



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES

**The Impact of Historical Narratives on Ethnic Conflicts in
Post-1991 Ethiopia**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Institute for Peace and Security Studies of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Peace and Security Studies**

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Advisor: Yonas Adaye Adeto (PhD)

November 2022
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Alemayehu Desalegn**, entitled “**The Impact of Historical Narratives on Ethnic Conflicts in Post-1991 Ethiopia**” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in peace and security studies complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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I would like to dedicate this work to my father Desalegn Alemu, my beloved wife Martha Negussie and my priceless kids Makeda Alemayehu and Michael Alemayehu.

List of Acronyms

AAPO – All Amhara People’s Organisation

AAU – Addis Ababa University

ANDM – Amhara National Democratic Movement

CUD – The Coalitions for Unity and Democracy

ENDP – Ethiopian National Democratic Party

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party

ESM: Ethiopian student movement

AESM – All Ethiopian Socialist Movement

OLF – Oromo Liberation Front

OFC – Oromo Federalist Congress

OPDO – Oromo People’s Democratic Organization

OSA – Oromo Studies Association

OMN – Oromia Media Network

PP – Prosperity Party

TPLF – Tigray People’s Liberation Front

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Abstract

The last 50 years of Ethiopia's history can be characterized by revolutions, popular protests, rebellions, self-determination movements, armed struggles, regime changes, and civil wars. Significant portions of these conflicts and civil wars are caused or supported by historical narratives. The revolution of 1974 was backed by the question of nationality raised by the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM). As a result, the established narrative on which the imperial regime has been based for centuries is challenged. After the 1991 regime change, the two contending groups confronted each other, as the narratives had been fighting through different courses of action. The main narrative, Pan Ethiopianism, lost its hegemonic status as a government ideology while the opposing ethno-nationalism assumed power through opposition and armed struggle. The dethroned narrative of Pan Ethiopianism continued to fight verbally through opposition parties and non-governmental organizations through the printing and broadcasting media. Ethno-nationalism, on the other hand, was privileged as a government narrative, propagating its ideals through government media and organizations. On top of that, the constitution and the federal arrangement are considered the advantages of ethno-nationalism. These conceptions of each group toward the other created a significant amount of grievance and conflict as a result.

This paper aimed to diagnose the features of the two conflicting parties, the perceived deprivations that are raised by both, and the actual conflicts that occurred due to the leading role of the two narratives. Using a qualitative approach, both primary and secondary data are used. Audio and video documents, with printed and unprinted documents such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic versions of some documents, have been analyzed. Additional interviews with a few concerned parties are held in order to get at the true causes behind the witnessed conflicts. As the conflict cannot be resolved through decades and still both are approved as the key actors in the nation-building process, reconciliation and peace-building mechanisms have been inquired into by the mentioned methodologies. Based on his research endeavor, the researcher recommended conflict intervention mechanisms for the peaceful process of the ongoing nation-building process.

Key words: *Pan Ethiopianism, Ethno nationalism, colonial thesis, national question, revolution, regime change, ethnicity, Unionists*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Ethiopia is considered by different viewers with different perspectives as a state, empire, or nation with a prolonged history. The ancient nature of the country is mainly claimed by the history of its state which assumed to sustain without interruption. This claim of possession of prolonged state is maintained by the rulers for creating legitimacy of their authority and sustaining of the country. As Shmeles and Feyisa, (2021) states this view from the perspective of the rulers who were 'instrumental' in pragmatic usage of narratives. In fact, as the writers assert, the rulers at the time of imperial Ethiopia, prepared legal and historical documents such as 'kibre Negest and Fitiha Negest that assure the ancient nature of their country and consequentially the divine right of their ancestors to rule the county (Shmeles and Feyisa, 2021). However, modern historians have made arguments in support of this historiography thesis, showing that the case does not hold up at a traditional level.

As a modern nation, when the state is reformed in a new direction, the nation building process took is a combating politics with the international system of European colonialism; especially, after Adwa conquest Ethiopia got a fresh opportunity to stand as one free nation among the contending European forces, for the colonialists agreed to demark border lines which created the then Ethiopia's shape. Menilik's role of nation building is a major issue of contention (Kebede, 1999). Different groups interpret the nation building process that took place by Menilik in contradicting directions and by the impact of the antagonism war of narratives emerged and as a result diverse conflicts rose from the roots of the historical narratives.

As of many writers the conflicts that emerged from the historical narratives can be traced into two major conflicting categories. The first named 'Pan- Ethiopian nationalists' affirm the above narrative of nation building while the second parties, known as 'Ethno-nationalists', collide by deconstructing the thesis and reinterpret it as an act of national suppression. Both of the conflicting parties trace their claim at Menilik's era; in the case of the formers by celebrating the period and the emperor.

In diverse communities, historical narratives are one of the most essential instruments for constructing identity, mass mobilization and power assumption. According to Koolae, (2020), historical narratives are the foundation for the construction of myths and diverse narratives that help them grow over time, and in this way, the nation or ethnic group's collective memory is formed. For the formation of national or group identity, historical memory is a powerful instrument. Identity formation is accomplished through the use of historical narratives and memories, which highlight some of the most important identity aspects and historical events. People are motivated to act by historical narratives. Although the primary goal of a historical narrative is to make sense of past events, it also serves to orient life in time in such a way that past events can be seen in a future light. As a result, historical narratives serve to define a possible path of action for individuals and communities guided by historical knowledge and memory (Levesque, 2015).

As a reason, these elements are among the most essential tools for ethnic and national group identity formation and nation-building. However, this function does not always take place in a peaceful manner, and there are times when rival ethnic groups in a country or region disagree about the validity of historical events. In this situation, each of these groups presents various accounts of common historical events, which gradually come to define each group's existence. This will be exacerbated further if the confrontations are tied to a territorial dispute. Elites identify their identity in the distant past and demonstrate the reality of their claims about a certain territory by emphasizing some parts of historical events and instrumental usage from them (Radnitz, n.d.).

There are numerous ethnic groups in Ethiopia that have a long history of coexistence. Throughout this lengthy process, internal conflicts have been observed. The struggle for power and self-determination is at the root of most conflicts. This is also evident in the 1700s, when historians refer to Zemene Mesafint. Emperor Tewodros II ascended to the throne in 1855 after defeating regional noblemen. Emperor Tewodros was recognized as the first to begin his modernization in politics by attempting to unite Ethiopia's fragmented polities. Taking Emperor Tewodros' vision into account, Emperor Menilik consolidated imperial authority, defended Ethiopian independence, and began the process of establishing and supporting modern Ethiopia.

According to Alemayehu (2014), Menelik united Ethiopia and inaugurated the modern Ethiopian state by securing Ethiopian independence and sovereignty. Emperor Menelik II's expansion into southern Ethiopia to achieve his goal and establish a strong nation continued to be controversial in current Ethiopian politics. According to Bahru, (2002), the internal conflict during the monarchy was between the central government and local powers. This was due to the emperors' efforts to expand his empire and the reluctance of the local powers to be submissive to his rule.

The Ethiopian Student's Movement sparked the 1974 Revolution, and a group of educated elites, most of whom were Marxists, founded a variety of political parties, which accelerated the changing tide. The All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) of the twentieth century saw Ethiopia's issues as the product of class struggles (Aalen, 2002).

While these parties acknowledge the importance of the class struggle, they also embrace the issue of nationality because they are both off springs of the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) (Merara, 2005). Walegn Mekonin is cited as a key figure in the growth of ethnic nationalism since he gave a speech on the subject of nationality at Addis Ababa University, which was later published in the 'Tagel magazine.' Walleigne thus urged for the deconstruction and replacement of this "false Ethiopian nationalism" with a "genuine Nationalist Socialist State," which he claimed could only be achieved "through violence and revolutionary armed struggle" (Sihmeles and Feyisa, 2021).

The new narrative that believes the presence of ethnic oppression in Ethiopia revived in Eritrea, Tigray, Oromia and elsewhere after the Ethiopian student movement declares its socialist affiliation. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) can be mentioned the main proponents of this thesis (Gebru, 1977).

After the TPLF-led EPRDF regime overthrew the Derg government in 1991, it implemented ethnical federalism. Following this, the differences between the two halves widened. The TPLF-led EPRDF was forced to step down in 2018 due to unrest and other reasons. In the meantime, the long-running political crisis has intensified. The root cause of many ethnic conflicts is the rhetoric of political leaders.

The conflict which is based on this major nation building process has been sustained for more than 50 years. However, this paper focuses on those conflicts that took place after 1991, after the regime change. When the established Pan Ethiopian nationalism overthrown and the opposite ethno nationalism took power, the conflict continued first verbally then violently. The violent conflicts first embarked in Oromia regional state and then in Addis Ababa.

Major grievances and perceived deprivations have been raised as the main causes of the conflicts by both parties. The privileged ethno nationalism tried to endure its existence through constitutional and structural enforcements while the opposition side of Pan Ethiopian nationalism refuted both the constitution and the federal arrangement as a factor conspired disintegrate the nation.

Both narratives embodied themselves through different organizations like political parties, human right organizations, civic societies, and pressure groups. By being organized, they both mobilize people and security forces, when they are in positions to do so, and facilitate conflicts that shaped the country's political life up to these days. The main conflicts subjected to deep investigation, in this paper are those raised in Oromia regional states at the time of transition post 1991 and that which seen at Addis Ababa following the 2005 election. This one is given special focus in the research because it was initiated by two major political groups that advocated the conflicting narratives. Coalition for democracy and unity (CUD) was an advocate of Pan Ethiopian nationalism while the EPRDF, the ruling party, was contending with its prominent ethno-nationalism as the writers of 'war of narratives' affirmed.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Ethnic conflict is defined as a situation in which two or more actors pursue unsuitable but entirely desirable goals from their individual perspectives, with at least one party's goals defined solely in ethnic terms (Cordell and Wolff, 2009). Despite the fact that conflict can occur in any group of people, nations with multiethnic populations, such as Ethiopia, are particularly vulnerable to the risk.

The ethnic conflict that exists in modern Ethiopia can be traced back to historical narrations conducted by both historians and non-historians. The realities, myths, and legends appear to

intermingle and overlap with one another, and the elite exploitation of historical narratives and its nexus with ethnic conflict over time is becoming highly complex.

According to Herbert (1993), the Ethiopian empire was formed at the same time as the British and French African empires, using many of the same methods of conquest, some of which were quite brutal. If the people submitted without a fight, they might be allowed to keep their own leaders and some internal autonomy, but if they did not, they might be dealt with through massacre, expropriation, and dislocation.

Emperor Menilik's reasoning for agreeing to the southern portion of Ethiopia was that he was attempting to reclaim regions lost during the 16th century battle (Marcus, 1975). Despite the fact that the other historical story portrays Emperor Menilk as an expansionist who sought to expand his dominion by subjugating Ethiopia's southern regions, this narrative, which has its origins in a 16th century war, serves as a foundation for ethnic tension and strife in contemporary Ethiopia.

According to Bekele Bayu (2021), Many reasons have been identified as the root causes of ethnic conflict in the area by various research. Competition for resources such as water and grazing land, land ownership and the struggle for exclusive use rights and sole possession, lack of good governance, confusing boundary demarcation, ethnic polarization, and ethnic federalism are just a few examples. All of these factors have their own facts, but the researcher does not believe that they are fundamental. The way in which politicians and activists understand the country's history, as well as its narcissistic nature, is the root cause of the conflict, but it has not been addressed.

The repercussions of this increasingly acrimonious debate have had a substantial impact on many Ethiopians' lives, and the country continues to be destabilized. Indeed, the narratives surrounding ethnic identities and ethnic politics demand the most attention in Ethiopia (Shimelis and Solen, 2020). The impact of contradicting historical narration and its nexus to Ethiopia's current ethnic conflict must be researched.

There are few studies conducted locally which addressed some aspects of this study. As Bantayehu (2016), investigate the inter-ethnic conflict in southwestern Ethiopia. The gap of this study focuses on a specific area, Alle and Konso only. On the research “What is driving Ethiopia’s ethnic conflicts?” (Semir 2019), the researcher provided an in-depth analysis of the

causes of ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. However, historical narrative did not pay attention on his work. In another study, Taye (2017), published an article on Ethnic federalism and conflict in Ethiopia. In this study, the author looks at ethnic conflict only from the perspective of Ethnic federalism. Mesay (2019), “the Nature and Challenges of Ethnicity: The Case of Ethiopia”, ethnicity traits and challenges were explored in this study, and no factors were identified as factors contributing to the conflict. Bekele Bayu (2021) published the study entitled Factors of Ethnic Conflict in the Ethiopian Federation. Although the author elaborates on the reasons for the Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia, its scope is limited to the Oromia and Somali conflicts.

In Ethiopian, the study of the historical narratives of ethnic based conflicts as a component of a political risk is underdeveloped. To fill this existing gap in knowledge, impact of historical narrations on ethnic based conflict in Ethiopia.

1.3. Research Question

1. Why are there different narratives on Ethiopian history?
2. How did the pan Ethiopianists and Ethno-nationalists present their historical narrative to rationalize their position?
3. What conflict dynamics have been witnessed due to the historical narratives?
4. What mechanisms have been tried to reconcile the two parties in order that piece building may be successful?

1.4. Objectives of the study

This section indicates the general and specific objectives of this research work.

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of the research was explore, describe and explain how historical narratives on nation building process of Ethiopia cause, impact and aggravate conflicts of the central politics of the country.

1.4.2. Specific Objective

- To explore the historical narratives pointed out by pan Ethiopianists in order to rationalize their position.
- To describe the historical narratives pointed out by Ethno-nationalists in order to rationalize their position.
- Identify the main grievances and perceived deprivations claimed by both parties.
- Investigate the conflict dynamics between Pan Ethiopianists and Ethno nationalists witnessed due to the historical narratives.
- Analyze the mechanisms that have been suggested to reconcile the two parties in order that successful piece building may be established.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study primarily investigated and examined the influence of historical narratives on ethnic tensions in post-1991 Ethiopia. The historical narratives of ethnic strife in Addis Ababa and Arsi zone, Oromia regional state, Ethiopia, are the subject of this research. This research looks at ethnic conflicts in connection to historical narratives after 1991. As a result, the study solely addressed or focused on the research questions and defined objectives. This study has limitations due to research design features, which resulted in data interpretation. Another disadvantage of the study is the lack of previous research on the issue. Furthermore, due to a lack of time and finances, research in other sections of the country are limited.

1.6. Significance of the study

The study looked at the impact of historical narrations on ethnic based conflict in Ethiopia. Accordingly, it helps to evaluate the ongoing ethnic conflicts in our country in terms of historical narrations. It provides an opportunity for political party leaders and activists to investigate the causes of conflict and provides input for government and policy makers. For academics and researchers, the study will serve as a foundation for future research on a similar notion to historical narrations impact on ethnic based conflicts.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This research paper was divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the study's background, problem statement with research questions, general and specific objectives, scope and limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of related literature on essential principles in historical narrations, ethnic conflict and related areas. In chapter three, we discussed the research design and methodology, techniques, target population, sampling tactics, and data collection and analysis methodologies. In chapter four, the collected data is evaluated, the findings are presented, and a discussion is held. The study is concluded in Chapter 5 with conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Defining Key Terms

2.1.1. Ethnicity

The meaning of ethnicity, according to Isajiw, (1992), is dependent on the meaning of various other notions, particularly ethnic group and ethnic identity. The most fundamental idea is ethnic group, from which all others are derived. As Kellas, (1998) defines ethnicity as a group of people who are generally recognized as a distinct group by themselves, with such recognition based on social or cultural characteristics.

The term "ethnicity" refers to a group's identification as a "people" based on perceived cultural distinctiveness. Language, music, morals, art, styles, literature, family life, religion, ritual, food, and so on are said to reflect this diversity (Britannica, 2020). The term "ethnicity" is relatively new, having first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1953, according to Hutchinson and Smith (1996), but its English origins are linked to the term "ethnic," which has been in use since the Middle Ages. The term "ethnic" can be traced back to Greece and the phrase *ethnos*, which meant "band, tribe, race, people, or swarm (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996).

An ethnicity, according to Hutchinson and Smith (1996), has six distinct characteristics:

- A common proper name that identifies and expresses the community's "essence"
- The myth of common ancestry, which incorporates the idea of a common ancestor in time and place and provides an ethnic group with a sense of fictive kinship.
- Shared historical recollections, or better yet, shared memories of a common history or pasts, including heroes, events, and the remembrance of those events
- One or more aspects of common culture, which do not have to be described but typically include religion, customs, and language.
- A connection to a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by ethnics, but rather a symbolic tie to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples and indigenous peoples.
- At least some portions of the ethnic population share a sense of solidarity.

In a larger sense, ethnicity is defined by Berreman, (1972) as one level of social stratification or inequality that includes race, class, kinship, age, estate, caste, and gender.

