

U.S. INTERVENTIONS AND CONFLICT IN MULTINATIONAL ETHIOPIA

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AI	Amnesty International
ATP	Anti-Terrorism Proclamation
ANDM	Amahara National Democratic Movement
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
CSA	Central Statistical Agency (of Ethiopia)
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
DOD	United States Department of Defense
DHS	The Department of Homeland Security
DOS	United States Department of State
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council

ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Forces
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESA	Ethiopian Studies Association
ETV	Ethiopian Television (state-owned).
EUEOM	European Union Election Observation Mission
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
Ginbot7	Ginbot7 (May 7) Party.
GoE	The Government of Ethiopia
GWOT	The Global War on Terrorism
HRLHA	Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HVTs	High-Value Targets
IMET	The International Military Education and Training
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group (of U.S.)

NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service (Ethiopia's Agency)
NSC	National Security Council
OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
OFDM	Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONC	Oromo National Congress
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization
OSA	Oromo Studies Association
OSG	The Oromia Support Group (UK)
PM	Prime Minister
PMAC	Provisional Military Advisory Council (Derg)
S-CAR	School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
SLF	Sidama Liberation Front
SNNPRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State

TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigre Peoples Liberation Front
UDJ	Unity for Democracy and Justice
U.S.	The United States of America
USG	The United States Government
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics
WSLF	Western Somalia Liberation Front

## **ABSTRACT**

### **U.S. INTERVENTIONS AND CONFLICT IN MULTINATIONAL ETHIOPIA**

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By combining the case study approach with in-depth historical and political analyses, this study examined U.S. intervention in multi-ethnic Ethiopia. Most studies of U.S. intervention in Ethiopia and the Horn have exclusively focused on the benevolent humanitarian aid aspect of intervention involving food aid and emergency assistance during and after civil wars. This research not only problematizes the traditional notion of intervention in Ethiopia, but most importantly it makes fundamental departures from traditional perspectives and examines the various forms of intervention as justifications for choosing narrowly-based authoritarian elites from Ethiopia's north. The objective of the study was to understand and describe why the United States has chosen the elites-led Ethiopian state as a linchpin in checking, containing or stamping out communism during the Cold War and terrorism during the era of the Global War on Terrorism. Multi-layered issues relating to the international aspect of U.S.-Ethiopia relations were examined using Morgenthau's and Mearsheimer's theory of realism. It applied Johan Galtung's theory

of structural and direct violence theoretical lens and investigated the local structural and direct violence dimensions of U.S.-Ethiopia relations, which spans over a century and is probably the longest-running of U.S. ties with any countries in the sub-Saharan Africa.

The study finds that during the eras of the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism, the U.S. has militarized its foreign policy-driven interventions towards Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The priority of this militarized relationship has focused on strengthening the military capabilities of known repressive Horn/Ethiopian regimes. As the U.S. militarized its relations with its communist and Islamic extremist rivals in the region, Ethiopia's northern elites also militarized their relationship with internal ethno-nationalist arch rivals and challengers, which the study confirms has contributed to massive human rights violations with impunity. As can be extrapolated from the study, U.S. foreign policy elites have starkly failed to analyze exactly whom they are entering into alliance and what the long-term impact of that would be among local groups in Ethiopia and the Horn. In the case of Ethiopia, America has chosen and legitimated narrowly-based unelected authoritarian leaders who oppress ethnic "Others" and whose terms of office go from two decades to four decades at times. The approach has alienated peoples of the political and power periphery who seek reform and representation in the state system privately owned by the centrist (northern) elites. If this trend is not addressed, the popular perception of the U.S. as a major benefactor of a brutal dictatorship is likely to further fuel legitimate popular resentments and threaten U.S. interests in Ethiopia and the Horn. It is recommended that present approaches need to be revised in order to ensure the sustainability of stability and counter-terrorism by

empowering the majority who have long suffered massive human rights violations and structural injustices. The problem of U.S. intervention in Ethiopia is largely a problem of power politics. The U.S. has long sought to maximize its power in order to counter or defeat its ideological and Islamic extremist rivals in the broader Horn of Africa region. The study found that America's pursuit of stability has indirectly abetted pre-existing protracted ethno-nationalist conflicts by tacitly choosing to be on one side of the conflict because it wrongly perceives that its interest are best served that way. U.S. policy elites have been in denial about America's leverage in inducing positive change in Ethiopia although empirical evidence suggests the U.S. is one of the largest donors to Ethiopia. Thus, the main U.S. objectives have been achieving security and stability even when those objectives are expressed rhetorically/morally in terms of humanitarian assistance, the promotion of human rights and democratization.

On the domestic front, the study finds that the new Ethiopia's anti-terrorism law, the legislation of which is inspired by America's counter-terrorism campaigns in the Horn, has served as a tool for legitimizing massive human rights violations. The law has effectively institutionalized structural and direct violence against opposition parties and members of the non-ruling ethnic groups such as the Oromo and the Ogaden-Somali peoples. The use of the law has taken on a whole new trajectory that even the United States did not anticipate as its victims are so far mainly civilian opponents as opposed to proven terrorists. This study finds that the law has systematically contributed to dismantling dissent and freedom of speech, which are structural issues. The mono-ethnic state ownership itself is proof of the power imbalances in favor of one group in a



fundamentally multiethnic state where the majority are systematically silenced and disadvantaged. The study reviewed negotiation theory and practice and pinpointed that the application of negotiation as a method of conflict resolution in Ethiopia has been precarious thus far. The study recommended that viable formal and informal negotiations must begin with a view to altering the power asymmetry between northern elites and south Ethiopian peoples. Attempts at negotiated settlements that do not take into account ways of addressing the entrenched problem of mono-ethnic state ownership is bound to face rejections from armed and peaceful opposition in the periphery. It proposed comprehensive negotiations that can lead to the creation of innovative sustainable social contracts in the interests of all local and international stakeholders in the conflict.

#### Key terms

Intervention, counter-terrorism, protracted ethnonational conflict, intrastate conflict, power politics, U.S., Ethiopia, foreign policy, Horn of Africa, power asymmetry, negotiations, conflict resolution, Ethiopian anti-terrorism law, structural violence, direct assault, Oromo, Amahara, Tigire, Ogaden-Somali.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter briefly introduces the study and presents the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, overviews of the theoretical and methodological frameworks used.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study focuses on examining the role of U.S. interventions in local ethnonational relations in Ethiopia. It argues that multi-faceted U.S. interventions have directly and indirectly helped retain in state power Amahara-Tigre elites from the north at the exclusion of the vast majority of the oppressed peoples of Ethiopia, notably the Oromo and the Ogaden populations of the south. Corollary to that, it argues that the international U.S. interventions in Ethiopia and the region have exacerbated domestic structural and direct assault against the long-disadvantaged and powerless peoples of Ethiopia's south. Instead of promoting the protection of human rights, democratization and stability, U.S. interventions have done the opposite—promoted narrowly-based ethnonationalist elites who have indisputably carried out massive human rights violations for decades, built up authoritarian structures, and contributed a great deal to the instability of Ethiopia and the region. The study questions the sustainability of such an approach and offers viable

options of conflict resolution as means of correcting the destructive aspects of the intervention in ways that sustainably address the needs of local as well as international stakeholders, including the U.S. In the contexts of the Cold War superpowers rivalry, and the current Global War on Terrorism/ Counter-terrorism campaigns in the Horn of Africa, the study attempts to seek answers to one central question and three sub-questions:

1. Why has Washington intervened in favor of the ruling Ethiopian Ethno-nationalist elites?
  - a) What are the justifications for choosing the Ethiopian elites-led authoritarian state as a dependable U.S./Western ally while sidelining others demanding inclusion and representation locally and internationally?
  - b) As popularly believed by some members of Ethiopian communities in the U.S. and at home, have U.S. interventions contributed to domestic structural and direct violence? And if so, how?
  - c) If there are any destructive aspects to such interventions, what can be done in order to mitigate them and initiate sustainable conflict resolution in the interests of the major local and international actors?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Conducting this research was important for a number of scholarly and personal reasons. First and foremost, as a fascinated observer of U.S.-Ethiopian relations, the researcher developed an intellectual curiosity in the topic of U.S. intervention in multi-ethnic Ethiopia in order to understand and interpret intervention-related events, policies, official rhetoric and grassroots uptakes and reactions to such interventions. I am an Oromo by ethnicity and this has given me some insight into the problems of Ethiopia. I have been as careful as possible to avoid a biased interpretation of events here. In the process of this research, particularly during proposal development and literature reviews early on, the researcher's interest in the topic was peaked by the realization that there has been a paucity of coherent literature dealing with U.S. interventions in Ethiopia from view points of Horn of Africans. The study is also a modest attempt at closing the gap in existing knowledge on interventions in multiethnic Ethiopia. The author endeavors to do so by combining the international (U.S.) and protracted domestic ethno-nationalist competitions. Because of this, this study is a layered case study of U.S.-Ethiopia relations on the one hand, and of multiple warring domestic groups on the other hand. By showing the complexity of both local and international issues shaping intervention, the study seeks to envision sustainable interventions that are constructively reflective of these complexities and pluralities of agenda.

Second, the researcher thought it was important to conduct this research because of his personal commitment to human rights, a sense of building a just and equitable system, a desire to see enduring peace and stability in the country and the region. The

researcher was puzzled by the exclusive U.S. pursuit of stability by aligning itself with a specific segment of the population. The researcher was puzzled by the fact that realist security and strategic concerns have silenced more holistic and productive approaches to interventions. At a personal level, this research is as a way of seeking answers to those puzzles and ironies in the foreign superpower interventions in Ethiopia.

Third, the research was inspired by the widespread beliefs and assertions of the Ethiopian Diaspora that the U.S. government has supported the current and past repressive Ethiopian governments for decades without questioning their domestic credentials. The study is significant in terms of attempting to confirm or disconfirm these beliefs and assertions. Opponents and critics of the ruling EPRDF/TPLF government believe that the ruling elites in Addis Ababa have imposed undemocratic or despotic governance in order to perpetuate violence against major groups who assert they have not been represented in the current one-party state structure. Ethiopian protesters have often expressed their frustrations with U.S. interventions in Ethiopia by holding demonstrations during important national and international events such as the 2012 G8 Summit at Camp David (Clombant, 2012:1, Goldberg, 2010:1). Ethiopian activists often implicate U.S. assistance to Ethiopia in massive domestic repressions, and demand U.S. change its foreign policy and aid practices, which are believed to be propping up dictatorship. This study is significant not only to confirm or disconfirm these views, but also to paint correct pictures on such issues based on empirical evidence.

Fourth, this study is significant also because it seeks to influence intervention-related foreign policy-making and implementation by Washington. In a unipolar world where the United States is the sole superpower with noticeable presence in the Horn of Africa, the need to synchronize domestic/regional dynamics with international priorities is of paramount importance for all stakeholders. Recognizing local problems is a responsible or even life-saving act. Not being able to synchronize the local complexity and America's priorities of achieving security and stability will perpetuate dealing exclusively with the unrepresentative government of Ethiopia at the cost of alienating the masses. Thus, one of the reasons why this study is important is because it makes a modest attempt to extrapolate policy recommendations for conflict resolution communities, for policy-makers and government officials, and most importantly for actors in the conflict. This is to allow for charting new social contracts that can shape the emergence of tolerant and peaceful societies in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. As an exploratory work, the study's goal is partially achieved if this case study will be able to generate conversations on interventions at least within the confines of the case study.

## **1.4 Theoretical Perspectives**

This study used two theoretical perspectives: realism and structural violence. First, the theory of political realism, as propounded by Mearsheimer (2001) and Morgenthau (1967), is used in this study in order to describe the behaviors of superpower and non-superpower state actors. In this case, realism is applied to explaining American and Soviet competitions that aimed at ensuring their survival and power in the Horn

during the Cold War, while currently the theory is relevant in explaining America's counter-terrorism policies in the Horn against local and international Islamic extremists. Second, the study uses Galtung's (1969) theory of structural and direct violence in order to explain, frame and interpret state-sponsored systematic violence and direct assault against ethnonationalist challengers to the state system in Ethiopia. The expanded version of the strengths and weaknesses of applying these theoretical perspectives is provided in the first part of chapter three.

### **1.5 Research Methods, Strategies and Techniques**

Mainly because the empirical evidence for this research was collected from documentary sources and those sources were subjected to in-depth interpretations based on the research questions, this case study used flexible research design as an overarching research methodology (Robson, 2002). The case study approach and many of its associated strategies and techniques of data gathering and analysis were employed (Yin, 2009). The formulation of the research methods, strategies and techniques are provided in greater details in chapter four, including the discussions of their strengths and limitations as well as the adjustments that the researcher made during the process of the research and write-up which together took at least a year.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The thesis is organized in seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by providing a preview of the research. Chapter two provides the historical and political context of the conflict so as to help readers understand references to contending local ethno-national groups and the dynamics of the local conflicts since the formation of the modern Ethiopian state. Chapter two also underscores the importance of local ‘history’ and ‘politics’ in understanding the case study. Chapter three reviews the relevant body of literature and presents the theoretical perspectives used in the study. Chapter four presents the research methods, strategies and techniques used in data collection and analysis. Chapter five presents the analysis of U.S. interventions in multi-ethnic Ethiopia for over a century with particular emphasis on official justifications for interventions during the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism. This chapter characterizes the nature of U.S.-relations with the ruling Ethiopian elites during these two key periods and describes what that has meant for power disparities between local groups. Chapter six presents the analysis of the internal systematic violence dimensions of U.S.-Ethiopia relations. Chapter six presents a detailed analysis of issues of systematic violence and direct assault in Ethiopia against disadvantaged ethnonational groups of southern Ethiopia with particular emphasis on the Oromo and the Ogaden peoples. Chapter seven presents a conflict resolution proposal, draws conclusions and provides nuanced conflict resolution and policy recommendations.



## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of the statement of the problem and research questions. It presented the significance of this study, the theoretical perspectives, research approaches and the structure of the study. It also explicated the author's rationales and justifications for conducting this research and the contributions he expects it to have.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF THE CONFLICT**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the historical and political context of the conflict. An analytical background of intergroup relations between the major local actors and their political programs is crucial in helping readers of this thesis understand the chapters that follow. Since this is the case of a multi-layered protracted ethnic conflict overlaid by foreign intervention, the four most competing ethnonational groups and political organizations that claim to represent them have been chosen to comprise the background. The ethnic groups are the Amahara, the Tigire, the Oromo, and the Ogaden. The determination of “most competing ethnic groups” has been made based on projections of trends relating to most active intrastate conflicts in Ethiopia (Hewitt et al, 2012: 125-126). Official census data is used to determine that the ethnic groups under consideration are “major groups.”<sup>1</sup>

The chapter presents a general country profile and historical and political accounts of the parties to the conflict. Since no group agrees on the other’s historiography and since the question “Who is an Ethiopian?” is fundamentally contested, the historical background is not presented matter-of-factly. Instead, it is deemed helpful to subject

historiography and politics to what this study calls critical-comparative analyses. It is assumed that a critical-comparative perspective is better than matter-of-fact presentations of history in helping reveal the complexity and the contested nature of the issues and interests the parties to the conflict have long advanced.

### **General Country Profile of Ethiopia**



Figure 1 Ethiopia and the Horn. ©Google Maps

### **Geography**

Separated from the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula by the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Ethiopia is located in Northeast Africa<sup>2</sup>, one of our world's most volatile regions with a long history of protracted ethnic, religious, class, border, interstate and proxy wars and conflicts. The country is located in the Horn of Africa between 3 and 5 degrees north latitude and 33 and 48 degrees east longitude<sup>3</sup>, or 8 00 north and 38 00 east geographic coordinates.<sup>4</sup> With a total land area of about 1.1 million square kilometer<sup>5</sup> and a total population of 74 million, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa. Ethiopia is surrounded by neighboring countries who share significant borderlines in all directions. Eritrea to the north, Djibouti to the northeast, Sudan to the northwest, South Sudan to the southwest, Kenya to the south, and Somalia to the East share varying border lengths with Ethiopia, from the smallest border of 349 km with Djibouti to the largest of 1, 600 km with Somalia. Ethiopia is the source of the mighty Blue Nile, on which the livelihood of countries downstream such as the Sudan and Egypt are built. Because of being the home of the Nile and of tens of other major rivers it is sometimes famously and ironically referred to as "the water tower of Africa" in geographic accounts. The irony in being called 'the water tower' is because Ethiopia is stalked by much chronic drought and famine. The importance of the Nile in the region is often highlighted by the popular saying in Sudan, "Whoever drinks from the Blue Nile, we will drink it from their blood."<sup>6</sup>

The country's economy is based on agriculture, "which accounts for 41 percent of GDP and 85 percent of total employment."<sup>7</sup> Coffee has been the leading export crop of the country. Ethiopia has no coastline because it lost the Red Sea ports of Massawa and

Asab as its former major means of access to the sea following the Eritrean referendum for independence in 1993. This makes Ethiopia the most populous landlocked country in Africa.

## **People and Society**

In terms of ethnic, linguistic and religious compositions, Ethiopia can accurately be seen as one of the extreme cases of a multiethnic, a multilinguistic, a multicultural and a multi-religious mosaic society on the African continent. With 86 ethnic groups<sup>8</sup> inhabiting nine federal regional states, Ethiopia ranks third in ethnic diversity while Nigeria with 250 ethnic groups and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 200, come first and second respectively.<sup>9</sup> Of the 86 ethnic groups in Ethiopia the major and the most influential ones are ten according the country's own record. These are: Oromo 34.5 percent, Amhara 26.9 percent, Somali 6.2 percent, Tigire 6.1 percent, Sidama 4 percent, Gurage 2.5 percent, Welaita 2.3 percent, Hadiya 1.7 percent, Afar 1.7 percent, Gamo 1.5 percent of the total population.<sup>10</sup>

Languages are also as multiple as ethnicity itself. The major languages spoken in the country include: Amarigna 32.7 percent, Afan Oromo 31.6 percent, Tigrigna 6.1 percent and Somali 6 percent. Language policies play some role in the conflict as will be seen in the more specific section on each major group later.

Furnishing the above ethnic background is important because ethnicity has long been the prominent feature of the violent as well as the non-violent conflicts and competitions among the four major groups this study focuses on. Ideologically-driven

interpretations of ethnic diversity exists: while there are a tendency among the Amahara northerners to see diversity as a perceived danger to national unification, Tigreans and the oppressed south including the Oromo and the Somali ( for instance), see the lack of recognition for ethnic diversity and equal representation in state power as a ‘dangerous imperialist idea’. What happens when international intervention favors certain groups over others in such an ethnically diverse society is the mainstay of this study. It is worth mentioning that national statistics themselves are not seen as neutral or objective facts in this protracted violent conflict. Numbers are also sites of contestations. It is commonplace to hear the politically and economically disenfranchised south claim that their numbers have been diminished by groups in power as part of the conspiracy to dominate them. To counter the perceived diminished numbers groups often claim inflated figures.

Religion is the third useful, but not essential category in this conflict. Religious affiliation is not uniform across ethnic lines. Almost all major groups follow mixtures of major religions. Of the total national population, the category of ‘religious affiliation’ involves these major religions<sup>11</sup>: Orthodox Christianity (the historically state religion) 43.5 percent, Protestant 18.6 percent, Catholic 0.7 percent, Islam 33.9 percent, Traditional 2.6 percent and Others 0.6 percent.

