped together through geographic location, rather than ethno-cultural similarities. As Ieuan Griffiths explains in *The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries*³⁰,

European colonialism lumped together peoples of diverse cultures and traditions, sometimes leading to secessionist movements and civil war... [Some countries] are so large and diverse that effective government becomes difficult.³¹

With the Ethiopia's large size and rich diversity, Ethiopia belongs squarely in Griffiths' second category of African state. Ethiopia is home to over 90 distinct ethnic groups³² and over

²⁹ Nationsonline.org, Klaus Kästle -. "Ethiopia - A Country Profile - Nations Online Project." *Country Profile - Destination Ethiopia - Nations Online Project*, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/ethiopia.htm#:~:text=The%20country%20covers%20an%20area,nation%20in%20Africa%20behind%20Nigeria>.

³⁰ Griffiths, Ieuan. "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries." *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 152, no. 2, 1986, pp. 204–16, <https://doi.org/10.2307/634762>, 204.

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Ethiopia - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples." *Minority Rights Group*, 3 Feb. 2022, <https://minorityrights.org/country/ethiopia/>.

70 unique languages³³. Based on the 2007 national census, Ethiopia's ethnic groups make up the following percentages of the country's population: Oromo 34.4%, Amhara 27%, Somali 6.2%, Tigray 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Siite 1.3%, Kefficho 1.2%, and the remaining 8.8% of the population are made up of smaller ethnic groups.³⁴

With a population this diverse, and with a tradition of democracy as young as Ethiopia's is, equal and fair representation for all groups has been a constant struggle for successive Ethiopian governments. Through emperor Menelik's campaign of southern expansion, to Haile Selassie's "Amharization" of Ethiopia through Amharic-only education programs, to Mengistu Hailemariam's repression of ethnic identity for the sake of national unity, the nebulous concept of ethnicity has permeated nearly every aspect of government policy as well as the broader Ethiopian psyche.

In the 19th century, King Menelik II of Shoa began a campaign of southern expansion (and to a lesser degree, northern expansion), encompassing the diverse ethnic groups of Ethiopia's peripheral regions into his Abyssinian Empire³⁵. Menelik II expanded his empire's territory to much of Ethiopia's present-day area, but, this vast territorial expansion resulted in the collection, rather than the organization of various indigenous groups into the empire³⁶. As Eritrean author and historian Bereket Habte Selassie writes in *Conflict and Intervention in the*

³³ Selassie, Bereket Habte. *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*. Monthly Review Press, 1980.

³⁴ Bhandari, Aditi. "Ethiopia's Ethnic Diversity." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 29 Apr. 2021, <https://graphics.reuters.com/ETHIOPIA-CONFLICT/TIGRAYANS/yzdpxbbzqpx/>.

³⁵ Project, The Sentinel. "Ethiopia's Impending Balkanization: A Short Explainer on the Country's Recent Crisis." *The Sentinel Project*, 26 Apr. 2021, <https://thesentinelproject.org/2021/04/26/ethiopias-impending-balkanization-a-short-explainer-on-the-ethiopia-crisis/>.

³⁶ Assefa, Getachew. "The Constitutional Right to Self-Determination as a Response to the 'Question of Nationalities' in Ethiopia." *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1–50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27072311>.

Horn of Africa³⁷, the major European imperial powers withdrew from their African colonies and gradually recognized their independence following the end of World War II. However, Menelik's conquered nations did not gain this same political independence. Instead, Selassie writes, "The Tigray people, just south of Eritrea, the Oromo in the south and southwest, and the Somalis in the southeast all suffered the fate of conquered nations"³⁸, even after the age of decolonization. The Ethiopian emperor was permitted to maintain the territorial integrity of his empire at the expense of the self-determination of the other ethnic groups within it.

This conflict between the peoples' desire for self-determination and Emperor Menelik's desire for central administration over a united territory lies at the core of Ethiopia's modern day geo-political conflict³⁹. The inability of successive Ethiopian governments to reconcile these two desires has resulted in ethnic factionalism and stronger allegiances held with one's region than with the Abyssinian Empire and the Ethiopian Federation, later on. To maintain control of this vast empire, Menelik began a meticulous effort to centralize his power⁴⁰ over the people of Ethiopia and the powerful regional rulers to whom they confer loyalty.

The main basis of Menelik's centralization of power was the economic marginalization of the regions through the neutralization of powerful regional leaders. Ethiopia existed under a feudalist socio-economic system until the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974⁴¹, and thus, has historically operated under an economically immobile framework. Vast scholarship on Ethiopia's geopolitics has repeatedly demonstrated that the highly stratified inequalities of

³⁷ Selassie, Bereket Habte. *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*. Monthly Review Press, 1980.

³⁸ *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*, 3

³⁹ "The Constitutional Right to Self-Determination as a Response to the 'Question of Nationalities' in Ethiopia.", 10

⁴⁰ Keller, Edmond J. "The Revolutionary Transformation of Ethiopia's Twentieth-Century Bureaucratic Empire." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1981, pp. 307–335., <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x00016955>.

⁴¹ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*. James Currey, 2009.

economic and political resources among the regions has increased the country's propensity for violent conflict and demands for secession⁴².

Historically, the Ethiopian regional peasantry was divided into two groups: serfs and land-owning peasants⁴³. As Menelik conducted his territorial expansion campaign and more of these regions were incorporated into his empire, formal taxation of the regions was established and standardized. The eventual formulation was of two types of tax: gibir and asrat⁴⁴, with the larger of the two (gibir) equaling between one-fifth to one-third of a peasant's gross annual products⁴⁵. A portion of this tax would go to the state in Addis Ababa and a portion would be distributed among the local administration (many of which were installed by the imperial government in Addis).

Ethiopia still relies heavily on its agricultural production; it accounts for the majority of the country's national income and is sustains the livelihoods of 75% of the Ethiopian people⁴⁶. Therefore, the regional peasantry would suffer immensely in the event of famine—not only are their crop yields decreasing, but they rely solely on the means by which they are taxed (harvested production). And in the event of a sharp tax increase to fund the emperor's extravagances in the capital, the regional peasantry will find themselves being worn increasingly thin.

In 1930, Ras Tafari Makonnen, Menelik's grandnephew, was crowned emperor of Ethiopia⁴⁷. He took the name Haile Selassie and he continued Menelik's push for political

⁴² Bakke, Kristin M., and Erik Wibbels. "Diversity, Disparity, and Civil Conflict in Federal States." *World Politics*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1–50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40060154>.

⁴³ "The Constitutional Right to Self-Determination as a Response to the 'Question of Nationalities' in Ethiopia.", 11

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Agriculture and Food Security: Ethiopia." *U.S. Agency for International Development*, 8 Jan. 2021, <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/agriculture-and-food-security#:~:text=Ethiopia's%20economy%20is%20dependent%20on,percent%20of%20the%20country's%20workforce>.