2.1.2. Ethnic identity

Many researchers define ethnic identity itself as one or more of the following factors, some of which are static by definition, while others are treated as fixed features: generational status, language proficiency and usage, attitudes toward ethnic and dominant languages and cultures, knowledge of ethnic cultural beliefs and practices, and participation in cultural activities and organizations (Buriel et al., 2016; Garbanati, 1990; Ortiz and Arce, 1984)

Ethnic identity, according to Epstein and Heizler, (2015), is an assessment of a person's sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group. Ethnic identity can be assessed in a variety of ways. Simply questioning a respondent about his or her ethnic group and their identity with the majority group is one form of measuring. It is an ethnic group feature that separates one ethnic group from another (Taras and Ganguly, 2015). Ethnic identity, according to Phinney (1992) is described as self-identification as a member of a group, a sense of belonging, and an attitude toward the group. Furthermore, especially among teenagers, self-identity is an important component of self-concept.

Ethnic identity is formed through a process of commitment and investigation, according to the theory of identity development (Phinney 2010). The term "commitment" refers to a deep emotional attachment to and personal engagement in a group.

2.1.3. Ethnic Group

A group of people who identify themselves as well as others because they share a common culture, customs, language, and ancestry (Barth, 1998). An ethnic group is defined by Taras and Ganguly, (2015) as "a large or small group of people, in either traditional or advanced societies, united by a common inherited culture, racial similarity, common religion, and belief in a common history and ancestry, and who exhibit a strong psychological sentiment of belonging to the group" (Taras and Ganguly, 2015). An ethnic group is a group of people who are socially distinguished as a distinct group, either by others or by themselves, due to their unique culture or national origin. Ethnic groups are defined by cultural features (e.g., language, religion, customs, or national origin) according to this concept (Yang, 2000).

Ethnic group, according to Esman (2004), is a self-conscious community or collective identity based on imagined common descent, fictive kinship, historical experience, and culture, particularly a common language. Furthermore, an ethnic group is defined as a population that: (1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating; (2) shares fundamental cultural values; (3) constitutes a field of communication and interaction; and (4) has a membership that identifies itself and is identified by others, according to Barth's Anthropological essay "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1998) (Esman, 2004).

Ethnic groups, according to Weber, are human groups that hold a subjective belief in their common descent as a result of physical similarities, customs, or both, or memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for group formation to continue; however, whether or not an objective blood relationship exists is irrelevant (Weber, 1978). According to Smith, an ethnic group is "a designated human community with common ancestral myths, shared historical memories, one or more components of a common culture, a connection to a homeland, and a sense of solidarity" (Hutchinson and Smith, (1996).

2.1.4. Conflict

Conflict is an unavoidable part of human life. It has its roots in fundamentally conflictual economic differentiation, social change, cultural creation, psychological growth, and political organization, and it manifests itself through the emergence of conflict parties with mutually incompatible agendas. Conflict, according to Adetoye and Omilusi, (2015), comprises a fight and rivalry for goods that individuals and groups value.

Conflict is an unavoidable and natural part of each social connection in the cultural setting. It can be positive or bad, with the former improving group ties by allowing members of opposing groups to share common ground ideals, while the latter threatens to erode the necessary consensus for growth and development (Jandt and Pedersen, 2014). Conflict is defined as a scenario in which two or more actors engage conflict behavior against one another to achieve contradictory goals and/or exhibit antagonism (Cordell and Wolff, 2011; Bartos and Wehr, 2002; Rodrigues, 2011)

According to Osaghae, Suberu, (2005), material objects in conflict can include scarce resources such as money, employment, and positions, including political ones, as well as advancement in both private and public organizations. Culture, tradition, religion, and

language are examples of non-physical objects. The identity of the conflict parties, the levels at which the conflict is contested, and the issues fought over (limited resources, unequal relations, competing values) may change over time and be contested. Conflicts are dynamic in the sense that they escalate and de-escalate, and they are made up of a complex interplay of attitudes and behaviors that can take on their own reality. As the conflict progresses, third parties are likely to become involved and, as a result, may become parties to an extended conflict (Osaghae, Suberu, 2005).

2.1.5. Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict arises from cultural incompatibility between groups, as well as a rapid increase in awareness of one's identity in respect to another ethnic group (Gilley, 2004). Ethnic conflict, according to Sajid (2018), is a dispute between two or more rival ethnic groups, with the source of the conflict being political, social, economic, or religious. Individuals in conflict must explicitly fight for their group's survival within society. Ethnic strife can be either violent or nonviolent. We can see ethnic strife every day in a multi-ethnic society where freedom of speech is protected (Sajid, 2018).

At least one of the groups will define its goals in ethnic terms in a conflict, claiming that its distinct ethnic identity, and the inability to express and develop it, is the reason that its members do not have the same rights and cannot realize their interests (Gilley, 2004). As a result, it is clear that ethnicity and ethnic identity play an important role in such conflicts, as they can provide a power capable of arousing passion and nationalistic feelings, which are then used by elites to pursue territorial and political power. Cordell (2009) stated that, it is a conflict between two or more ethnic groups that is caused by a variety of factors, but it is defined in ethnic terms (Cordell and Wolff, 2009). Ethnic conflict, as defined by IGI (2021), is a disagreement between two or more ethnic groups. Political, social, economic, or religious issues may be at the root of the conflict (IGI Global, 2022).

According to Cordell and Wolff (2009) it is a type of conflict in which at least one party's aims are stated in ethnic terms, and ethnic differences are the primary source of conflict. Whatever the specific causes are that lead to conflict, at least one party to the conflict will explain their displeasure in ethnic terms or interpret the conflict along an actual or perceived ethnic divide. To put it another way, an ethnic conflict involves at least one party formed around its members' ethnic identities (Cordell and Wolff, 2009).

2.1.6. Historical Narratives

The term 'historical narrative' is used by the researcher to refer to the stories that are created and spread about the history of a state, people, or other population group, including their relationships with others. Narratives, according to Kreddha, (2018), are closely tied to the historiographies on which they rely; they are the result of selecting events, incidents, and developments from the past and stringing them together with an explanation that serves a purpose in the present (Kreddha, 2018).

They disclose people's historical ideas and views while also being expressions of those beliefs and perceptions, which in turn influence those beliefs and perceptions. During times of conflict, selectiveness is particularly prominent. Leaving aside the interpretations parties give to historical events, the events they evoke are typically chosen to promote their purposes and portrayed spatially and temporally separated from other events and developments that could potentially throw light on or provide alternate explanations for them (Kreddha, 2018).

The terms "narratives" and "stories" are frequently interchanged. Sharing anecdotes and messages is not the only thing that storytelling entails. There are characters in stories; they have a beginning, middle, and end; they have a plot, conflict, and resolution; and they have a plot, conflict, and resolution. A narrative, on the other hand, is a collection of stories that fit together to form a cohesive picture of the world based on our personal experiences, culture, and education.

"Narratives explain how events unfold over time and how one thing causes another by containing patterns that fit the data of everyday life (events, people, actions, sequences of actions, messages, and so on), containing patterns that fit the data of everyday life (events, people, actions, sequences of actions, messages, and so on)" (*Engaging Narratives*, n.d.).

A narrative is a system of stories that helps people make sense of their experiences and develop a cohesive picture of the world, according to IFIT, (2021). The narratives we adhere to frequently appear to be common sense based on the information, events, and surroundings we are exposed to throughout our lives. They unknowingly impact our perceptions of ourselves in society, including our beliefs about identity, community, group membership, and interpersonal connections. The way members of various social groups interact with one

another and mobilize for social and political action is guided by narrative. Narratives contribute to either deepening or reducing the conflicts that are inevitable to occur among groups throughout time, depending on how they are used (IFIT, 2021).

In summary, Historical narratives are capable of expressing the inner truth about peoples and nations (Berger, 2009), acting as a guide to contemporary activities, and attempting to construct a national identity. The narratives serve as cognitive shortcuts by weaving together a few bits of data to produce a story that explains the country in question (Hutchings et al., 2010). Historical narratives serve as the foundation for ethnic and national identities. The narratives serve to identify the group's members as well as its foes, and through time, they help to create the group's collective memory. Collective memory refers to modified historical ideas, feelings, and moral judgments (Zerubavel and Eviatar, 2003).

2.1.7 Collective Memory and Conflict

Collective memories (CM) are widely shared knowledge of past social events that may not have been personally experienced, but are collectively constructed through communicative social functions (Schuman and Scott, 1989). Collective memory offers accounts of emotionally salient events and persons in the past that have particular relevance to how a group understands itself and the challenges it faces in the present and future (William, 2010). Through both interpersonal and institutional communication, these social representations, or common knowledge about the past, are elaborated, transferred, and maintained in a community.

People benefit from social representations of the past for a number of reasons. First, they maintain a positive image of the group to which they belong. Second, they preserve a sense of continuity for the group, so that it can endure through time (Bellelli, Barkhurst and Rosa, 2000). Third, they provide guidance as to the values and norms that prescribe behaviors and contribute to defining what characterizes or should characterize the group (Olick and Robbins, 1998). Fourth, collective memories are a symbolic resource that can be mobilized politically to legitimize political agenda for the present and future (Liu and Hilton, 2005)

Some scholars cite the use of collective memory as useful, the fact that in the social discourse, there is frequent the use of metaphors as “the nation never forgets” or “repressed events reemerge in the collective mind” or “a nation suffering from a negative past needs to

express feelings to heal and deal with this past". From this point of view, collective memory is a juxtaposition of personal to national processes where societies are conceived as king size psyches or personalities writ large (Hamber and Wilson, 2003).

Collective memory in our view needs to examine the interplay between institutional/official and informal of communicative memory. Conflict between different memories of the same events and between official and informal memory are frequent (Paez and Liu, 2010). Broadly, the term collective memory has been used to refer to construal's of the groups past. Collective memories of intergroup conflict provide a coherent view of the origins and evolution of conflict, and identify the key events of conflict.

As a result, collective memory is made up of what is recalled (particular occurrences and events) and how these experiences are remembered (i.e., their interpretations). Collective memories are not required to offer an accurate description of what occurred (Paez and Liu, 2010). Thus, each side in a conflict has a different construal of the origins and development of the conflict. Collective memories of past conflicts play an important role in maintaining intergroup violence. For instance, the collective memory of violent events may serve to justify current violence and may help perpetrate and refuel new violence (Rezarta, 2012). The requirements and motivations of the present impact what and how events are remembered. Significant social psychology research shows that groups are driven to selectively recall some occurrences while forgetting others. As a result, collective memory is reconstructed, recreated, or exaggerated in response to the present (Paez and Liu, 2010).

As Bar - Tal (2000) identified there are four common themes of collective memories of conflict. Each group's collective memory (1) provides a legitimization of the origins and development of conflict, (2) portrays the ingroup in a positive light, (3) delegitimizes the opponent, and (4) focuses on victimization of one's group. Some are conflict resolution, sociopsychological barriers to; conflict, culture of; conflict, ethos of; conflict, intractable; delegitimization. Conflict and memory are often two sides of the same coin, which seamlessly feed into each. Memory is at the root of many disputes, since particular methods of recalling dramatic incidents (whether recent or distant) involve bringing the past into the present, together with old wounds, grudges, resentments, hatreds, and feelings of vengeance (Brady and Ignacio, 2016).

Taking memory into account can therefore help us to better understand how certain uses of the past may reignite, perpetuate, or originate conflicts (Brady and Ignacio, 2016). However, it may also demonstrate how communities utilize memory to learn from history, heal old wounds, remember and recompense victims, or encourage more reflexive ways of coping with the past in order to avoid future conflicts. All in all, the study of memory is important inasmuch as “the past becomes a tool for creating change or stability as well as promoting or inhibiting conflicts” (Wagoner, 2014:189).

Violent fighting is more the rule than the exception in the Horn of Africa (Mengistu, 2015). These regional disputes are producing issues. These disputes, however, might be violent or uncontrollable, dominant or recessive, resolvable or insoluble (Aremu, 2010). Ethnic Conflict throughout Africa, including Ethiopia, has become the norm. Ethiopia is one of the few countries that has seen recurring ethnic clashes in recent years. The conflict in Ethiopia has relations with collective memory of the past for the engagement of violence. Ethnic groups in Ethiopia have their socio-economic and political collective memory and understanding of their past.

2.2. Review of Literature

2.2.1. Ethnic Conflict from a Theoretical Perspective

When considering the nature of ethnic groups and the causes of ethnic conflict, ethnic theories are a natural place to start. There are three basic theories (approaches) that can be used to answer concerns about how ethnic identity is generated, why it survives, and why ethnic conflict occurs.

2.2.1.1 Primordialism

The primordial perspective contends that "ethnicity" has existed throughout human history. Primordialists contend that ethnic groupings that exist now are descendants of tribes that existed in the distant past and are anchored in biological inheritance. According to Edward Shils (1975), individuals of current ethnic groupings have primal family or "blood" links. The radical variant of this theory, known as "essentialist primordialism," claims that "ethnicity" is natural, rather than historical; it is an a priori fact of human life. According to Clifford Geertz (1973), ethnic identities are "given and ineffable, and can be overwhelming or forceful."

According to Joshua Fishman (1980), "[t]he human body itself is considered as a representation of ethnicity, and ethnicity is often thought to be in the blood, bones, and flesh" (p.85). This view ethnicity shapes the way they see ethnic conflict and the way this ethnic conflict could be solved.

This theory claims that ethnic conflicts are a natural occurrence caused by cultural differences. Ethnic identities, according to primordialism, are drawn from nature (either biologically determined or manufactured by persons in the distant past) and have been passed down to current generations of people from their predecessors (Yeghiazaryan, 2018). In either case, each person is a member of a single ethnic group, which, once acquired, does not change over time. Furthermore, members of an ethnic group create a group consciousness as a result of its language, culture, traditions, and history, which is reinforced over time by myths and symbols passed down from previous generations.

In this theory, ethnic identity is basically a biologically determined or natural thing (Berghe, 1995; Taras and Ganguly, 2015). In this sense, ethnic groups are the network into which human people are born, and every human infant or young child finds themselves a member of a kinship group and a neighborhood, and so comes to share certain objective cultural qualities with other group members. Primordialists emphasize the subjective or psychological components of self- and group-related experiences of identity distinctiveness, as well as their perception by others, as a significant factor of ethnic identity creation and maintenance, alongside objective cultural indicators (Taras and Ganguly, 2015).

2.2.1.2 Constructivism

The constructivist perspective - "constructivism" - opposes the primordial view of ethnicity, claiming that ethnicity is a result of social interaction and survives as long as it is a legitimate construct (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). According to Florian Coulmas (2019), "ethnicity and cultural identity are not eternal and static. Many [modern] ethnic groupings are the consequence of recent fission or fusion" (p.29). Additionally, the "likeness and difference criteria... are selective. They can be foreground or suspended as needed or necessary" (ibid). As a result, in contrast to the primordial view, which considers ethnic identity to be fixed, "constructivists perceive it as a work in progress" (Coulmas, 2019:2). This theory views as conflict is not inherent and ethnicity is not inherent.

As constructivism asserts that ethnicities are not inherently conflictual, and that ethnic violence only occurs when political structures and cultural scripts let it. This theory asserts that ethnic identities are built, reconstructed, and mobilized in response to social and political forces. It can be traced back to historical arguments made by French and English philosophers. The primordialists view of a group's features as natural qualities arising from physiological traits and psychological predispositions, according to constructivism, is wrong. Furthermore, constructivists contend that it is incorrect to presume that members of an ethnic group have an internalized "unique social experience" to which everyone in the group is exposed through their collective consciousness (Cerulo, n.d.).

Ethnicity, according to constructivist theorist, is socially constructed, fluid, flexible, and prone to change through time, situational defined and rational socio-cultural creations (Aalen 2002). Ethnicity can be created through fission, in which some groups leave the existing society to form their own group, or fusion, in which two people assimilate vertically or horizontally to produce a new ethnicity (Gebregziabher, 2007).

In this theoretical view of ethnicity and the idea of ethnic conflict, this research explored the research issues raised in the study. As a result, it believes that ethnicity is not static, but rather progressive, that ethnicity is not natural, but rather constructive, and that ethnic conflict is not inherent.

2.2.1.3 Instrumentalism

The "Instrumentalist" perspective regards ethnicity as a versatile weapon employed by political elites to stratify the state and conduct ethnocentric rivalry (Noel, 1968). "Ethnocentrism" is the tendency of people or groups to view the world through the lens of their own culture (us) and to label others as outsiders (they). As this theory, resource competition between elites can aggravates ethnic conflicts.

Instrumentalism states that ethnic conflicts are caused by ethnic entrepreneurs who organize members of their ethnic group to achieve their own personal goals or by various groups mobilizing their ethnic identities to realize their conflicting interests. People use ethnicity as a tool to attain their aims, according to instrumentalism, because people who share inscriptive features can be efficiently organized and mobilized to influence public policies. In other words, people who believe that voting a fellow ethnic member to a political office will

provide them with vital resources or state services are more inclined to do so (Yeghiazaryan, 2018).