Immediately after the national census was released in 2007, it produced strong reactions from followers of some religions who complained that the official figure diminished their ‘true numbers’. For instance, some Muslim critics openly rejected the

national census for Islam for “missing millions.”<sup>12</sup> Pointing out that the “33.9 percent” figure was inaccurate, critics claimed that Muslims made up between 45 and 50 percent of the country’s population. As they did not conduct a parallel census, the estimation was *ex ante*. More than showing the accuracy or lack thereof of national statistics and counter-claims, the interest here is to show how groups turn seemingly mundane issues into important, but contested ones.

However, except for rare and unpublicized incidents, there has been a long-running religious tolerance in the country. Wars have been waged mostly on secular grounds thus far. Because the expression of ethnic identity is frustrated in the country, more and more people are withdrawing from their political space into religious space. A 2007 Gallup survey found that “few Ethiopians are confident in their institutions; only religious organizations elicit the trust of the majority [68 percent].” (Rheault, 2008:1). Thus, one cannot rule out the potential that the presently-ethnic conflict can take a religious turn if relentless efforts are not made to recognize diversity through political representation.

Thus far the general profile of Ethiopia has been provided. The rest of this chapter provides a brief critical background of the history of intergroup relations in the Ethiopian Empire.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.2 Brief History of Ethnonational Relations in Ethiopia**

Many historians and social scientists have often turned to historiography as a way of making sense of the asymmetric intergroup relations in Ethiopia (Markakis, 2012;

Jalata, 1993; Pankrust, 1998; Levine, 2000). These and other scholars fall into two categories: those scholars interested in glorifying and maintaining the status quo ante, and those who challenge the status quo—referred to as “revisionists” in their readings of the so-called ‘Ethiopian history’. It is necessary to define where the geographic and ethnic focus of status quo and revisionist scholars rest before we go into the details about inter-group relationship.

The disagreements over history in the two camps were so great that the status quo scholars founded the Ethiopian Studies Association in the early 1970s, while the revisionists who did not accept the mainstream representation of Ethiopia founded the Oromo Studies Association in 1986. They publish separate journals and hold separate conferences in Universities in North America and Europe.

The geographic and ethnic focuses of the two camps of scholars are different. Revisionist scholars focus on the “geographic-power periphery” (Markakis, 2012) that in this study is represented by the Oromo and Ogaden peoples of south Ethiopia. The status quo (Ethiopianist) scholars focus on the Amahara and Tigre people from the north who are proud to jointly and variably call themselves ‘Ethiopians’, ‘Abyssinians’ and ‘Habesha’ (Markakis, 2011:4; Levine, 1965:1). I collectively refer to the two northern groups as “Amahara-Tigre” or Abyssinians when needed for the sake of distinguishing between parties to the conflict. Since putting all groups in an “Ethiopian” category will obfuscate analytical nuances, the study will desist from that.



Making distinctions between Oromo and Ogaden southerners and Amahara-Tigre northerners are necessary because political and military elites from the latter are empire-makers while the populations of the former are generally considered subjects and unrepresented in state power (Markakis, 2011:4). The process of empire-building started with the conquest of the ethno-nations to the south during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—a turning point in the history of the country and the region that is glorified by the status quo ante groups and mourned by the revisionists and the forces in the political-geographic periphery. The tacit consensus on either side is that “experience historiography has much to say,” (Markakis, 2011:1). In order to understand the relationship between the north and the south, Markakis<sup>14</sup> adopts “the centre-periphery perspective.” He links the concept to state formation as follows:

The process of state formation is initiated and managed from an expanded centre of power that radiates outwards to annex territories along its geographical periphery, and then weaves an administrative network to incorporate them and capture their resources...What distinguishes the centre from the periphery is not simply geography, though this is often a salient feature. The locus of power is the most significant indicator. Imperialism is founded on an uneven power relationship...What distinguishes the periphery is its marginal position in the power structure of the state, or more precisely, exclusion from state power...exclusion from power translates into lack of access to state resources, as well as native resources appropriated by state and transferred to the centre. Equally important is the denigration of social and cultural accomplishments of societies in the periphery, and the expectation in the name of national integration that they should give place to the superior cultural accomplishments of the centre... (2011:7).

Essentially Markakis is discussing power analysis based on the complex political history of Ethiopia. His version of center-periphery perspective is excellent because he

not only adopts it from elsewhere, but he develops it outwardly in a grounded fashion from the case itself. His work comes with the baggage of colonial vocabularies such as “frontiers”, ‘meaning unknown or an explored places, but one can look beyond them given his analytical precision and balance, which is often lacking in many other partisan works. This study largely relies on some form of Markakisian perspective. As a supplement to that, the critical presentation of history below may, at times, use Volkan’s concepts of “chosen trauma and glory (we-ness)” (Volkan, 1997:36-50, 81-101).

Volkan uses the term “chosen trauma” “to describe the collective memory of a calamity that once befell a group’s ancestors...it is a shared mental representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings, and defense against unacceptable thoughts,” (1997:48). “Chosen glory” is also a mental representation of a historical event that spurs the feelings of success or victory in a group over another. Like chosen traumas, glories are heavily mythologized over time. The recollections of a particular glory serve to unite and create self-esteem in a group (1997:81). These concepts are significant in understanding a group’s history since they highlight how groups’ protracted conflict tend to live the past as if it is the present—time is collapsed and what happened centuries ago can be presented as an ongoing phenomenon.

The chapter now proceeds to provide relevant backgrounds on the Amahara, Tigire, Oromo, and Ogaden-Somali respectively. Connections will be made where necessary. The reason it is important to devote separate sections to each group includes

the researcher's beliefs and facts such as: impartial treatment of parties; and the recognition that diversity and difference exist not only between groups, but also within the same group. It is important to avoid the common nationalist tendency of essentializing categories and drawing solid boundaries, where, more often than not, things are loose and overlapping.

### 2.2.1 Amahara History and Politics

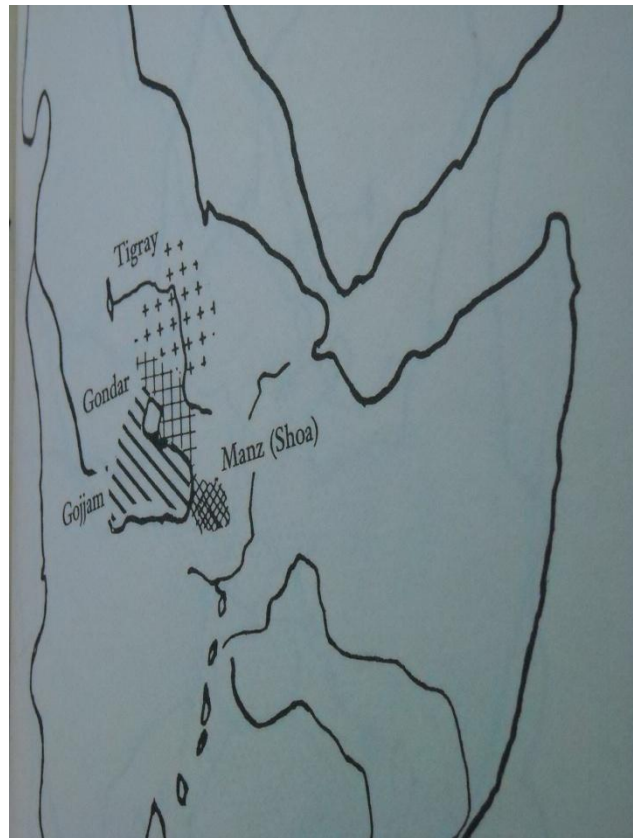


Figure 2 Abyssinian area, 1870, indicating the kingdom of Tigray (Axum), Gondar Gojjam, and Manz ©Holcomb & Ibssa 1990.

The Amahara people, one of the two branches of the Abyssinians, live in what is today the Amahara region in the provinces of Gonder, Gojjam, west Wallo and part of north Shoa (Levine, 1965:2; Census, 2007:16). This region is located in the northern highlands of Ethiopia. Since the beginning of the so-called Solmonid Dynasty in 1270, all the emperors of Abyssinia-cum-Ethiopia have been Amahara except one. Yohannis IV (1872-89), an emperor from a closely related Tigire ethnic group, was the exception. Amahara kings and emperors controlled political, military and economic powers for at least seven centuries.

Perhaps, the most significant events that have profoundly changed the relationship between the Abyssinian north and the Oromo and the Ogaden south were the events of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the authoritative historical literature link the beginning of this protracted conflict to the Abyssinian Emperor Menelik II's (1865-1913) conquest and occupation of many independent southern nations or provinces for their rich resources (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1998:101-16; Jalata, 1993; Markakis, 2011: 9; Pankhurst, 1998: 178-179). The conquest was accomplished with firearms (Remington rifles) supplied to Menelik's army by European powers (Melba, 1998:59). Europeans supplied arms to Menelik because they were freshly embarking on the scramble for Africa and thought of using Menelik as a pawn to gain entry into the resource-rich interior. Menelik quenched his own and his grandfather King Sahla Sellasse's desire to acquire land in the south. This is described as "Abyssinians share the spoils of conquered and occupied regions," (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990:101). Soldiers were rewarded with the

spoils of war. Other Ethiopian-cum-Amahara rulers after Menelik consolidated state power, transformed occupation into colonization, modernization and state-building.

The war which took decades was clearly asymmetric as Oromia and the southern provinces relied on traditional African weapons such as spears and shields. As a result, some claim and link the first “genocide” against Oromo to the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The combined devastations from war, diseases and famine “reduced the Oromo population from 10 million to 5 million,” (Bulatovich, 2000:12; Jalata, 2007:63; Melba, 1998:8).

From this period onward, the pages of the country’s history began to be chronically stained by blood. The events of this period are the sources of glory and pride for the Amahara imperialists, while they mark the beginning of what Volkan (1998:48) calls “unresolved mourning or chosen trauma” for the southerners who were conquered and incorporated into the expanding Abyssinia-cum-Ethiopian Empire. Every conquered nation has a poignant mental representation of the event and use in current collective actions or rebellions.

Court historians, Ethiopianist scholars and imperialists often try to redeem this period by recasting it as a successful attempt at “unification and modernization,” (Pankhurst, 1998, Levine, 2000). For them the barbarity is excused by notion that Abyssinians were trying to spread civilization to the native south. Some of these expatriates and local Amahara elites either completely deny the conquest and occupation of the south or they simply devote the least amounts of pages or none at all in writing

about them. In contrast, emerging scholars and nationalists from the south expand on the trauma of this event and incorporate it into the identity of their respective peoples.

Amahara's language, Amaharic, has been the official language of the Amahara region and of the federal government. "Amaharic is a Semitic language that ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amaharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues," (Levine, 1965: 2). Amaharic and Amahara culture have been imposed on the peoples of the empire through policies that strictly required the use of the language as an official one in many of the political and social institutions of the country, including churches, mosques, schools and courts. This process was part of the linguistic and cultural assimilation project well known as "*Amharization*" (Levine, 1965:2-3; Bulcha, 1997: 325). Amaharization is a policy Bulcha succinctly calls "the politics of linguistic homogenization," that promotes a minority language at the expense of banning the vastly spoken Cushitic languages such as Afan Oromo, which itself is a complex topic that requires a separate study. It suffices to say that attempted assimilations exacerbated the conflict as the subordinated have been demanding linguistic rights, *inter alia*.

#### **2.2.1.1 Amahara Culture and Social Organization**

In this part of the world, claims and counter-claims to who is indigenous to 'the land' and who is not have long been part of partisan historiography as well as ingredients of group rhetoric. It is common to see vocabularies such as "indigenous" "foreigner", "newcomer" in Ethiopian history books (Pankhurst, 1998). The reasons ethnic groups

choose stories affirming primordial presence in a country or an area can be many, but a few of the most important reasons are to seek distinction, permanence, legitimacy and superiority (Korostelina, 2007:66, 87; Rothbart and Korostelina, 2006:4). According to these authors, “a collective axiology defines boundaries and relations among groups and establishes criteria for ingroup/outgroup membership. Through its collective axiology, a group traces its development from a sacred past, extracted from mythic episodes beyond the life of mortals, and seek permanence,” (2006:4).

As a mechanism of legitimizing their claims over territories, the Amahara, via mythologies of origin, claim a “3000-years” history in Ethiopia. This claim to a longer presence than others draws on two conflicting accounts of a Middle Eastern origin: a South Arabian-Yemeni origin and a Solomonic Jewish origin.

The first account about Amahara-Tigre origin from Sabaens of South Arabia “dates to at least first millennium BC, or, some believe, as early as eighth century,” (Pankhurst, 1998:20). The South Arabian origin is linked to a site of pre-Aksumite civilization—Yéha—in northern Ethiopia. The Yéha civilization was closely connected with a parallel civilization in South Arabia (Yemen). Comparing Yéha and Yemen, Pankhurst writes, “Closely connected to the Sabaens of South Arabia, it seemed to have originally used the same Semitic language, employed the same script, and worshipped the same gods, primarily the disk of the sun and the crescent moon...Yéha is the site of an impressive stone temple reminiscent of buildings in Yaman [sic]” (1998:20-21). Based on this account, Abyssinians proudly claim a descent from Yemen in order to claim that

they are the oldest superior race while relegating peoples of African descent to a status of “newcomers” (*maxxee*) or immigrants.

The historical account relating to Abyssinian origin from Solomonic origin completely contradicts the first and changes their religious and racial origin from Arab Muslims to Judao -Christians. The Bible provides the building blocks of the famous “Queen of Sheba Legend”:

When the Queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the Lord, she came to test Solomon with hard questions. Arriving at Jerusalem with very great Caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked to him about all that. Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the King to explain to her (NIV, 1 Kings 10:1-3).

The Ethiopian-cum-Abyssinian version of this biblical story went further and asserted that the Queen had a son by Solomon, that later the child, Menelik, traveled to Jerusalem to visit his father, brought back the Ark of the Covenant, and established a dynasty, which is believed to have ruled Ethiopia for about three thousand years (Pankhurst, 1998:19; Levine, 2000: 17-18).

If one fact-checks these biblical verses against this ethno-nationalistic stories, it becomes clear that the Abyssinian version distorts the biblical verses. The bible says nothing clear about the alleged extramarital affairs between Sheba and Solomon and the ensuing birth of a son, who would establish an entitled political hegemony. The bible itself was equivocal about the nature of meeting



between the two. It does not say from where exactly Queen Sheba originated. The Queen could not have been from northern Ethiopia since at that time Ethiopia did not have the technology to build ships to cross the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in order to reach Israel. The bible clearly states the means of transportation as “caravan”—a method suited for travels through desserts. Caravan as a method of travel was impossible across the sea; it is also not culturally a northern Ethiopian temperate highland phenomenon.

Despite these factual inconsistencies common to legends, claiming a three thousand-year history and a Semitic origin is significant to this conflict. By drawing impenetrable boundaries, the legend becomes the criteria of inclusion and exclusion in the contexts of resource use and political power. Levine puts the effect succinctly: “...the consequences of this image are that Ethiopian history comes to be conceived as the process of extension of Semitized culture over more and more peoples of Ethiopia; that those people who are not ‘true Abyssinians’ come to be viewed as alien and inferior; and that little or no attention is given to the non-Semitic component of the Amahara Tigrean culture and to the indigenous traditions of other Ethiopian peoples,” (2000:18).

The mode of traditional Amahara communication is an important factor in the way they relate to others with distinct traditions. The Amahara are known for using a form of verbal communication known as *Sem enna warq* (“wax and gold”). Wax and

gold is a form built of two semantic layers. ‘Wax’ is the literal (denotative meaning) of words, while ‘gold’ is the hidden and important meaning of the same set of words (Levine, 1965: 5). Amahara culture celebrates double entendres and ambiguity in speaking and writing. Levine rightly calls *semina warq* language usage “*the cult of ambiguity*”<sup>15</sup> (1965:10). While Levine applauds the economy of words (usually two lines) inherent in the form, he criticizes the tradition for its failure to adjust to the requirements of modernization— clarity, precision, and directness of communication (1965:10). He sees *sem enna warq* as unfit for institutions of modern institutions and bureaucracies, as a challenge to the much-needed open and clear communication between Ethiopian elites and their foreign patrons.

The social organization of Amara is characterized by hierarchy and specialization (Levine, 2000:122-123). Within the group itself, boundary is strictly enforced by the culture, where low-class or low-ranking members are expected to almost religiously revere people of higher status. This happens in the family, religious and secular institutions. Levine writes, “...individuals relate to one another mainly on utilitarian and competitive basis...The head of the household [man) is addressed by all others by the honorific term *getoch* ‘masters’ or *getay* ‘my master’,” (1965:123).

#### **2.2.1.2 Tenets of Amahara Political Programs**

Since the fall of the south in the aftermath of the conquest and occupation of the last half of the nineteenth century, the Abyssinian politics of ‘unification’, ‘modernization’ and ‘uniqueness’ have informed the political programs of emperors and northern military

leaders. In contrast to the politics of the south, which has been largely the politics of protracted opposition to hegemony and centralized control by Amahara-Tigre elites, the politics of the north has been incorporated into the mainstream state policies of domination and resource extraction from the geographic and political periphery (Markakis, 2011:32).

For at least one century and three decades, all the Ethiopian heads of state have come from the Abyssinian north: Emperor Menelik II (1889-1916), Empress Zewditu (1916-1931), Emperor Haile Sellasie I (1931-1974), President Mengistu Haile Maryam (1974-1991), and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi who is an ethnic Tigre (1991-present) (Advocates, 2009:IV). Despite claims to some form of reform or another, these leaders share a common characteristic of core Abyssinian origin and military leadership. There was no political party, but the monarchy until the last emperor was overthrown by the emperor's own Colonel Mengistu Haile Maryam in 1974. Then, Abyssinian political parties such as the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, the Tigrean Liberation Front/Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front were formed and began to implement state policies. In other words, there has never been distinction between the state and the party.

In a power struggle with Tigreans, the Amahara lost control over state power to the closely related Tigrean Liberation Front (TPLF) since 1991. As a result, the disaffected Amahara began organizing into opposition in order to struggle against Tigreans to return to the glorious past. The nascent Amahara opposition has political programs similar to those of the emperors and the military leaders of the past. They are

commonly accused of interest in restoring Amahara dominance in the guise of Ethiopian unity, free market economic policy, democracy and individual rights.<sup>16</sup> The leaders earnestly oppose the group rights that southerners demand.

The Amahara opposition is not only opposed to the Meles Zenawi's military leadership, but it is also opposed to other opposition parties, liberation fronts, rebels and other organized entities. Prima facie, Abyssinian elites come up with innocuous and fancy party names such as "Unity for Democracy and Justice," "Ginbot 7 Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy", but at the core they are fundamentalist right-wing ethno-nationalists, as can be seen from their political goals and their leaders' rhetoric. The fact that the composition of their executive committee members and top leadership is from purely one group defeats the good-sounding names they have coined. Essentially, the political goal of these parties is to seek a national political arrangement in which they will regain control over others. We will see the challenges to unitary state system when we deal with the Tigire, Oromo and Ogaden below.