⁴⁷ Levine, Donald. "Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: Myth or Reality?" *Africa Today*, vol. 8, no. 5, 1961, pp. 11–14, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4184215>, 12

centralization in Ethiopia. As sociologist and historian Donald Levine wrote, “For the sake of Addis Ababa, the provinces have been heavily taxed and left relatively undeveloped”⁴⁸. In addition, during the reign of Haile Selassie, no famine relief was provided to the regions that had previously rejected Shewan rule—specifically the Wollo, Tigray and certain parts of the Oromo region⁴⁹.

Emperor Haile Selassie, an ethnic Amhara himself, was also a strong proponent of “Pan-Ethiopianism”⁵⁰: an ideal touted by many of the Shewan noble elite. In concise terms, Pan-Ethiopianism is the belief that all people in Ethiopia are of one national identity and that through cultural unity, the country can promote lasting stability⁵⁰. The regions on Ethiopia’s periphery faced increasingly strenuous taxation for the sake of the emperor’s “modernization”⁵¹ plan for Addis Ababa. In addition to this economic marginalization, the regions also faced the forced cultural-linguistic assimilation⁵² of their native traditions in favor of the Amharic language and the Ethiopian Orthodox religion.

Through Amharic-only education in the few regional schools that existed at the time, the Amhara ruling elite aimed to establish national unity through ethno-linguistic assimilation⁵³. By diminishing the unique ethno-cultural identity of the regions (and thus, their regional allegiance), the emperor could eliminate any threat to his continued rule. Thus, the socio-political marginalization of the regions was a two-fold process: it consisted of the economic subjugation

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ 3. *Rebellion and Famine in the North ... - Human Rights Watch*.
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/e/ethiopia/ethiopia.919/c3wollo.pdf>, 55

⁵⁰ Iyob, Ruth. “Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1993, pp. 257–276., <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x00011927>.

⁵¹ Levine, Donald. “Haile Selassie’s Ethiopia: Myth or Reality?” *Africa Today*.

⁵² “Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*.

⁵³ Ibid.

of the peasantry through increased taxation and denial of land ownership, as well as the assimilation of the diverse local identities in favor of a united, central, “Ethiopian” identity.

However, the forced Amharization of Ethiopia and the economic marginalization of the country’s regions *did not* result in the political neutralization of ethno-nationalist groups in the country. Instead, it created an extremely volatile social environment between the central government and the inhabitants of the regional provinces⁵⁴, which eventually facilitated the 1974 military takeover of the Ethiopian imperial government. So, in a failed attempt to minimize the significance of ethnicity in influencing political allegiance, Haile Selassie actually created an environment that promoted the festering of political grievances within Ethiopia. This left the *ancien regime* vulnerable to popular uprising because the Ethiopian citizenry were more likely to, and eventually did, support a coup d’état against the emperor.

Following the 1974 coup and the establishment of Mengistu Hailemariam’s authoritarian military dictatorship⁵⁵, the question of nationalities still pervaded Ethiopian civil politics. The rise of Hailemariam’s military dictatorship, known as the *Derg* in Amharic⁵⁶, coincided with a popular uprising of peasants, students, and urban workers in the early 1970s. The Derg professed their dedication to socialism⁵⁷ and the creation of a modern Ethiopian state through land reform and class emancipation. And in order to create this modern socialist Ethiopian state, the Derg regime insisted on political unity and designated any ethno-nationalist movement seeking self-determination as “counter-revolutionary” and antithetical to national progress⁵⁸. So, Haile

⁵⁴ Berhe, Aregawi. “The Origins of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front.” *African Affairs*, vol. 103, no. 413, 2004, pp. 569–592., <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adh024>.

⁵⁵ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ “Enat Hager Weym Mot (Revolutionary Motherland or Death).” *Modernist Art in Ethiopia*, 2019, pp. 184–246., <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv224tx1n.10>.

⁵⁸ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*.

Selassie's ethno-centric Amharization program in pursuit of a single Ethiopian identity and Mengistu Hailemariam's self-proclaimed socialist movement for a united Ethiopian proletariat had the same effect for Ethiopia's ethnic minorities. Both programs led to the political marginalization of Ethiopia's regional groups and the proliferation of armed ethnic-based resistance movements in the country.

Specifically, the Derg targeted members of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) in their bloody "Red Terror" campaign⁵⁹. The Red Terror was a sequence of extrajudicial killings and detentions perpetuated by the Derg's cadres against the EPRP's young members to thwart the movement's demands for civilian participation in government. This violent political repression lasted from 1976 until 1978⁶⁰ and resulted in the deaths of thousands of young intellectuals and the neutralization of the EPRP. The Red Terror aimed to demoralize Ethiopia's political opposition groups through the liquidation of its young organizers—but these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in securing the Derg's continued control over the Ethiopian people.

This is because the Derg, like the imperial government before it, underestimated the unwavering zeal and long-standing grievances of Ethiopia's indigenous peoples. Thus, following the Red Terror of the late 1970s, Ethiopia saw the mass-mobilization of various ethno-nationalist groups who sought self-determination, protection for ethnic traditions, independence, or some combination of these things⁶¹. It was in this volatile political environment during the 1970s that various ethnonationalist movements in Ethiopia's regional provinces formally emerged. Of the many regional ethnic militias that emerged, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF),

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Berhe, Aregawi. "The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front." *African Affairs*

Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)⁶² posed the largest threats to the Derg's authoritarian control over the provinces. Although the specific agendas and operations of the three organizations differed, they each were founded on the belief that their people had the right to self-determination and the preservation of their cultural heritage—two things that the Ethiopian Empire and Derg military junta aimed to dismantle.

What followed the Red Terror campaign was a seventeen-year armed resistance against the Derg regime, which eventually fell to TPLF, OLF, and EPLF forces in May 1991. After Mengistu Hailemariam fled Ethiopia and sought asylum in Zimbabwe⁶³, granted to him by current president Robert Mugabe, the victors of the Ethiopian civil war were tasked with building the first democratic Ethiopian state in history. The size of this task cannot be understated—Ethiopia's democratic founders were assigned the duty of introducing a modern representative government for the country's 50 million people. After a four-year transitional period, the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was adopted, and thus, began a new political era for the country. The remainder of this paper will focus on the motivations for Ethiopia's accepted form of government as well as the weaknesses that were embedded within it from its inception.

I will present my findings regarding the motivations for Ethiopia's ethnic-based federal structure as well as the inherent weakness that lie within it. Next, I will explain how the fundamental weaknesses in Ethiopia's ethnic federalist experiment have led to the repeated use of state violence to limit the self-determination of Ethiopia's indigenous groups. And finally, I

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Banya, Nelson. "Mengistu to Remain Zimbabwe's Guest." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 27 May 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-mengistu/mengistu-to-remain-zimbabwes-guest-idUSL2742471720080527>.

will explain how the Ethiopian government's overwhelming desire for "democratic centralization"⁶⁴ has eliminated meaningful civilian participation in government as well as the protection of their basic human rights.

Theory, Hypothesis, and Methods

The theory of this essay is that the conflicting ideals of self-rule and shared rule in a federal state, exacerbated by centuries of tense ethnic divides and incessant political corruption, have made the current state of the Ethiopian Federation unfit to govern its people. Thus, the independence or increased autonomy of Ethiopia's regions is not only inevitable, but necessary to avoid ethnic conflict and promote the dignity and self-determination of the country's people.