Instrumentalists are concerned in the malleability of ethnic identity as well as the role of elites in ethnic politicization. For instrumentalists, ethnic identification might be shifted in pursuit of financial gain. Elite political leaders use ethnic identity symbols to persuade their supporters to support their political goals. The elite (political entrepreneurs) create identity based divisions and then manipulate/politicize them (Paul R. 1989). Elites create politicized ethnic identity by drawing on, distorting, and sometimes fabricating materials from the cultures of the communities they desire to represent in order to maintain their well-being or existence, or to achieve political and economic advantage for their groups as well as themselves (Taras and Ganguly, 2015).

2.2.2. Historical Narratives from a Theoretical Perspective

Historical narratives are capable of expressing the inner truth about peoples and nations (Berger, 2009), act as a guide to current actions and strive to create a national identity. The narratives, function as cognitive shortcuts through which a few pieces of information are woven together to create a story that explains the country in question (Mitchell, 2009). The ethnic and national identities are created based on historical narratives.

The stories identify the group's members as well as its opponents, and over time, they help to develop the group's collective memory. Collective memory refers to modified historical ideas, feelings, and moral judgments (Zerubavel and Eviatar, 2004). The notion of collective memory was created by Halbwachs and Coser, (n.d.) who stated that individual memory can only be comprehended in the context of a group and unites a nation.

Historical narrative studies are built around the idea of owning history. Selective historical interpretations are employed for modern social and political purposes in this process (French, 2012). As a result, historical narratives plays a vital role in society's political culture, particularly in regard to other groups (Langenbacher and Shain, 2010).

2.2.3. The Relationship between Historical Narratives and Ethnic based Conflict

Historical narrative indicates a description of past experience formed by specific groups within which they find meaningful forms of identification that may empower them (Weedon

and Jordan, 2012). On the other hand, influences actors' interpretation and understanding of the external world and a specific situation, such as a conflict. Historical narrative can be used to justify the start of a conflict and its progression. In difficult conflicts, a group's beliefs about historical narratives present positive images of the group as a whole, as the group engages in intense self-justification, self-glorification, and self-praise.

The beliefs of a group in historical narratives portray its own group as a victim of the opponent (Wang, 2018). Scholars of nationalism have proposed in recent decades that modern nations engage in rituals, the construction of national myths, and other symbolic elements that help construct and maintain people's sense of belonging to an imagined community (Roudometof, 2002).

According to Wang (2018), historical narratives can explain the characteristics of ethnic conflicts as well as the causes of their occurrence or amplification. As a result, myths and historical narratives play a dual role in the development of identity. Examining the role of myths, narratives, and historical memory in the interrelationships of ethnic groups and nations reveals a variety of situations, some of which are conflicting. Many academics believe that myths and historical narratives play a significant influence in the formation of national identities. Key historical events are, in reality, important ethnic group markers. Past losses, defeat, and extreme humiliation shape the group's identity and link the members together (Wang, 2018). The most crucial step in the process of nation-building is the formation of national identity through identification markers in general.

Historical narratives and myths can sometimes become politicized, contributing to the escalation of hostilities between opposing groups. One of the perceptual categories that give symbolic speech form and content is political myth. A political myth is a story about events in the past that has special meaning for the present and future. For those who wield or desire to wield political power, myth builds or reinforces political identities and gives them authority. Myth serves to construct a collective memory that connects members of an existing or future group with their forefathers and successors in a single symbolic cosmos, thereby legitimizing current or desired political roles and institutions through political discourse (Sherlock, 2007).

According to Radnitz (2018), compromising between hostile groups is fraught with psychological and long-term consequences in many societies. Inflexible identities and their clash with other groups have been examples of such obstacles over time. By presenting

unilateral conflict narratives, the nationalist elites continue to polarize the population. As a result, academics have long understood that violent conflict leads to political and psychological processes that prohibit groups from reconciling. A conflicting parties often establish opposing narratives that stress their own group's victimization while blaming the other side solely. Elites selectively emphasize or disregard historical events, then reassemble them into meaningful narratives to create a cohesive yet tendentious version of history. These narratives take on a taken-for-granted quality when they are institutionalized by states through official symbols, textbooks, and the media, and then disseminated and adopted by the general population (Radnitz, 2018)

As a result, the current narratives become rigid, and the parties' conflicts get more intense over time. McDoom (2020), claims that ethnic violence is a result of mythical-symbolic complications in ethnic groups' identities. These complications are cultural tales of a particular ethnic group. According to Kaufman, such narratives result in a sense of hatred between ethnic groups, and violence is a result of these sentiments. People will react to ethnic symbols and mobilize to combat those symbolic politics theory. If accepted ethnic symbols and myths explain antagonism with other groups, people will react to ethnic symbols and mobilize to resist them. According to this view, the main causes of ethnic violence are the group's mythologies, which explain the mass mobilization's hostility and nationalist policies (McDoom, 2020).

According to Głowacka-Grajper (2018), historical motives and arguments play a large role in most disagreements between nations or ethnic groups, making resolution much more difficult (Głowacka-Grajper, 2018). Scholars believe that long-running conflicts are vital in the formation of a group's identity. When there has been historical animosity between groups, people prefer to judge one another primarily on group identity rather than individual characteristics. As a result, conflict can help people create and maintain social identities. Enmity is carried down the generations when traumatic experiences are integrated into a group's identity; even though future generations were not present at the time, they share the group's suffering (Wang, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

3. Research Methodology

This study's research methodology is concerned with the philosophy of the research process that is used to investigate, describe, and explain a phenomenon. The term methodology is the system of explicit rules and the procedures in which research is based and against which knowledge is evaluated (Ojo,2003). The study used a qualitative research technique in order to investigate the Impact of Historical Narratives on Ethnic Conflicts in Post-1991 Ethiopia. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research allows researchers to make interpretations, assessments and predictions in a flexible manner. It is clear from the research's goal that this approach is essential to the study. As a result, the thesis adopts qualitative technique. In addition, Kothari (2004) asserts in his thesis that qualitative research allows for greater flexibility in analysis

3.1. Research Design

As Creswell defined, Research Design is "a sketch and system for a study that covers the decisions from broad assumptions to in-depth methods of data collection and Systematic analysis and interpretation of filed data" (Creswell, 2009:36). According to Mugenda (2008), the steps that an investigator have taken from the beginning to the end of a research project are referred to as research design. The exploratory research design is applied in this study. Exploratory Research Design is a design to comprehend what is happening and to seek new insights to ask questions and assessing phenomena in a new light (Yin, 1994). Exploratory research design is critical for gaining new insights, discovering new ideas, and/or expanding knowledge about the experience (Kevic, 2011). An exploratory research is chosen in an attempt to answer and relate to the presented questions. As a result, the exploratory strategy is used to gain a thorough understanding of the subject in order to explain and investigate the impact of ethnic violence in Ethiopia since 1991 in connection to historical narratives.

3.2. Source of Data and Instrument of Data Collections

The researcher wanted to use both primary and secondary data in this investigation. The study draws on primary data and includes an interview. As Croker (2009) pointed out, "an interview

or purposeful conversation or professional conversation has been described as the Golden Standard of qualitative research." The study includes a semi-structured and open-ended interview tool. The rationale for using semi-structured and open-ended interviews is because of its accommodating character and their usefulness for both respondents and researchers to cover a wide range of topics and create essential supplementary data on the issue.

Secondary data contain both published and unpublished materials, such as Books, News, Articles, Newspapers, Internet searches, Magazines, dissertations, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, News story and analysis, and other secondary materials relevant to the study topic, ideas, and concepts that include historical and present concerns. The research was compiled using academic sources, which included the work of prominent authors in history, political science, peace and security, and identity politics. The primary purpose of the study was to describe and critically assess the state of narrative conflict in Ethiopia after 1991.

3.3. Sample Design

The Non-Probability, Purposive Sampling approach is used in the course of this investigation, depending on the nature of the issue. In addition, an in-depth semi-structured interview with an open-ended question has been chosen. Purposive sampling was employed, with the researcher collecting data from selected websites, media pages, Academicians, Policy-makers, politicians, and bureaucrats.

Eight interviews with historians, political leaders and active participants were conducted as part of the study. These are academics under the history department of Addis Ababa University and the questions were presented to them in the form of an interview. Because the subject goes across national politics, the study enlisted the help of academics and political analysts to supplement and triangulate the information gathered. Four Interviews with academics in the domains of social and political sciences, history, two interviews with political leaders and two interviews with political analysts were undertaken for this section of the study. As a result, the sampling approach is based on the criteria that key informants are chosen based on their skill and knowledge in specific fields that help the researcher answer the research questions.

Participants	Participants location	The time of the interview	Gender of participants		Total Participants
			Male	Female	
Historians	Addis Ababa	March 2022	3	1	4
Political Leaders	Addis Ababa	April. 2022	2	-	2
Political activists	Addis Ababa	April. 2022	1	1	2
Total			6	2	8

Table 1: sampling table.

3.4. Data Analysis

The Thematic technique, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a data analysis method used for finding, analyzing, and reporting data by organizing and describing the data in depth and then allowing it to be interpreted in many ways. Because the technique of the research is qualitative, the researcher will use this method to assess the data that is obtained. The goal of the study, as previously stated, is to investigate the impact of the narrative on the war in Ethiopia after 1991.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

It is true that any research in the field of the social science disciplines is vulnerable to bias and subjectivity. Especially, the degree of this problem would be also high when the subject is political and sensitive security issue. In this regard, the researcher has seriously taken into account the following ethical issues: An effort has been made by the researcher to avoid bias and to be as objective as possible. The rights, dignity, privilege, consent and personality of the participants and people named in the study have been protected and respected. The anonymity and privacy of the participants as well as the confidentiality of the data they provided have been carefully respected. The researcher has and will never use the data gathered during this research for other purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis, Result and Discussion

4. Historical Narratives that lead to Conflict in Post 1991 Ethiopia

4.1. Features of Actors of the conflict

In 1991, a change of government took place in Ethiopia. The new government, came up with a change of narrative. The existing narrative makes Menelik the founding father of modern Ethiopia. According to this view, Menelik's mission to the south was a glorified act of reunion. After the 1991 change of regime in Ethiopia, established rhetoric of reunion continued to challenge not only the new government but also the Tigrayan and Oromo elites, and consequently at various times provoked conflict.

The contradicting view which opposes the unionist thesis, on the other hand, argued that Menelik's war against the southern part of Ethiopia should be treated as a tool of national oppression, and therefore, in order for the oppressed nations to emerge victorious with self governing status there needs to be an alternative of liberty. The third historical understanding of Menelik's project is the one treating it as a colonial endeavor. This colonial thesis can be considered as the extreme case of the oppression thesis, which we had explained it above, next to the unionist one.

In this chapter, we will see how these three perspectives serve as a catalyst for conflict. It is the opinion of many scholars that the above historical narratives are the cause of major conflicts in Ethiopia. Merera, (2001), for instance, calls these narrative challenges contradictory dreams. In addition to his intellectual prowess, Merera is himself a political activist who has been involved in Oromo politics for over forty years. But as a scholar, he came to the conclusion that history has become a major tool for conflict.

Messay (1999), a supporter of the unionist narrative by many instances and a supporter of the established understanding of history by the virtue of being unionist, also explained how historical understanding and narrative are the cause of conflicts. In particular, he mentioned three different perspectives on how different parties interpreted Menelik's campaign. These

include first, those who argue that Menelik II as a unifier, second, those who believe that Menelik II as expansionist, and thirdly, those who consider Menelik as colonial rule¹.

4.1.1. The Pan-Ethiopianists

This camp is also called as unionist and considered as opponent of the ethno-nationalists. As of Merera's (2001) account, these groups are mostly Amhara and middle-class elites residing in cities, especially in Addis Ababa. Another Unionist group is the one known as “oromara” which in 2018 being created as a movement lead by city elites who believe they are born from one or both of the two great nations Amhara or Oromo (Seyoum, 2018). These elite were advocating the capability of having enough votes to assume state power by the mere coalition of the two giant nations. Siyum Teshome (2019), a political activist, one among the many founders of Oromara movement ones broadcasted in the interview that

“If Oromo and Amhara nations can manage to form coalition, they would only need to have one small nation among the eighty plus nations, in order to assume state power” (Seyoum, 2019)

For these groups, Menelik is seen as the founding father of the country and his mission to the southern Ethiopia was to restore unity, considering that the country was broader than the current territory, which delimits up to the Red sea in North, Berbera and Indian sea in the south, west and east respectively.

As of this narrative, continuous trouble against the Ethiopia, the ancient empire narrowed and during the reign of Menelik II, the colonialists took over and weakened it. Despite the fact that local rulers divide it, Ethiopia is in danger of becoming as powerful as it once was. Menelik is said to have strived in the south to solve the problem and strengthen the unity of the country. The unionists cite historical events in which the country's internal unity was weakened, citing Imam Ahmad's invasion as the primary reason and the 16th-century Oromo expansion.

The statehood and nation formation of Ethiopia is attached with Menilik especially after Adowa victory when colonizers signed with the emperor on boundary issues. The controversy

¹ Messay Kebede. (2015). Menelik and Southern Ethiopia: Colonialization, Reunification, or Expansion? Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://borkena.com/2015/04/17/menelik-and-southern-ethiopia-colonializationreunification-or-expansion-messay-kebede-phd/>

on the nation building process is connected not exceeding to the “how” aspect on the name of the mechanism that the emperor used to adopt. Some try to explain the process by the concepts of expansion, while others adopt integration or reintegration; still others love to call the process invasion. Messay Kebede in his article² explained all these positions with the rationale behind them and the political interests by whom the writers aimed to achieve³.

Whatever the process has been called, the nation building went by the common myth of Adowa victory and by the creation of patriotic self-image. According to Teshale (2020), the victory of Adowa played a major role in creating a national self-image according to the Axumite paradigm. After the Italian occupation, the national sentiment is consolidated by strong centralism and liberty oriented notion through one country in loyalty to the emperor.

As Tekle Hawaryat's. 2014) wrote in his autobiography, loyalty for the emperor is more known than loyalty to the country. Adolph Parcel also affirmed the consciousness of the people was limited on the level of being loyal to their lord, not for the country.

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution backed by the prior student movement, a new type of nationalism is introduced beyond the established status quo of Ethiopian nationalism. National questions emerged as emancipator of the oppressed ethnic societies of Ethiopia and a mechanism of expanding the political arena as an inclusive political tool. As it is noticed by Merera Gudina from 1960s, the time when organized politics started, “there have been two forces at work: the ethnic /regional based movements and the multi-ethnic political forces.”

The new form of nationalist movement revealed as the antithesis of the established political system. The students and the revolutionary powers claim the established political system, which is the Ethiopian nationalism, as a kind of system which favors the Amhara ruling class which is based on the oppression of other ethnic societies. In the newly emerged organized politics in the 1960s, the main instrument was the reinterpretation of history because the activists thought that “the political, economic, and socio-cultural domination of one group

²Messay Kebede. (2015). Menelik and Southern Ethiopia: Colonialization, Reunification, or Expansion? Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://borkena.com/2015/04/17/menelik-and-southern-ethiopia-colonializationreunification-or-expansion-messay-kebede-phd/>

³ Messay Kebede.(2015). Menelik and Southern Ethiopia: Colonialization, Reunification, or Expansion? Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://borkena.com/2015/04/17/menelik-and-southern-ethiopia-colonializationreunification-or-expansion-messay-kebede-phd/>

over the others created a process where the history of the dominant group became the history of all others and was portrayed as the authentic history of the whole country” (Gebru, 1977).

The Ethiopian revolution raised national questions in favor of the national ethnic group including the question of Eritrea. Tigrrians, Oromo, Somalis, Afars and other ethnic groups raised national questions through revolutionary parties and other pressure groups. Though Ethiopian Student movement (ESM) raised national questions in favor of oppressed ethnic groups, its organizational nature is truly multi-ethnic and as it is claimed by many scholars as “The first major political force to pursue a multi-ethnic agenda” (Andargachew, 2019). Concerning the views of the activists in ESM, Merera affirmed the fact as “whatever their ethnic background most agreed to characterize Ethiopia as a ‘prison house of oppressed nationalities and classes’ and were determined to change it.” EPRDF documents and leaders of EPRDF such as Meles Zenawi claimed that in the 1991 transition, the number of armed political organizations representing different ethnic groups were more than seventeen.⁴

Revolutionary personalities are responsible in articulating the national question and the prominent figure that stands first is Walelign Mekonin, a student leader who was later killed in an attempt to hijack an Ethiopian airliner in 1973 (Wallelign, 1969). These national questions assume the Amhara culture and language as the privileged one by the Feudal Imperial Ethiopia. As the oppressed group needed to liberate, it seems that no need for The Amhara identity to be supported or to be empowered; instead, the anti-oppression struggle assumed to be held for the emancipation of the other cultures from the suppression of the dominant Amhara culture (Jalata, 1993).