### **2.2.2 Tigire History and Politics**

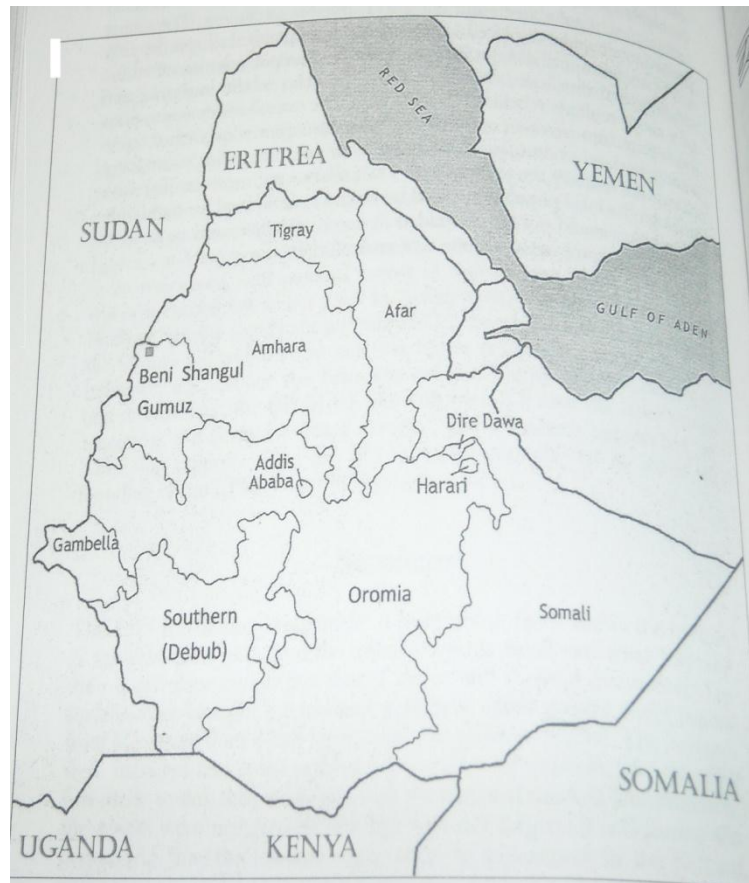


Figure 3 showing the Tigire (Tigray) state in the north and other eight federal states. © Markakis, 2011.

The ethnic homeland of the Tigire people is the Tigray state in the northern most point of the present Ethiopia. Tigires share a border, the Tigire language and common ethnic ancestry with Eritrean neighbors. Although there have been perennial power struggles between the Tigire and Amahara, the two also share common Abyssinian (Habesha) ancestry. The social organizations and ethnic self-categorization of the Tigire reflect what Horowitz (1985:55) calls “family resemblance.” Much like other ethnic groups in Ethiopia, Tigre have maintained an ethnic affiliation that is strongly linked to

“membership given at birth” rather than a voluntary affiliation based on “choice” (Horowitz, 1985:55).

Historians, sociologists and anthropologists agree that the Tigire and Amahara share the same ancient Habesha ethnic roots or proto-family (Levine, 2011:33; 2000:18; Young, 1997:38-39; Markakis, 2011:9; Pankhurst, 1998:20). Nevertheless, there is a great deal of inconsistency among accounts about the exact location of the origin of the proto family. Some of them use myths such as the Queen Sheba legend so as to claim that they have Semitic Oriental origin—South Arabian or Judeo –Christian. Some explanations about the roots of the Tigire are linked to an ill-defined and a relatively recent construction so-called “Ag’azi society as ‘seedbed’” for Abyssinian civilization beginning in Axum (Levine, 2011:30). The Ag’azi kingdom is presented as the proto-family that centered at Axum in Tigray. The kings from this family are said to have based their political structure on the divine order of monophysitism. The whole idea of this divine order was to claim that a king’s right to rule was ordained by God, and therefore, was not to be challenged by followers.

John Young, a western scholar who has written the history of Tigire People’s Liberation Front 1975-1991 based on interviews with Tigire peasants and the group’s top leadership, writes about the Arab origin of the Tigire people:

In the early years of the first millennium BC waves of Semitic peoples from what is now Yemen crossed the Red Sea, conquered the local inhabitants, and settled at Yeaha near the present site of Axum. One group of Semites, the Sabaeans, intermarried with the Hamites, and their offspring subdued their neighbours and established the Axumite kingdom (Young, 1997:38-39).

What one can deduce from this and other historical evidence is that the Tigres had an aggressive relationship with their neighbors long before the Ethiopian state was constitutionally constituted under the auspices of European powers in 1931. The latter generation of Tigire emperors and leaders of Ethiopia perfected their predecessors' violent domination of their neighboring Oromo population to the south. Tigire Emperor Yohannis IV led a campaign of massacre and forced conversion of Wallo Oromo from *Waaqeffannaa*<sup>17</sup> and Islam to the Monophysite Orthodox Christianity in 1883 (Pankhurst, 1998:168-169). Those who were forcefully subjugated at the battle of *Boru Meda* were Christened and incorporated into the nascent Ethiopian state structure. A hundred and eight years later in 1991, Meles Zenawi, the present Prime Minister of Ethiopia, continued the legacy of his ancestor's aggression against the Oromo on a scale never seen before.

The history of the Tigire People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is also necessary in understanding the politics of the Tigire people. Since its founding in 1975, the TPLF has had a turbulent relationship with the Amahara-led Ethiopian state and the Oromo peaceful and armed opposition. In 1976 the TPLF articulated in its manifesto that its purpose was to seek self-determination (independence) for the Tigire region. Like many opposition forces in Ethiopia at the time, the birth of the TPLF was inspired by the leftist student movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which viewed "Ethiopia as a prison house of nationalities," (Young, 1997: 112; Levine 2011:41).<sup>18</sup> This "prison house" view of Ethiopia is still pervasive in the south.

The TPLF's organizational structure, as a former rebel movement and as the nucleus of the current Ethiopian ruling party, is similar to other Marxist-oriented movements. Young writes:

The highest body is the congress which is composed of elected fighters and representatives of mass associations. It elects a Central Committee which is the highest organ between congresses and which in turn elects members of the Political Bureau which manages the day-to-day activities of the Front. The Chairman of Central Committee also serves as the chairman of the Political Bureau...

The organizational structure of the TPLF from its days as an insurgent group is important because this structure is maintained in the ways the Ethiopian ruling party and state are currently organized.

TPLF, a guerilla organization originally committed to the independence of the Tigre ethnic homeland, shifted its purpose to controlling the unitary Ethiopian state power after violently overthrowing Mengistu Haile Mariam's ethno-communist military Junta in 1991 (Shinn, 2009). In other words, the Tigre elites have replaced Amahara ones in monopolizing state power since 1991. Using the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a satellite umbrella party controlled by the TPLF, the TPLF posed as de facto national political group at the beginning of the end of the Cold War in 1989. The formation of the EPRDF was primarily intended to delegitimize and undermine potential and actual opposition to the restoration of Tigre dominance from other ethnically-based liberation fronts representing the south such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).



From 1991-1992, the TPLF/EPRDF and the OLF closely collaborated in forming a short-lived transitional national unity government; they wrote a transitional charter (blueprint), and drafted a constitution that granted, at least on paper, the right of peoples to self-determination including secession, among other rights (Young, 1997:206). Some uncritically argue that these so-called transitional dispensations radically shifted the way the Ethiopian state is organized, but this study's context shows how notion of "the decentring of the state," (Young 1997:206) is a very misleading argument as none of the nations from the south, including the Oromo and the Ogaden, have real autonomy, self-determination or a fair-share in state power. Like the 1974 socialist revolution was hijacked by militants so as to serve the narrow interests of the predominantly Amahara elites, the 1991 ethno-nationalist revolution has come to be seen as serving the obvious interests of parasitic Tigire elites. The background on the history and politics of the Oromo and the Ogaden peoples that follow will demonstrate how the Ethiopian state continues to marginalize and oppress the south.<sup>19</sup> The south opposes the elites' practice of parasitism on the rest of society in terms of the rampant culture of corruption and impunity in government.

### **2.2.3 Oromo History and Politics**

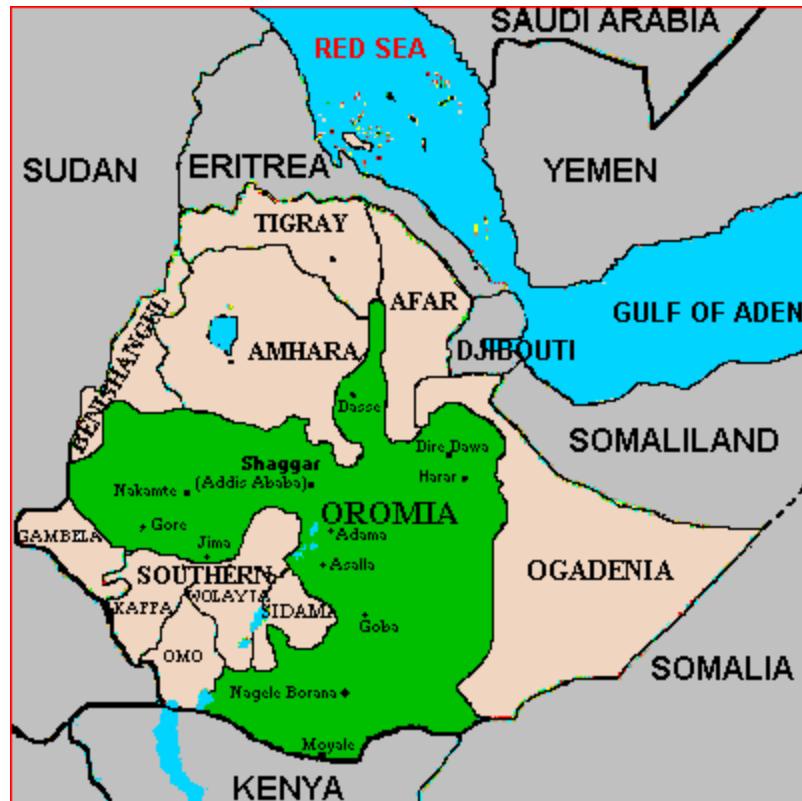


Figure 4 showing Oromia State (green). ©Oromo Press.

A background on the history and politics of the Oromo is necessary because Oromo's ethnic homeland, Oromia, "constitutes about 275,000 square miles, over half the present land of the empire, and its people account for over 60<sup>20</sup> percent of the population of present-day Ethiopia," (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1992:2-3). As other precious mineral resources (diamond, oil, gold and coltan) are central to ethnic conflicts in other African countries, competition over *fertile land* is central to ethno-nationalists conflicts in Ethiopia (Markakis, 2011). As Ibssa and Holcomb articulate, "The Oromo issue is central historically, structurally, geographically, numerically and theoretically to any

consideration of the nature of the Ethiopian state and of the political economy of the region,” (1992:3). Oromia is also relevant since it is a major region of an ongoing armed intrastate conflict (Hewitt et al., 2012: 125).

### **2.2.3.1 Oromo Origin and Self-identification**

In writing about the origin of the Oromo people, it is relevant to this study to briefly examine two categorically opposed views: (a) the self-identification of the people; and (b) how their arch rivals identify them. It is also important to acknowledge that myths of origin feature a great deal in ideologized historiography almost always with the purpose of justifying the domination of the privileged elites over others. Contention over who the “ingroup” and “outgroup” is constitute a substantial amount of this ethno-nationalist conflict (Rothbart and Korostelina, 2006, Korostelina, 2007).

First, the Oromo are one of the Kushitic-speaking groups of people in the Horn of Africa “with variations in colour and physical characteristics ranging from Hamitic to Nilotic,” (Melbaa, 1999:11). The people have always self-identified as the “Oromo”, a collective name that has probably evolved from the root word “Orma,” meaning “strong or brave men” (Jalata, 1993:16; Krapf, 1860: 73). Accounts from revisionist scholars, archaeologists, European travelers and missionaries indicate that the Oromo are not only the indigenous people of ancient Ethiopia and the Horn, but also that they may be the origin of the human species by virtue of being home to the remains of *Caaltuu*-Lucy or *Australopithecus afrensis*—who is estimated to have lived in Awash valley 3.85 million years ago (Smithsonian, 2012<sup>21</sup>; Melbaa 1999:11; Bates, 1979 in Melbaa 1999:11). Bates

asserts that “The Oromo were a very ancient race, the indigenous stock, perhaps, on which most other peoples in this part of eastern Africa have been grafted on,” (1979).

It seems that while the invocation of evolutionary evidence and history gives longer presence to the Oromo myths of origin, the invocation of religious antiquity gives Abyssinians claims to longer presence in the region. Nubia, the land of Kush in the middle lower Nile in the north, and *Madda Walaabuu*, a place in the fertile Bale region in southern Ethiopia are frequently cited in literature as original indigenous centers from which the Oromo presumably dispersed (Melbaa, 1999:11,14; Jalata, 1993:16). What is very important here is not the two conflicting places of origin; it is rather the meanings attached to them to claim indigenous status by the Oromo.

Oromia, first named by Johann Krapf as “Ormania” (1860:xiii, 72-122) and then by the OLF in 1973, and Oromia as recognized by article 46 of the 1995 Federal Constitution as a national regional state, is the present homeland for the Oromo people. Their language, Afan Oromo is “one of the five most widely spoken languages from among the approximately 100 languages of Africa (Gregg, 1982 in Melbaa 1999:15).

### **2.2.3.2 The Oromo Origin and Outgroup Identification**

Second, pointing out how outsiders—Ethiopianist elites and their expatriate sympathizers—depict the Oromo and how Oromos respond to those depictions is also important to this context. The Abyssinians have referred to Oromo as “*Galla*”, a denigrating term equivalent to “Nigger,” in pre-civil rights U.S. and “Kaffir” in apartheid South Africa for black people. There is controversy about the origin and the meaning of

the term. Some believe that it was invented “around 1590 by an Amahara monk called Bahrey and henceforth European historians and others almost invariably accepted this story as a fact,” (Melbaa, 1999:13). Scholars point to the increasing use of the term during and since the 16th century in the Christian Abyssinian literature, the Muslim literature of Harar and the European travelers’ accounts due largely to the fear of the emergence of the Oromo as one of dominant peoples in the Horn of Africa (Hassen, 1994: xi; Jalata, 1993:17). An early account by Krapf (1860: 73) holds that “Galla means immigrant...and has been given to them by the Arabs and Abyssinians.” Loaded with a host of derogatory connotations such as “pagan, slave, uncivilized, uncultured, enemy, inherently inferior” (Melbaa, 1999:14), the G-word is used primarily to falsely claim that Oromos are “foreign, immigrants and invaders” and, thus, not entitled to the right to own land and participate in state politics and economy.

By depicting the Oromo as “invaders” and “immigrants”, Abyssinian elites are also legitimizing their own sense of primordality, superiority, and divine order to rule over the south. This narrative is dualistic and condensed in nature in that it depicts the Oromo as a dark force with no material and intellectual contributions to the empire. In contrast, it depicts Abyssinians as the force of civilization or of higher material and spiritual culture (Hassen, 1994:2). Jalata maintains that the Abyssinians use the term to justify colonial domination over the Oromo (1993:17). Abyssinians use prejudiced terms associated with the G-word such as “avalanche, wave, flood, swarms of migratory locust” to describe Oromo in non-human terms in times of war and peace. The Oromo have always resisted to being called the ‘G-word’. Using the term within ingroup social circles

is considered equally offensive to the Oromo. The use of it produces violent interethnic tensions and fights even on university campuses in Ethiopia today.

Pages of Ethiopianist historiography are littered by stories of “Oromo migration” (Pankhurst, 1998:96-97). This is a powerful Abyssinian ingroup narrative that strives to make the Oromo “arrival time” shorter than theirs. Abyssinian extremists make bizarre and unreal claims that Oromos emerged from water, and unknown distant foreign places and conquered Ethiopia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ethiopian historiography either falsely depicts Oromo or completely ignores them (Hassen, 1994:1). For instance, a respected Ethiopianist scholar, Richard Pankhurst, inter alia, labors to portray the glory of Amahara-Tigre history in 297 and a half pages out of 299 in a book titled *The Ethiopians*. Pankhurst spends only a page and half writing about the Oromo and even that page and a half itself is littered with stereotypical accounts that cast Oromo as foreigners. This reinforces the traditional view that the Ethiopians are only two Abyssinian groups, leading to seismic changes in the ways the south relates to the state and its history.

Hassen (1994:xii-xiii) points out that it is incorrect to depict Oromo as “newcomers, immigrants” on three grounds: (a) because the accounts seek to establish the origin of Oromo outside the present boundary of Ethiopia; (b) the accounts are based on the assertion that all Oromo were nomads before and during the sixteenth century while to the contrary large segments of Oromo were sedentary agriculturalists and only some of the Oromo were parts pastoralists ; (c) the accounts were far-fetched since they

asserted all Oromo lived in one unnamed or ill-named tiny place before their 16<sup>th</sup> century migration.

### **2.2.3.3 Oromo Social Organization**

Since the *Gada System* has been inextricably connected with traditional Oromo life “for at least four centuries of recorded history” (Legesse, 2000:30), social scientists and the Oromo people consider it to be both the social and political structure of the society (Jalata, 1993:19-22; Hassen, 1994: 6-17; Legesse, 2000). *Gada* provides an important context without which understanding the Oromo can be rendered superficial and incomplete.

Experts on the subject of *Gada* acknowledge the difficulty involved in precisely defining it (Hassen, 1994:9; Jalata, 1993:19) due to the broad and archaic nature of the indigenous system as well as the tensions between it and the modern Ethiopian state institutions that have either fully replaced or undermined the practice of *Gada* in many places in present Oromia. According to Hassen, *Gada* “is a term loosely used for so many varied concepts that it has lost any single meaning...unless one takes into account strictly the context in which the term is used,” (1994:9). For the purpose of this study, it would suffice to first provide the most common definition of *Gadaa* and then to provide a brief summary of the three most prominent institutions associated with it.

The *Gada System* is a “system of *gada* classes (*luba*) or segments of genealogical generations that succeed each other every eight years in assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities,” (Legesse, 2000: 31). A “generation” is

forty years long and is made up of five age-based gada classes. The classes are males who pass through five eight-year initiation. Baby boys enter the system at age zero (childhood) and serve their society for eight years in various social capacities/roles until some of them are elected to the position of *Abba Gada* (top ruler equivalent to president) only after age forty. The term of office of one Abba Gada is limited to eight years. Gada System is synonymous with “Oromo democracy and Oromo polity” in recent literature (Legesse, 2000) and forms one of the three institutions.

The *Qallu* or *Moiety* institution is the second element of the system that divides the Oromo society into two equal halves known as “Borena and Barentu,”—branches of a proto-family that settled in different parts of Oromia, Ethiopia. The social significance of this institution is that it serves as balancing and power-sharing mechanism by splitting a society into two politically opposed camps (Legesse, 2000:136). The divisions between the two moieties are artificial as they are interconnected and interdependent in their “structure and activities”, (Legesse, 2000:134). Marriages openly occur across the qallu-lines, further strengthening economic and social interdependence.

The *Gumi Institution (General Assembly)* is the third, the most important and the highest political and legal body of this indigenous social organization. A leading *Gada System* expert, Legesse (2000: 100) is succinct in describing the roles, responsibilities and the power of the *Gumi*:

The NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, (Gumi) is made up of all the *Gada* assemblies of the Oromo, who meet, once every eight years, to review the laws, to proclaim new laws, to evaluate the men in power, and to resolve major conflicts that could not be resolved at lower levels of their judicial organization. The present and former



Abba Gada are leaders in the main session of the Gumi...The Gumi stands in a superordiante position vis-à-vis the other institutions. It is the institution that gives structural substance to the notion that power rests ultimately with people—a right they exercise by direct participation or by delegating power to five groups of Gada leaders, active and semi-retired.