The theory regarding ethnic federalism's failures in Ethiopia is that the conflict between the regions' desires for self-determination and the central government's desire for "democratic centralization" is the main force behind regional unrest. The regional desires for autonomy theoretically exist due to the historical oppression (through cultural assimilation and economic marginalization) of Ethiopia's provinces. Due to these frequent threats against their ethnic heritage and personal dignity, the regional peoples developed a stronger association with their individual ethnic group than with a united Pan-Ethiopian identity. Also, linguistic barriers, geographical separation, and long-standing historical grievances further encouraged the primacy of sub-national allegiances in Ethiopia's body politic.

These facts make up the political reality of Ethiopia. The EPRDF and the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution did not politicize ethnicity in Ethiopia—ethnicity has always been political in Ethiopia. What the EPRDF effectively did was complicate the relationship between self-rule and central rule in Ethiopia. By including provisions for increased regional autonomy in the

⁶⁴ Colburn, Forrest D. "The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Masking and Unmasking Tragedy." *World Politics*.

constitution, the EPRDF attempted to counterbalance the central government's power with increased regional political representation. This created immediate tension between Ethiopia's regional governments and the central government due to competing claims to power.

I hypothesize that ethnic federalism's main failure in Ethiopia is due to its inability to resolve the long-standing power struggle between the central government and various regional political groups. I also hypothesize that conflicting visions of the Ethiopian national identity, fueled by foreign pressures, long-standing ethnic cleavages, and Abiy Ahmed's deliberate destabilization, have further weakened the country's multinational structure. To test this hypothesis, I will present logical discrepancies in the larger argument for federalism in ethnically diverse societies, empirical evidence demonstrating Ethiopia's repeated employment of violence to resolve civil clashes, and ethnic federalism's structural inability to oppose unconstitutional seizures of power. The primary method used in pursuing this research was an in-depth case study of the ethnic federalist experiment in Ethiopia, with supplementing analysis of the long-standing ethnic divides that made multi-national federalism the most apparent solution to Ethiopia's geo-political instability.

Findings

The overarching findings of this research explain that ethnic federalism has failed in Ethiopia for one main reason. The primary reason for ethnic federalism's failure in Ethiopia is that the regional provinces have overwhelming desires for self-determination (some to the extent of secession), yet the Ethiopian government insists on "democratic centralization" for the sake of maintaining a united Ethiopian state. Ethnic federalism was initially pursued in Ethiopia with the aim of granting equal rights and protections for all ethnic groups in Ethiopia⁶⁵, a move that was

⁶⁵ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

necessary in the country due to its historical legacy of ethnic assimilation and unequal regional development. However, the creation of the Ethiopian Federation has not in the end served the needs of Ethiopia's indigenous groups nor ensured continued political stability in the country. This is because, in a very real sense, Ethiopia is not one nation, but rather, a nation of nations⁶⁶; meaning that pursuits towards "democratic centralization" will have the effect of politically marginalizing certain regions and ethnic groups.

Ethnicity in Ethiopia

I have discussed the population percentages of the various ethnic groups in Ethiopia and the historical context for their addition to Ethiopian territory, but I have not yet explained why each of these groups still has a stronger attachment to its ethno-cultural practices than to a more general Pan-Ethiopian identity. As my hypothesis suggests, and as current empirical evidence demonstrates, Ethiopia's historical isolationism, religious conservatism, and the scars of traumatic forced assimilation weakened the ethnic federalism experiment from its inception and paved the way for incessant civil conflict. I will discuss each of the three elements of my argument in this section, but first, I will describe the concept of "nationality" in the Ethiopian context.

As defined in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "nationality" is defined in terms of "common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties"⁶⁷. This means that one's nationality may refer to their immediate origin, the Central Tigray Zone for example, or, due to Haile Selassie's Amharization program and promotion of a united "modernized Ethiopia", a larger "Pan-Ethiopianist" identity. In this section, I will present the evidence for ethnic federalism's failure to

⁶⁶ Berhe, Aregawi. "The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front." *African Affairs*

⁶⁷ Miscevic, Nenad. "Nationalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 2 Sept. 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/>.

reconcile strong the ethno-cultural identities and desires for self-determination of the regions, the preservation of cultural heritage, fair political representation, territorial integrity, and a coherent program of economic development in Ethiopia.

Historical Isolation Framework

In order for an organic sense of national unity to emerge among Ethiopia's numerous ethnic groups across the 9 National Regional States (NRSs), they must first, obviously, encounter one another. The difficulty of travel within Ethiopia has been a major influence on inter-regional conflict due to the lack of exposure to groups not located immediately within one's region. This is due in part to the direct influence of dividing agents, such as the lack of infrastructure between regions, and in part to the indirect influence of ethno-linguistic cultural barriers⁶⁸.

The absence of proper rural infrastructure exacerbated the regional division and long-standing ethnic factionalism that Ethiopia faces today. Prior to the Italian occupation of 1936–1941, Ethiopia lacked a widespread and industrialized network of roads and bridges connecting its regional territories⁶⁹. The Italians, with their invading troops and crucial supply chains in need of transport, began the earliest industrial attempt at a road-building program in Ethiopia⁷⁰. However, since these roads were built with an emphasis on military strategy rather than civil engineering, “the priority was given to roads linking major towns, but also to those linking the ‘colony’ with the outside world”⁷¹. Therefore, roads connecting the regions to one another were not built, but rather, roads connecting Addis Ababa to the economic hubs at the Port of Assab on the Red Sea.

⁶⁸ Emmenegger, Rony. “Dialogue 39.” *The Roads of Decentralization: The History of Rural Road Construction in Ethiopia*, NCCR North-South, Bern, 2012.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Emmenegger, Rony. “Dialogue 39.” *The Roads of Decentralization: The History of Rural Road Construction in Ethiopia*, NCCR North-South, Bern, 2012.

⁷¹ Ibid.

This had the effect of isolating the regions from contact with the outside world as well as with each other. In fact, in many parts of Ethiopia, it is quite common for people to live their entire lives in the region in which they were born. With the lack of proper roads and the method of inter-state travel being confined to donkey or mule transport, communication and exposure among Ethiopia's many ethnic groups becomes a nearly impossible occurrence. To this day, the infrastructural disconnect among Ethiopia's peoples bears a significant obstacle⁷² in the pursuit of a cohesive Ethiopian identity within the country.

Religious Conservatism and Cultural Rigidity Framework

Now that it has been established that a weak network of rural infrastructure influenced the historical division of Ethiopia's various ethnic groups, I will now explain how long traditions of religious conservatism and the regional resistance to cultural assimilation led to the proliferation of a subnational rather than a national political consciousness. Ethiopia is home to the second oldest Orthodox Christian tradition in the world (spanning back to the 4th century)⁷³, and a 2017 Pew Research Center report shows that 98% of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians identify their faith as "very important" in their lives⁷⁴. Orthodox Christians account for 44% of Ethiopia's population and are largely concentrated in the Tigray/Amhara regions, Sunni Muslims account for 34% of the population and are located largely in the Afar/Somali/Oromia regions, various Christian Pentecostal groups account for 19% of the population, and the remaining population is divided among smaller Jewish, Catholic, and local animist traditions⁷⁵.