Though the Feudal system with its main representative monarch is thrown away by revolution, the cultural domination is claimed to exist and this claim justified the necessity of civil war by freedom fighters that bear national questions for their ethnic groups. Major of these fighters used the guerilla fighting as a main resistance alternative. Among them, TPLF and ELF succeeded in overthrowing the military led socialist regime and with OLF and other ethno nationalist forces control the state apparatus. According to Micheau (1996), the establishment of transitional government which majorly contains EPRDF, OLF, and other parties that represent specific ethnic groups each (Micheau, 1996).

⁴ The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). (1988) <https://zelalemkibret.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/eprdf-program.pdf>.

In 1991 when the socialist regime is demolished and those parties representing ethnic groups, which actually raised national questions, establish new order Amhara, as one ethnic group, was not represented by any party. During the debate held between Meles Zenawi and Mesfin Wolde Mariam, Mesifin claimed that no one dared to represent Amhara, and in fact cannot represent it, for there is no as such called Amhara whereas Meles claimed that though Amhara is not represented by a party in its name, other multiethnic parties represented its interests.⁵ By attaching ANDM with its precursor and due to alleged submissiveness to TPLF, many do not want to trust it as the Amhara national. The opponents of ANDM not only oppose ANDM, but even don't want to support the ethnic nationalism as they were thought that ethnic nationalism threatens the classic romance of Ethiopian nationalism.

During the imperial reign, this narrative held the position of government and supporters of the ruling class. It will be difficult to trace the position of the revolutionary leaders. While most progressive forces acknowledge ethnic oppression and therefore opposing the unionist thesis, the late revolutionists who chose the armed struggle for national liberty have been completely rejected the unionist thesis (Bahru, 2010). Thus, those revolutionists who support the Pan-Ethiopianism chose to advocate national liberty for the mere tactical efforts to dismantle the regime, while they have sought to maintain the status quo by the unity of the oppressed class.

The unionist cause became even more serious after 1991, following the change of regime, when the ethno-nationalist groups came to power and broke the established narrative and began to deviate in other ways. After 1991 the following main Pan-Ethiopianism advocates and conflicting parties have been emerged.

- **The post 1991 Free Press and prominent personalities:** The majority of those journalists and printing Medias in the private arena were pan-Ethiopianists while the state-owned press was allowed only to the ethno-nationalist content of the newly founded government. Scholars and politicians who have joined the camp to oppose the new system. Among the scholars Bahru Zewde, Mesfin Wolde Mariam can be mentioned (Yonas,2022).
- **Some political parties:** such as the 'The all Amharan People's organization', have been the main manifestation of the unionist camp. The EDP, which split from the former, have

⁵ Meles Zenawi and Mesfin Woldemariam about the existence of Amhara 1991 E C - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8SXeZGnxls&t=16s>.

not changed their basic stance. The EPRP in the Diaspora, which claims to have maintained the former EPRP, supports this position (Yonas, 2022).

- **Political Movements:** ‘The Oro-mara Coalition’, which was widely recognized by the media as one that facilitated the change of regime (widely known as Political reform) in 2018, was also a proponent of this belief (Yonas, 2022).

In general, the power in the Pan-Ethiopianist camp has two forms. The first is progressive and the second is considered by the revolutionary term as reactionary. The Progressives are those with a positive view of the student movement and the Ethiopian revolution, and is largely derived from this generation.

While acknowledging the existence of ethnic oppression, they emphasized the need to prioritize the country’s unity over ethnic rights, as they consider ethno nationalism for promoting racism and disintegration. The so called reactionaries, however, acknowledges the existence of the monarchy and denies the existence of racial oppression. These groups asserted that all the repressive regimes had been perpetuated, and called all of the emperors' wars, including Menelik II as unification process or the normal nation building process, which had been occurred in all European countries.

4.1.2. Ethno nationalists

Ethno-nationalists, on the other hand, base their arguments on the Ethiopian student movement (ESM). In particular, they believe that the article presented by Walleign Mekonnen, (1969), a prominent leader of the movement, properly describes the situation in the country. They also present a narrative that will change the current system of ethnic oppression.

The second contingent was called the Ethno-Nationalist, which originated with the student movement. Founded in 1966, the ESM has a communist ideology that opposes the current system and seeks to change it. In an article written by the leader of the movement, Walleign Mekonnen, (1969), and presented at the conference, he stated that the current system dominates the religion and culture of a nation. Recipients of this article have also been instrumental in the political process, both individually and collectively. Based on this article, the following are some of the people who have struggled with opposing views.

Political parties have backed this: The Oromo nationalists, who are not in power, and the Tigrayan nationalists are also members of the camp. The individuals were former members or supporters of the Student Movement and include those who may or may not have been able to join the parties that emerged from this movement. Examples include Andreas Eshete, Gebru Tareke, Merera Gudina, John Markakis, and others. At the ECA Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Student Movement in 2014, the issue was still relevant, according to a majority of the young people of that time who were supporters of this position. The concept is still debated.

Pan Ethiopians view their idea as the core of the Ethiopian state. This view is still widely accepted by various researchers. Even those who do not share this view do not lose sight of the fundamental role that views play. Merera Gudina, (2001), for example, describes the development of the empire from Emperor Tewodros in his writings on the subject.

They see themselves as advocates of national unity. This idea was defeated in 1991 and lost political power. However, after losing political power, it remained the agenda of opposition political forces.

4.2. Key Features of the Pan-Ethiopianist Camp

The Pan-Ethiopianist camp has important features. Some of these are discussed in this study.

4.2.1. Three Thousand Years of History:

The main theme of this camp is that Ethiopia is a country with a continued history of three thousand years. One of the features that identify a given land as a country is the presence of government. Ethiopia is therefore identified as a country of long history of the government, for the unionists. In fact, this camp considers 3,000 years of state history as a continuous heritage. The pan Ethiopians (also known as unionist) camp shares its view by the main historians who actually wrote the Main Stream narrative in the arena of the countries historiography. Just to mention some of these prominent figures: (Sergew Hable Selassie (1972); Tadesse Tamrat, (1974); Mered Wolde Aregay; Bahru Zewde, 1993; Tekle Tsadik Mekuria : 1935; Paulos Gnogno) can be put at the front side of this narrative.

Bahru Zewde, one among the many Pan Ethiopians historians perspective, published an article in response to the 1991 change of regime and narrative that opposed the old narrative

of 3,000 years of state existence by replacing by the opposite narrative that advocate the country as 100 years of juvenile history. He stood against the new narrative and give academic support for those who like to romanticize the antique nature of the country that emanates from its ancient history (Bahru, 2017).

Bahru recalled that day of narrative fight as the first endeavor to publish a scholarly article in Amharic, and that he was compelled to do so because he was outraged that Ethiopia's history was only a hundred years old, not three thousand years old. He assumed his effort was so successful, for the article got a wide circulation and pop readability. In fact, the article so demanded that it had been duplicated by a photo copy machine and by a sold for five birr in areas of Addis Ababa down towns, especially at Merkato.

Bahru wrote later at the preface of one of his books: “Most of us in the academic circle write in English. This is because the university's academic language is English and the publishing houses are foreign institutions. But for the first time, I was forced to write in Amharic. The Derg fell and a new perspective began to emerge with the new regime. And, the new narrative was privileged enough to be propagated by the government media outlet, that Ethiopia was an ancient country with a history of three thousand years and that it was a country with a history of 100 years.

To address the urgent politico historical question, Bahru wrote a short article. “As soon as the article was published,” he said “I went abroad, so that I could not understand the effect of the article. One of my colleagues, whom I met by chance, said, He told me that in my home town, the people were in love with the article, and they were willing to pay 5 birr for a copy of it. When I heard this, I thought we had not written in the language of our people. After that, I started thinking about translating my English books into Amharic”

At the time the regime change has been taken place, the new narrative was almost certainly in control of the government media, while the pan Ethiopianist view, in contrast, engaged in the print medias which were owned by the private sector. It has been common to see argumentative essays in newspapers and magazines, as well as in books. Pan Ethiopianism disseminated not only in the medias but also in the arena of the opposition groups such as political parties, civic societies and human right activists, even prominent scholars and famous personalities have sprung up to oppose the ethno nationalist ideals.

Some of the opposition parties, mostly known as the ‘Unionist Forces’, and the Amhara affiliated parties, echoed this 3,000-year history. Lidetu Ayalew was the leader of one of these Pan Ethiopianist parties, and for more than 20 years he was a proponent of the idea, both individually and as a party leader. Even after the dissolution of his party, he has been sustaining the ideology and kept it alive through media (Lidetu, 2002).

Other bearers of this view include Asrat Woldeyes, Mesfin Woldemariam, (2013), Birhanu Nega, 2006), Hailu Araya, contribute a significant portion of the sphere from the ideologue camp. These and other prominent figures showed their effort by organizing political parties, NGOs and through intensive use of Medias.

4.2.2. The Use of Stories as Instrument of Narrative

The Pan-Ethiopianists' idea is to emphasize Ethiopia's antiquity and its dominance. There is a story to be told. According to Adamu, (2009) it tells of three thousand years ago that the queen of Sheba was an Ethiopian queen and that she gave birth to a son in a relationship with King Solomon. While some may view this as a myth, Pan Ethiopians argue that it is a fact. Modern Pan Ethiopians think that even if it is a myth, it is an important narrative for state building (Adamu, 2009; Budge, 2008).

Explaining this, Merera Gudina says: "For many, this narrative of Queen of Sheba and her son, Menelik I, is nothing more than a myths, still it has been used as an important tool that the emperors used it to gain the support of their empire." (Merera, 2007)

This narrative was first introduced in the ancient “book of Kings” (Kebra Nagast, 1300s). The book states that the Ethiopian kings descended from Solomon. This dates forth to the reign of Haile Selassie, who ruled until 1974. Approving the genealogy of the king from the chosen race and the divine right of the prince, the book served as a document confirming the legitimacy of the kings. Those who oppose the Pan-Ethiopianist narrative, however, dismiss the narrative as fairy tale. Oromo nationalists, in particular, can be mentioned as the main actors in rejecting this narrative. In his various essays, Moti Biya denounced this view as "a fable for books to deceive people." (Moti, 2015).

Tabor Wami, well known Oromo historian and writer, is among the main to popularize the counter narrative of Queen of Sheba (Tabor, 2015). He denounced all the Geez ancient books

as ‘The Greek-Roman dominated literatures that the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy prepared to support the colonial ambition of their fellow kings. Tabor didn’t limit his critique by ‘the book of kings’. Instead, he added other books that were used for imperial execution such as ‘glory of kings’ (Kibre Negest) and ‘Justice of kings’ (Fitha Negest).

4.2.3. Absence of Ethnic Oppression

The majority of Pan Ethiopianists do not accept the thesis that affirms ethnic suppression and national question. They believe that the ruling class was not just one nation. The kings are said to be descended from different nations. Both Menelik II and Haile Selassie were born not only from the oppressive Amhara, but also from the so called oppressed Oromo. "It is also the Oromo leaders who went to war with Menelik in what are now Oromia and the South," Messay kebede said, denying the allegations (Messay, 1999).

Bewketu Seyoum, though a creative writer not a political, he published one as a collection of short essays, the majority of them are political essays (Bewketu, 2016). These essays have been widely circulated and have caused a great deal of controversy and debate. In particular, Bewketu argued that the identity of the monarchs, commonly referred to as Amhara, was erroneous, and that the Oromo, considered an oppressed nation, were ruler in collaboration with Amhara in the Showa.

Achamyeleh Tamiru is also one of the main document contributors in supporting the Amhara nationalism and Pan Ethiopianism at the same time. Through his various social media posts and interviews, he has even gone so far as to support the monarchy, claiming that there has never been racial or class oppression in Ethiopia.⁶

According to these groups, there has never been a ruling class called Amhara. Based on this assertion, they misrepresent the nationalist questions raised by the student movement and the Ethiopian revolution as a false allegation against the monarchy or an agenda taken from colonials and other foreign Anti-Ethiopia forces. By this token, persons who have written about ethnic oppression such as Walelign Mekonnen had been considered by this camp as traitors.

⁶ Achamyeleh Tamiru, (2022) Facebook. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/achamyeleh.tamiru>

For example, let's take a look at some of Achamyeleh's arguments: "Walelign's consideration of Amara domination is not based on evidence. Though he provides some, still they are not correctly taken. Injera, Shema, dorowot are not Amhara's origin. And, even though his claim may have some truth values, they are not representative enough to conclude that there have been national or ethnic suppression."⁷

Achamyeleh also tried to trace some of the cultural materials that are claimed to be that's of Amharas' own. "It is a mistake to say that Injera and Shema (Habesha dress) are originated from Amhara. In fact, injera is from Agaw and Shema is from Gamo"⁸

4.2.4. Controversy on the Meaning of Nation

This camp considers Ethiopia as a unified single nation. On the contrary, it does not accept other nations in Ethiopia. Instead, it considers them as a mere race, ethnicity, tribe, or clan.

They say it is wrong to call them Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, as a nation since they are only ethnic identities. Ethiopia is considered as a nation by some and a united nation by others. The empire character of its ancient statehood is reframed by Minilik second and colonial powers in the Horn. Since colonial powers are claimed to be boundary markers, Ethiopia has been one among the African states to be identified as a modern state with demarked boundaries. Teshale T. identified these as radical left (Teshale, 1996) and Merara Gudinea called the position 'The colonial thesis perspective'(Merara, 2001).

They also condemn being called 'the Ethiopian people' as Amharic plural form when in actuality one people of Ethiopia are present. Walelign Mekonnen, in his article, argued that 'sociologically speaking' Ethiopia is not one nation, so he prefers to use in the plural form as peoples but not people (Wallelign, 1969). According to Pan-Ethiopianists, any society in a given country is united and must be considered as one. No nation of any country has ever been considered as multiple nations because of its ethnic divisions. In Ethiopia, however, the regime uses a divisive way of creating contending nations that leads to dismantling the country (Getachew H., 2012; MerhaTsidik Mekonin, 2018).

⁷ Achamyeleh Tamiru (2018). *የለልኝ መኮንን ኢትዮጵያን ያከሸፈ ወይስ ዘመኑን የቀደመ ግለሰብ? አቻም የለህ ታምሩና ጥላሁን አፈሳይ ሚኒታሉ* 11/18/2019 - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD7J1-M878g>

⁸ Achamyeleh Tamiru, (2020) Facebook. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/achamyeleh.tamiru>

Pan Ethiopianists oppose politicizing ethnicity and considers ethno nationalism as a kind of ethnic politicization. In Ethiopia, politicizing religion is illegal and, organizing religious party is forbidden by constitution. Unionists request for the same prohibition of ethnic parties. They also see the recognition of other nations as a threat to the unity of Ethiopia.

Jawar Mohamed argues that the unionist narrative was created because of the assimilation interest.⁹ He believes that ethno nationalistic politics is not something to be feared in Ethiopia but to be learned from European experience and world political history. “In Nineteenth-Century Europe there was a dominant view that states 'If there are many different cultures and identities in a country, it is necessary to somehow create a' dominant 'culture and national identity; otherwise, if there are different identities in a country, they will not be able to establish a stable country because they are in conflict with the national identity. ‘It is in this process that countries like France, despite having many nations, have been able to crush and create a single national identity.’”¹⁰

Jawar believes in an attempt to unite nations and languages in order to maintain unity. He explains how this French experience came to be in Ethiopian former state building process. “A unitary system has been tried. Aklilu Habtewold and his colleagues who built Ethiopia were French students who worked hard to create a national identity by assimilation, especially after the Italian invasion. But in the nineteenth century, they faced strong opposition. The Eritrean question, the Oromo question, the Tigray question came out. In these movements, the radicals focused even to the question of independence to be given. But that didn't work. Instead of having individual countries for each nation, other alternatives brought to the table. The Derg gave autonomy for provinces. And EPRDF secure regional states; and, as a matter of fact multinational federalism was established”¹¹.