Although Legesse is succinct in describing the Gumi as the highest democratic decision-making organ of the Oromo polity, he rarely offers criticisms about the drawbacks of the fact that the Gumi has to wait eight years to conduct its general assembly meetings. The central idea of Legesse's book that the Oromo have their version of indigenous African democracy rests on his study and observation of many actual general assembly meetings. Deliberations on issues of national importance do take place at Gumi sessions, but the long gap in meetings gives the impression that the system is not based on ongoing deliberations. This is a principal shortcoming. It is a commonsense that at the core of many Western democracies is dependence on ongoing actual and televised national deliberations as new developments happen. Meetings in modern democracies seem to be issue-driven whenever those issues crop up and require serious attention. For a system that traces its beginning to "A.D 1400," (Hassen, 1994:4), it is a remarkable achievement by African standards for *Gada* to set an anti-authoritarian direction by imposing an eight-year term limit for its top leaders. Even in many so-called democracies transitions to power seem to occur violently than peacefully. If one were to grade a nation on its progress towards peace, then surely the Oromo nation would be among the leaders.

By contrast to, the Abyssinian social system (particularly Amahara's), in which relationships among members of the group are governed by hierarchical and utilitarian

individualistic ethos, the Oromo political culture is primarily characterized by “egalitarian” and “communal solidarity” ethos (Levine, 2007:46-49). Levine writes that “although differentials of rank and power exist throughout Oromo society, Oromo custom tends to minimize their significance” (2007:46). The notion of “*qite*”, for instance, stands for “equality” of men when they come together. Levine concludes his analysis of the Oromo system by noting that ‘communal solidarity’ makes Oromo system differ from the Amahara system. Communal solidarity is connected to how interests are pursued in relations to other members of the society. In essence, “...individual interests among the Oromo has tended not to be obtained at the expense of their neighbors—as was the case in the North due to competition over land and for honorific appointments,” (Levine, 2007:48).

The above shows us that Oromo political culture has a comparative egalitarian nature, but that does not mean that there are not segments of the Oromo society that the system excludes. The entire women section of the society is excluded from holding important leadership positions because elections to *Gada* offices are based on “universal male-suffrage; the main criteria for office were knowledge, honesty, bravery and demonstrated ability,” (Jalata, 1993:20). The Oromo system also excludes caste groups such as smiths and tanners. Most literature tends to ignore research into these excluded categories of people. Excluding caste groups and women is not unique to the Oromo since many ethnic systems in Ethiopia do exclude and denigrate these classes of people.

#### **2.2.3.4 Oromo: ‘Liberation’ Politics and History**

The history and politics of the long drawn-out conflict between the Abyssinian north and the Oromo and the south began during the last half of the nineteenth century. The period coincides with the partitioning of the Horn of African by colonial powers such as France, Britain, Italy and Ethiopia (Jalata, 1993:47). The scramble for Africa is significant to this conflict because it marked the beginning of alliance between European imperialists and Amahara-Tigire colonists who exploited the relationship in order to build the Ethiopian empire by conquering and colonizing their arch rival and neighbor, the Oromo people. With the help of weapons supplied by the British and French government<sup>22</sup>, the Abyssinians emperors carried out a series of raids into Oromo territories for over sixty years starting in 1840 until they finally succeeded to conquer and colonize Oromia and the south around 1900 (Melbaa, 1999:8,47; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990: 114; Jalata, 1993:47).

The period can be characterized as the “bloodiest” in the history of the conflict between the north and the south as the ravages of colonial war reduced the Oromo population from ten to five million (Melbaa, 1999:8). The massive number of deaths was due to a combination of factors that included direct killings by the colonial army and settlers, famine, epidemics and selling off occupied people into slavery. The conquest and occupation has been the source of a national trauma and a part of the core Oromo identity and resistance ever since. The stories from this traumatic period are incorporated into oral tradition, folk music, modern freedom songs, and written literature on the Oromo. To paraphrase Volkan (1997:48), this period from over a century ago forms a

powerful national trauma or “unresolved mourning,” for the vanquished Oromo and the south. The main consequence of the conquest in Oromia included: the establishment of fortified garrison cities (*ketemas*), dismantling of indigenous Gada administration, the institution of *naafxanya-gabbar* (a form of domestic slavery), banning of southern culture and languages, and the exclusion of the Oromo-south from state power (Jalata, 1993:56; Melbaa, 1999:9; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990:117).

Past trauma accompanied by current repression of the Oromo in Ethiopia led to the formation of the Oromo national liberation movement.

Before the southward expansion of Abyssinian army, the Abyssinia was organized into four kingdoms: Tigray, Gondar, Gojjam and Manz (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990). Many country experts on Ethiopia link the birth of ethno-nationalist conflict in Ethiopia to the conquest of the last half of nineteenth century (Jalata, 1993; Markakis, 2011). The successors of Emperor Menelik, the Amahara king who conquered the south, consolidated the empire and state that Menelik built by force. Ever since, the alternating Amahara-Tigre dominance in a wide range of spheres, including monopoly of state power, the economy and national culture and religion is a fact (Levine, 1965:1) The Oromo and the south view this Abyssinian dominance as an unacceptable birth defect of the Ethiopian empire and think that it continues to fuel inter-ethnic conflicts. The conquest’s destructiveness primarily expressed itself terms of massive land expropriation in Oromia and the south. The Abyssinians took two-thirds of the conquered lands for the state, leaving one-thirds to the subject population (Markakis, 1998:140). Since state is

ethnically controlled, “state” in the case of Ethiopia is a euphemism for Amahara-Tigre rule.

The conquest dealt a devastating blow to the Oromo and the south in many ways. The most important consequence was that it effectively crippled the capacity of the Oromo and south to dissent or rebel for nearly a century. Particularly, under His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974), Amahara elites ruled relatively unopposed by implementing a policy of linguistic and cultural homogenization of the peripheries like Oromia into the culture, language and Orthodox Christian faith of the centre (Bulcha, 1997:325). Successive Ethiopian governments promoted Amaharic as the only national or official language and banned other majority languages such as *Afan Oromo* in the south.

Explaining why there was not a significant Oromo opposition to the imperial governments until the 1960s, Hassen (1998: 194) writes:

From 1880s to the early 1960s the Oromo suffered a great deal from the lack of central leadership. It should be remembered that in the 1880s during the conquest and colonization of Oromo territory, a large number of the Oromo people, together with their leaders, were decimated...other Oromo leaders were co-opted into the Ethiopian political process. The basis for independent leadership was destroyed.

The first attempt at overcoming the lack of Oromo organized leadership was born out of the Marxist-Leninist student movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The movement challenged the imperial regime by conceptualizing “Ethiopia” in Leninist terms as “the prison house of nationalities”<sup>23</sup> and by emphasizing the needs for the equality and self-

determination for all ethnic groups. As a dominant force of opposition at the time, the student movement rallied under the famous slogan “*land to the tiller*”<sup>24</sup> in direct opposition to the feudal holding system by ruling elites that included the imperial aristocracy, the nobility, the Orthodox church, and land lords (Gebissa, 2010:2).

As a way of addressing the widely felt sentiments of alienation and repression, a few urbanite Oromo elites from the university-based student movement established the Macha and Tulama Association (MTA), a self-help civil society group whose initial goal was to engage in development activities in Oromia, in 1963 headquartered in nation’s capital Finfinne (aka Addis Ababa). The organization held its first meeting in *Itaya*, where it expressed the grievances on behalf of the Oromo people in the following terms:

- (1) less than one percent of Oromo school age children get the opportunity to go to school; (2)...less than one percent of Oromo population get adequate medical services; (3)...less than fifty percent of the Oromo population own land; (4)...a very small percentage of the Oromo population have access to [modern] communication services. [And yet] the Oromo paid more than eighty percent of the taxes for education, health, and communication”(Hassen, 1998:205-206 quoted in Jalata, 2010:15-16).

The underdevelopment issues the MTA raised are more moderate than the “self-determination” questions raised by the multi-ethnic student movement. However, the questions are significant because it was a taboo before that point for Oromos to be organized and ask potentially revolutionary questions like those. The Haile Silassie government perceived the MTA as threat to its power because of MTA’s rising popularity and because of the thorny nature of the issues that it foregrounded.

Tadassa Birru, a prominent General in the Haile Silassie army and a secret member of the MTA, attempted a coup to take control of the government in 1967 (Jalata, 2010:16). That led to a swift and brutal action from the government. The association was banned and some of its leaders were killed (Markakis, 1998; Jalata, 2010).

#### **2.2.3.5 The Birth and Evolution of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)**

Oromo elites who realized the limits of the MTA in challenging the Haile Silassie regime took a more militant position and created the OLF in 1973. The OLF describes its mission or goal as:

“...to lead the national liberation struggle of the Oromo people against Abyssinian colonial rule. The emergence of the OLF was a culmination of a century old yearn of the Oromo people to have a strong and unified national organization to lead the struggle. The fundamental objective of the Oromo liberation movement is to exercise the Oromo people’s inalienable right to national self-determination to terminate a century of oppression, exploitation, and to form, where possible, a political union with other nations on the basis of equality, respect for mutual interests and the principle of voluntary association... (OLF, 1973).

This grandiose mission of the organization is both backward-looking and forward-looking at the same time. Framing the Oromo question as a colonial question is directly linked to the national trauma induced by the Amahara conquest and occupation of the Oromo and southern territories in the second half of the nineteenth century. The mission expresses the national calamity that befell the Oromo nation and the urgent need now to reverse that. In many ways, the backward looking aspect of the organization’s goal is similar to other regional liberation movements who capitalize on the unfinished mourning of the past (Volkan, 1997:48). The mission not only powerfully connects the past to

present, but it appears to also raise the past over the present in order to effectively rally supporters behind OLF goals. The forward-looking aspect the OLF's objective is a revolutionary idea of changing the status quo of northern domination in Ethiopia and allowing the Oromo to exercise what it called "their inalienable right to self-determination." This insinuates that the Oromo have never been asked whether they prefer to be part of Ethiopia or not from the beginning state formation. Empowering the Oromo to decide their destiny by facilitating a national referendum on whether they wish to stay in Ethiopia and reform the state or whether they wish to break away and create an independent Oromia has formed the substance of the OLF counter-hegemonic discourse for years. This discourse fundamentally challenges the status quo that the Amahara-Tigre ethno-nationalists would like to maintain. It has been a source of confrontation and ongoing intrastate war between the OLF and various Ethiopian governments since the birth of the OLF. The mission statement is ambiguous. Such an ambiguous mission statement in "either or" terms have also created splinters within the OLF, with more radical members wanting to opt for a complete independence of Oromia. We will turn to the issues of factionalism later.

The OLF was the product of the both the pro-liberation student movement of the 1960s and 1970s that swept the African continent. It also a product of a specific circumstance of Oromo history and nationalism. It was engineered by the emerging urban intelligentsia of the 1960s that began to react to the Amaharization policy, which forced other ethnic groups to take Amahara identity wholesale by abandoning their own (Markakis, 2011:194). Markakis writes that the necessity of armed struggle was



advocated by the young radicals, and fully shared by the emerging Oromo nationalists. The belief in armed struggle was reinforced by the violent killings of MTA Oromo dissenters as well as the national trauma of the “distant” past.

In the 1970s, the OLF did not gain traction among the broad rural peasantry. Some say the initial lack of rural support for the OLF was due to the land reform introduced by the pseudo-socialist<sup>25</sup> military junta in 1975 following the revolution of 1974 that violently removed Emperor Haile Silassie from power (Markakis, 2011;197). Markakis argues that the land reform of 1975 transferred land from the feudal owners to the common peasantry, which served the purpose of pacifying the rural peasantry who were merely serfs under the previous regime. The OLF call for Oromo nationalism attracted popular attention in the 1980s since the OLF controlled some territories and proved to the Oromo that it stands for their national interest. In the late 1970s and in the 1980s the OLF operated from its base in neighboring Sudan alongside the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigre People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The common enemy of the three fronts at that time was the Mengistu’s socialist government. Mengistu was fighting these insurgents in the provinces of Tigray, Eritrea and Oromia. While the OLF and the EPLF fought for the independence of Oromia and Eritrea respectively, the TPLF fought for the self-determination of Tigre people (Bayer and McAllister, 1991). The three rebel groups—TPLF, EPLF, OLF—were partners in overthrowing the military junta in 1991.

The conspiracy to exclude OLF from state power began in 1989 when the TPLF leaders created a fake umbrella organization known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) out of satellite people's democratic organizations (PDOs). The satellite organizations were composed of defectors and captives from Mengistu's army. The captives were either captured by the TPLF and EPLF or surrendered to them in Tigray and Eritrea. The creation of the EPRDF was done in preparation for a possible takeover of power by the TPLF after the eminent fall of Mengistu's regime. The primary aim of forming a TPLF-controlled satellite groups in regions like Oromia, Amhara and southern nations was to undermine the popularity of indigenous liberation front such the OLF in order to counter the minority status of the TPLF in case of elections (Gebreab, 2009).

Writing about who the identity of the captives in the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), a surrogate of the TPLF in Oromia, Geberab<sup>26</sup> provides us this insight:

The OPDO whose top leadership has, for years, alternated between Kuma Demkssa and Abadula Gameda was composed of former war prisoners and opportunist individuals whom the TPLF leaders condescendingly nick-named "enduring choices", just like the Ethiopian-version of the Coca-Cola advertisement. In closed circles, TPLF cadres also scoff at these individuals as "Tekeze river's chameleons". It was the deceased Kifle Gebremedihin, the security chief for the TPLF, who shaped the recruits in the palms of his hands and created the OPDO as a beer-bread<sup>27</sup> along the bank of the Tekeze river. Kifle then took them to a place called Odet in Tigray and made the OPDO to hold its first general meeting. Among the group's early members were: Kuma Demekssa, Ibrahim Melka, Abadula Gameda, Aberra Hailu and Bacha Debele... Using a relatively better-educated second generation of Coca Colas such Shifera Jarso, Hassen Ali, Negasso Gidada, Girma Birru, Sofian Amhmed, the TPLF built the so-called "OPDO intellectuals"...(Gebreab, 2009:270-271).

The idea of referring to the OPDO members as “coco cola” highlights how every OPDO leader is similar in political trait to the next OPDO leader just like one coca cola bottle is similar to the next one. This highlights the organization’s surrogate status and lack of independence in thinking, judgment and action regarding the Oromo question for self-determination. “Coca cola” is a way of comically depicting OPDO leaders as passive conduits for the political programs of the TPLF in the occupied Oromia.

Once the rebels took over the capital in 1991, the relationship between the OLF and the closely related TPLF and EPLF started to deteriorate from partnership in overthrowing the military junta to something of a bitter ethnonationalist competition over as to who must prevail in controlling state power. The TPLF-EPLF coalition succeeded in militarily prevailing and taking over Addis Ababa. The OLF was militarily inferior at the time with about 7,000 fighters while by contrast the TPLF with 80,000 guerillas, and the EPLF with 60,000 guerillas were militarily superior (Bayer and McAllister, 1991: 5). The Tigire and Eritrean rebels combined their forces and fought against the OLF in the early 1990s, eventually driving out the OLF from the transitional government (1991-1992) and the relatively vast and resource-rich state of Oromia. The power asymmetry persisted afterwards too. Among the most important reasons the TPLF/EPRDF considered the OLF as a serious threat in Oromia and the capital Finfinne, was OLF’s popularity. TPLF leaders knew that if they allowed democratic elections they would lose

power to the OLF because the OLF support-base has been a clear majority while the TPLF base has been a clear minority.

Aga argues that coercive procedural manipulation has been essential to the survival of the TPLF as a political force; the TPLF has been using procedural manipulation heavily to overcome the weakness of its minority support base *ceteris paribus*. Free and fair democratic elections would not have made any logical or statistical sense to the TPLF leaders, where Tigres are a clear minority (6.10 percent) in the country that votes along ethnic lines. In this situation, the author argues “if you were Meles Zenawi you have two options: (1) be autocratic and brutal and stay in power, or (2) be democratic and lose power” (Aga, 2009). From two decades of the EPRDF governance, one can observe that Zenawi has chosen the first option.

Let us briefly examine the exact procedural manipulations motioned above. TPLF undermined the influence of the OLF first by forming a number of surrogate ethnic peoples’ democratic organizations (PDOs) including the OPDO. Then it used these organizations in the political maneuvering that followed the national conference of 1991. The conference established an 87-member Council of Representatives that in turn formed the basis for the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) (Clapham, 2002:26). The 87 members of the council were representatives of national liberation fronts, other political organizations and ethnic minorities. The number of seats for the organizations was decided by the TPLF/EPRDF. Some say that this was just an exercise of bringing more

groups under the control of the TPLF (Jalata, 1993). Jalata provides the methods TPLF used in controlling state power:

By using its force majeure in the council, the TPLF/EPRDF secured executive position in the transitional government. The TPLF/EPRDF gave itself forty-four of the eighty-seven seats in the Council...through the adoption of the charter and the formation of the transitional government, TPLF/EPRDF legitimized its interim state power and began to manage the empire's politics and economic resources.”

Jalata adds that the OLF got a minority share in the council by 12 votes. The rest of the seats went to other smaller groups.

This grand TPLF manipulation marked the beginning of a conflictual relationship between the OLF and the EPRDF (Clapham, 1998; Markakis, 1998; Jalata 1993). The OLF objected to the procedures for district and regional elections and withdrew from the transitional government in 1992. OLF leaders went into exile and the organization resumed armed struggle to liberate Oromia (Shinn, 2009:2).

The OLF is still fighting an ongoing intra-state war with the Ethiopian government to control Oromia. As the endless war goes on, the OLF finds itself splintered into factions. The first fracture occurred when Jarra Abbagada who chose to leave the organization in 1978 with a group of Muslim followers and created Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO). Jarra opposed the secular policies of the OLF whose leaders have come from all regions and religions (Waqeffannaa, Christianity and Islam) of Oromia. Anticipating the difficulty that might arise from following a religious

policy in diverse religious setting, the OLF states its policy on religions and religious extremism as: "...the OLF respects religious equality and pursues secular policy. It opposes religious domination and religious extremism of any kind," (OLF, 1973). Secular policy did not sit well with some few individuals like Jarra Abagada who chose to splinter.

Then another group called QC-OLF (transitional OLF) splintered from the OLF in early 2000s, claiming an ideological difference between itself and the original OLF. QC claimed that OLF's mission was ambiguously stated and confuses the Oromo people. The ambiguity QC cites is in reference to the question of OLF insistence on a referendum option for the Oromo people to either stay and democratize Ethiopia or decide to form an independent state of Oromia instead of centrally imposing the decisions of the vanguard organization on the fate of the people. The QC-OLF believes that Oromos must fight for the complete independence of Oromia from Ethiopia instead of autonomy.

A third faction known as *Jijjiirama*-OLF (Change-OLF) splintered from the OLF in 2008 claiming to be more militant under the General Kemal Gelchu. By accusing the OLF of the "lack adequate military action" in Oromia, the Jijjiirama faction promised it will increase military actions against the state. Change-OLF itself splintered in two factions in 2011: one faction joined a fundamentalist right wing Abyssinian group Ginbot7<sup>28</sup>; the majority of the members of Change-OLF group considered General Kemal Gelchu's faction as traitors and dropped out of the movement.

Currently, there are four OLF factions. However, almost all the groups that splintered from the original OLF have poor military and political presence in Oromia-Ethiopia. The OLF that is now fighting an intrastate war with the Zenawi's government is the original OLF, which has its base in Eritrea and has some military forces in various areas of Ethiopia. It engages in low-key guerilla warfare. Thus, the OLF referred to in this study hereafter is in reference to the secular and the main OLF, which is actively engaged in intra-state conflict with the state of Ethiopia (Hewitt et al, 2012: 125).