⁷² Walsh, Declan. "This Ethiopian Road Is a Lifeline for Millions. Now It's Blocked." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 29 July 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/29/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-aid-crisis.html>.

⁷³ "2. Orthodox Christians Are Highly Religious in Ethiopia, Much Less so in Former Soviet Union." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, Pew Research Center, 17 Aug. 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/11/08/orthodox-christians-are-highly-religious-in-ethiopia-much-less-so-in-former-soviet-union/#orthodoxy-in-ethiopia>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Ethiopia - United States Department of State." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 1 Dec. 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/ethiopia/index.html>.

Ethiopia's topographically and geographically isolated territory has allowed for the insulation of Ethiopia's various religious practices from foreign imposition. This long religious tradition, coupled with the regional isolation of the Ethiopian peasantry, further widened the ethnic divides within Ethiopia between Christian and non-Christian groups. And through Haile Selassie's Amharization campaign, and with the adoption of Orthodox Christianity as the state religion in Ethiopia, the direct assimilation of regional ethno-cultural practices spread.

The Scars of Traumatic Forced Assimilation

When considering the failures of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia and its historical context, one must remember that this relates to very recent history. A 2011 Welfare Monitoring Survey found that the literacy rates in the 9 National Regional States (NRSs) still represents the legacy of Ethiopia's regional marginalization. The survey found that in 2011, the total literacy rate in the regions was as follows: 86.7% in Addis Ababa; 63.8% in Dire Dawa; 59.8% in Harari; 53.5% in Tigray; 46.8% in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR); 47.3% in Benishangul-Gumuz; 45.4% in Oromia; 41.4% in Amhara; 30.5% in Somali; and 34.2% in Afar⁷⁶. Similarly, the health and infant mortality rates in the regions also represent the persistent economic disparities between the country's center and its peripheral regional areas.

Many of the historical events described in this paper are still in living memory, and thus, encroachments on regional autonomy bear a particularly striking resemblance to similar moves in Ethiopia's past. And the historical domination of the Shoan-Amhara feudal class⁷⁷ over Ethiopia's regional groups still has persistent economic impacts on the country's regions to this day, due to Haile Selassie's asymmetric economic development for Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's

⁷⁶ "Welfare Monitoring Survey 2011." *IHSN Survey Catalog*, https://catalog.ihsn.org/index.php/catalog/3124/related_materials, 3

⁷⁷ Iyob, Ruth. "Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*.

regional provinces⁷⁸. Now that the historical factors influencing the country's persistent ethnic divisions have been established, the next section of this essay will examine why, in the face of the glaring socio-economic disparities among Ethiopia's regional groups, the drafters of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution determined that ethnic federalism was the best solution for Ethiopian statehood.

Motivations for and Weaknesses of Ethnic Federalism

The strongest, and historically most convincing, argument in favor of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is that it was best suited to reconcile “the question of nationalities”⁷⁹ with the desire to maintain the country's international borders. I will soon explain how these are two diametrically opposed concepts, but first, I will present the arguments in support of the ethnic federal system and its underlying, generally beneficent, motivations.

Motivations for Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

The first and most apparent motivation for ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is that since “ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism came to be the predominant mode of political mobilization”⁸⁰ due to shared history, territorial insulation, and common psychological grievances regarding their oppression, ethnic groupings seemed to be the most effective form of political demarcation. Aregawi Berhe, former co-founder of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, explains that the insistence of the 1995 EPRDF coalition on an ethnic federalist structure was a result of “the [historical] failure of the state to resolve the [ethnic] resentment simmering throughout the country”⁸¹ which caused “people to seek a solution in their own localities, [and

⁷⁸ Levine, Donald. “Haile Selassie's Ethiopia: Myth or Reality?”

⁷⁹ “The Constitutional Right to Self-determination as a Response to the ‘Question of Nationalities’ in Ethiopia”, 30

⁸⁰ Allo, Awol. “Why Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party Could Be Bad News for Ethiopia.” *Abiy Ahmed | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 5 Dec. 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/12/5/why-abiy-ahmeds-prosperity-party-could-be-bad-news-for-ethiopia>.

⁸¹ Berhe, Aregawi. “The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front.” *African Affairs*, vol. 103, no. 413, 2004, pp. 569–592., <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adh024>.

thus produced] a series of ethno-nationalist mobilizations”⁸². And, as I have previously mentioned, the basis of their resentment was largely well founded—economic and linguistic disparities among the capital’s population and the population of Ethiopia’s peripheral regions served to further not only Tigrayan ethno-nationalism, but ethno-nationalist movements across Ethiopia⁸³. However, after the 1974 revolution and subsequent fall of Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian Empire’s end began yet another age of political instability and harsh repression rather than pluralism and democratization.

The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution and the rise of Mengistu Hailemariam’s Derg regime was a revolution of class, rather than ethnic, consciousness⁸⁴. Thus, the Derg promoted a broader Ethiopian “nationalist agenda”⁸⁵. In opposition to Ethiopia’s millennia-long monarchical rule, radical wings in the Ethiopian army, established the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces (CCAF)⁸⁶, adopted a so-called “Marxist-Leninist”⁸⁷ ideology, and staged a coup d’état in and around Addis Ababa in 1974. The CCAF, later known as the Derg⁸⁸, overthrew Haile Selassie’s government in February of that year and proclaimed demands for “freedom of political parties, democratic elections, land reform...[and] free education for all”⁸⁹ among other revolutionary changes.

The Derg’s military takeover formally abolished the Ethiopian feudal system that had historically marginalized the country’s regions (through severe taxation and denial of landownership based on ethnicity, religion, and loyalty), and instituted a program of sweeping

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*. James Currey, 2009.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Derg is Amharic for Committee, refers to Mengistu Hailmariam’s military junta (1974–1991)

⁸⁹ “The Constitutional Right to Self-determination as a Response to the ‘Question of Nationalities’ in Ethiopia”, 16

land reform in the country⁹⁰. As Abera Yemane-ab explains in the article “*Land to the Tiller*”: *Unrealized Agenda of the Revolution*, the primary goal of the land reform program was the “abolition of tenancy and the provision of land to the tiller”⁹¹. However, the Derg’s land reform measures have been criticized by regional governments on the basis that the Derg’s allocation of land was dependent on whether a peasant had the “means to plow it”⁹² –thus, excluding the poorer peasantry from gaining any meaningful economic independence. This phenomenon coupled with poor rains, widespread famine, the Derg’s violent repression of political dissent, and the initiation of the bloody Red Terror campaign⁹³, further exacerbated regional grievances. By ignoring the question of nationalities and the right to self-determination of the regional peoples of Ethiopia, and by relying on military force to silence this regional rebellion, the Derg managed to become as brutally repressive as the empire had been.