4.2.5. Perspectives on the Amhara Nation

The view of this camp towards Amhara is particularly different. They do not prefer to identify Amhara as ethnicity, tribe, or ethnic group, or other. Different reasons are given by the camp for the re-identification of Amhara. Some think Amhara does not exist as a nation while some do think that it only exist as a non-ethnic or nation being, it is an alternative name

⁹ Jawar Mohammed (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/Jawarmd>

¹⁰ OMN: Amharic interview with Jawar Mohammed (Part 2) Sep 27, 2014). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQeQ-rgchNw>

¹¹ Jawar Mohammed | Facebook.(2010). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/Jawarmd>

for Ethiopians, or even to mean Christian. In his last-minute speech, the president of the Pan Ethiopianist government, Mengistu Haile Maryam, emphasized the idea of the nonexistence of Amhara nation as he said:

“What does Amhara mean? From where and when did this word come? Israelis visited Ethiopia many years ago. They observe the beautiful chains of mountains, valleys, rivers and in general the geography of the country, and the culture of the society. Comparing these with their Middle East geography, they became amazed and after their return to their home, they said that we saw beautiful land [Yamare Hager] and wrote in title ‘Journey in beautiful [yamare] land’. By this way, they introduced Ethiopia to their nation. In Hebrew, ‘Am’ mean people and ‘Hara’ mountain, so in collective Amhara mean people living on mountains. This name hadn’t ever known in our country before they named it. There is no nation known by this name. In the Ethiopian correct expression Amhara mean highlander [Degegna]. So which one is the Amhara? Is that the Eritrean or the Eritrean highlander? Or is that the Tigray, the Gondrean, the Gojammie, the Wolloye, the Oromo, or the Gurage, the keffa, the Gimira, the wolayita, the Gamo, Argoba? Or which one of these is the Amhara?”¹²

Secondly, Mesifin Woldemaryam also being among the first proponents of this position, argued against the Amharan national existence and the formation of national region as a consequence of Amharan national identity narrative by the newly established EPRDF regime. On a debate held between Mesfin woldemariam and Meles Zenawi (Meles and Mesfin 1991), the moderator of the discussion raised a question of representation of Amhara saying “How do you see the non-representation of Amhara while other major ethnic groups are represented by different political forces in the transitional government?” Mesfins response was as follow:

“Amhara is hard for representation. There is no as such thing Amhara. And it is impossible to represent the nonexistent. As I know, there is Gojammie. And in Gojam there is Damote and proper Gojam situated beyond Abay. There is

¹² President Mengistu Hailemariam’s Last Speech Part 3 of 7 - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFtrxZP-3lw>

also Gondore, Simen, Armacheho, wolkait, Tsegede. Even in the little one, Showa, there are divisions such as Tera, Menz, Bulga, Tegulet, Minjar etc. The people identify themselves with their land. No one has ever said that I am from Amhara, for there is no land in the name of Amhara. Had been a person in the conference representing Amhara, I would assume that person as mad man or with other problem. In any circumstance, one cannot represent a thing which doesn't exist. Surely, no ... there is no Amhara”¹³.

The other point mentioned by Mesfin to justify his claim is the religious identity which the peasants identify themselves by Amhara not to mean ethnically but religious wise to mean Christian.

“For my study in Wollo, I asked this question for hundreds of peasants. When I ask him as ‘Are you an Amhara’ He answers ‘no’. When I ask him ‘so, what is your identity?’ his response is ‘I am Islam’. When he is asked what his language is the response is Amharic, still he doesn’t identify himself as Amhara. This is the same in Bale and Arsi”¹⁴

Mesfin further elaborated this view in his book (Mesfin, 2013). Though he added little deviations, he continued commenting the agenda by the same position on his face book pages and this continued up to his last breath.

‘The non-existence’ view is also followed by others due to some reasons. Hating the ethno nationalist policy of EPRDF and the ideology of ethno nationalists some preferred to be curious not to identify oneself ethnically Amhara.

Andargachew calls this position a ‘conscious political opposition.’ According to him, those who are in the category of conscious opposition are not unaware of the nature of ethno multiplicity of the people of Ethiopia. Instead, though being collected from different ethnicity, this group is privileged from the beginning of modernity up to now; so, this had become the Amharan ruling class with fears of losing its status by the new system of ethno national politics (Andargache, 2018).

¹³ Meles Zenawi and Mesfin Woldemariam about the existence of Amhara 1991 E C - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8SXeZGnxls&t=16s>

¹⁴ Meles Zenawi and Prof Mesfin Woldemariam about the existence of Amhara 1991 E C - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8SXeZGnxls&t=16s>

Andargachew Tsige, who once went so far as to write a book to mobilize Amhara nationalism and become a leader in ANDM, later changed his position and joined the Coalition as a Coalition, criticizing not only his former Amhara nationalism but also his previous EPRDF position. He later worked as an advocate for organizations working to undermine Amhara nationalism. According to Andargachew, Amhara has a higher national identity and should not confuse itself with other states. Andargachew argues that Amhara cannot be like other peoples because it does not have a tribe or ethnicity, and that the creation itself is new and deliberately created for campaign purposes (Andargachew, 2018).

4.2.6. The Role of the Amhara

The members of the Pan-Ethiopianist Camp are individuals from many different ethnic groups, but Amhara predominantly dominates the camp. People who have studied Amhara nationalism have also noted that after Pan-Ethiopianism, regionalism is one of the challenges facing Amhara nationalism.

After quarter a century, the ethnic nationalism has been the mainstream political arrangement, the Amhara nationalism became eminent. Still, the dilemma between the Amharan nationalism and Pan Ethiopianism is not yet resolved. Amanuel T. put this dilemma priority among some other controversial elements which are in process of resolution. “The primary dilemma of Amhara nationalism is defining its relation to pan-Ethiopian nationalism, which still has substantial currency among the Amhara despite relentless campaigns against it over the past two and a half decades”¹⁵.

Others consider the ethnic nationalism of Amhara as a tactical instrument for the purpose of mass mobilization and competitor with other ethnic identities. Thinking that other major ethnic groups organized and benefited from the politicization of the ethnicity through nationalism, Amhara nationalists encourage the abandonment of Ethiopian nationalism temporarily. They argue that they should not be harmed as the last twenty plus years because of their lack of organization based on Amharan identity.

Yilkal affirmed this position strongly. As Amharan nationalism is the result of victim mentality, it can be terminated as long as things had ever been rectified. It is not the question

¹⁵ Amanuel Tesafye.(2018). Commentary:The Birth of Amhara Nationalism: Causes, Aspirations, and Potential Impacts - Addis Standard. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://addisstandard.com/commentarythe-birth-of-amhara-nationalism-causesaspirations-and-potential-impacts>

of cultural domination or any other thing but it is just self-defense from attack. So if the political system can be fair enough for all, inclusive and based on citizenship, the Amharan nationalism cannot be necessary (Yilkal, 2019).

There are those who have worked to change this Amhara attitude. The motto most often used by the ANDM party was "Amhara nationalism thrives." This was important because Amhara nationalism, like the Tigrayan and Oromo nationalities, could not be developed as quickly. Andargachew Tsige, who was working closely with the party at the time, also published a book on achieving this goal.

Andargachew says. "The Amhara people do not want to see themselves as one nation and do not want to be organized as a nation to achieve political and religious interests. They believe that we are not the first nation. However, at least one of the Amhara people meets all the requirements that can be created for a nation. As a nation with a common language, a common psyche, a common culture, it can truly be called a nation. Second, there is the fear that nationalism will divide the country. However, Amhara's ethnic organization, along with its brothers, will create conducive environment for national unity, not a threat. Therefore, he should support this nationalism, which he hates for himself and for the whole country. "

4.2.7. Opposition of Ethnic Federalism

This view traces its origin from the definition given by Aleqa Taye: "Amhara didn't come from anywhere, but is a good soldier of Lasta, collected from each type- powerful, immoral, rebellious, educated and uneducated, brutal, and mercenary" (Demelash, 2017) Citing this definition, Melkamu T. (2010) deduced "this shows that being Amhara is not only a matter of race but behavior and culture." still, Teshome being unsatisfied by the definition of Taye, for its vagueness and exclusiveness of other people such as Agaw, Qimant and Weytho.

Other nationalists declared this view to protect the nationalism from primordial notion and racism. Andargachew is the first to denote the non-racial and non premordialist notion of being Amhara in a distinct sub title of 'blood and bone don't reveal the Amhara.' By mentioning those who bore from parents of Amhara and other nation and those who are mingled with other nations through marriage, Andargachew suggests that the feeling of empathy must embrace the psychological stresses of these people. In addition he said: "According to the circumstances in our country, we need to consider and give due attention to

accommodate those who forgot their native language and culture because of the hegemonies status of Amharic language and culture” (Andargachew, 1985).

Pan-Ethiopians have long objected to the change in the country's structure since 1991 and the replacement of the unitary system with a federal one. At times, they even resent the idea that federalism is based on ethnicity. Federalism is seen as a threat to unity, with many nations recognizing their own state and government. They also do not like Ethiopia being a multiethnic nation. They often refer to federalism as linguistic, ethnic, racial, or ethnic. The solution is federalism, but they suggest geography.

They often say, “There is no such thing as a federal, linguistic and ethnic federalism. According to the Manifesto, if the Coalition of Pan Ethiopians can seize power, it will dismantle ethnic federalism and replace it with a geographically federal system.

Another point they make in the federalism system is that it denies everyone as if it gave equal rights to all nations. “It ensures that each region belongs to one nation and that it extends to other nations within the same territory. People from all over the country are categorized as native and settler. The so called natives are considered indigenous, and privileged for assuming power, while the settlers are alienated from the local politics, and the economic activities. This will prevent citizens from being treated equally.”

4.2.8. The Opposition of the 1995 Constitution

The Pan Ethiopianist camp strongly opposes the federal constitution as it is assumed to raise ethno nationalism. In particular, advocates of cite Article 39, which respects the rights of nations to the point of secession. The article's support for secession is seen by nationalists as a major manifestation of the country's divisive agenda. The question of “changing the constitution” is frequently asked by Pan Ethiopianist individuals, groups and parties.

Lidetu Ayalew, for instance, in addition to his protest against the old constitution, he further went up to proposing a new draft constitution prepared and published by him. Explaining why he did so, he wrote: “If the current state of affairs in the country continues to weaken and the conflict continues, it could lead to catastrophe. As the constitution provides for a break through, I have tried to do my part to provoke a discussion on the constitution alongside the co-operative work that needs to be done at this time” (Lidetu, 2020).

Organizing a party based on religion is not permitted under the national law of Ethiopia. And, Pan-Ethiopians desire to be banned ethnic parties in the same manner. Pan Ethiopians challenge nationalist extremism by idea. But, expanding their opposition, they want ethno nationalism to be banned by legal action and forceful measures. This position has been criticized by some for its violinist nature. The rationality behind this motive is that any party with the intention of ethnicity and politicization of ethnicity should not be getting the chance, for its actions lead into disintegration. “It would not be right for ethnically organized party to be involved in national election. The party that wants to run the country must be national that can be inclusive to all Ethiopians.”

4.2.10. Pan Ethiopianist Position on Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is one of the most controversial issues between the two conflicting parties. Pan Ethiopians take Addis Ababa as a model for their imaginative nation building process. They believe that the unity and solidarity in Addis Ababa reflects Ethiopia. Addis Ababa was founded by King Menelik II, the father of modern Ethiopia, and the birthplace of modern (Pankhurst, 1992).

Pan Ethiopianists are also known for their debates on Addis Ababa’s ownership, status granted by the constitution and even the name of the city. Arguments sometimes lead to conflict. One of the sources of the controversy was the victory of the Pan-Ethiopianist party in the 2005 elections. The then Pan Ethiopianist side, Coalition for Democracy and Unity, have objected to the ruling party's decision to make Addis Ababa the capital of the Oromia region.

Pan-Ethiopians strongly condemn the denial of the city's equal status to self-administration as other national states of the country. They also consider the appropriation of the city as a capital of Oromia is nothing more than a political conspiracy by the ruling party. They argue that other cities should not be considered as the possession of a single nation or national state, for many of the cities are similarly populated by ethnic groups and ethnic groups that are gradually merging to reflect Ethiopian identity. As of the unionists, the towns in the Oromia region, in particular, are predominantly populated by Amhara, Gurage, and other ethnic groups, and the language widely used is Amharic rather than Afan Oromo.

The towns, which were created as a result of Menelik's unification process of nation building, reflect Pan-Ethiopianism, and the camp is largely urban. In particular, a number of articles have been published stating that Addis Ababa should not be Oromian possession. Among them is the article "Addis Ababa Bete" by Getachew Haile (Getachew, 2018).

Contradicting the Pan-Ethiopianists' interest on Addis Ababa, the ethno nationalist Oromos counteracts through leading a struggle by taking Addis Ababa as their strategic city. Similar reactions take place in the Amhara and pan Ethiopianist camp. Amharan elites, leading the pan Ethiopianist camp by direct participation and sharing of ideas; they called the city Berera in opposite reaction to the 'Finfine' account of Oromo nationalist, and published many books to popularize their position. In the meantime, the city has been embroiled in a controversy over its claim to be Amharan or Oromian. As of the Amharan account, before the city became Finfine, it has been existed as Berera (Belete, 2009). Both accounts have become the motivation for many articles and books, media contents as well.

4.3. Main Features of Ethno-nationalists

The second camp is known by many scholars as the Ethno-Nationalists. This camp opposes the Pan-Ethiopianists and criticizes the Pan-Ethiopianists by using the words *ahadawinet*, which is 'unionists in English, *Chefilakiwoch* which is assimilationists in English, *Neftegna* which is gun bearers in English and so on. The camp sees itself an advocate of equality. The movement is linked to the student movement and the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. Here are some of the key points he will use to present the narrative.

4.3.1. National Oppression

From this point of view, ethnic oppression has been rampant in Ethiopia for centuries. Although the oppressive nation is assumed to be Amhara, it does not mean that members of the nation are generally oppressive. However, the ruling class, mainly from the Amhara ethnic group, has oppressed all ethnic groups in Ethiopia, including the Amhara itself. As of the account of the ethno nationalists, though the Amhara people were subjected to formal oppression that distinguished them from other oppressors, they did not experience national oppression. That is, its language, religion, culture are not oppressed as it was done upon others.

Other nations, on the other hand, have experienced both class oppression and national oppression. The EPRDF, which has been able to seize power among those who oppose this ideology, has reaffirmed its position through various publications, discussions, and media coverage. Professor Merere Gudina, an outspoken critic of Oromo nationalism, has also strongly supported and criticized other views on his published scholarly studies. The parties involved are based on this principle (Merera, 2007; 2011; 2001).

In the 2006 (E.C) document for dialogue and training, the EPRDF quoted Walegn Mekonnen as follow: “The student movement has put a clear line of unanswered questions and political struggles. As Walegn, a member of the student movement, wrote in his written call for national struggle, "Ethiopianism that has not been built under national struggle can only is an instrument of oppression" (EPRDF, 2006).

The document also states that the Amhara ruling class does not apply to the entire Amhara population. “The people of Amhara are just as oppressed as any other people. In fact, he was exploited by his own ruling class and traded in his name” (EPRDF, 2006).

The document states that there were class and ethnic oppression. Went on to say that other nations had suffered two kinds of oppression. Amhara, on the other hand, claims to have survived a second form of oppression. Finally, explains that the Amhara ruling class is oppressive not only to the other people but also to the Amhara people from where it is emerged. The document explains that both the Ethiopian Revolution and the ensuing armed struggle have come to solve this problem.

This is the root cause for the claimed ethnic oppression, which is used as a basic tool for the ethnic groups such as OLF, TPLF, and other ethnic parties in shaping their ideology and policies. Based on this agenda, they organized the people and fought. They organized a party and participated in the election.

OLF has pursued different agendas at different times. Each facet is different, especially when the organization is divided at different times. The extremist faction wants to secede and establish its own state of Oromia (Jalata, 1993), while the other faction seeks to remain Ethiopian within the framework of self-government (OSA, 2022).

The OLF, which saw secession as an alternative, exaggerated the ethnic oppression in Ethiopia to colonialism. Those factions of OLF assert that Menelik's project can only be described as "colonial act", so that it necessitates the liberation of Oromo state (OLF, 2012).

Most OLF and other Oromo nationalists, however, do not accept the idea of colonialism; however, strongly believe that Oromo, as a nation, underwent in a national oppression. Lencho, a longtime member of the OLF leadership, abandoned his position for more than 30 years and accepted the option of living in an Oromo-dominated federal system within the Ethiopian framework. He has already published a book that will help him describe that (Lencho, 2004).

According to Lencho's book, even though oppression has been a part of history, separation is not a solution. Rather, it would be better for the people of the Horn of Africa to come together in a framework of common ground.

Merera Gudina, a well-known Oromo nationalist politician, also criticized the idea of that considers Oromo as a colonial relation with Ethiopia. In his article, criticizing the Pan Ethiopianist camp, Merera refuted the colonial thesis as equally and strongly as the PanEthiopians do when they deny the existence of ethnic oppression and pretending that the Menelik regime is a colonial one. According to him, Menelik's expansion involved Oromo warlords. He recalls that the army was not only Amhara but also Oromo. He argues, then, that it is an internal power struggle, not a colonial one (Merera, 2005).

Merera Gudina is a prominent figure opposing both the colonial thesis and the other extreme Pan Ethiopian nationalism. He affirms the existence of national oppression and resides at the centrist position between the two antagonizing extremes. Merera put this position as the solution to the problems created by political and ideological extremism. He also challenges those who view national rights as a threat to the country's unity. On the contrary, he assumed ethnic nationalism as a guarantee for equality of nations and consequently a guarantee of living together.