#### **2.2.4 Ogaden-Somali: Politics and History**



Figure 5 Ogaden-Somali State. ©Human Rights Watch 2008

Article 47 of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution lists the Somali state, homeland for the ethnic Ogaden-Somali, as one of the nine member states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Located in the eastern part of Ethiopia, the Somali state is bordered in the east by mainland Somalia, in the west by the state of Oromia, in the northeast by the Afar and Djibouti. The region also shares a small portion of its southern border with Northern Kenya. The Somali-Ogaden are the third largest nationality in Ethiopia (6.2 percent) and their state is the second largest state in Ethiopia (after Oromia). Ethiopian Ogaden-Somali share Somali ethnicity with people across the border in Somalia and Somaliland.

By economic activity the Somali-Ogadenis are predominantly mobile nomadic pastoralists constantly shifting territories in search of green pastures and water points in the Horn (Ethiopian Census, 2007; Markakis, 2011:58). The Ogaden-Somali raise a number of animals such as goats, sheep, and cattle, but camel rearing is the most important, the most prestigious and the oldest pastoralist practice. Somalis attach special importance to camels as their folkloric evidence shows: "...According to a Somali poem, 'one pays creditors and others with goats, sheep and cattle, but one keeps camels as insurance for life,'" (Markakis, 2011:58). Some of the reasons for this strong preference for camels include its: "many uses, adaptability, greater mobility, eclectic eating habits, endurance in hot climates, selective browsing behavior, longer lactation, greater volume of milk per lactation, and resistance to disease and drought," (Markakis, 2011:58-59).



By inference from the work of Hewitt et al (2012) that describes general peace and conflict trends in Ethiopia, the Ogaden state is the region of the second longest-running protracted conflict in Ethiopia next to that of Oromia. The process of conquest of the Ogaden, much like that of Oromia, can be linked to the period of the European scramble for Africa and the southward expansion of the European-backed Abyssinian groups (Amahara-Tigre) in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pankhurst, 1998; Jalata, 1993; Markakis, 2011). Since Emperor Menelik II of Amahara conquered the Ogaden in 1887 (HRW, 2008: 20; Pankhurst, 1998: 178), the Somali have had an antagonistic, ambivalent and belligerent relationship with the Ethiopian empire. The combined effect of the arbitrary colonial boundary system, Abyssinian conquest and domination, the world wars, the U.S.-Soviet cold war rivalry, among other factors, may have contributed to disrupting the traditional Ogaden-Somali pastoralist way of life, effectively relegating them to the status of political and geographic periphery under modern Ethiopian state schemes. While that is the similarity the Ogaden struggle with state bears with other southern ethno-nations, the region has also its own peculiarities that are worth briefly discussing below.

The state of Ogaden has been the scene of unprecedented competition among constantly changing European powers (Italy and Britain) and regional powers (Abyssinia-Ethiopia and Somalia) from colonial ear down to the end of the Cold War and now in the ear of the Global War on Terrorism. When Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1936, the Ogaden region was incorporated into the Italian East African Empire. The allied power defeated Italian forces in East Africa in 1941, which briefly led to uniting all Somali territories,

including the Ogaden, under the British military administration (HRW, 2008: 20). Emperor Haile Silassie of Ethiopia who contested the British military occupation of the Ogaden region, laid claim to it as an integral part of Ethiopia, and solicited U.S. support in order to pressure Britain to hand over the territory to Ethiopia during the post-World War II period (Marcus, 1995; HRW, 2008). Due to the combined U.S.-Ethiopian pressures, “Britain restored Ethiopian sovereignty over the Ogaden territory and abandoned its vision of one united Somali administered by Britain. On September 23, 1948, the Ogaden was transferred from British to Ethiopian control...” (HRW, 2008: 21).

As one form of control or crisis ends in Ogadenia, usually another one begins. With the aim of incorporating the Ogaden and other presumably lost Somali territories into the ideologically-inspired vision of “Greater Somalia” (Marcus, 1995:34), the Siad Barre’s Somali government continuously backed insurgent movements in south eastern Ethiopia in 1960s and 1970s (HRW, 2008: 21). More than competitors, the insurgency and counter-insurgency wars not only ravaged the civilian Ogadenis, but also culminated in the first Somali-Ethiopian war of 1977-78 over the Ogaden. Backed by the Soviets (and Cubans), the Mengistu Haile Mariam’s communist regime of Ethiopia defeated Barre’s Somali forces and gained control over Ogaden. Accounts indicate that the occupation by Ethiopia after victory resulted in humanitarian crises of major proportions, including massive internal displacements and flight across the border with the losing Somali military.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the Somalia backed insurgents during and prior to the Ethio-Somali war, including the now defunct Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) fought an irredentist war, not for the interests of the Ogaden-Somali of Ethiopia, but for the interests of the Barre government, which created and sent them across the porous borders. This phenomenon changes after the end of the cold war as another rebel organization, relatively independent from both the Ethiopian and Somalian influences, emerges on the scene and articulates the Ogadeni question as a question of self-determination or independence. The new insurgency is the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Established in 1984 with the aim of conducting the Ogaden struggle for self-determination (Hewitt et al. 2012:125), the ONLF is the youngest and the militarily strongest of the myriad of Ethiopia's liberation fronts involved in an ongoing intrastate conflict with Ethiopian-cum-Tigre state.

ONLF's armed conflict with the state began when in 1996 the ONLF declared war against Ethiopia and attacked the Ethiopian government troops. Some expatriates call this first military engagement of the ONLF with Ethiopia a "holy war"<sup>30</sup>, insinuating the predominantly Muslim composition of the Ogaden-Somali region, but the ONLF dismisses that and claims that it is fighting for a secular cause of self-determination (ONLF, 1998-2011), as can be seen in its objectives below. The movement frames its political and military objectives in colonial terms by drawing on the past traumas and the urgency to deal with them now. ONLF's overarching goal is to liberate Ogaden from the Ethiopian colonial power (Hewitt et al, 2012:126). Three of its six political objectives

(aka ‘fundamental considerations of the ONLF), stand out as the resounding ONLF grand vision and conflict narrative-line:

(1) The Ogaden cause is not at the heart of a dispute between the Republic of Somalia and Ethiopia. It is one of the visages of European colonialism in Africa. It is the cause of a nation betrayed by Britain and other colonial powers and annexed by Ethiopia in a manner contrary to the agreements concluded between the Ogaden people and Britain and in conflict with International Law and the charter of the United Nations. (2) The struggle of the People of Ogaden and the aim of their movement is to obtain the right of self-determination, rather than a struggle aimed at realizing the identity of a nationality. This is because Ogaden has never been historically or politically part of Ethiopia. (3) The revolution of the People of Ogaden is based upon their absolute rejection of the unauthorized disposition of their territory by the British Government; and subsequently on their constant appeals to obtain the right of self determination based on the principle that the people of Ogaden alone reserve the right to determine their political future.

ONLF’s implementation of these objectives has put the ONLF in major direct confrontations with the Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF) following the group’s attacks on Chinese-owned oil fields in Ogaden in 2007, in which “sixty-five Ethiopian and nine Chinese workers were killed, while seven Chinese were also taken captive...,” (BBC, 2007/04/24). The incident is important because it not only escalated the conflict to a new level, but it also provoked a reprisal counter-insurgency campaign from the EDF. The reprisal attacks led to one of the most devastating and continuing humanitarian crisis of recent decades in the Ogaden. Characterizing the Ethiopian army’s response as “war crimes and crimes against humanity”<sup>31</sup>, Human Rights Watch provides satellite images and a report, showing five villages that were razed to the ground in Fiiq, Korahe, Gode, Wardheer, and Dhagahbur (2008:9). In addition to the destruction of villages, the report

points out the massive forced internal displacements, denial of humanitarian operations and access by foreign journalists to the region (HRW, 2008). As the quest for self-determination by the ONLF has continued, so has Ethiopian crackdown on human rights in the region. The ethnic nature of the conflict can easily be missed if one ignores the fact of Amahara-Tigre domination of power in Ethiopia. The context on the Ogaden is, thus, significant to this study because it is one of the protracted conflicts of the country.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the historical and political background for the internal ethno-national actors in Ethiopia. The diversity of ethnic, linguistic, religious communities and local actors presented here, more than anything, highlights that the current Ethiopian state run by a mono-ethnic group is a fundamentally multi-ethnic mosaic of East Africa, with many hostile contending actors. It is evident that any resolution will take decades, if not generations, to achieve.

We observe that there are at least two versions of contending Ethiopian history: the northern hegemonic version of Amahara-Tigre that emphasizes the glory and victory of Abyssinian rulers; and the historiography of the south—the Oromo and the Ogaden—that emphasizes the ongoing national traumas that have befallen the two nations in the last half of the 19th century. The history of the Amahara-Tigre is as much an ethno-nationalist historiography as much as those of the Oromo and Ogaden peoples of the south. Neither the north nor the south accepts the other's version of history.

Historiography provides to each side a rich and combustible raw material for the ongoing ethno-nationalist conflict and competition. Each side uses historiography to delegitimize the other's identity. This chapter attempted to critically examine the prominent aspects of the empire's complex inter-ethnic relations with the view to not only mapping the conflict, but also revealing what partisan historiographers gloss over or completely ignore. It is particularly significant to mention that the hegemonic northern historiography, as a history driven by the power at the center (Finfinne), has completely ignored, glossed over or denigrated the history of the south.

Some of the important purposes of attempting to present a critical background in this chapter are to show the complexity of the conflict and to guide the inquiry in a new and creative direction. A critical approach breaks the common taboo of silence about ignoring "the elephant in the room"—refusal to address the deep-rooted disagreement among local actors on the political entity called "Ethiopia." The rejection by the south of the national Ethiopian identity and their struggles for self-determination itself highlights that a protracted conflict exists over national identity. The chapter frames the "Ethiopian" societies as multinational or multiethnic by contrast to the prevailing mono-ethnic dominance. The 'multiethnic' framing in this superpower intervention research is anticipated to help analyze the problems associated with supporting mono-ethnic elites in such a complex environment.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The objectives of this chapter are twofold: (a) present summaries and critiques of the theoretical framework used in the study; (b) present the review of relevant literature on intervention. The study uses realism (power politics) as a theoretical lens for the purpose of analyzing the international aspect of the U.S.-Ethiopia relations during the eras of Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism. In order to do that, the chapter draws on realist philosophies of Hans Morgenthau (1967) and John Mearsheimer (2001), two of the most prominent proponents of realism in international politics among nations. For the analysis of the influence of U.S. interventions on domestic politics, the study uses Johan Galtung's (1969) conceptualization of structural violence. It critiques the limitations of the Galtungian theory of violence and peace. The second part of this chapter reviews the relevant literature on intervention with specific emphases on providing what is known, unknown, or left out about the subject. The chapter evaluates the strengths and the weaknesses of the intervention literature relevant to this case study.

#### **3.2 Theoretical Perspectives**

### **3.2.1 Realism (Power Politics)**

Despite some differences in nuances, there are significant consensus among realist thinkers concerning the nature of politics and relations among states. Developed in response to and in the context of the overwhelming international violence of the twentieth century such as the World Wars and the Cold War proxy wars and confrontations, realism has sought to explain the behaviors of state actors in international relations (Mearsheimer, 2001: xi). The theory is statist in the sense that its variables are states and the power struggles for dominance among them. Since states in the international system fear each other, “their ultimate aim is to gain a position of dominant power over others, because having dominant power is the best means to ensure one’s own survival,” (Mearsheimer, 2001: xi). This is consistent with Morgenthau’s assessment that the most immediate goal of international politics is the pursuit of “interests define as power,” (Morgenthau, 1967:5, 25). Morgenthau does not define power in detail, but he does generally speak of power in terms of its nature as, “...man’s control over the minds and actions of other men. By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large,” (1967:26). Realists conclude that the pursuit of power is the most fundamental aspect of international relations (Morgentahu, 1967; Mearsheimer, 2001).

In summary, Mearsheimer (2001:17-18) identifies three main areas of consensus among realists: (a) realists treat states as principal actors in global politics; (b) they believe that the conduct of great powers is shaped mainly by their external environment, not by internal characteristics; (c) realists hold that the calculus of power dominates



statist thinking and that states are in a perpetual mode of competition spurred by fear and uncertainty. These are the strengths of the theory since realism allows us to explain competitions and behaviors of great powers in a bipolar, multipolar or unipolar asymmetric world. The periods emphasized in this case study are periods marked by bipolar power struggles between Americans and Soviets in the Horn then and between America and non-state Islamic extremist actors in the region now.

Now that we pinpointed to the areas of consensus among realist theorists, we would briefly turn to the nuances of some of the differences in their conceptualization of realism.

#### **3.2.1.1 Morgenthau's "Human Nature Realism" or Classical Realism**

Morgenthau's human nature realism, which dominated the field of international relations from 1940s-1970s,<sup>32</sup> is based on the assumption that states are led by human beings who have the predisposition for aggression from birth and therefore states are aggressive too (Morgenthau, 1967: 32; Mearsheimer, 2001:19). According to this logic, aggression or the tendency to dominate others that characterizes human relations at family and community levels is coextensive with the behavior of states to dominate other states in pursuit of their interests. "A will to power or limitless lust for power,"<sup>33</sup> drives states to outdo their rivals in accumulating the most power they can get. Based on this assumption, Morgenthau proposes six fundamental principles of political realism. The first principles stipulates that politics is governed by objective laws that have origin in human nature; the second principle defines interest in terms of power; principle three

holds the meaning of interest defined as power is not permanently fixed; principle four holds realism's awareness of the moral importance of political action; principle five differentiates between particular moral aspirations by nations and universal norms; and principle six states the profound difference between realism and other schools of thoughts.

### **3.2.1.2 Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism**

The other typology of realism is Mearsheimer's "offensive realism." Offensive realism retains most of the early conceptualization of the theory by Morgenthau and others, but it empathizes on the international structure, not human nature, as a primarily causative factor for states to compete for power (2001:21-23). The assumption here is the belief that the international state system compels states to "maximize their relative power because that is the optimal way to maximize their security."<sup>34</sup> Alternatively, a state's prime goal is to be a hegemon in the system by relentlessly seeking ways to increase its power. Thus, survival needs spur a state's offensive behavior. As in human nature realism, the amounts of power states want are virtually limitless. Mearsheimer further challenges the prevailing received wisdom that the post Cold War relations between states are devoid of competitions for power. He thinks the idea that there is no power rivalry between states now is preposterous. Mearsheimer propounds that as long as global structural factors are in place, the drive to control the levers of power remains an 'offensive' reality (2001:4). In power politics the status of "great power" is determined mainly by the military capability of a nation (Mearsheimer, 2001:5; Waltz, 1979:161).

### **3.2.1.3 Some Limitations of Realism**

Despite some of its key strengths in explaining states' behaviors, there are several problems with the wholesale application of realism to the field of conflict analysis and resolution (Burton, 1995). The first important limitation of realism is its narrow and implicit assumption that peace and security can only be achieved by resorting to coercive power. The theory suffers from a Westphalian tendency that puts militaristic state actors at the centre of the universe, relegating other means of securing "peace by peaceful means," (Galtung, 1996). It is only one theory of the many of its kind in international relations.

In his chapter, "Track Two: An Alternative to Power Politics," John Burton (1995) is one of our field's first leading scholars to identify several key limitations of political realism. Burton's critiques of realism are both contextual and substantive. Contextually, Burton dismisses power politics on the ground that Morgenthau was writing in the late 1940s from within the boundary of an already powerful state, allowing him to be biased in favor of the prevalent realist perspective. Burton also maintains that coming from a highly legalistic tradition, Morgenthau's philosophy is limited since it saw that power can be used for peaceful and other good purposes (1995:84). Substantively, Burton challenges Morgenthau on his basic assumption. Burton rightly critiques realism for its allegiance to first track diplomacy for its becoming a justification for "adversary diplomacy, deterrence strategies, covert operations, interventions into the domestic political affairs of countries that have different social and political policies..." (Burton, 1995:86). Its focus on states alone is reductionist in that contemporary conflicts

typologies are many including protracted ethnic, religious and identity conflicts (Burton, 1995:87). Burton proposes track two diplomacy as alternative to power politics.<sup>35</sup>

It is because of the limits of realism to capture domestic ethnic relations in multi-ethnic Ethiopia that this study also relies on an additional theoretical perspective—structural violence.

### **3.2.2 Theory of Structural Violence**

Johan Galtung (1969) provides in-depth formulations of the concepts of “violence” and “peace.” Defining peace as the absence of violence, Galtung argues that thinking about peace theory and practice rests upon the same framework as thinking about violence (1969:172). He defines violence expansively as, “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is.”<sup>36</sup> He develops two notions of violence: structural violence and personal violence, with their respective typologies, sub-typologies and means.<sup>37</sup> Structural violence refers to a form of silent, invisible and stable violence that is built into a prevailing social system.<sup>38</sup> The hallmark of structural violence is “inequality” in the distribution of power and wealth. He acknowledges that structural violence can take on the form of direct assault when the “top dogs” from their secluded palaces mobilize the army to defend the status quo against sources of threat “from below”.

#### **3.2.2.1 Conceptual Differences and Similarities between Structural Violence and Direct Assault**

Despite the array of differences in the ways personal and structural violence occur, they share two common properties: (a) both causes the difference between the potential and actual development of persons, and (b) both are assumed to result in similar levels of suffering.<sup>39</sup> The main purpose of personal violence is to do physical harm to others through the agency of a “gang” or an “army”.<sup>40</sup> Personal violence inflicts harm in two major ways. First, person-to-person violence attempts to directly destroy “the machine” or “the human body” (by methods of crushing, tearing, piercing, burning, poisoning and evaporation). The other way of inflicting bodily harm is by preventing the human body from functioning (by denying air, water, food and movement). While the object of personal violence can see the violence and complain, “the object of structural violence will be persuaded not to perceive it at all”—violence is naturalized. Structural violence is conceived of as showing some stability overtime unlike direct assault (for example, as measured by tolls resulting from group conflicts and wars) that shows significant fluctuation over time. Galtung posits that due to its physical nature, personal violence may be more easily seen whereas “the ‘tranquil waters’ of structural violence may contain much more violence.”<sup>41</sup>

Galtung argues that “an extended concept of violence leads to an extended concept of peace.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, we (peace researchers and practitioners) can understand peace better only if we understand how violence works. Most importantly, Galtung proposes “negative” and “positive peace” to help solve the problems caused by personal and structural violence respectively. Negative peace removes the persons (groups, army and gangs) who carry out violence. The concept of positive peace will help

promote social justice—meeting the deprived basic needs of individuals (Burton, 1979:38).

As one of our field's grand theories, the strengths of Galtung's theory of structural violence is the relatively precise and detailed ways in which the theorist defines the concepts of peace and violence. The broadness of the theory might create a compelling temptation to apply it to the analysis of everything structural or personal violence. Galtung proposes 'negative' and 'positive' peace as mechanisms of addressing issues of systemic and personal violence, thereby leading to peace. For instance, he refers to social justice (egalitarian distribution of power and resources, *inter alia*),<sup>43</sup> but he barely provides adequate methods of distributing power and resources. While the shortage of details on the "how" of the theory is an obvious limitation, its application to the analysis of the case of domestic structural and direct violence in Ethiopia are relevant. This study narrows down the use of this theoretical perspective to the analysis of the application of the anti-terrorism in systematic repressions and to the analysis of the manifest massive human rights violations against perceived and real arch ethnic rivals.

### **3.3 Literature Review**

The literature review covers three main areas of intervention: mythological and conventional narratives underpinning U.S. interventions in Ethiopia; reasons for intervention in Ethiopia during the Cold War; and reasons for intervention in the era of War on Terrorism.