As Kjetil Tronvoll, Charles Schaefer, and Girmachew Alemu Aneme explain in their book *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*,

The entire era of the Derg was characterized by massive human rights violations, which constituted state-sponsored terror in the form of sexual abuse, summary execution, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, disappearance, unlawful dispossession of property, the use of food aid as a political tool, and forced resettlement.⁹⁴

The Derg viewed Ethiopia as a “monolithic society, thereby declaring any ethno-nationalist grievance or demand for self-determination as contrary to Ethiopian unity and interests”⁹⁵ and, therefore, counterrevolutionary. The Derg then responded to increased calls for self-

⁹⁰ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*, 3

⁹¹ Yemane-ab, Abera. “‘Land to the Tiller’: Unrealized Agenda of the Revolution.” *Northeast African Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2016, pp. 39–64., <https://doi.org/10.14321/nortafstud.16.1.0039>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Tronvoll, Kjetil, et al. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenged*, 4

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Berhe, A. “The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front.” *African Affairs*, vol. 103, no. 413, 2004, pp. 574, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adh024>.

determination with increasingly violent force. These human rights abuses, in addition to the increased economic marginalization of the Ethiopian peasantry, fueled by centuries of highly politicized ethnic divides, proved, once again, that unitary government over Ethiopia's vast territory and diverse peoples was ineffective and, in practice, devastating. All of these historical facts surely influenced the decisions of the early democratic state-builders of Ethiopia in 1991—the failures of the Derg and the empire in protecting the regional peoples' economic welfare and human rights had the effect of “[manifesting] itself in mutual hostility and mistrust”⁹⁶ among the regions. It was with this hindsight that multinational federalism was pursued in Ethiopia, rather than unitary national control. However, multinational federalism did not solve the problem of self-determination, but rather, temporarily pacified the regions to maintain popular support. In the next subsection, I will present why the multinational federalism solution was only temporary and why it entirely collapsed in 2020.

Weaknesses of Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

The fundamental weakness of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, and the primary force behind the country's perennial civil conflict, is that ethnic federalism is based on a fundamental contradiction. The theoretical justification for federalism, whether ethnically rooted or otherwise, is “based on the combination of shared rule and self-rule: federalism offers the potential to retain the territorial integrity of the state while providing some form of self-governance for disaffected groups”⁹⁷. As Kristin M. Bakke and Erik Wibbels explain, proponents of ethnic federalism support it based on the assumption that the land is “indivisible”⁹⁸—there is no claim to territorial secession, but each state has, at least in the Ethiopian formulation, the “unrestricted right to self-

⁹⁶ Bennett, Jon. “Tigray: Famine and National Resistance.” *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 10, no. 26, 1983, pp. 94–102., <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056248308703537>.

⁹⁷ Bakke, Kristin M., and Erik Wibbels. “Diversity, Disparity, and Civil Conflict in Federal States.” *World Politics*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

determination up to secession”⁹⁹. In addition, the Ethiopian Constitution grants individual regions the final authority to settle border disputes among the involved states. And finally, Article 2 of the Ethiopian Constitution states that the territory of Ethiopia shall comprise of the borders of the member states of the Federation¹⁰⁰. These three components expose the fundamental contradiction in Ethiopia’s multinational federalism: the central government has granted each region the “unrestricted right to administer itself”¹⁰¹, including the right to secession, but ultimately, the central government remains the final authority regarding territorial borders and, as a result, regional sovereignty. If this was not the case, then the recent calls for increased Oromo and Tigrayan sovereignty would not have been met with such vicious repression in 2016¹⁰² and 2020¹⁰³, respectively.

This inherent contradiction between self-rule and the central government’s desire for territorial sovereignty has resulted in harsh repression of Oromo youth movements calling for fair representation and increased autonomy in 2016¹⁰⁴ and an outright invasion in response to Tigray’s legal government proceedings in 2020¹⁰⁵. In the forthcoming sections will explain why this contradiction, in tandem with Abiy Ahmed’s governmental failures, is the key factor in the perpetuation of the Tigray Genocide and how only through the resolution of this contradiction, can there ever be sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

Rise of Abiy Ahmed Ali

⁹⁹ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “Ethiopia: Lethal Force against Protesters.” *Human Rights Watch*, 28 Oct. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/18/ethiopia-lethal-force-against-protesters>.

¹⁰³ “Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone.” *Human Rights Watch*.

¹⁰⁴ “Ethiopia: Lethal Force against Protesters.” *Human Rights Watch*.

¹⁰⁵ “Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone.” *Human Rights Watch*.

Despite its flaws, ethnic federalism was adopted in Ethiopia by the EPRDF in 1995¹⁰⁶, and since then, it has been the sole means of political organization in the country. Meles Zenawi, an ethnic Tigrayan who led the Tigray front of the liberation movement against Mengistu Hailemariam's Derg regime, became head of the EPRDF coalition and served as Prime Minister of Ethiopia until his death in 2012. During his tenure as prime minister, Zenawi ushered in an era of economic growth in the first unstable years of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia—eventually transforming the country into one of the “fastest-growing non-oil-dependent”¹⁰⁷ economies in the world. His government analyzed the regional failings of the empire and the Derg and aimed to bring the regions into the same age of modernity that Addis Ababa had enjoyed since the beginning of the 20th century.

Zenawi's coalition government pursued this goal by expanding education in the regions, building new rural roads, establishing stronger famine-protection measures, and granting regions the “unrestricted right to self-determination up to secession”¹⁰⁸—the right to self-determination, as described in Article 39 section 3 of the Ethiopian Constitution, grants regions the “unrestricted right to administer itself; and this shall include the right to establish government institutions within the territory it inhabits and the right to fair representation”¹⁰⁹. As Article 9 section 1 of the Ethiopian Constitution states, “The Constitution is the supreme law of the land” and, “All laws, customary practices, and decisions made by state organs or other public officials inconsistent therewith, shall be null and void”¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁶ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

¹⁰⁷ Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dies at 57.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 21 Aug. 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/22/world/africa/meles-zenawi-ethiopian-leader-dies-at-57.html>.

¹⁰⁸ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Through a coherent program of economic development, political decentralization, and protection of ethnic heritage, The EPRDF managed to successfully—albeit temporarily—reconcile the peoples’ vocal desires for self-determination with the states’ desire to maintain its international borders. As long as economic development steadily increased, ethnic conflict was isolated to intra-state strife (which would then be resolved by the local, rather than federal government), and the coalition maintained active participation, then it appeared that the ethnic federalism experiment would be an honest solution to the country’s historical ailments. However, following the very sudden death of Meles Zenawi in 2012 after a severe infection¹¹¹, the cracks in Ethiopia’s ethnic federalist foundations began to widen.