4.3.2. Menelik II's Forceful Nation Building Process

Ethno nationalists blame Menelik II for the spread of national oppression. The king's nation building process by force goes to the south prompting destabilize a number of local rulers. While some agreed to submit without war, others resorted to war, and as a result violence and

oppression took place in order to submit the rebellious local chiefs (Jalata, 1993; Tafla., 2000; Endreas,2013; Merera, 2001).

According to Merera Gudina, "Menelik's war has left scars like Anole that sustains up to now He Menilik burnt all the wealth of the people without discrimination. Above all, the oppressed people have been oppressed not only for governance but for the mere fact that they do speak their own language and exercise their culture" (Merera, 2007).

Menelik had a modern-day weapon of the time, so that he was at the advantage position of defeating. In the wake of this historical event, Menelik II invaded his empire and invaded other territories. He was snatched away. They accuse it of being expansionist as colonialists was. In addition to expanding the empire, he established a repressive and oppressive system of government. He exploited oppression and humiliation in order to destroy the national identity of the states.

Merera Gudina's article shows that Menelik have killed a large number of people in his forceful domination to Arsi, then Wolayita and then Harar. He recalls the suffering of the local people during this five-year war, especially in the Arsi area. Minilik is accused of several brutal acts, and even went so far as to cut off the hands of male civilians and breast of females who had not participated in the war. This is done order to destroy the potential threat of reciprocity.

The feudal system of government has allowed its soldiers to dominate and subjugate the local people, as it has allowed them to exploit the natives with all their property. As a result, the farmer in the northern part of the country was deprived of his property and became only a third of his produce (Merera, 2005).

4.3.3. Colonial Suppression

Extremists who are dissatisfied with this narrative of national oppression tend to extend it to colonialism. There are scholars who argue that Ethiopia was equally colonizer as European countries such as Britain, France, Italy and others (Jalata, 1993; Tafla, 2000). Most of the proponents of this idea are Eritreans and Oromos. Assefa Jalata is particularly known for promoting this position. Although many ethnic politicians did not accept this position, they accepted the Eritrean issue as a colonial issue. Although they did not recognize the Oromo and other ethnic groups as a colonially related with Ethiopia, they acknowledged that they

were in a national suppression and working to create a system that would improve the situation.

4.3.4. The Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM)

The ESM founded by Ethiopian students living abroad in the 1960's, is a leading movement in declaring and calling for the national question. According to Bahru Zewde (2010), the student movement has previously explored and analyzed the repressive and popular demands in a communist ideology based on the public interest of protests and riots in Ethiopia. It also waged a series of protests (Bahru, 2010).

One of the principles of the student movement is that accepting Eritrea's case as colonial cause and the others as the national oppression in addition to class oppression. Ethnic oppression was not quickly accepted by the student movement. The students, who saw racism as a divisive issue and a divisive issue, argued against it, but in the end, they accepted it because it was believed to be detrimental to those in power (Habtu, 2015)

Most of the Pan Ethiopianists and the Amharan nationalists see the ESM with suspicion. The main reason for their suspicion is that the affirmation of the national question by the movement. The Amharan nationalists think of the ESM as the main source of the national oppression narrative. Yilkal Getnet, famous on his strong support for the Amharan nationalism, claims that "though ESM were led by young Ethiopians with strong enthusiasm for the wellbeing of their country, their agenda had been set by the Fascist Italian colony before thirty years. The student's idea was hijacked by external political forces. Their map of Ethiopia was the one created by Italy and Egypt." (Zemen megazin, 2018)

The hatred on the ESM is especially driven by one reason (though not the only) of a thesis presented by Walelign, who has active role in the movement and assumed to be the initiator of the national question with his famous articulation. Writers of Amhara nationalism called Walelign "Banda" and "traitor", for they think that he should be stand to his ethnic identity of Amhara instead of stand in the position of other "oppressed nations" (Andualem, 2018)

In the hatred side of the ESM, Andargachew Tsige can be singled out as an exception. In his book, he does confirm that there was a national oppression in Ethiopia as it had been stated by Walelign. The national oppression was initiated by the ruling class who is emerged from

Amhara. Andargachew clearly identifies the ruling class of Amhara with oppressed class of the same ethnic group. By admitting the historic oppression, he shows the harm was not limited on other nations, but even in the sphere of Amhara. The conclusion of Andargachew is the calling for Amharan nationalism based on the progressive outlook, i.e, by the oppressed class of Amhara and in fraternity with other nations (Andargachew,2018).

This notion of Amharan nationalism is similar with that of ANDM and EPRDF, as Andargachew himself was working in cooperation with ANDM during the publishing period of the book. Meles, in his debate with Mesfin W., put the same idea of separating the ruling class of the Amhara with the oppressed class. “No advantage had ever been realized the Amharan people, as the small sector of the ruling class monopolized any benefits alone. And we need to be cautious no to mix the ruling class with the mass.” (Meles and Mesfin, 1991)

Misganaw stated that “the source from which Walegn and his friends grasped their thought is worthless and the work of anti Amharan propaganda. Led by this cancer [ill minded] journalist, the students made massive harm on the country and cause for endless suffering upon the Amhara” (Misganaw, 2018).

Continuing from the anti-Student movement sentiment, the Amhara nationalists show hatred for the Ethiopian revolution. Misganw commented the Ethiopian revolution by this manner.

“The so called ‘Ethiopian revolution’ which the students claim that they had done it is anti Amharan revolution.” (p.243)

4.3.5. 100 Years of History

Ethno-Nationalists believe that Ethiopia has no history of more than a hundred years. According to this historical perspective, Ethiopia was created in the current context of Menelik II. The country has been expanding and narrowing over the years in various aspects as it has been shaped by different courses, and therefore it has necessitated is said that Menelik II was re-established in its current form (Jalata, 1993).

Ethno-Nationalists view the Pan-Ethiopian’s three-thousand-year-old narrative as a myth. Some argue that it was created for political purposes and not for evidence, while others argue that the story is originated from Greco-Roman writers who wrote history for their colonial

goal. And, the Orthodox clergy is claimed to write historical accounts by its scribes, following the footsteps of Greco-Roman colonial ambition.

Tabor Wami is one of the Oromo writers who argued frequently against the historical accounts that are based on clergy scribes and Greco-Roman colonial writers. In his book, he affirmed that books such as ‘honor of kings’ (Kibrenegest) is designed for the ultimate purpose of giving the emperors divine Wright to rule without any risk of competition or rebel. Tabor W. explains that this is the case with other ancient books, such as the book of Chronicles of kings, and book of Justice of kings, History of Kings (Tabor Wami, 2021). In explaining the issue he stated as follows;

“The Book of Chronicles of kings is a myth scribed to fulfill the ambition of the emperors and the Greco-Roman colonialists. It was intended to enslave the peoples, but to bring them into subjection. Thus the history of the notebooks is similar in content and purpose to that of the Greco-Roman writers of the colony” (Tabor, 2021).

The ethno-nationalists are critical of what the authors of the 3,000-year-old narrative have said. Their critique is not limited on the old historical accounts of the clergy and the European colonialist writers; it is extended to the contemporary historiographies. For example, Semir Yusuf (2009) presents commentary on Bahru zewde’s historiography by deconstruction of the belief that Ethiopia has a long and uninterrupted history. Yusuf (2009) deciphered this historiography as he deconstructed and said, “The methodology of Bahiru Zewde is a deliberate act of selecting historical evidences that are useful for the intended purpose, while equally practicing of deliberate act of ignoring those evidences of that intended purpose. So that, how could one get it easy to accept his account as a true history. We can only be sure that the history is predesigned to be consistent and coherent” (Yusuf, 2009).

4.3.6. The Deep Involvement of Progressive and Revolutionary Movements

As scholarly written materials show that the two major ideological and conflicting parties that emerged after the student movement were the main actors of the movement as it is showed by Merera Gudina 2004’s dissertation.

“EPRP and AESM (MEISON) are twin offspring of the student movement. The two parties are at the forefront of the movement's efforts to reflect the progressive demands of the

movement and to carry out national struggles” (Merera, 2001). But they chose to follow different tactics. Led by an Oromo MEISON, Haile Fida, he believed that the Oromo-led stagnant stance in promoting unity could lead to Oromo and thus end the ethnic oppression of the Amhara ruling class (MEISON, 2003; Andargachew, 2000).

The EPRP had previously ignored the question of ethnicity, claiming that ethnic strife would lead to disintegration, but gradually accepted it. The strategy was based on recognizing and supporting ethnic groups. Surviving members of the party testify that revolutionary organizations, such as the EPRP, have struggled to overthrow the repressive system by supporting other ethnic groups (Kiflu, 1998).

In addition, the major parties and organizations that represent the ethno nations to ensure national rights are the major parties that fuel this camp. The TPLF and OLF are the main ones, while other minority parties, which have been struggling for some time, have emerged, especially since the beginning of the multi-party system is started after 1991. The introduction of the multi-party system and the holding of elections every five years, the numbers of ethnic parties have increased from year to year.

Particularly after the Ethiopian revolution, acceptance and struggle for national identity or support for those who fought was a major manifestation of progress. At the same time, accepting Eritrea's demands and supporting the country's struggle for independence as part of Ethiopia was seen as an important sign of progress. As a result, the struggle intensified and the system was able to run smoothly. As the national parties gradually lost, nationalist parties, particularly the TPLF, emerged victorious, dispossessing the Pan-Ethiopians and their ideologues, as well as ethno-nationalists.

4.3.7. The Ethno Nationalist Stand on the Amhara

According to this narrative, the Amhara Nation in general can be concluded as the oppressive nation. Yet, the oppressive ruling class originated from it. Thus, the oppression fallen upon the Amharan people is considered in terms of class oppression, but not ethnic wise or nation wise (EPRDF, 2006). Unlike other nations, the Amhara people have not experienced racial oppression. In fact, it is believed that the Amhara people benefited from ethnic rights because of their language, culture, diet, dressing, proper name of individuals, and even the main religion became the grand or superior identity marker of the country (Wallelign, 1966).

In response, the ethno-nationalists worked tirelessly to defend their position of in particular, the major answers are not categorized by the Amhara nation. But there was a struggle against the ruling class. This is the position of all revolutionary organizations. They all fought. But the oppressed people of Amhara have been exploited by the same ruling class.

The dominance of Amharic language, culture, and religion, are not limited by one identity. In fact, they are also traced as Tigrean and Walelign mentioned as 'The Amhara culture' interchangeably with Tigrean as both nations share similar identity markers. Concerning the multi-national identity of the ruling class of the imperial era, ethno nationalists despite of recognizing the fact, they respond by stating that the core of the ruling class is dominated by Amhara and the other members are transformed in to Amharan identity in terms of psychology, culture and religion as it is demonstrated by king Michael who is formerly was Ras Ali.

Ethno nationalists also argue that if the Amhara nation had been completely considered as oppressor, the Amharas would not have fought. In particular, the fact that the ethnic identity of Walelign is being Amhara is considered by both conflicting groups as a key point. While the Pan Ethiopianists consider this as a deliberate act of the left to give the question coherence by defending it as a pure popular and progressive quest, Ethno nationalists present this same fact as the evidence for the non-racism content of the question.

4.3.8. Reaction to the Assimilation Project of Nation Building

According to Ethno-Nationalists, pre-revolutionary assimilation attempts do not succeed; instead went in the opposite direction and ignited ethno nationalism. Jawar Mohamed states that the previous regime's attempts to create a unique Ethiopian identity have not been succeed.

“This attitude [creating unified Ethiopian identity through assimilation] was challenged by opposing views from the nineteenth. A 'no crushing' movement began. To defend ones identity from demolition of identities, that believes ‘If there are different identities in one country, they cannot coexist in one country,

the opposite counter came out saying "Every nation should be divided and have its own country"¹⁸.

Although Jawar Mohammed believes that nationalism is a struggle for rights and freedoms, he does not support the end by secession and disintegration. He believes that secession exposes the disintegrated states to another kind of conflict and does not solve their problem.

"It simply came to our notice then. He scattered the first nations. Second, after the secession of a nation and the establishment of its own nation, peace prevailed. In addition, so-called multinational federalism is becoming a better option. It led to the idea that after the success of Indian democracy, many states in a country could have their own identity and gradually build a common national identity. So, from a theoretical point of view, I think national democracy is good for countries like Ethiopia"¹⁹.

Jawar Mohammed suggested a multinational democracy as a solution. "Multinational Democracy is the best alternative between the two extremes. When nationalism is ripped apart, disintegration is created. Such tendency will expose a state to be weakened. The disintegrated states will join into war with one another. At the other end of the spectrum, there is an ongoing struggle between nations, which want to see an end to assimilation. The fight against oppression also provokes war. The key to all of this is to incorporate unity into nationalism in a way that eliminates the two extremes. The nationalists believe that the question of nationality can only be alleviated when Unionist is weakened"²⁰.

4.4. Perceived Grievances and Suppressions by both Conflicting Parties

As shown in the narration of the two conflicting parties above, both sides are hurting each other by portraying themselves as victims. They also try to defeat the other party by placing the opposing side as the main culprit. In the next section of our research, we take a look at the perceived oppressions and grievances of both sides.

4.4.1. Pan-Ethiopianists Complaint

¹⁸ Ethiopia: Jawar Mohammed presentation at 2010 Horn of Africa Conference in Washington 81 DC - YouTube. Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkLqdlOT-3E>

¹⁹ Ethiopia: Jawar Mohammed presentation at 2010 Horn of Africa Conference in Washington 81 DC - YouTube. Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkLqdlOT-3E>

²⁰ Ethiopia: Jawar Mohammed presentation at 2010 Horn of Africa Conference in Washington 81 DC - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkLqdlOT-3E>

The Pan-Ethiopianists present the following major developments in the country's political system.

4.4.1.1. Threat of Being Stateless

From the point of view of the Pan-Ethiopianists, the country is divided into nations. In this case, people who are born into two or more nations or who do not identify themselves with one nation may feel that there is no place for them. People, especially in cities like Addis Ababa, have been made to feel that the cities do not belong to them. And, this creates perceived deprivations.

Lack of regional status of Addis Ababa and the fact that other cities have been handed over to the same nations is a matter of concern to Pan-Ethiopianists. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa are particularly being the focus of deprivation portrayal, for the Pan Ethiopian nationalist uses these cities as iconic representative of what Pan Ethiopianism looks like and the humiliating act upon these cities by ethno nationalists is considered as a political ploy to make the cities a minor district accountable to the federal government to deny their independence and self-rule.

Pan-Ethiopians raise the issue of native-settler dichotomy in a way that further confirms their complaint of putting the metropolitan and the Ethiopian nationalist into a condition of being 'stateless' and they present this threat as a political conspiracy.

The Pan Ethiopian nationalists support their threat by additional explanations that go into the federal arrangement. There are many nations in every region; yet, only one of them is considered to be the owner of the region while the rest are considered as immigrants and settlers. This is even more detrimental to the Amhara and the unity politicians. Because other citizens in Oromia and other regions are considered settlers and do not have full rights.

Yilkal Getnet. assumed that Amhara's struggle has three distinct goals. The first one is securing and sustain ones survival, as Amhara is endangered in survival issue. Secondly, securing its political, economic and social privileges as per to its own share not by donation but by legal right. The third goal is having its own country in cases when disintegration may be possibility (Yilkal , 2019).

Yonas Ashene (PHD), a political scientist in Addis Ababa University put the case as follow. “The system [the federal arrangement] poses the same problem for all nations. For example, Oromos in the Amhara region are a minority, while Amharas in Oromia are a minority in a similar manner. Not only that, it became dangerous to be a minority in each region. Everyone who travels away from home, not very far, gets himself in a place where he is treated as alien. And, if the people in that area traveled a little, they too would be a minority and new comer. Even those who are born of a few nations will not be spared.” Yonas went on to say: “When all the nations are in an uproar, living outside the territory poses a threat” (Yonas, 2019).

4.4.1.2. Threat of Disintegration

Pan-Ethiopians are convinced that ethnocentrism will disintegrate. They believe that this will hurt the country and its people, but they say that the problem is more frightening to them and that the nationalists are to blame. They said the threat of disintegration stemmed from the system: “The constitution is structured in such a way that it can destroy the country. Article 39 of the Constitution states that secession is a right given to a nation as of the structure nations and organized into regional states.”²¹

The fact that the right to secession was granted without the consent of the other nations is a matter for the country to disintegrate easily. The denial of the right to self-determination by one nation and another is a negative attitude. Therefore, from the very beginning, the Pan Ethiopian considers the constitution as if it is the basis for the disintegration of the country and was intended to be implemented gradually. Pan-Ethiopians are even more concerned about the fact that people who do not see themselves as members of the same ethnic group are not involved in the secessionist movement in any region.

4.4.1.3. The Problem of Non-representation

It is common for Pan Ethiopians to complain that only nations are represented in the country at the federal and state levels. The parties in power are ethnic. Parliamentary seats are also held by the parties that represent Bahrain. Pan-Ethiopianist organizations and individuals have been denied this opportunity.

²¹ The Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,1995.Article 39.