### **3.3.1 Mythologizing Intervention: Ethiopia as an Outpost of Christian and Semitic Civilizations**

Many conventional and scholarly views exist on why the United States and the West choose to ally themselves with the Amahara-Tigre elites from the north, as opposed to the Oromo and other peoples of southern Ethiopia. Many authors locate the origins of United States' favoritism to Amahara-Tigre rulers in the Judaeo-Christian mythology that the Ethiopian elites themselves created or other expatriate writers of the classic antiquity created for them elsewhere (Jalata, 2001:89; Levine, 2000:1-9; Sorenson, 1993:13). It is generally well understood that the image of Ethiopia as Christian island surrounded by many Islamic states and large internal Muslim populations have long guided Western official perceptions in choosing certain ethnic groups over others as allies in Ethiopia. Right-wing Ethiopian elites have been perceived as sharing Judaeo-Christian values with Europe and the United States for centuries. Narratives about common traditions have played legitimating and discriminating roles simultaneously.

Many intervention-related myths and legends abound in written and oral narratives, but two of them seem to be the most significant because they seem to have shaped the U.S. and Western foreign policy approaches toward Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa for a long time. These are the "*Solomon and Sheba*" and the "*Prester John*" legends that cast Ethiopia as the outpost of Semitic and Christian civilizations respectively (Levine, 2000:17; Sorensen, 1993:23-24). The "Solomon and Sheba" legend is significant because it represents "the means by which the ruling elite invented an ancient and divine genealogy to legitimize their rule," (Sorensen, 1993:23). Accordingly

to this legend, the Queen Sheba visits King Solomon in Jerusalem and returns home pregnant with Menelik I, who later became an anointed Abyssinian king. The Solomon-Sheba legend is well known in the West from biblical references<sup>1</sup> and the arts (Sorensen, 1993:23). These kinds of ideas are likely to be in harmony with already prevalent and biased Eurocentric ways of viewing peoples in Ethiopia.

The Prester John legend is another popular legend about a fictitious Christian Portuguese king, Prester John, lost among Muslims and pagans in the Orient [Ethiopia]. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this justified the alliance of Ethiopia with European Crusaders against the Somali Jihadist forces of Ahmed Granyé (Sanceau, 1944: X). This study will investigate the question of whether religious images continue to reinforce the belief that a Habesha-led Ethiopia is a dependable Western ally. To avoid a wrong causal relationship, one can assert that mythologies and legends may have served to justify other underlying interests. Mythologies seem to be important as justifications, but they may not in and of themselves be the most important factors in U.S. interventions in Ethiopia.

The strengths of Levine and Sorensen's analyses of the two legends are that both authors recognize that Habesha elites exploited them to legitimize their power and to claim superiority over the Oromo and the south. Their approaches are different in that Donald Levine advances an ideological narrative of "*Greater Ethiopia*," by devoting chapters to the analysis of the differences between Oromo versus Amahara-Tigre

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<sup>1</sup> In the New International Version of the Bible (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chronicles 9:1), reference is made to the nature of Sheba's visit to Solomon, but it is not clear which country she departed from to visit him. Ethiopian elites claim it is northern coastal area of Assab. Reference is also made about the precious gifts she presented to King Solomon and the possible sexual encounters.



(Habesha) social systems and cultures from an evolutionary perspective, whereas John Sorensen adopts Michel Foucault's discursive approach to examine the contested imagination of "Ethiopia" itself by the Amahara-Tigre and the rest of the peoples. Sorensen's major contribution is his recognition that Western discourse and scholarship on the nature of the Ethiopian state are skewed in favor of the cultures of the Amahara-Tigre ethnic groups, while virtually excluding those of Oromo and the southern peoples. Levine is a leading mainstream Ethiopianist scholar devoted to defending the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia under the dominant leadership of ethno-national Amahara-Tigre groups. Levine does this by casting the Amahara as a "thesis" and the Oromo as an "anti-thesis" in state-building, effectively portraying the former positively as possessing superior civilization and culture, but the latter as having inferior ones (Levine, 2000:72-80). It can be a weakness that both studies rely heavily on classic and contemporary documentary evidence alone. Other possible sources of empirical evidence can be stated policy goals, actions and implementations. Throughout his book, Levine uses the term "Galla"<sup>2</sup>, a pejorative Habesha appellation for the Oromo people, which shows the biased nature and ethical shortcomings of his book.

Because of the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the Ethiopian empire, the repercussions of such myths in justifying conflict against the ethnic Other are far-reaching. Paradoxically, Levine (2000:18) identifies two main negative consequences of this image: " (1) that the Amahara-Tigrean peoples are identified as the 'true Ethiopians'

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<sup>2</sup> The term is the equivalent of "Nigger" for blacks in the U.S. and "Kefir" for blacks in apartheid South Africa.

or the ‘Abyssinians proper’; (2) the core elements of the Amahara-Tigrean culture are viewed as deriving from early Semitic influences.” He maintains that this will lead to considering the Oromo and the southern peoples as non-true or fake Ethiopians and their culture and indigenous systems as alien and inferior.

In his analysis of *The Impacts of U.S. Foreign Policy on the Oromo National Struggle*, Jalata (2001:89) argues that “the application of racist values to the Oromo issue by Ethiopian and the U.S. foreign policy elites makes possible the economic exploitation and political oppression of Oromos and facilitates judgments and policy based upon stereotypes, and unexamined preconceived ideas about the Oromo.” Jalata compares and contrasts Western and U.S. views towards Oromo and Habesha. Whereas the U.S. views Habesha as “Semitic,” “Christians”, and “advanced peoples,” it views Oromos inaccurately as “savage,” “Muslim fundamentalists,” “pagan,” “backward,” and, most recently, “terrorist.” This, Jalata argues, has contributed to the marginalization of the Oromo voice in Ethiopia. Jalata (2001) follows a critical approach and makes some astute observations about perceptions which are mostly validated by many other writers, but it can be controversial that he raised perceptions to the level of institutionalized racism practiced by Ethiopia and the U.S. He maintains that the U.S. foreign policy elites play a big role in upholding the dictatorship in Addis Ababa by labeling the Tigre dominated Ethiopia, “a functioning multi-party democracy,” while the country has been a one-party repressive state from the beginning ( 2001:102). We will see if Jalata’s points hold in the analyses chapters.

### **3.3.2 Global Strategic Interests of the U.S.**

#### **3.3.2.1 The Cold War and Anti-communism**

There is a consensus among some experts on Ethiopia and the Horn that the language of “humanitarian interventions”—including food aid, development assistance and technical cooperation”—has been used as justifications for America’s other grand geopolitical interests such as anti-communism (Sorensen, 1993: 81; Schwab, 1978: 6-7). Sorensen painstakingly demonstrates how famine was used both by the incumbent state as well as by donor states as a scourge against ideological enemies. The U.S. government barely acknowledged the large-scale famine during the right-wing pro-American Haile Sellassie regime, whereas discourses routinely invoking famine were used to delegitimize the left-wing and unfriendly regime of Mengistu Hailemariam (Sorensen, 1993:82). U.S. media narratives depicted humanitarian intervention as a purely innocent activity meant exclusively to save lives by pejoratively calling the famine in Ethiopia “an African nightmare,” (Sorensen, 1993:82). Sorensen concludes that humanitarian intervention was subverted in favor of ideological expediency. Others writing about U.S. policy toward Africa from a U.S. official point of view claim that “traditionally, Africa has been thought of primarily as an object of humanitarian concern,” (Lyman and Dorff, 2007:xi). At the expense of focusing on the surface narratives produced by U.S. officials, this Euro-American view of humanitarian intervention is oblivious to the fact that the language of humanitarianism is largely used as justifications for other realists goals such as thwarting the expansion of communism, terrorism and resource extraction. It ignores that humanitarianism is also a major strategy of selling other forms of interventions to

ordinary Americans who would otherwise refuse to support naked aggressive policies that do harm overseas.

The language of humanitarian intervention is also oblivious to the fact that humanitarian aid is subjected to massive local and international corruptions in the Horn of Africa. In his book *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*, Michael Maren, a humanitarian worker with over nineteen years of experience in the aid and charity industry in the Horn and around Africa, presents a bleak picture of the two industries. Maren recounts how not only the aid and charity industry have failed to improve the lives of ordinary peoples they were intended for, but also that they have become a big part of the protracted conflicts since they are open to overt and covert corruption schemes among government officials and aid corporations (1997: 8,11). Maren provides detailed evidence on how politicians in the Horn “loved” U.S. aid projects as gifts to their supporters, clans and co-ethnics (1997:1). This trend is observable in American humanitarian activities in Ethiopia. It is observable in a more enhanced fashion in the sense that foreign aid is built into the oppressive architecture of the ruling party and government. Many literature written on humanitarian intervention from the perspectives of retired American officials barely tell us about the corruption and repressions involved in the aid and charity industry (Lyman and Dorff, 2007; xi, xii). At the expense of amplifying and romanticizing aid and charity as exclusive spectacles of the generosity and the life-saving kindness of the West, mainstream literature on humanitarian intervention ignores the “negative” aspects of aid (Sorensen, 1993:100-102; Maren, 1997: 4). Africa and Africans are linked to a prejudiced and patronizing colonial

discourse that portrays them as recipients of help, while it portrays the West as divinely-duty-bound helpers of the poor. This flawed understanding itself contributes to the multiple officially unacknowledged failings associated with humanitarian interventions. Some roles of humanitarian interventions in domestic violence will be examined further in chapter six.

Let us further delineate the specific characteristics of U.S. influence in Ethiopia. As the British influence in Ethiopia waned, a new emerging superpower—the U.S.—supplanted Britain in Ethiopia after the Second World War in the early 1940s (Marcus, 1995: 42). Many scholars claim that Washington’s foreign policy priorities and objectives in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa focused more on meeting its global strategic and geopolitical interests than on harnessing mutually beneficial ties between ordinary American and Africans (Jalata, 2011:131; Marcus, 1995:79-114; Sorensen, 1993:31-32).

Literature shows that military intervention in the Horn was the main American priority during the Cold War. The main U.S. interest was to take over Radio Marina, an Italian military communications facility in Asmara [Eritrea], and to bring it under the control of the U.S. army in order to use the facility as a “relay station forwarding messages to and from naval vessels and as part of a global network that gathered and beamed intelligence to the Pentagon,” (Marcus, 1995:82-83). U.S used Kagnev Station<sup>44</sup> from 1943 to 1977. As one of the major global hubs of military communications, this facility was of vital strategic importance to the U.S. at the time because of its security, political and economic interests in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and in Africa. The

factor that made Radio Marina even more valuable was the perceived and real threats of the expansion of Russia and world communism and the desire by the U.S. to prevent hostile powers from holding power in the region (Marcus, 1995:3).

An important part of the U.S. calculus in considering entering into alliance with Ethiopia by replacing the British lies in the preeminence that Emperor Haile Sellassie was gaining in the West because of his resistance to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the 1930s and because of fighting Italians alongside the allies in the Second World War (Marcus, 1995:8). It is well known that the challenges Ethiopia put up to Italians, including defeating Italy at the battle of Adwa in 1896, have been seen in much of Africa and black America as a triumph over racism and white supremacy (McVety, 2011:187). For the first time in history, Ethiopia (and by extension Africa) came to represent the notion that blacks can also dominate whites. This perception was important to other Africans in that it served as a source of great pride in their own resistance against European colonialism. By capitalizing on the popularity of the Ethiopian state in much of Africa and among African-Americans, the U.S. rightly thought of Ethiopia as point of entry and expansion into the rest of Africa. That is, by posing as anti-colonial force, the U.S. used these historical circumstances as an attractive foot-in-the-door foreign policy strategy into the rest of Africa. This strategy materialized much earlier when the U.S. sent its first ever mission to sub-Saharan Africa to Ethiopia in 1903 (McVety, 2011: 187). The diplomatic mission relied on Judaeo-Christian myths and legends as alleged common values the two nations have shared.

Before the embattled Emperor was forced into exile in England in 1936, the armies of Italy and the Ethiopian Empire fought in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (October 1935 to May 1936). The War resulted in a four year military occupation of Ethiopia (1936-40) and its annexation into the Italian East Africa (Marcus, 1995:8). The emperor became a hero in the United States. According to Marcus (1995:8), the British and Americans sought to return and use the fugitive Emperor in order to “secure Suez Canal’s Red Sea flank from the Axis” upon Rome’s entry into World War II. In short, Haile Selassie’s reputation and image soared in the United States (1) because of the Anglo-American interests in wresting the Suez canal from the hands of fascist Italy; and (2) because “Washington could proudly broadcast its commitment to self-determination, stress its traditional anti-colonialism, demonstrate to Afro-Americans that the government was fighting their war too,” (Marcus, 1995:2). It is not clear whether this and other images continue to reinforce current intervention on the side of the ruling Ethiopian elites. It is also not clear how much (foreign) intervention policymakers and implementers base their decisions and justification on the apparently simplistic notions of images of authoritarian leaders such as that of Haile Selassie. It is the task of this research to uncover images and all major factors that might be at work in justifying interventions.

Despite the strong image (real or manufactured) of Haile Selassie as a “seasoned diplomat and leader”, a pro-American Ethiopia descended into deep corruption, nepotism and despotism under Emperor Haile Sellasie and his family. Evidence shows the emperor was not doing well on the home front. Yet, he continued to receive all types of U.S. assistance. Apart from mentioning that the emperor was a loyal U.S. ally and that his

oligarchy benefited from U.S. military aid, economic aid, and technical and information services, Marcus (1995:3) ignores the fact that the emperor used his American connection and aid to squash domestic ethnic opponents/rebellions such as the ones in the dissident Ogaden and Oromia regions in the south. Marcus's work is well researched, but only gives passing treatment to the impact of aid on local power struggles. Marcus (1995:42) and Sorensen (1993:32) tout the exceptional diplomatic skills of Emperor Haile Sellassie, especially his ability to elicit and get American assistance of any kind whenever he wanted. Sorensen writes that Pentagon officials stated, ““if the emperor wanted it in solid gold Cadillacs...he could have it that way,”” (Halliday and Molyneux, 1981:218 quoted in Sorensen, 1993). U.S. involvement in Ethiopia also contributed, inter alia, to modernizing the fields of agriculture, education and to the bureaucratization of the state. America also helped the empire to enter the so-called “era of financial capital,” (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990:171-278). Enough is known that the U.S. focused on the building of the modern Ethiopian empire (including bureaucratizing and militarizing it) from 1941-1974 (Marcus, 1995; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990).

### **3.3.2.2 Global War on Terrorism, Return of the U.S. to Ethiopia**

Following the ascendance of a socialist military junta to power in 1974, America's influence in Ethiopia started to wane. From 1977-1991 the regime of President Mengistu H. Mariam replaced the United States by the Soviet Union as “Ethiopia's main arms provider and foreign ally,” (Ottaway and Ottaway, 1978:151). There was a regime change and alliance change, but the characteristics of the Ethiopian state remained *Habesha* dominated. Jalata (2011:1) points out that after the end of the



Cold War in 1990s, the U.S. returned to Africa with the aim of “using the continent for its objective of the so-called the Global War on Terrorism by allying with some dictatorial and terrorist African regimes, such as that of Ethiopia.” Jalata’s study finds no reform in U.S. foreign policy toward Oromia and Ethiopia even under President Barack Obama, a reformist U.S. president who promised change to Africa in his Ghana speech.<sup>45</sup> Jalata’s article is a relevant one because it adds to the rare body of critical scholarly publications on U.S. interventions in Ethiopia from 1990s to the present. Jalata is a sociologist and he approaches these issues from that perspective. He does look at human rights violations and other forms of structural violence against Oromo, but he did not examine the series of repressive laws that Meles Zenawi passed recently. In that sense his work has some shortcomings.

From the body of literature reviewed under different headings so far, it is clear that the U.S. has been allied with the Ethiopian state for over a century, supporting ethnocentric Amahara-Tigre ruling elites. What remains largely less known are the extent and the nature of whether various forms of U.S. assistance to Ethiopian elites have played significant roles in exacerbating conflict between local groups and whether the U.S. will change its espoused policy positions towards Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. In essence, the goal of this study is to fill the gaps in the studies conducted so far. Most importantly, as a native Horn of African person who has lived, studied and worked for most of his formative years in Ethiopia, this researcher would like to approach the issues from inside out, as opposed to expatriate studies that look at local power struggles in Ethiopia exclusively from the standpoints of their own value systems and interests. This entails a

critical perspective that is not dominated by the official discourses of U.S. foreign policy interests. The study approaches the issues from the vantage point of the peoples who are objects of interventions. My study will add a conflict resolution perspective to the issues. Of necessity, the research will be both empirical and analytical in that it wishes to impartially understand U.S. approaches to interventions in Ethiopia. This study assumes that one of the important areas in which the true face of intervention is revealed is in the areas of domestic human rights violations. The researcher has human rights concerns in Oromia and southern Ethiopia. Some parts of the study will rely on human rights data for analysis. Despite my human rights commitments, the role I assume in the study is “a conflict analyst’s role”, as opposed to that of a “human rights activist’s”, where I will try to account for multiple points of view and explanations on the phenomenon under investigation as fairly as possible.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter summarized and discussed the theoretical perspectives used in this study. It also reviewed the intervention literature relevant to this case study. It evaluated the strengths and limitation of the theoretical perspectives and the literature. The literature review shows us that the discourse on humanitarian intervention has helped mask other forms of U.S. interests such as military and economic ones. Since a great deal of work has been done highlighting the virtuous aspects of humanitarian intervention, this chapter took a slightly unconventional look at the same issue by particularly focusing on its justificatory role for other underlying or substantive goals. While the role of

mythology was examined as one of the factors facilitating the establishment official ties between the U.S. and Ethiopia, the literature does not seem to definitively show a causal link between official decision-making with regard to discrimination in foreign policy at the domestic level. The next chapter is on the research methods used in the study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH METHODS, STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methods, strategies and procedures used in this research. The study used flexible design as an overarching research methodology. The case study approach and many of its associated techniques of data gathering and analysis were employed. It provides the operational definition of intervention, and reflects on the problems encountered and insights gained while implementing certain data collection and analysis strategies. During the research process that took at least a year from the approval of the proposal to the writing of this thesis, the experience the researcher gained and the adjustments he made along the way will be mentioned in this chapter.

#### **4.2 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions**

This study aims at examining U.S. interventions in Ethiopia in light of the former's foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa. It investigates the role of U.S. foreign policy interventions on conflicts and the state of power relations between local ethno-national groups. It seeks to understand, explain and interpret the nature of U.S.-Ethiopia relations and its role in ethnic relations within diverse polities in Ethiopia. The

study will particularly scrutinize the reasons why Washington chose to intervene on the side of the northern elites during the eras of the Cold War and the War on Terrorism. It also explores how U.S. interventions might have exacerbated structural violence in multi-ethnic local context. It explores groups and elites who have benefited from such interventions and those who have not and critically examines the ensuing implications.

The study attempts to seek answers to one central question and three sub-questions:

1. Why has Washington intervened in favor of the ruling Ethiopian (understood Amahara-Tigre) ethno-nationalist elites?
  - a. What are the justifications for choosing the Ethiopian elites-led state as a dependable US/Western ally while sidelining others?
  - b. Have U.S. interventions contributed to domestic structural violence? And if so, how?
  - c. If there are any destructive aspects to such interventions, what can be done in order to mitigate them and initiate sustainable conflict resolution in the interests of the major local and international actors?

### **4.3 Operational Definitions of “Intervention”**

In order to delimit the scope and meaning of the term “intervention”, the researcher will first explore what other researchers mean by it. I then provide the term’s meaning as used in this study.