Hailemariam Desalegn, Ethiopia’s foreign minister and deputy prime minister, succeeded Meles Zenawi as prime minister of Ethiopia in September 2012¹¹². After being approved for appointment by the EPRDF, Hailemariam Desalegn became the new party chairman¹¹³ and assumed control of the second largest country in Africa. However, many feared that Desalegn lacked “the charisma, the competence, the political capital or the political clout to be a consequential or a meaningfully effective prime minister”¹¹⁴. And during his brief tenure in office, these fears became a very genuine reality. In response to largely peaceful protests in Oromia opposing an Addis Ababa land-expansion program (that would have resulted in Oromo territory being absorbed into the capital)¹¹⁵ in November 2015, Desalegn’s government ordered

¹¹¹ Gittleman, Jeffrey. “Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dies at 57.” *The New York*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Gemechu, Kumerra. “Ethiopia Ruling Coalition Approves Hailemariam Desalegn as PM.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 15 Sept. 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics/ethiopia-ruling-coalition-approves-hailemariam-desalegn-as-pm-idUSBRE88E0FQ20120915>.

¹¹⁴ Moore, Jina. “Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Resigns amid Political Turmoil.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 15 Feb. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/15/world/africa/ethiopia-hailemariam-desalegn.html>.

¹¹⁵ ““Such a Brutal Crackdown’ Killings and Arrests in Response to Ethiopia’s Oromo Protests.” *Human Rights Watch*, 2 Jan. 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/15/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopias-oromo-protests>.

the use of lethal force at the hands of the state security forces in the region¹¹⁶. This resulted in the deaths of over 400 civilians and the restriction of telecommunications services in Oromia¹¹⁷: further exacerbating regional resentment against the federal government. The protests lasted until May 2016 and in October of the same year, Desalegn's government issued a "national state of emergency"¹¹⁸ to resolve these ethnic clashes. This state of emergency lasted until 2018 when, finding himself unable to resolve the violent ethnic clashes in the Oromia and neighboring Amhara regions, Desalegn resigned as prime minister of Ethiopia and appointed Abiy Ahmed Ali as his successor¹¹⁹.

Ethiopian political analysts believe that "the ongoing protests, and the government's need to bow to some opposition demands in order to maintain its grip on power,"¹²⁰ encouraged Desalegn's resignation in favor of Abiy Ahmed Ali, an ethnic Oromo. At this time, Ethiopia was experiencing severe ethnic tension and the central government approved Abiy Ahmed Ali's appointment because they believed that we would welcome a new age of liberalization and democratization in the region. He quickly charmed the international stage as the youngest leader of an African nation and appeared to be a stabilizing figure in the country. In June 2018, Ahmed declared peace with Eritrea following 20 years of bitterness between the two neighboring countries¹²¹. Following Eritrea's independence in 1993, and a bloody border war between 1998 and 2000, relations between Eritrea's president Isaias Afwerki and the leadership of the

¹¹⁶ "Such a Brutal Crackdown." *Human Rights Watch*, 2 Jan. 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/15/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopias-oromo-protests#>.

¹¹⁷ "Legal Analysis of Ethiopia's State of Emergency." *Human Rights Watch*, 28 Oct. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/31/legal-analysis-ethiopias-state-emergency>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Moore, Jina. "Ethiopia's Prime Minister Resigns amid Political Turmoil." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 15 Feb. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/15/world/africa/ethiopia-hailemariam-desalegn.html>.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ "Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace Deal Brings Hope to Horn of Africa." *United States Institute of Peace*, 17 Sept. 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/08/ethiopia-eritrea-peace-deal-brings-hope-horn-africa>.

Ethiopian government had severely deteriorated. For his role in brokering the much-anticipated peace agreement, Abiy Ahmed Ali was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2019¹²², though it was not immediately clear what the impact of this new friendly alliance would be. After the 2020 invasion of Tigray, the true motivations behind the peace agreement revealed themselves.

After becoming the focus of the world's admiration following the peace deal, Ahmed began ambitious policy measures within Ethiopia, as well. Believing that the EPRDF government coalition; comprised of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO), Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM); was a defunct organization unfit to govern Ethiopia, he proposed the dissolution of the four national parties and the formation of a "single pan-Ethiopian national party"¹²³. The TPLF, the regional government of Tigray, rejected this proposal citing the unconstitutionality of the dissolution of the regional governments (Article 39 section 3 of the constitution stipulates that the regions have the right to establish their own government institutions, independent of proclamations from the central government)¹²⁴.

The TPLF noted that through the formation of a pan-Ethiopian national party, the country risks a return to "Ethiopia's centralising and homogenising past"¹²⁵, since the new Prosperity Party, as Ahmed's government called it, would not represent the regions, individually. Thus, the

¹²² Magazine, Smithsonian. "Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali Wins the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 11 Oct. 2019, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ethiopian-prime-minister-abiy-ahmed-ali-wins-2019-nobel-peace-prize-180973326/>.

¹²³ Allo, Awol. "Why Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party Could Be Bad News for Ethiopia." *Abiy Ahmed | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 5 Dec. 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/12/5/why-abiy-ahmeds-prosperity-party-could-be-bad-news-for-ethiopia>.

¹²⁴ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

¹²⁵ Allo, Awol. "Why Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party Could Be Bad News for Ethiopia." *Abiy Ahmed | Al Jazeera*,

desires for self-determination of the Tigray people, as well as the inhabitants of the other regions, would once again be dismissed for the sake of national unity. Ultimately, the TPLF regarded Ahmed's attempt to consolidate the ruling coalition into one party, of which he would be the leader, as an illegitimate act, and thus, after holding a vote, refused to dissolve the TPLF and join the new Prosperity Party¹²⁶. In October 2019, the EPRDF ruling coalition was formally dissolved and three of the four member-states joined Ahmed's Prosperity Party (the OPDO, ANDM, and SEPDM)¹²⁷. So, from the beginning of the Prosperity Party's existence, tension simmered between Ahmed's central government and the Tigray regional government.

The Tigray government's justification for rejecting the proposal of a pan-Ethiopian national party was in part due to the fact that at the time of this proposal, Ahmed had not yet faced an election, himself, and also due in part to the fact that the Ethiopian Constitution grants each region the right to establish their own government institutions (including political parties). Since the Tigray government's representatives voted against the merger, they were acting within their constitutional right, and since the Tigray region rejected the proposal to extend Ahmed's government mandate, legally speaking, Ahmed had no constitutional basis to demand that Tigray not pursue their own regional political administration. Ahmed, personally eager to gain total control over all aspects of the Ethiopian government, saw the move by the TPLF as an act of aggression and an indication of treasonous intent¹²⁸.

Ahmed's attitude towards regional political opposition is similar to that of previous totalitarian Ethiopian governments. The Tigray regional government, by exercising their legal

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ "Ethiopia Appoints New Leader of Tigray during Conflict." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 13 Nov. 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-tigray/ethiopia-appoints-new-leader-of-tigray-during-conflict-idINKBN27T0SZ>.

right to establish the administrative institutions of their own province, presented a direct opposition to Abiy Ahmed's pursuit of political centralization over Ethiopia. By eliminating political opposition, Ahmed can essentially guarantee his continued unchecked control over the Ethiopian government. It is important to note that this is markedly different from his proclamations of democratic pluralism made in 2018¹²⁹. The following section will explain how Ahmed, after the emergence of the Prosperity Party, used his new power in response to an apparent act of aggression from the TPLF. I will also demonstrate why the actions that Ahmed took during this time present an even stronger argument for the increased autonomy of Ethiopia's regional provinces in order to protect their constitutional right to self-determination.