It is argued that the constitution was ratified in this way because Pan Ethiopians did not participate in the process. This is what Andreas Eshete, (2013) who played a key role in the drafting of the constitution, said during a debate between Meles Zenawi and Mesfin Wolde Mariam on Amhara national issues. “I think there is an issue that needs to be addressed. There are organizations representing different nations, but no one has come forward to claim to represent Ethiopianness”²². Complaints from Amhara politicians that were not represented at the time of transitional government, (post 1991). Proponents of this case have been working to make the actual transcript of this statement available online. They also argued that the constitution should be abolished, not reformed, and that they should not be represented.

The Amhara party, NAMA, has been promoting this idea through its leaders. "The current constitution, which is signed by EPRDF and OLF, goes against the will of the people of Amhara and the like-minded people," commented Desalegn Chane, former president of NAMA (Desalegn, 2020). Similarly, Amhara's political interests have been deliberately pushed aside, and Amhara organizations have worked to marginalize Amhara. At the same time, they have done a disservice to the Pan-Ethiopianist Party, which is considered oppressive.

Amanuel Tesfaye considers “the very narrative of the current federal arrangement” as the driving force for the coming of Amhara nationalism that is obligated to deviate from its Pan Ethiopianist status quo²³. Many of the nationalist share this idea due to few reasons. First, they think that the federal arrangement is ethnic based, so that it is in favor of other ethnic groups while excluding The Amhara which is dispersed throughout the country (Misganaw, 2002).

Secondly, they raise the question of representation during the transition and affirm that the federal arrangement is undertaken without the representation and participation of Amhara.

Though they claim themselves as one among the competing nations, they do not have interest to be bounded by the boundary recognized Amharan national region.

²² Meles Zenawi and Mesfin Woldemariam about the existence of Amhara 1991 E C - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8SXeZGnxls&t=16s>

²³ Amanuel Tesafye. (2018). Commentary: The Birth of Amhara Nationalism: Causes, Aspirations, and Potential Impacts - Addis Standard. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://addisstandard.com/commentarythe-birth-of-amhara-nationalism-causesaspirations-and-potential-impacts>

On the contrary, they think other national regions have the chance of being in their home land with the ultimate privilege of self-rule. As a result, they consider The FDRE constitution unacceptable to the Amhara and the Pan Ethiopianist. Renouncing the system, they call for institutional reform or removal of the system. Amanuel put the inherent deficiency of the Federal arrangement to satisfy the Amharan demand as follow:

“Thus, by design, the federation aimed to ‘liberate’ the multitude of ethnicities in order to enable ‘self-determination’, while simultaneously containing the Amhara so that other groups can continue to exercise their ‘self-rule’”²⁴.

Bazezew Chane interview held by the researcher, though he was a leading member of ANDM, reflected his position of representation of Amhara in Arsi, where he thought half of the population is Amhara.

Yilka (2019), also claims that in all cities and towns of the whole region where the Amhara population is enormous enough to be represented in the upper political administration, there should be delegation of power, and due respect of the constitutional right of self-administration in Oromia and SNNP where Amhara is enormous.

The question of representation exceeds up to the rearrangement of the constitution and the federal system since both are designed without the participation of Amhara and in a manner that can fulfill the interest of Amharan territorial claims in other national regions.

4.4.2. Ethno-Nationalists Grievance and Perceived Deprivation

Ethno-nationalists also have grievances. Not only are these happening but they are also problems that they think are still happening in different institutions. Most of all, they fear that we will be in danger because there are Ethiopianists working to restore order. Their main concerns are as follows.

²⁴ Amanuel Tesafye. (2018). Commentary: The Birth of Amhara Nationalism: Causes, Aspirations, and Potential Impacts - Addis Standard. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://addisstandard.com/commentarythe-birth-of-amhara-nationalism-causesaspirations-and-potential-impacts>

4.4.2.1. National Oppression

The main idea of the ethno-nationalists is to focus on the widespread oppression in Ethiopia for centuries. People lived in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. Oppression is seen in the fact that the ruling class has been oppressing and exploiting the masses. Then there is racial oppression.

This oppression has made the country look like a nation with more than eighty nations. The Amhara Nation dominated until it appeared to be the only nation. The language, religion, diet, dress, and festivals of other nations were considered non-existent, and citizens were held in high esteem for their identities (Jalata, 1993; Tafla, 2000).

They spoke in their mother tongue, but they did not receive legal protection, and they were mistreated. They also had to stand up for justice. Even if they were named in their own language, they would change their name to Amharic.

In his autobiography, Sibhat Gebre-Egziabher, we find the following story in his native Tigray. "As a farmer from Tigray, an armed veteran from the interior of the country yells at a farmer, 'Stop!' The farmer replied, "Oh my lord, I am poor and I can't speak Amharic" (Zenebe, n.d.).

People who used to go abroad at that time introduced their country only to the Amhara culture. For example, one young Ethiopian went to the World Youth Forum to promote his country and exchange experiences in 1957; and when he was asked about Ethiopia: "I am not a black African. Neither I am from the inferior ethnicities of Ethiopia. I am Amhara. ... Amhara is the largest and most civilized ethnic group in Ethiopia. It is not like other black Africans." (Vintage, n.d.) This statement surprised many. The document is still widely circulated on social media.

The ethno-nationalists, who have been complaining about the country's national oppression in this way, have always remembered Walelign Mekonnen. Ever since the regime was overthrown and the rights of the people have been respected, they have been celebrating the day of the Constitution and the day of his martyrdom.

Despite the repression at the governmental level, they continue to lash out at disrespectful and degrading sentiments towards nations. Although most ethno-nationalists do not accept

colonialism thesis, they partially or completely support the themes of the colonial thesis advocates claim. These include the prohibition exercising one's own culture and dominated by the other which is considered as superior. Losing of one's identity by the act of assimilating, exploitation and expropriation are some examples that they share from the colonial thesis. Above all, as advocates claim, the rulers plundered the people by giving land to their own troops from the interior.

Tedros Kassahun (Teddy Afro), a vocalist who recently said, "Menelik's war is a holy war because it has united the country," has provoked strong opposition from Oromo nationalist Jawar Mohamed. Teddy's sponsor at the time, Bedele, was banned from drinking beer and boycotted the company (*OFS*, 2013).

4.4.2.2. Violation of Cultural Rights

One of the manifestations of ethnic oppression is that the oppressors are prevented from developing other languages as a result of their policy of creating one national language. Ethno-nationalists complain that the country's original language policy was to abolish one language and destroy another. The modern authorities, who have publicly promoted the abolition of the Amharic language, have come up with their own ideas. Bahiru Zewde, in his study of modern Ethiopia, mentioned this tendency of imperial authorities to abolish other languages and cultures in order to create a unified identity by the Amharic identity.

Jawar Mohammed also claimed that the imperial Ethiopia was focused on assimilation by adopting the French Policy. "Aklilu Habtewold and other contemporary officials of him were French students, and they believed that following the French assimilation policy would unite the country. So they tried to strengthen the unity of the country by trying to assimilate. However, instead of strengthening, the assimilation process weakens the country. Because of the opposition of the people, the question of self-determination arose as a huge political question"²⁵.

The adoption of the orthodox religion 'of the Amhara' to be the national religion, the denial of the rights of other religions, and the systematic oppression that hinders other ethnicities identity are the major claims reflected in Walelign's thesis (Walelign, 1966). One of the

²⁵ Ethiopia: Jawar Mohammed presentation at 2010 Horn of Africa Conference in Washington 81 DC - YouTube. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkLqdlOT-3E>

forms of oppression that Walegn described was religious oppression. “One has to speak Amharic to be a good Ethiopian; He must follow the orthodox religion of Amhara.” Due to this claim Ethiopian Muslims were protesting against the regime, and those revolutionists stood with the Muslim, supporting their cause.

Cultural oppression is similarly manifested in the oppositions by mentioning those claims of the Pan Ethiopianists who tried to portray Ethiopia as a Monoculture state of Amhara. Diplomats, students and others, who got the opportunity to represent Ethiopia in the international stages, had claimed that the Amhara is superior and others as inferior. The fact that ethnic groups, such as the Oromo are large in number and cover the vast share of the country’s land, still they are considered as inferior to the extent that being majority can’t save ethnic groups from suppression is the main evidence of cultural oppression. There are complaints that the minority cultures have been crushed and swallowed up by the Amhara culture. Complaints that anti-ethnic sentiments are still rampant, insults and derogatory remarks about ethnic groups are widely cited by ethno-nationalists as a source of grievances.

4.4.2.3. Land Relocation and Contemporary Deprivation

The aristocracy made land available to a few people. Most of the provinces are run by members of the Amhara ruling elite who have been exploited by their neighbors. This protest prompted the “land to the tenant” protests (Zewde, 2010).

According to Merera G. analysis, during the reign of the emperors, land ownership varied from northern Ethiopia to southern Ethiopia. “The northern farmer counts the seed and inherits it. He cultivates freely. In southern and Oromia, however, the land was given to the plunderer. A third version was added for the morning, a third for the presenter, and a third for the farmer. The landowner plundered his own land. An Unfulfilled Cruel System” (Merera, 2007).

Land grabbing created a booming political economy, and economic exploitation intensified its ethnic oppression. The plunderer follows the emperors and conquers the local people, forcing them to occupy the land. Thus, the newcomer to the ruling Amhara or the Amhara ruling class, Shewa, in addition to its economic benefits, created ethnic oppression in which the Amharic language and culture were trampled upon.

Ethno-nationalists are concerned that the situation could be reversed even after constitutional change and the protection of the rights of nations. The private media, opposition parties, civic associations, and religious and cultural institutions are all seeking to overturn the constitution, and they fear that the system will be overthrown and that nations will return to oppression.

The trend witnessed during the 2005 election has fueled this fear. The Pan-Ethiopian Front's alliance by the main opposition CUD (Coalition for Democracy and Unity) threatens the ethno-nationalists leading to the idea that ethnic groups would be in danger of being swallowed up. At various times, there were claims that state 'unionists trying to crush us.'

4.4.2.4. Pseudo Ethiopianism

The Pan-Ethiopians, who have always been concerned about the unity of Ethiopia, have been complained to be concerned only for one nation, the Amhara. They are also accused of promoting racism in the Ethiopian mask. 'For them, being a good Ethiopian means being Amhara. But they pretend to be lawyers for all Ethiopians.' (As articulated by Waleligh M. and repeated by many nationalists such as Meles Z., Jawar)

In his book, Emperor Yohannes and Emperor Menelik, GebreKidan D. describes this claim. "One is considered as a good Ethiopian only if and only if he is willing to abandon his own language, culture and religion. If he respects his identity, he will not be considered an Ethiopian" (*Gebre*, 2018.).

The fake nationalism naming is in fact first coined by Waleligh when he said "There is of course the fake Ethiopian nationalism advanced by the ruling class and unwillingly accepted and even propagated by innocent fellow travelers" (Mekonnen, 1966). And Meles Zenawi also affirms this on interview by Diaspora media: "You do not have to be a bad Oromo to be a good Ethiopian. On the other hand, to be a good Oromo, you do not have to be a bad Ethiopian" (Meles, 2009).

Ethno-Nationalists argue that "Ethiopian nationalism, which is not based on the root national identities, is a fake nationalism." Ibsa Gutema, who is known for his poem "Who is the Ethiopian?" questions the genuine As a result, it is being criticized that Pan Ethiopians are underestimating their ethnicity and claiming that they are Ethiopians.

Pan Ethiopians are especially criticized for arguing that "we have no ethnicity" and "Our ethnicity is Ethiopian" is a mask from the Amhara people. Ethno-Nationalists blame this: "We have been crushed by the mask of Ethiopianness; we still have this concern."

4.5. Main Conflicts Undertaken Between the Conflicting Parties

After the 1991 regime change, though blood war terminated, the war of narrative continued by both parties two sides representing each other. The so-called mainstream Pan Ethiopianism is represented by the fallen government, while the anti-ethno-nationalist narrative is represented by the founders of the new government. Even after that, there was no end to the fighting. The narratives are represented by different parties and have created various conflicts.

4.5.1. Conflicts in Oromia

Following the 1991 change, there were clashes between members of the Amhara ethnic group living in the OLF and the Oromia region, which claims to represent the Oromo people. The clashes took place in Arsi, Bale, and Harar.

According to the ethno-nationalists, the Amharas in Oromia came from Menelik's time aimed to perpetuate national oppression. This is what they call 'Settler Colonialism' (Birru, 1981). The Amharas, on the other hand, oppose being called settlers by arguing that Pan Ethiopianists was an Ethiopianist before Menelik II and that the state could not be called Oromo. They describe themselves as equal to the Oromo (Getaneh, 2019).

This narrative has escalated into a full-blown conflict that has resulted in bloodshed at various times. Conflicts occur, especially when the government is weak and there is a systemic change. After a change in 1991, a transitional government was formed. OLF, which was involved in the transitional government, has the opportunity to govern Oromia. However, conflicts have followed (Merera, 2011).

Interviews with locals at the time of transition period (post 1991) stated that OLF had categorized and labeled Amharas and other dwellers in the region, as 'those who are married with Oromos', Oromos who are mingled with Amaharas though marriage or other relatins, and moderate Oromos that doesn't engage actively with the OLA. As of the radical nationalists, the word Amhara is not limited to the people of Amhara descent but also people

of different nationalities, including Oromo living in the cities and allied socioeconomically with the pan Ethiopian mindset. These were classified as Amhara because of the perceived positions that they would have been in a negative view of the new Oromo state.

An unknown number of city dwellers were brutally murdered. The survivors were waiting in line for a list of names. “As we learned later, it was decided that all the inhabitants of the city should be identified, identified, and when and where they would be killed. The unarmed were just a few days away from being executed. They survived by accident. A record of the names of those killed was found. Not only were the names of the victims but also the method of execution written. Most of the executions were horrific”

The victims also took defensive measures. Most of them spent the night in their home, in a small fortress, to protect themselves and their families. Some even went so far as to kill the gunmen. However, they could not save themselves because of the lack of weapons.

The problem was solved by the transition government, which resorted to force. The government, which had been neglecting the situation firstly, began to take action as the consequences intensified and the damage came to itself. Eventually, the OLF was crushed and the leadership fled, and the army disbanded.

The EPRDF has reaffirmed its absolute supremacy over the administration of Oromia. The Oromo-Amhara ethnic conflict also brought temporary relief. The controversy continued, but the fighting subsided. Both parties were able to live together in a balanced view. As a result, they were able to stay calm. Massive Conflict between Ethno nationalists and Pan-Ethiopians On the contrary, they continued to be suspicious of each other. Controversial issues, political, economic, and similar issues that may arise between the two parties have not been properly addressed and have caused further damage at various times.

4.5.2. Conflicts in Addis Ababa

The main conflict between Pan-Ethiopianists and Ethno-Nationalists took place in Addis Ababa is not only the site of the conflict but also the cause of the conflict. The Oromo ethnonationalists staged a massive protest against the erection of a statue of Menelik II in the center of the capital, expressing their hatred for Menelik II and the regime by wearing black monuments. Menelik's supporters, meanwhile, protested in support of Menelik, protesting

against the demolition. These questions did not lead to conflict at the time, but it did indicate the status of the two essays.

This is exactly what happened when the system changed and the transitional government came to power. It is well known that both narratives originate Menelik and Menelik's system.

The Pan Ethiopianist considers Menelik as the source of unification (Messay, 2015), while the Ethno nationalist sees as the source of oppression (Jalata, 1993). These contradicting attitudes have led to a series of deadly clashes, particularly in Oromia. Demonstrations in the capital Addis Ababa, demonstrated in front of the two camps. The fact that the protests began in Menelik II Square was a sign of the future. In fact, the situation has since escalated in Addis Ababa and other parts of Oromia. In the aftermath of the 2005 election in particular, the conflict has become a major issue.

Exponential growth of party membership is one measure taken by EPRDF as a mechanism of defending itself from potential threats or another risk from the Pan Ethiopianist. The EPRDF enumerated its members, believing that it should increase its membership. It reported that 5 million members had been recruited during that period. After two years, it has campaigned hard to create such a large number of members and recapture the power that was constituted by the rival Party, CUD or any other Pan Ethiopian nationalist.

The moment also urged EPRDF to undergo ideological baptismal training. This time some criticized it, saying: “The party has not changed; but tried to emulate the Pan Ethiopianist agenda. The EPRDF announced that it had become the dominant party following its proliferation and winning the next election and then called the system ‘the dominant party system.’ Opposition parties were divided over the issue. Some lost their legal status. The main ones fled. Opposition parties have stated they will not run in the by-elections, but only one party will win. The council was 100% occupied by representatives of the ruling party.

Although the EPRDF did not change its ideology and ethno-nationalist position, it began to try new ways instead of continuing as before. For example, during the celebration of the Ethiopian Millennium, Meles Zenawi, in a unique way, boasted that Ethiopia was a great civilization and that this greatness was gradually declining. This speech was ones considered as the Pan Ethiopianist narrative which was not favored by ethno nationalists.