Scholars have not reached a consensus on the meaning and scope of the term “intervention.” Because of the lack of a common definition, authors often focus on various aspects of intervention. The two most common types of interventions researchers focus on are military and humanitarian (Hoffmann, 1996: 12-38; Kuperman, 2001). These authors use the word “intervention” in the titles of their books, but they barely provide any precise operational or even dictionary definitions of the term. There is a tendency to jump into analysis without delimiting the scope of the term. One can infer from Kuperman’s (2001) study of the limits of humanitarian intervention in the Rwandan genocide that he focused predominantly on military-related decisions made and not made by the U.S., the UN and other European powers as inevitable factors that contributed to the mass murder. Upon the investigation of the military power of the Hutu-controlled Rwandan government, Kuperman arrives at a pessimistic conclusion that even if the West had fully intervened they could not have averted the magnitude of genocide against the Tutsi (2001: vii-ix). He absolves interveners from any responsibility or failures in this sense.

Hoffman’s primary research interest was the ethics and politics involved in humanitarian intervention with emphasis on traditional legal regimes governing

international relations and state sovereignty (1996:12). In the case of the former Yugoslavia, Hoffman (1996:56) emphasizes the incompatible and competing goals of local actors arising from their exclusive claims to sovereignty, self-determination, and human rights. He shows how behaviors by local actors make it difficult for the international community to come up with uniform workable criteria for intervention in some regions. Hoffman, like Kuperman, pays more attention to the domestic side of the problem of intervention than examining excuses and justifications provided by great powers for choosing on which side to intervene or not to intervene.

In other instances, some authors provide a good operational definition of the term “intervention”, but their analysis tends to be a shallower than Hoffman and Kuperman’s (Evans and Sahnoun, 2001:8). Evans and Sahnoun provide the definition of intervention at the beginning of their book, which adds an advantage of early clarity for readers. They attribute part of the disagreement over defining “intervention” to a range of activities the term encapsulates. These activities include military, humanitarian, diplomatic pressures, leverages of conditional support for a state and its leaders, *inter alia*. To Evan and Sahnoun (2001:8) the operational meaning of the term is “action taken against a state or its leaders, without its or their consent, for purposes which are claimed to be humanitarian or protective,” (2001:8-9). Such definitions are important so as to decide what to include and exclude in intervention-related conflict resolution research, but they are not enough to meet my needs in the case of the U.S. interventions in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. In the case of Ethiopia, the elites consent to intervention in the country and the region, while the vast majority of citizens do not have a say on such issues. More

lucidly put, the leaders, and through them the Ethiopian state, not only consent to interventions, but they also play important proxy roles for major powers in exchange for anything between the spoils of war and forgiveness (neglect) for rights violations. The presence of consent at least by the state and leaders makes Evan and Sahnoun's conception of intervention above less relevant and inadequate to capture the dynamics of the Ethiopian case. Another factor complicating the dynamic of intervention in Ethiopia is that everyone solicits major powers to intervene on their ethnic group's side. Interveners fall in the trap of one-sided intervention for unknown or ambiguous reasons. Having considered how others have approached intervention research so far, I will provide an operational definition of intervention that fits my study mostly informed by the literature reviewed on the U.S.- Ethiopia relations.

By "intervention" I primarily mean actions, decisions and inactions taken by the U.S. primarily in the areas of diplomatic, humanitarian and military support/opposition to the ruling ethno nationalist elites, secular rebels, and Islamist forces in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa since 1903. The term also encompasses the presence and activities of U.S. government agencies, embassy officials, and humanitarian organizations and NGOs in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

Research designs "are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis," (Creswell, 2009:3).



I plan to use “flexible design” (Robson, 2002) as the overarching design for this study for a number of important reasons. Comparing the general characteristics of fixed and flexible design, I judge that a qualitative design is a better-suited approach to understanding, exploring, interpreting and explaining the social and human phenomena of the role of U.S. foreign policy intervention towards Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in local conflicts. This design is also relevant because this research is purely based on archival or documentary data, most of which tend to be qualitative in nature. According to some research methods authorities, qualitative research “is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem,” (Creswell, 2009:4), while quantitative designs are concerned, inter alia, with quantitative aggregates, group properties, reporting results in terms of general tendencies, testing objective theories, making causal or relational predictions, and generalizations from samples to population (Robson, 2003: 98-100; Creswell, 2009: 4; Druckman, 2005:55).

This design also suits the problem and the research questions because it lends itself to a perspective I and many others espouse, which is “social constructivism” (Creswell, 2009:8). There are several assumptions that researchers espousing this perspective make, but some of the main assumptions they hold include, “...individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work...these meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning to a few categories or ideas,” (Creswell, 2009:8). This is relevant because this study aims to unravel the social and historical construction of justifications

for certain interventions. I seek to understand and explore this uncharted territory in terms of what it means for U.S. foreign policy elites to intervene on the side of one group at the expense of others. I am interested in how government officials (particularly foreign policy elites) justify interventions. It is equally important for me to make sense of the policy documents and decisions in terms of what it means when they are subjected to interpretations from the perspective of rival local actors. I believe that there are many factors at work as root causes of conflict in a multi-ethnic Ethiopia. Even if this study may not account for all the root causes of the conflict because of its limited scope, it will examine U.S. intervention as one of the indirect and external driving factors of internal conflicts in a multi-ethnic setting. I am mainly interested in capturing in-depth and interpreting “the subtleties and complexities” (Robson, 2003:98) of foreign interventions in the context of equally complex local dynamics. I seek explanations to how the same ethno-national group managed to stay in power for over a century in the face of both peaceful and armed opposition from other social groups.

I see my work as a work of interpretation and my role as an interpreter of social realities based on the historical and documentary evidence I collected and analyzed. The research was conducted from the point of view of a Horn of African native insider (myself). I am an Oromo from Ethiopia, but I have approached this study dispassionately and inclusively as a private citizen who is not a member of any political organization or interest group. I took into account multiple viewpoints given the controversy surrounding many intervention inquiries. I maintain some of my pre-research normative concerns

relating to mitigating the conflict, injustice and wars in Ethiopia and the region. My position is that U.S. policy approaches towards Ethiopia and the Horn needs to be systematically understood better than it has ever been so as to inform possible policy reforms and ameliorate destructive aspects (if there are any) of some interventions. I lived and worked in an often violence –prone Ethiopia and the Horn for most of my formative years and I now live in the United States, the two universes I want to link and understand. I have a normative view that destructive violence is unnecessary and preventable based on sound conflict analyses.

#### **4.5 The Case Study Strategy**

This is a case study of the U.S’s foreign policy interventions in Ethiopia and local conflicts. Yin defines case study as, “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence,” (in Robson, 2003:178). The method has long been in use across many disciplines in the social sciences (Yin, 2009: 4; Robson, 2003:177). I plan to use the case study method because it suits my research problem and questions. Before I considered using the case study approach, I had already posed my questions in terms “how” and “why” questions. Yin estimates that “the case study method is most likely to be appropriate” for those types of questions (Yin, 2009:27). This study can be considered a multiple-case design (Yin, 2009:53) because its units of analyses involve at least two countries in the contexts of multi-ethnic societies. The international

aspect of the case study involves relations between two states—Ethiopia and the United States. The local aspect of the case study involves four major rival ethnic groups—two northern groups defending the status quo and two southern others acting as challengers to the dominant groups.

Of the six sources of data Yin (2009:98-125) lists and describes in detail with examples, the two that are deemed most useful to this study are: documentation and archival records. These multiple sources of evidence are advantageous to this inquiry because of the opportunity inherent in them to help triangulate and corroborate information, as Yin maintains. The variety of documents/archival records upon which this study relies include: declassified data from U.S. national security archives, the Ethiopian anti-terrorism law document, relevant international human rights reports, relevant testimonies in front of U.S. foreign relations sub-committees, U.S. Department of State's country reports on Ethiopia, military and government documents, periodicals, letters, editorials, and news clippings. WikiLeaks has also recently made public a mine of secret and confidential information on the Government of Ethiopia and the United States Government and their foreign policy objectives and priorities. The study uses WikiLeaks sparingly for more recent events only if there is a lack of up-to-date crucial information. I searched for documentation in George Mason University libraries' "Government Documents" section, in many university-sponsored online research databases, in the Smithsonian, and the Library of Congress. I have been researching the topic from May 2011 to May 2012 and obtained many documents and archival records. The research

process, which began widely, has seen a substantial narrowing since the formal proposal was developed and approved in Fall 2011. Washington D.C. is the most ideal place to be on earth for the purpose of conducting historical and archival research. I found that this is true in retrospect because I could not have had the luxury of large volumes of data available to me if I were to do this research in Ethiopia, where access to official and sensitive documents is tightly controlled or prohibited altogether. It would not have been safe to do any research on a topic such as this from within the boundaries authoritarian Ethiopia.

As Yin (2009:103) advises, I will not necessarily accept documents as “literal recordings of events that have taken place.” I would rather approach documents with an eye to drawing out some hermeneutic interpretations in undistorted and systematic ways that can help answer my questions. I created digital and manual databases and coded the documents into thematic categories both electronically and manually into several folders.

The study used the case study protocol to guide data collection. The case study protocol is desirable for a number of reasons, but it is particularly used in this case study because it “...is a major way of increasing the reliability of a case study research and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out the data collection from a single case,” (Yin, 2009: 79). Protocols may increase the reliability of a case study because they are detailed research plans and anyone who uses them will probably find similar data.

The most notable limitation of a case study research is that no statistical generalizations can be made about the universe based on data collected from the sample (Yin, 2009:38). However, “analytical generalization” from my case study can be made to my proposed theories of realism (Mearsheimer, 2001; Morgenthau, 1967) and structural violence (Galtung, 1969). At various phases of this case study, I followed Yin’s concepts of ensuring the trustworthiness of the design, including conducting tests of construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (2009:40-45). Particularly important to me while building explanations was the need for commitment to identify and provide “rival explanations” to the phenomenon of why the U.S. chose to intervene on the side of one group. Robson calls this “negative analysis” (‘playing the devil’s advocate’), where the researcher’s responsibility as he develops his theory is to “devote time and attention to searching for instances which will disconfirm your theory,” (2003:175). Perhaps, the most notable advantage of a case study design is its capacity of holding a four-in-one triangulation: data, observer, methodological and theory triangulations (Robson, 2003:174). The study used the mentioned triangulation strategies. The research questions served as guides in deciding the relevance or irrelevance of certain documents and data sources. This would ensure that data collection would be confined to the scope of the study so that the possibility of information overload would be avoided.

## 4.6 Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used in this study, with the research questions setting the boundary for what and what not to look for. The main idea behind purposive sampling is a researcher's use of data and sites "that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question," (Creswell, 2009:178). Purposive sampling depends on the role and judgment of a researcher (Robson, 2002:199). Accordingly, among others, I purposively identified George Mason University's Government Document section of the Fenwick Library and refereed online databases as places to look for documents. I decided to look for human rights data relevant to the study from the official websites of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in addition to their hardcopy reports I owned.

Even my application of purposive sampling was not sufficient to prevent some challenges. As pointed out earlier, the study obtained documents from multiple sources. In a few weeks into the data collection, the researcher realized that key word library searches started to yield a huge volume of data that would be difficult to manage. At this stage, it was important thinking about a stopping point for data collection. This insight was important because of the limited scope of the study and also because of the need to complete the study within a reasonable timeframe. I kept reflective journals throughout the research to stay on course. One of the reflective questions posed in my research journal was: "How many documents are enough to stop collecting documents?" This question can be explained by the nature of sample size in flexible designs. Methodology writers discuss the difficulty involved in pre-specifying the amount of data needed in

qualitative designs (Robson, 2002:198-199; Creswell, 2009: 2009:178). Robson provides a basic, but useful advice that one needs to keep looking until one reaches a “saturation point”, meaning that data collection adds little or nothing to what one already collected or knows (Robson, 2002:199). One could see the useful application of this theoretical idea to the practice of doing this research. Data collection reached a saturation point when I started to find and read the same documents more than once. For instance, when my search for government and human rights documents started to repeat themselves, it was a clear sign for me to stop searching and start reading and writing.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This study used several incrementally complex steps and procedures in order to make sense of the volumes of archival information. Creswell views data analysis or interpretation as an ongoing process until a study is completed (2009:183). Analysis and interpretation are obviously the meaning-making stages of a research project.

This study started with key term-based categorization of information. As I tracked in my process notes, initially the study began by categorizing information under fairly broad key terms such as U.S. intervention in the Horn of Africa/Ethiopia, U.S. policy towards Africa, Congressional Hearings on Ethiopia, U.S-Ethiopia relations, U.S. and Somalia. The researcher predetermined these key terms based on common sense and literature review. As the study moved deeper and deeper, one started to identify common themes via close readings of documents. At a more advanced stages, the researcher filed notes and reflections under themes such as “background,” “counter-terrorism,” “human



rights and anti-terrorism-Ethiopia,” “domestic structural violence”, “U.S-Ethiopia relations” “local actors and their political programs,” “U.S. official elite rhetoric on the media on democratization and human rights,” “theoretical perspectives,” and “conflict resolution proposal,” and so on. Key documents and notes on them were coded and filed electronically as well as manually for efficient access.

In terms of specific procedures, the researcher followed the following three general steps<sup>46</sup>:

Step 1: organized and prepared data for analysis; step 2: read through the gist of the data and reflected on their overall meaning or pattern; step 3: began detailed analysis by applying systematic and continuously updated coding; step 4 : used coding processes to generate the description of settings and people in the documents; step 5: noted that the descriptions and themes would be used as narrative evidence for analysis; interpreted the data according to important repeatedly emerging patterns across data and literature. These six steps allowed the researcher to use a combination of predetermined and emerging codes.

Coding is essentially a labeling process whereby a researcher organizes data into manageable chunks before imposing meaning (Creswell, 2009:186). I developed electronic code files and updated them continuously. As an insight, the researcher learned that coding helps overcome the challenges and frustration resulting from dealing with volumes of data, by shrinking them into manageable chunks or themes.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

The research methods, strategies and procedures used in this study underwent a series of updating and modification based on the real surprises that underlie the actual practice of doing research. Despite the volumes of supplementary information uncovered during the research, the eventual analyses used a handful of focused important documents such as the Ethiopian anti-terrorism law of 2009 , key human rights reports from 2008-2012, the 1956 U.S. national security policy, a few congressional hearings from the early 1990s and 2000s. An important methodological lesson learned during this research was the ongoing incremental narrowing of focus. Focus was achieved not only through the research questions, but also through specific insights gained and adjustments made during the research process.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **ANATOMY OF U.S. INTERVENTIONS IN MULTIETHNIC ETHIOPIA: THE POLITICS OF JUSTIFYING ETHNONATIONALIST RULING ELITES**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and critically interprets data on the international aspects of American geopolitical, security and economic interests in the Horn of Africa that have shaped U.S. interventions in Ethiopia for over a century. It analyzes how American official rhetoric on ‘human rights’ and ‘democratization’ is an overwhelmingly misleading lip service meant to justify and legitimize America’s own underlying priorities at home and to build the images of friendly dictators in the Addis palace.

The first official diplomatic relationship between Ethiopian ruling elites and American diplomats began at the turn of the twentieth century with the 1903 Skinner Mission<sup>47</sup>, which had the twin goals of making Ethiopia a trade partner and of using it as pawn against the expansion of European imperialism into Northeast Africa (McVety, 2011: 187). From the beginning, rhetorical justifications of U.S. officials for establishing and maintaining solid relationships with despotic Ethiopian elites were based on racialized quasi-religious language and imperialist perceptions of the manufactured

images of the country—all disconnected from and eclipsing the local realities of ethnonational power struggles and civil wars between the Oromo and the Ogaden of the south and the hegemonic Amahara-Tigre elites of the north.<sup>48</sup> This chapter analyzes justifications of a myriad of U.S. interventions in Ethiopia first from the point of view of American official policy towards Ethiopia. It then critiques the implementation of self-serving foreign policy-driven interventions by evaluating the gap between rhetoric and reality, as well as the disconnect between realist international considerations and local ethno-national dynamics.

The chapter focuses on American policy priorities as justifications for intervention in Ethiopia and the Horn during the key periods of the Cold War and the so-called Global War on Terror. It will examine what considerations have driven the U.S. to back authoritarian elites who are popularized in the West by Western elites, but who lack a modicum of popularity and legitimacy within their own country. Notwithstanding the historic negative consequences of the domestic unpopularity and illegitimacy that have always spurred the removal of ethnocentric elites from power through violent revolutions, following many years of mass suffering, the problem of the U.S. failure to bring sustainable stability and peace requires analytical explanations.

## **5.2 Cold War U.S.-Ethiopia Relations**

The common themes that have been extrapolated from this study suggest that U.S. foreign policy towards Ethiopia itself, and official statements and testimonies made by some high-ranking political, religious, diplomatic and academic U.S. elites about

Ethiopian history and politics have served as justifications for choosing centrist Amhara-Tigre elites while sidelining the peripheral elites among the ordinary peoples of Ethiopia's south. The concerted systematic interactions between local elites and U.S. elites have not only justified Ethiopian rulers' extended terms of office, but have also contributed to a precarious misreading and eclipsing of the ethnic, political, religious and geographic diversity of the empire. It will be shown how this practice has spurred strong ethnonational competitions between groups, arguably exacerbating ongoing violent and non-violent conflicts. The details of this trend will be subjected to critical analyses in sections that follow.

### **5.2.1 Cold War U.S. Policy Priorities as Justifications for Choosing Sides**

A loose initial diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and the U.S. began at the turn of the twentieth century with the Skinner Mission (McVety, 2011). Ethiopia had already established its reputation by fighting alongside the Allies against fascist Italy in World War II, when in 1941-42 the United States supplanted Britain as a patron and superpower in Ethiopia/Horn and transformed the relationship into an alliance that was to endure for most of the Cold War (Marcus, 1985: I-II).

On June 16, 1951, representatives of the United States and Imperial Ethiopia signed the "Point Four Agreement for Technical Cooperation," which ostensibly focused on bilateral cooperation on exchanging development and education-related technical knowledge and skills (McVety, 2008: 371). In addition to the success in establishing a few of the most reputable agricultural universities in Ethiopia, this technical assistance

was significant, as McVety (2008:371) writes, because it “ marked the beginning of a new era in U.S.-Ethiopian relations , one that greatly differed from its predecessor in the amount of attention Washington paid Addis Ababa.” McVety concludes that the program failed to develop Ethiopia because of the problematic nature of Harry S. Truman’s Washington’s concealed anti-communism agendum and because of the ‘large-scale’ ‘top-down’ approach that was susceptible to Ethiopian elite corruption (2008:399).

Despite all these incoherent on-and-off diplomatic initiatives, until 1953 and 1956, Washington did not have a comprehensive strategic policy towards Ethiopia.

Authored by the National Security Council<sup>49</sup> on October 23, 1956, “U.S. Policy Toward Ethiopia,” as the first comprehensive written policy, contains several key considerations that justify military, technical and development interventions in Ethiopia. Assessed overall, the document links the security and strategic values of Ethiopia to its geopolitical location in the Horn near the Middle East, the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The U.S. became and still is interested in forming an alliance with Ethiopia in order to thwart “forces that are threatening U.S. influence in Ethiopia, to strengthen U.S. position in Northeast Africa generally, and to prevent further penetration of Africa by unfriendly forces...U.S. interests are now threatened by Soviet bloc influence in Ethiopia, Egyptian agitations in the area, and xenophobia among Ethiopian leaders,” (NSC, 1956:6).

It appears that the long-standing desire for the U.S. to see a stable and strong Ethiopia is predominantly motivated by the realist logic of preventing external

superpower competition in the country and on the continent by maximizing its own offensive power (Mearsheimer, 2001:21). To a lesser degree, the stability consideration is also targeted at containing domestic ideological and ethnic opposition to the central government.