Resistance Against Undemocratic Seizures of Power

Here, the focus of my essay shifts away from arguments against ethnic federalism in Ethiopia on logical, practical, and historical bases, and towards a specific understanding of Tigray's resistance to the central government's overreach during Ahmed's term as prime minister. I have decided to include a specific discussion of the war in Tigray in this section because it demonstrates the exact phenomena which my hypothesis describes. At the beginning of my research, I hypothesized that the inherent conflicts between shared-rule and self-rule within the same political system, coupled with centuries of deeply rooted ethnic suspicions and unfettered government corruption, have resulted in a complete breakdown of the Ethiopian federalist structure. Today, the Tigray region remains starved, politically powerless, and economically devastated. Ethnic federalism, a system implemented in Ethiopia to ensure the ethnic protection and meaningful self-determination of the region's peoples has failed to deliver

¹²⁹ Markakis, John, et al. "The Nation State." *Home*, Edition Open Access, 2021, <https://www.mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/14/index.html>.

either of these things to the people of the Tigray region. Here, I believe that a brief timeline of the critical events that have occurred in Ethiopia and globally since Abiy Ahmed Ali's appointment should be beneficial.

Timeline of Events

1. February 2018 – Hailemariam Desalegn resigns
2. April 2018 – Abiy Ahmed Ali becomes Desalegn's appointed successor
3. June 2018 – Ahmed accepts a peace agreement with Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki
4. October 2019 – Ahmed is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the Ethiopian-Eritrean peace agreement
5. October 2019 – Ahmed dissolves the EPRDF coalition and forms the unitary Prosperity Party
6. December 2019 – The first known cases of COVID-19 reported in Wuhan, China
7. March 2020 – First known case of COVID-19 reported in Ethiopia
8. March 2020 – Ethiopia's ruling party announced the indefinite postponement of the August 2020 elections, citing COVID-19 concerns
9. June 2020 – Ethiopia's parliament approved allowing Abiy Ahmed Ali to maintain his office despite the expiration of his mandate
10. June 2020 – Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa is mysteriously killed, sparking protests throughout the Oromia region; protesters met with violent force
11. September 2020 – Citing the unconstitutionality of the postponement, the Tigray region proceeds with their own regional elections; calls Ahmed's government illegitimate
12. October 2020 – Ahmed's appointment for a military posting at Tigray's northern command was rejected by the Tigray regional government, citing Ahmed's government's illegitimacy due to the expiration of his mandate
13. November 2020 – Northern Tigrayan regional troops (Tigray Defense Force) "foiled a plan by the federal troops to use artillery and arms stationed there to attack the region"¹³⁰
14. November 2020 – Ahmed orders a military offensive against the Tigray region, citing "provocation and incitement"¹³¹
15. May 2021 – A CNN exposé revealed the presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray; reportedly blocking aid and transportation
16. August 2021 – Reports of weaponized rape, sexual slavery, and mutilation emerge from Tigray; arbitrary arrests of ethnic Tigrayans begin across the country

¹³⁰ Paravicini, Giulia, and Dawit Endeshaw. "Ethiopia Mobilises for War in Northern Region." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 5 Nov. 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict/ethiopia-mobilises-for-war-in-northern-region-idUSKBN27L1LP>.

¹³¹ (www.dw.com), Deutsche Welle. "Ethiopia: PM Abiy Ahmed Mobilizes Military in Tigray Region: DW: 04.11.2020." *DW.COM*, <https://www.dw.com/en/ethiopia-pm-abiy-ahmed-mobilizes-military-in-tigray-region/a-55494109>.

17. December 2021 – International organizations warn of “potential genocide”¹³² in the Tigray region

After Ahmed’s success in dissolving the EPRDF and forming the Prosperity Party in 2019 and following the TPLF’s rejection of the political merger later that year, the TPLF found themselves largely sidelined from meaningful participation in the Ethiopian central government. Unfortunately, the new year did not bring with it renewed hope for peace and stability in the region. 2020 was a difficult year for Ethiopia; Ahmed’s emergence on the Ethiopian political stage coincided not only with strained ethnic relations in the country, but with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well. The first known case of COVID-19 in Ethiopia was reported in March 2020¹³³ and by the end of the month, Ahmed’s government announced the postponement of all national elections originally scheduled for August 2020, citing the outbreak¹³⁴. However, as Reuters reported in March 2020, Ethiopia only had “25 confirmed cases of coronavirus so far”¹³⁵.

Highly suspicious of this postponement, the TPLF, citing their constitutional right to administer their elections within the Tigray region, held their regional elections in September 2020¹³⁶, in defiance of Ahmed’s announcement. Ahmed’s government quickly declared the elections illegitimate and the act tantamount to treason¹³⁷, and thus, had the pretext for an

¹³² *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/risk-of-genocide-ethiopia>.

¹³³ “Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) - Events as They Happen.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>.

¹³⁴ Pike, John. “Ethiopia - Election 2020.” *Ethiopian Politics - Election 2020*, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ethiopia/politics-2020.htm>.

¹³⁵ Endeshaw, Dawit. “Ethiopia Postpones August Election Due to Coronavirus.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 31 Mar. 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-election/ethiopia-postpones-august-election-due-to-coronavirus-idUSKBN21I2QU>.

¹³⁶ Paravicini, Giulia. “Ethiopia's Tigray Holds Regional Election in Defiance of Federal Government.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 8 Sept. 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics/ethiopias-tigray-holds-regional-election-in-defiance-of-federal-government-idUSKBN25Z35S>.

¹³⁷ Peralta, Eyder. “What to Know about Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict.” *NPR*, NPR, 13 Nov. 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/13/934241830/what-to-know-about-ethiopias-tigray-conflict>.

invasion of Tigray. Appearing to lose his grip of control over a splintering federation, Abiy Ahmed Ali sought to reestablish that national control through political marginalization, territorial invasion, and deliberate genocide of Tigrayan civilians. Ahmed began his retaliatory attack on Tigray in earnest in the days leading up to the November 04, 2020 invasion of Tigray. Both the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) had suspected that conflict was approaching; the Ethiopian national government and the TPLF both suspected that the other would attempt to seize control of the entire Tigray region. The power struggle between the TPLF and the Prosperity Party emerged from conflicting interpretations over which party had the constitutional right to conduct elections within the Tigray region.

Although ethnic federalism’s weaknesses are rooted in practical conflicts between self-rule and shared rule as well as Ethiopia’s long standing ethnic tension, ethnic federalism finally unraveled following the official dissolution of the EPRDF and the return of a centrally controlled single party in Ethiopia. This is because although Ahmed’s Prosperity Party is ostensibly eager to promote democratic pluralism, they have actually reduced the people’s active participation in national politics. By repeatedly and strategically postponing elections in three of the ten voting states¹³⁸, Ahmed managed to prevent the people of those regions from voting for the regional parties that they *actually* supported—effectively stealing the election. Thus, the Prosperity Party managed to snag votes in the provinces that they had majority support; in several constituencies, Ahmed’s party ran unopposed¹³⁹.