“Although we do not know how our ancestors celebrated it a thousand years ago, it is unquestionably a great civilization. We must still celebrate this millennium as a wake-up call for the resurrection of Ethiopia.” (Meles, 2007)

Most of Meles' statements, including the Ethiopian Resurrection, Ethiopian period of Renaissance etc. were not previously spoken by ethno-nationalists and were not used by revolutionaries. It was used by self-proclaimed patriots, lovers of royal Ethiopia, and by Pan Ethiopians. This discussion eventually led to discussions within the party on merging the party and promoting a unified ideology. At the time, Tefera Walwa, a member of the party's leadership, supported the merger. The matter was referred to be decided by the executive committee of the party.

Mixing of the two camps were another feature that triggered by the conflict of 2005. The situation of the one-sided political activist has begun to mingle with the nationalists. The Pan Ethiopians, who founded Ginbot 7, have started working with ethno-nationalist organizations such as OLF. The OLF also agreed to work with the much-hated Pan-Ethiopianist organization.

This situation did not completely solve the problem. They agreed to fight together, but their attitude did not change. Pan Ethiopians traveled to Eritrea to negotiate with the Ethiopian government to reclaim their lost power through peaceful means. The Eritrean government's policy of sheltering Ethiopia's enemies continues to support Pan Ethiopian. The OLF has already started armed struggle in Eritrea earlier.

Narratives continue to erupt in the aftermath of Meles Zenawi's death. For example, the emergence of Abiy Ahmed as a leader and the strengthening of the ethno national politics by political figures such as Jawar are major events. While Abiy Ahmed was in the EPRDF, the fact that he was seen as a pan-Ethiopianist was a sign that the EPRDF wanted to change its policy. However, widespread ethnic strife is a sign of growing ethnic politics in the country. Conflict in all directions resulted in many deaths and displacements. As a result, the conflict has escalated into a full-blown civil war.

The government appointed Investigation commission to investigate and measure the extent of violence by security forces. Opposition groups called for an inquiry into the deaths of victims of the conflict. The EPRDF, however, established a free and independent commission, in

which only Ethiopians could participate in the debate over our own internal affairs. The commission, headed by Professor Gemechu, contacted various parties, including the families of the victims, and reported the extent of the damage to the House of Representatives.

Although, the Investigation Commission was not trusted a neutral body by the opposition, it did not provide sufficient evidence of its impartiality. Opposition was high because the government nominated it. In his final report, the chairperson explained: "We agree not to conclude that the government has taken appropriate action even if someone has been killed." The conflict necessitated an arbitration Process. In addition, the government chose to solve the problem by local mechanisms not to accept foreign actors. The principle of reconciliation must be with the elders by refusing to accept foreign delegations to mediate the release of imprisoned members of the opposition. A delegation of elders led by Prof. Ephraim Isaac was able to apologize to the prisoners and the government to pardon them.

After two years of negotiations, the prisoners were released, and conditions prevailed. It is the first step in filling out an apology form and apologizing in a letter to the government. The amnesty board investigated the matter and presented it to the president, who granted it in accordance with the law.

The prime minister made the remarks at a press conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Tuesday. The disbanded politicians, however, became divided. Soon most of them fled. Conflict escalated into a full-blown civil war.

4.6. Methods of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation

The conflict in narratives and the conflict fueled by historical narratives are not closed until these days. Different parties and concerned individuals are trying to provide different ideas that may lead to reconciliation and peace building. Although many efforts are still on the side of competition over cooperation, and each group focused on being superior by dominating the rival, some efforts are still hovering over the integration aspect. Now it has been clear that without integration one of the attitudes cannot be the ultimate solution. Below are some of recommend strategies that different sides provide as reconciling mechanisms.

- **Constitutional resolution**

The FDRE constitution has been widely presented as a solution of answering the core questions of nationality and providing a right to rule and legally decide ones interest. On the one hand, it has established a system of nations to have a regional government and to administer them at the zonal or district level by their own choice. The constitution provides for the right to self-determination to the point of secession. It is also stated that this right is given to avoid conflict. The solution to the problem is to allow the nation to be legally divided without resorting to violence. Especially the EPRDF and other ethno nationalist groups claim the solution from the constitution is ultimately possible.

On the other hand, the constitution guarantees the restoration of unity in a federal system, and the federalism system is also known as the holding together, which ensures that it includes not only the rights of nations but also unity. The constitution provides for the protection of oppressed nations in the fight for their rights and freedoms. On the other hand, the Pan Ethiopianist, who seeks unity, is built on the idea that in order not to disintegrate; it will be respected the rights of nations.

- **The Organizational structure of the security**

National security and intelligence, police, and defense forces are built on national wise by centralism principle. While being centralized allows the interests of Pan Ethiopianists, the contribution of members is from the regions secure the ethno nationalism interest.

- **Searching for the Middle way**

From the two conflicting sides, ideas that create balanced views have been suggested as alternatives. Meles Zenawi, for example, has been coined the conception of coming together in Ethiopian history in his various statements. "But the history of each nation, which is part of the history of Ethiopia, will be not only limited to that area, but to the whole country," he said. Abiy Ahmed has further expanded this view that "Medemer" as the only option in the country. The title book has been distributed in several copies. This book has been translated into Afan Oromo and English. He further added that the reason for the coming together was to explain the differences between the two sides (Abiy, 2019).

- **The Art of Compromise**

The art of compromise has been tried as a potential solution. The two opposing narratives try to reconcile over time, embracing each other and minimizing the other's fears. For example, the majority of the OLF, which promotes separatism as a goal, has softened its stance and turned to self-governing politics. Other nationalist activists have also pushed for a united front to gain more support and reduce the risk of political instability. Realizing that ethnic politics is not something they despise in the first place, they are reluctant to think of it as unpopular and insist that the rights of all nations be respected.

- **Utilizing the Role of Social and Cultural Institutions:**

Different cultural mechanisms have been used as conflict interventions and build peace building initiatives. Religious ties, arbitrations in ethnicities have been included in the modern apparatus to enhance the system. Institutions such as the Ethiopian Council of Religions, Religions for Peace, etc. are tools used to build peace by modernizing cultural institutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusions and concluding remarks

5.1. Conclusions

In this Research, the issues raised at the conflicting dynamics of the two parties that stood on contending historical narratives. The first contending camp is the Pan Ethiopianist while the second one is Ethno-nationalist. AS we have seen at the different courses of the research process, the Pan-Ethiopianist is considered as the mainstream one, for its narrative has been endured from early times of imperial and still its voice doesn't cherish up to these days.

The second conflicting camp, the Ethno-nationalist, is emanated from the Ethiopian student movement (ESM) as a counter narrative of an anti-thesis of the Pan Ethiopianists. As the Ethiopian revolution breaks, the question of nationality emerged as one major political question and leads to argument, narrative development and deconstruction of the mainstream history. Major political organizations of the post revolution have given enormous support for the historicization of the ethno nationalist version with the narratives of national oppression, and the due political question that demands reversing the status quo.

Nationalist groups and freedom fighters took this ethno nationalist narrative as the main narrative for their cause articulating manifesto, ideology and mass mobilization indoctrinations so that the narrative developed from simple argument into embodied manifestations of organization, army building, mass mobilization, alliance formation etc. The main ethnic organizations are TPLF, ELF, and OLF. From these organizations, ELF can be assumed unique, for it extends the cause as colonial question. Due to the difference of the question and the recognition of the question by other revolutionist organization, its struggle had concluded by secession. ELF's question is not a mere national oppression. It has been undergone diversified claims from colonial thesis up to national oppression thesis.

The ELF with other Oromo nationalists question the structure of the country from the imperial up to now whenever they want to struggle for power quest or call for rebellion. These methods of opposition have been continued after the 2018 transition, which is considered to happen by the Qero opposition. Though the prime minster is from ethnical Oromo and OPDO (an Oromo party), and the main offices are took by the Oromo individuals

who have been struggled for Oromo wrights, other oppositions from Oromo movements raise the old age questions as they are not still resolved.

The 1991 regime change happened as a key point of history by which the established narrative of Pan-Ethiopianism pushed away from the government arena and became the narrative of the major oppositions while the ethno nationalist narrative assumed power and all the government apparatuses propagate the ideals of the conquered side.

Both sides of the conflicting parties are still fighting by narratives and consequentially by forceful measures. The first conflict rose, as this research showed is the one took place by OLA lead Oromo ethno nationalists with the Amhara dominated urban dwellers in the Oromian region. As these people are considered as ‘Neftegnas’ by OLF, they would be subjected for evacuation. Yet, the forceful acts of evacuation and killings motivate reactions though the dwellers have not been armed well so that they became victims of mass murders until war between EPRDF army and OLA burst and the later exterminated to the end.

After the OLA leading conflict culminated temporary peace has been established by the conflict intervention and peace building initiatives set by the EPRDF initiatives. Yet the claims of both groups don’t come to an end. At different periods, conflicting incidents have been witnessed the unsettlement of the narrative based conflicts.

Each research questions of this paper addressed the essential features of the conflicting parties with their perceived deprivations. The first one demonstrated the key characteristics the Pan Ethiopianist camp. This Camp is characterized by its conception of Ethiopia as a nation of 3000 years with a history of prolonged government. By the virtue of its precedence, it can be considered as the thesis of the dialectics. The Camp sees its narrative as the main pillar for the county’s unity and, therefore the opposition to its ideologue is considered as the heretic and anti Ethiopianist.

Secondly, the anti-thesis of the Pan Ethiopianists is the one created at the era of revolution and now is known as ‘Ethno-nationalist. The root of this camp is from the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM). AS it is emanated from the discourses of the revolutionists, it has been considered as progressive and lead to the organizing of parties and ideological capital for those organizations committed to armed struggle. This view is selected by the ethno nationalist and liberalist groups, for its opposition stand against the established Pan Ethiopianist view and supports for national liberty and self-rule.

The synthesis of the two contending parties is the proposed solutions by the proponents of both parties and different concerned individuals for the coexistence and/or the reconciliation of the ideologues. In this paper we have seen this issue at the fifth research question. EPRDF, OLF and other parties who are participated in the transitional government established after 1991 regime change, have proposed the constitution as a solution. Moreover, the reform took place by both parties can also be considered as additional endeavor for conflict intervention and peace building process.

EPRDF and other ethno nationalists tried to embrace the questions of pan Ethiopianists by taking some points of narrative into their own arena. For instance, Meles Zenawi, in his speech at the Ethiopian Millennium (2007), expresses Ethiopia as an ancient state with great civilizations. OLF, on the other hand signed to collaborate with Pan Ethiopianists, while the Pan Ethiopianists also agreed to struggle with the OLF and other ethno nationalist parties.

The great method that successfully created the synthesis is the one proposed as ‘Medemer’. Though the term is coined by Meles Zenawi, it is popularized by Abi Ahmed. By this ideology both contending parties have been come to join into the government. When EPRDF changed into prosperity party (PP), the narrative shift had been experimented and as a result EZEMA, a party of Pan Ethiopianist agreed to work with PP, and the ruling party with the ethno nationalistic sentiment inside it, added the Pan Ethiopianist rhetoric to reconcile the old age antagonism.

The third and fourth research questions inquired the grievances and perceived deprivations of the conflicting parties that had been raised as a rationale for the hatred behind the conflict. How these grievances lead to conflict, and the main points of history that revealed conflicts had been witnessed due to the narratives are pointed out.

Pan Ethiopianists mention the suppressions that are imposed upon them by the duly ethno nationalist forces that are able to assume power after 1991 and by the constitutionally rearranged structure. They perceive the constitution and the federal arrangement as structural attack towards the Pan Ethiopianism camp, especially towards the Amhara and the metropolitans. In addition, the Pan Ethiopianists feel as if they are being threatened by the ethno nationalists as the country is divided into regional states by ethnic lines and any one as a group or an individual can never possess a state ownership without being first possessed in one of the recognized ethnicities.

Pan Ethiopianists fear the loss of the countries' continuity, as the ethno nationalism threatens the unity and if there would be any dissatisfaction of certain regional state, disintegrations will be inevitable. They consider disintegration as inherent problem of the constitution buried by ethno nationalists so as to ensure their power for unlimited period of time and if they fail to do so, they have put disintegration as an alternative plan.

Ethno nationalists, on the other hand, have been threatened of being assimilated and consequentially loss of their identity and privilege of self-rule. Though they believe that the current constitution is in favor of them and guaranteed their privilege, they are not satisfied fully. Some of them object the democratic nature of the federation while others claim that power is concentrated at the center, and as a result regional states cannot exercise their Rights.

Ethno nationalists also present their fears of reversing the federal system by the Pan Ethiopianists. Though the regime from 1991 up to now is still from the side of the nationalist cause, the cultural tendencies, the media domination and the urban demography is in favour of the Pan Ethiopianists, so the perceived deprivation is still apparent to the ethno nationalists.

Due to these and other grievances, major conflicts had been witnessed between these two categories. From these conflicts, the main ones are those happened in Oromia and in Addis are featured in this research. The first one is led by OLA as a protagonist of the conflict drama and provoked the urban dwellers of Oromia (basically Arsi, Bale, and Harer) as antagonists. These conflicts continued until EPRDF army exterminated The OLA.

The other main conflict is that which occurred after the 2005 national election. The conflicting parties can be traced according to the two categorical narratives of Pan Ethiopianism, and Ethno nationalism. The former was represented by the CUD (Coalition for Unity and Democracy), while the latter is mainly represented by EPRDF. Both parties argued verbally before the election and forcefully after the election. The post-election conflict was occurred at the capital city when the opposition party claimed to assume power and the ruling party resisted by its own claim of winning the election.

The riot called by CUD supporters changed into violent attacks on government properties and as a reaction security forces shoot more than 100 people. This conflict prolonged for weeks

and resolved by the forceful measures of government such as poisoning leaders and many other ordinary citizens.

After the violent conflicts, temporary peace established and examining commission appointed by the federal government and then reconciling committee volunteered to intervene the conflict and building peace. Both committees worked for their goal and at the end the commission presented the report for house of people's representatives and the reconciling committee successfully created an agreed upon environment between the conflicting parties, consequentially prisoners freed and the government appointed a neutral body of administration for Addis Ababa to fill the vacuum created by the resign of the CUD.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research and the observation of the researcher, a few recommendations can be given both for the fixing of the ongoing conflicting relationships and for those who are going to commit to conduct additional researches.

The Pan Ethiopianist versus Ethno nationalist argument and conflict dynamics is not yet the resolved one. The 2021 Tigray war is considered as an evidence for the presence of the argument. In Oromia, OLA is mongering for self-determination and different ethnic conflicts are still considered by many scholars as the continuation of such ideological war. So, in order to settle the conflict strong conflict intervention mechanisms must be taken into account by both parties.

The Ethiopian government, as a major responsibility holder of peace building must work to reconcile both parties by ensuring the satisfaction of their interests and through mediation. The main role of government should be focused on establishing a system that each group refrains from extremism and recognizing the interest of the group.

Firstly, Pan Ethiopianists refrain from the denial of national suppression, so that it would lead them into recognition of the perceived deprivations of ethno nationalists. The denial of one's perceived grievance cannot be acceptable and even it can be assumed as unethical act, for it lacks empathy for the suppressed.

Secondly, the Ethno nationalist also should be able to recognize the threats of the Pan Ethiopianist since other identity cannot be marked though one and single ethnic lines. Other

identities should be taken into account so that the ethno nationalist can broaden the democratization of the political process and the inclusion of other ethnic and non-ethnic identity markers into its arena.

Thirdly, each group must refrain from rigidity and needs to include the other opinion in the political doctrine of itself. Demonizing the other category should be no more the strategy of mass mobilization. Many scholars and concerned parties are suggested that it became clear that no one of the conflict parties can solely be the solution and the only governing body of the government apparatus. So elite bargain and continued discussion must be taken seriously.

Mostly the solutions have been taken for political tactic and this has been the cause for disagreements. But sole winner cannot be guaranteed and prolonged conflict became the norm. Genuine discussion and inclusive system is not just for the benefit of the other party but for both in the side of the privileged and at the arena of the opposition in order to guarantee sustainable peace.

Finally, Researchers need to conduct additional studies in the field. Though many historians and political scientists agree with the antagonism of the two parties, sufficient researches have not yet been made. In addition, this leads to the continued conflict, and even a prolonged war. Therefore, the field needs deep insights and alternative solutions inquired through many other studies.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

1. In Ethiopia, there is a division between 'unity forces' and 'nationalists'. Which is better for the country? Which one do you say will cause damage to our country?
2. Which section of society do you believe has been victimized by the system since 1991?
3. Do you believe that there was ethnic oppression in Ethiopia during the reign of the kings?
4. Since 1991, how and why have public conflicts between unity activists and nationalists arisen?
5. Do you have a solution for the two sides to come out of the conflict and build a peaceful system?