The only justification that the Ethiopian central government had for the invasion of Tigray was the TPLF’s legal exercise of their constitutional rights to conduct elections within the

¹³⁸ Al Jazeera. “Abiy's Party Wins Landslide Victory in Ethiopia Election.” *Elections News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 11 July 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/10/ethiopias-ruling-party-wins-national-election-in-landslide>.

¹³⁹ Press, The Associated. “Ethiopia's Ruling Party Wins National Election in Landslide.” *NPR*, NPR, 11 July 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/10/1015019374/ethiopias-ruling-party-wins-national-election-in-landslide>.

region. After mobilizing troops from all over Ethiopia¹⁴⁰ and after engineering a pretext for the invasion, Ahmed launched his full-scale attack on Tigray on November 04, 2020, the results of which have been brutally catastrophic for the region. The scorched earth tactics¹⁴¹ utilized by Amhara militiamen, ENDF troops, and Eritrean troops will have lasting effects on the viability of Tigrayan soil for future crop production. The onset of the war and the ensuing looting of schools¹⁴² by ENDF troops has prevented school-aged children from being able to safely attend school (or attend school at all) in the Tigray region. And the brutal weaponization of rape and sexual slavery¹⁴³ has resulted in the traumatization of numerous young Tigrayan girls, as well as the widespread transmission of deadly venereal diseases—which have gone untreated due to the deliberate destruction and further looting of Tigrayan hospitals¹⁴⁴.

The lives of innocent Tigrayans matter. Ethnic federalism and its current catastrophic iteration have both failed the people of Ethiopia. By denying the Ethiopian people their right to self-determination, the protection of their basic human rights, and the preservation of their cultures as they themselves see fit, the Ethiopian central government has lost its political legitimacy and directly violated articles 17, 38, 39, 54, 58, and 90 of the Ethiopian Constitution¹⁴⁵. The current war in Tigray demonstrates that Ethiopia’s ethnic federalist structure is incapable of protecting democratic pluralism, human rights, and meaningful political participation in the country. To show this, I have presented the three gravest consequences of Abiy Ahmed Ali’s genocidal war in Tigray: the Prosperity Party’s unconstitutional consolidation

¹⁴⁰ Walsh, Declan, and Abdi Latif Dahir. “Why Is Ethiopia at War with Itself?” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Nov. 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained.html>.

¹⁴¹ Lang, Hardin, and David Del Conte. “The Tigray Conflict at One Year: Ethiopia’s Descent into Famine and Civil War.” *Just Security*, 4 Nov. 2021, <https://www.justsecurity.org/78876/the-tigray-conflict-at-one-year-ethiopia-descent-into-famine-and-civil-war/>.

¹⁴² “Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone.” *Human Rights Watch*.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

of power, credible reports of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in Tigray¹⁴⁶, and the indefinite postponement of *any* elections in the northern region.

Conclusions: Ethnic Federalism's Conflicting Goals and Inability to Resist Undemocratic Seizures of Power have Propelled the Impending Balkanization of Ethiopia

This essay found that when attempting to maintain the country's territorial integrity, the central government of Ethiopia has historically been faced with four options: unitary control through monarchical oppression, unitary control through political repression, federal control through practically questionable and logically contradictory regional cooperation, and finally, a return to unitary control through political repression. Ethnic federalism ultimately failed in Ethiopia because it couldn't resist Abiy Ahmed Ali's seizure and consolidation of power. Instead, it buckled and sacrificed the self-determination of the people of Tigray and Ethiopia's other regions for the sake of some fictional concept of pan-Ethiopian unity. As I demonstrated in earlier sections of this essay, pan-Ethiopianism simply does not exist; there is no single Ethiopian identity, as each region has its own unique ethno-cultural practices and languages that make it largely distinct from the others. In theory, a united Ethiopian nation would increase stability in the Horn of Africa and would provide Ethiopia's allies with a sense of reassurance in conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. This is because Ethiopia has historically been an ally—to the US, specifically¹⁴⁷—in the war on terror, and a balkanized Ethiopia would see that fact change. This is yet another reason that a critical analysis of independence for Ethiopia's regions

¹⁴⁶ “Crimes against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone.” *Human Rights Watch*.

¹⁴⁷ Guevara, Marina Walker, and Ben Welsh. “Ethiopia Reaps U.S. Aid by Enlisting in War on Terror and Hiring Influential Lobbyists.” *ICIJ*, 8 June 2020, <https://www.icij.org/investigations/collateraldamage/ethiopia-reaps-us-aid-enlisting-war-terror-and-hiring-influential/>.

has not genuinely been pursued. Instead, the international community continues to defer to the central government of Ethiopia as a genocide is perpetuated in silence.

My research strongly encourages a thorough reevaluation of Ethiopia's federalist structure considering the central government's increasingly audacious seizures of political power. My research contributes to the current literature on ethnic federalism in Ethiopia because this essay recognizes the merits and relative successes of Ethiopia's ethnic federalist structure while also acknowledging that greater regional autonomy would better promote cultural preservation and democratic freedom within the country. Most of the anti-federalist scholarship in Ethiopia comes from proponents of a unitary political structure—Ahmed's Prosperity Party being an example. My essay explains that although the federalist structure has not served Ethiopia well, unitary control over Ethiopia's 115 million people has also had devastating consequences. Thus, my research argues that increased autonomy, up to and including independence, is the only constitutionally viable and humanely justifiable move for the Ethiopian government regarding the regions.

This research had its limitations—since the current war in Ethiopia has gone largely unreported over the past two years, accounts of it are largely absent from the published literature. Since the conflict is so recent, and since the Ethiopian government has instituted a region-wide internet blackout in Tigray¹⁴⁸, primary sources from within the region are extremely limited. Also, the central government's extremely effective propaganda campaign has also increased confusion among diaspora communities and made the discovery of verified information increasingly difficult.

¹⁴⁸ Antonio, Felicia, et al. "Voices from Tigray: Ongoing Internet Shutdown Tearing Families, Communities, Businesses Apart." *Access Now*, 7 Apr. 2022, <https://www.accessnow.org/voices-from-tigray-ongoing-internet-shutdown-tearing-families-communities-businesses-apart/>.

Potential future research might include a study of the specific methods of propaganda utilized by the Ethiopian central government for these military purposes. Tigrayans demand justice. If this war is going to end and if peace is going to be restored in the Horn, then the perpetrators of this horrific violence must be held accountable for their crimes. But, in order for these actors to be brought to justice, then the international community must demand the restoration of internet access in Tigray and the full publication of the unrestricted truth of the war. Not only will these publications strengthen the regional demands for greater autonomy, but they will also force the international community to begin to take those demands seriously.

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3. *Rebellion and Famine in the North ... - Human Rights Watch*.
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/e/ethiopia/ethiopia.919/c3wollo.pdf>, 55
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