Some specific American realist considerations for choosing Ethiopia as an ally include (NSC:1956): (a) the need for a friendly and stable government in the Horn to counter developments in the Near East; (b) the base agreement concluded between the two in 1953 to allow the U.S. to maintain a U.S. army radio station in Asmara, which was later expanded as a major Cold War era's world-wide communication system; (c) Ethiopia's increasing orientation towards the West as demonstrated by contributing troops to support the U.S. in the Korean War of 1950-1953; (d) desire to intervene to protect so-called Christian Amahara dynasty from what it called "large Moslem minorities," and progressive student movements and ethnic armed movements; (e) the fact that the U.S. had already spent about \$12.4 million in technical assistance, and \$12 million in military assistance to the build the imperial army since 1952.

The policy justifications for supporting elites in Addis Ababa to counter foreign influence in the area are obviously well known and written about by foreign policy experts on Ethiopia and the Horn. What are often left unanalyzed, deliberately or not, are justifications that are based on internal differences and what they mean to the relationship between the centre and the periphery within Ethiopia. As summarized from the document, considerations "a" and "d" above are linked to the intent to counter any

internal opposition, peaceful or violent, which demanded reform and justice during the imperial era. This type of opposition is labeled stereotypically as “Muslims” or “Communists,” “forces of anarchy,” regardless of the truth of their political views. The religious line of justification that views Ethiopia as a Christian island is directly linked to the Judeo-Christian mythologies of Ethiopia’s ruling class’s origin, which the Ethiopian elites and the clergy have succeeded in propagating at home and overseas among Western elites who without examination write them into important official documents such as “U.S. Policy Toward Ethiopia.” This approach influences foreign policy decision-making in Washington that in turn affects the lives of Ethiopia’s disadvantaged ethnic groups of the south. An argument can be made from this policy itself that if one’s reason for intervention is to uphold ‘stability and peace’ in Ethiopia, then any opposition to such stability and peace, internal or external, can be automatically deemed ‘against U.S. interests’. The Manichean worldview of power politics that classifies groups into either enemies or friends is something that the chapter treats further in this section and in the counter-terrorism subsection.

### **5.2.2 Militarization of U.S. Intervention: The Rise and Fall of the Lion of Judah (1941-974)**

U.S. military assistance to Ethiopia began during the early years of the second half of the twentieth century. On May 23, 1953, the U.S. and Ethiopia signed two treaties in Washington, allowing the U.S. to use military facilities in Ethiopia in exchange for military assistance to the Imperial Ethiopian Army (Henze, 1990: 12; Ohaegblum, 2004:



97-98; NSC, 1956:1). The U.S. gained a number of important additional benefits from the agreement to build and use a military base, including “unlimited access to its military installations by surface, sea and air and overflight privileges over all of Ethiopia,” (Henze, 1990: 12).

What is missing from cited sources so far is the question of how Ethiopia was to use its newfound powers in local context. Mechanisms of accountability and responsibility to safeguard against abuses of power on both sides seemed to have been avoided based on purely aggressive realist calculations for gaining boundless power in order to coerce and control whoever would counter their mutual interests.

In the context of the Cold War rivalry and proxy wars between the U.S. and Soviets to control the Indian Ocean and the Horn, Emperor Haile Sellassie’s Ethiopia received substantial amounts of American military, development and food assistance from 1953-1977 (CRS,1985:5; Henze, 1990: 12-13; Ohaegbulum, 2004:98). With Ethiopia as a sidekick for a quarter a century, the U.S. waged the Cold War in the Horn against the Soviets who enlisted and backed Somalia and Sudan as proxies (Ottaway and Ottaway,1978:150). As a great power in a bipolar world, the specific geopolitical interests of the U.S. and its allies were protecting shipping lines on the Indian Ocean vital to transporting resources from Africa and elsewhere. Schwab (1978:7) lists four geopolitical interests that have justified a strong presence of the U.S. in the Horn of Africa: (1) maintaining the economic security of the West; (2) upholding stability and security in the Horn and the Middle East; (3) preventing potential blockade of Western

oil lanes by the Soviets; (4) opening the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean for Israeli and Israeli-bound shipping. This seems to suggest that, although expressed in terms of ideological interests, the underlying Western interests in the area has also been strongly driven by economic logic.

The Ethiopian Empire's interests ran parallel to those of the great powers. Ethiopia was using its status as a U.S. proxy to leverage the suppression of its multiple Marxist armed and civilian opponents in Eritrea, the Ogaden and Oromia regions (Ottaway and Ottaway, 1978; Marcus, 1995). In the 1960s and 1970s, as elsewhere on the African continent, potentially untamable leftist liberation movements were brewing in the backyard of the Emperor's palace in universities and jungles due to the frustration of the Ethiopian intelligentsia with the continued U.S. support for an increasingly tyrannical, corrupt and ethno-centric administration of the emperor. When the left attempted a coup d'état plotted by Geremame Neway, an American-educated member of the aristocracy of Marxist persuasion, the power of the Imperial Army that Americans helped build up was in full display in the capital and nationwide. The coup was aborted with the help of U.S. intelligence; and direct security was provided to the Emperor by an American Colonel (Marcus, 1995:1). As Greenfield (1965:412-13 in Marcus, 1995) puts it, U.S. intelligence and military intervention determined the outcome of the internal struggle in favor of Haile Sellassie loyalists: "...their [American] involvement was obvious and unconcealed—an American colonel later rode in an open jeep in front of Haile Sellassie's vehicle when after subsequent fighting the latter re-entered the stricken capital."

Despite the consensus on Ethiopia's receiving substantial amounts of assistance, there is a noticeable inconsistency among independent records and U.S. government documents on the exact amounts of American expenditures on each of those areas. One U.S. government record estimates the total cost of the military assistance program at \$ 41.9 million for the initial build-up phase from 1957-1960 and continuous funding afterwards at an average of \$ 3.2 million until the completion of the program in 1977 (NSC, 1956:13). This spending is directly connected to the cost of militarizing the 1956 U.S. policy toward Ethiopia, as discussed earlier. During the period 1961-1971, a report estimates that all types of U.S. assistance to Ethiopia amounted to an average of \$ 36 million each year.<sup>50</sup>

Ohaegblum's<sup>51</sup> independent research produces higher figures and different periodizations for various types of assistance: for the period 1946-1977, economic assistance was \$395.4 million; for 1953-1977, military assistance was \$ 287.3 million; Ethiopia was given a further \$ 100 million worth of arms from the U.S. after His Majesty Haile Sellassie was overthrown. At first glance, these amounts can appear to be small, but the study shows that at the time "they were a huge amount, about half of the total U.S. military assistance to all African states."<sup>52</sup> Ethiopia also benefited from having more than 3500 of its elite military personnel trained in the U.S. from 1953-1977. In addition to the overseas training, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) trained and equipped three commands of three brigades of the Imperial Army, each numbering 28,000 men.<sup>53</sup> Except large equipment such as 105 Howitzers and tanks, U.S.-supplied equipments and

weapons included: small arms, mortars and other light artillery, and 1,700 trucks for the entire program.<sup>54</sup>

Thus far, we have covered predominantly geopolitical factors that have served as justifications for U.S. support for narrowly-based and autocratic Ethiopian-cum-Amahara elites. Before we exit the Cold War's power politics, it is relevant to discuss some of the highly featured diplomatic justifications in favor of Ethiopia's ruling elites.

*Ceteris paribus*, these significant amounts of U.S. assistance to Ethiopia played a role in entrenching the powers of Haile Sellassie and other predominantly ethnic Amahara elites around him for nearly half a century.<sup>55</sup> How Haile Sellasie managed to rule the country for such a long time without Euro-American opposition despite deep-rooted local disaffection can be explained by other factors related to diplomatic image-building campaigns waged on his behalf in Western capitals.

### **5.2.3 U.S. Diplomatic Justifications for Backing the Emperor**

One area in which the influence of American power in Ethiopia was reflected was in the building of Haile Sellassie's images outside Ethiopia. American diplomatic intervention helped lift the emperor out of relative obscurity and into global prominence. For instance, the emperor, who was deeply unpopular at home, was featured on the front page of *Time Magazine* as "Man of the Year,"<sup>56</sup> largely as a result of the deserved popular sympathy he garnered among black and white Americans for his nation's victimhood to Italian fascism following the second Italo-Abyssinian war of 1935-6

(Marcus, 1995:8). The problem was that he exploited his new image to crackdown on ethnonationalist opponents locally. This would make it difficult for the outside world to imagine how such an externally popular leader would engage in malevolent repressive activities to an extent that those who justly complain would be considered insane liars.

Elevating Haile Sellassie to the level of a world-famous figure (American darling) was not an instant event; it was a gradual and long process infused with prejudiced misreading of the Empire's religious and ethnic diversity based on Western Judeo-Christian values that have long served as mythological justifications for the ironfisted rule of Ethiopian monarchs and dictators. The mythology of the emperor's descent from the noble genealogy of King Solomon of Israel was manufactured originally at Oxford University by British elites and later spread as reality in the U.S.<sup>57</sup> *Time Magazine* emphasized the exceptional 'goodness' and the 'wisdom' of Haile Sellasie and showered him with accolades such as, 'the best and wisest ruler ancient Ethiopia has ever had is the Present Man of the Year.'<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, the article denigrates and mocks the Oromo and other people of the periphery who follow traditional African religions and Islam as follows: "...a few Christians are to be found near Addis Ababa, and the Coptic Christians, to which faith the Imperial Family appertains, form an island in the Mohammedan and pagan sea of peoples which is Ethiopia," (Time, 1936:3). There is evidence that suggests such a distorted view of the southern Ethiopians have crept into important official U.S. policy documents such as the 1956 policy statement that positively identifies the elites as " Christian

Amharic[sic] dynasty”.<sup>59</sup> Coming from such a reputable magazine as *Time*, the racist depiction of the rule of the emperor over the rest of Ethiopia was erroneous: “...he inherited a savage country, he will never be a leader of men, the chief of the wild hordes...infidels.”<sup>60</sup> These prejudiced depictions of the periphery undermined the intense degree of suffering and injustice experienced by the geographic and power periphery in Imperial Ethiopia.

Black Americans, as much as white American elites, have contributed to building the image of the *Man of the Year* abroad. In fact, the fervor for and identification with the King was much stronger among African Americans who have long been proud of black (Ethiopian) victory over white Italy at the famous battle of Adwa in the last quarter of the 19 century (Marcus, 1995). In 1935, ‘Ethiopian Week’ was declared in the U.S. as an awareness-raising campaign against Italy’s occupation of Ethiopia. Leading African American pastors across churches in the U.S. were in the frontline building the diplomatic images of Ethiopia in the world (Time, 1935:1).

There was no problem with the campaign against fascism, per se. The problem was the black pastor’s identification with a narrow segment of the Ethiopian peoples. Reverend John King, an eminent Kentucky evangelist keynotes his misreading of the country: “Ethiopia is the land of our heritage! She is the oldest Christian nation in this world and the Lord Jehovah can’t let her down,” (Time, 1935:1). The way Haile Sellassie was magnanimously portrayed at this particular moment had significance for his entire grip on power for half a century. When Westerners think of Ethiopia the first thing that is

likely to come to their mind besides its poverty is the wrong and precarious idea of a mono-religious and mono-ethnic Ethiopia despite the reality of the country's ethnic and religious diversity. Added to the externally manufactured grandiose image of the emperor were the preexisting megalomania and a state of messiah complex created by home-based elites for him. This ranges from him being seen as a 'God'-figure among Jamaican Rastafarians who made religious pilgrimages to Ethiopia to worship him to consistent everyday mention of the emperor in sermons by the Orthodox clergy, his identification in the nation's 1931 and 1955 constitutions in caps as: "CONQUERING LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH HAILE SELLASIE I ELECT OF GOD, EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA," and endless other ritual practices.<sup>61</sup>

Justifications— whether geopolitical ones or very subjective and prejudiced diplomatic image-building campaigns—for choosing the Haile Sellassie regime as an anti-communism ally did not save the personal rule of the emperor from unraveling in 1974. Immediately after Haile Sellasie was deposed in the aftermath of the September 1974 socialist revolution, Major Mengistu Hailemariam and the Derg<sup>62</sup> converted the former Western bastion into a Soviet client and an ethnic Amhara-dominated socialist state once again (Ottaway and Ottaway, 1978: 5, 149).

The findings of this study suggest that the ones who benefited the most from decades of U.S.-Ethiopian relation during the Cold War were the emperor himself and elites with kinship ties to him. In addition to the secret famine that claimed the lives of at

least 100,000 peoples on his watch<sup>63</sup>, his government suffered from rampant corruption and nepotism, as Dr. Sassard, Haile Selassie's French physician, comments below:

...Haile Sellassie has never been popular among his turbulent subjects...The numerous Ministers are generally more or less related to the Emperor and the Emperor considers the granting of a cabinet post a simple method of calming a noisy cousin or a belligerent vassal...Disorder and misadministration make each Ethiopian Ministry a bottomless barrel into which money flows...Emperor Haile Selassie...<sup>64</sup>

The evidence of chronic famine and corruption in imperial Ethiopia shows that the development aid that was poured into the country for decades failed to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people. The Derg inherited a broken state with over five million people threatened by famine for which the U.S. later lambasted Mengistu despite America's early record of decades of silence on the same issue.<sup>65</sup> This was due in part because of the irreversible fact that what Americans long feared—the spread of communism—had occurred. The Marxist-oriented military rule of Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam terminated ties with the U.S. and turned to alliance with the Soviet Union in 1977 (Ohaegbulam, 2004:97). The Ronald Regan Administration reacted to this turn of events by terminating military and development assistance to the new socialist Ethiopia and by then enthusiastically and desperately turning to Siad Barre's Somalia as a new U.S. ally in January 1981 (Ohaegbulam, 2004:101).

However, the U.S. continued to provide small amounts of food aid,<sup>66</sup> as an ideological mechanism of demonstrating that the new unfriendly government is starving its own people. Although the large-scale famine of 1984-85 is understood largely as the



“evil work of the communist regime” in the West, the Derg only exacerbated what secretly existed for decades during the imperial era. U.S. criticism/scourge of the military junta over the famine seems to have only emerged after U.S. influence declined in the “new Ethiopia” in a form of ideological vengeance aimed at tarnishing the image of the “new” state. The justification that the U.S. invoked for abandoning Ethiopia for the next seventeen years (until regime change in 1991) was that “the Ethiopian government has refused to compensate American firms and private individuals for property nationalized in the 1970s.”<sup>67</sup> The underlying reason for this justification seems to be strongly linked to the America significant loss of control over its Cold War military bases and other exclusive strategic privileges, which called into question the very sovereignty of the Ethiopian state among citizens during the imperial era.

The next section critically examines U.S.-Ethiopian relations in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods in the context of the so-called Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

### **5.3 The Global War on Terror and U.S.-Ethiopia Relations (Post-9/11)**

As far as Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa are concerned, this study finds that America’s core geopolitical strategies and priorities have barely changed from those during the Cold War in the post-anticommunism period. While there is a substantial continuity in the nature and types of American interventions in Ethiopia and the Horn, it is clear the “enemy” has changed from “Communism” to the “Global War on Terrorism.” Now, as in the past, the U.S. is interested in seeing a militarily strong and stable Ethiopia

that would serve as an important ally in a region known for some of the world's most protracted and destructive civil wars and interstate conflicts (Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen, 2007: 59). The anarchy in the region is also appealing to some of our world's biggest known foreign terrorist entities.

Sudan's hosting of Osama bin Laden from 1991-1996, terrorist attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City and on the Pentagon in Washington D.C.<sup>68</sup> have not only raised the importance of Ethiopia and the Horn, these tragic events have also enhanced America's perceptions and geopolitical interests to new unprecedented levels in the region.<sup>69</sup> The challenges of terrorism the U.S. faces in some Horn of African countries such as Somalia and Sudan are historically and presently real and legitimate.

The assertion of this study is that U.S. intervention that has been heavily driven by counterterrorism priorities have exacerbated internal ethno-national conflicts in Ethiopia because Washington has chosen alliance with narrowly-based authoritarian Tigre elites who primarily see "counterterrorism" as "an opportunity to garner western aid" (USIP, 2004:10) and as a license to oppress members of opposing ethnic groups without being held accountable. The problem lies with America's blind support for dictatorship in Ethiopia. In an effort to meet its counterterrorism objectives, the U.S. has "nurtured relationships with autocratic leaders and favored covert and military actions over diplomacy," (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2007: 60). In their work *Blowing the Horn*, Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen were succinct on how "recent U.S. policy has

only made matters worse,” on the domestic and international fronts (2007:59). For the sake of clarity, exactly what these policy strategies are will be briefly discussed below. Discussing them is important because they seem to drive all forms of current interventions in Ethiopia.

### **5.3.1 ‘The Bush Doctrine’: U.S. Strategic Priorities and Justifications**

One can assert that the post-9/11 period clearly marked the beginning of a further militarization of U.S. intervention in Africa in general and the Horn and Ethiopia in particular. In the 2002 national security strategy document, George Bush’s White House unequivocally states that counterterrorism is America’s top strategic priority toward Africa.<sup>70</sup> As was the case elsewhere, the policy expresses America’s right to secure itself against countries that were suspected to host and support foreign terrorist organizations. The strategy justifies working with African ruling elites regardless of their domestic records on human rights and democratization as long as they were willing to join “the coalition of the willing” and cooperate so as to stamp out transnational terrorist threats.<sup>71</sup>

The problem lies in that America’s grand counter-terrorism strategy lacks effective means of ensuring that the authoritarian leaders of the so-called “anchor states” do not exploit their status as an ally to prolong their grip onto the highest offices of their lands and their countries’ resources for private or ethnic gains. This is particularly true in the way the U.S. approached ruling elites of Ethiopia who have found the GWOT convenient to justify the elimination of all dissent and opposition unrelated to terrorism (AI, 2011). The structural violence within Ethiopia will be analyzed in detail in a separate

chapter. Ironically, rather than countering terrorism, these policies have the effect of generating violent opposition to the regime.

### **5.3.2 The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)**

AFRICOM, one of the nine of centralized combatants commands exclusively dedicated to Africa and answerable to the Secretary of Defense, became fully operational in October 2008 with the objectives of implementing a number of military and security operations related to counterterrorism.<sup>72</sup> The most overt operations of AFRICOM in the Horn and Ethiopia include: “International Military Education and Training Program, (IMET), the “Foreign Military Sales Program,” (FMS), “The Combined Joint Task Force Africa-(CJTF-HOA).<sup>73</sup> CJTF-HOA, a branch which conducts operations to enhance Ethiopia and Kenya’s capacity to combat terrorism and piracy, was initiated following the 2002 high-profile meeting at the White House between President George W. Bush and the longtime heads of states of Ethiopia and Kenya, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and President Daniel Arap Moi respectively.<sup>74</sup> At this meeting, Moi and Zenawi officially grabbed the opportunity and joined the ‘coalition of the willing’<sup>75</sup> driven primarily by the crisis of legitimacy deficit they face at home and by expected financial remunerations that would come out of this to oil their state’s repressive machineries. From AFRICOM’s own mission statement, President Bush’s and defense officials’ statements, it is apparent that the object of this sprawling defense bureaucracy is to “strengthen the defense capabilities of key African states and regional partners,” (AFRICOM, 2011:1; Cruz and Stephens, 2010:193). U.S. official statements contained strong concerns for upholding

the status quo in Ethiopia and other authoritarian African states whose army is predominantly composed of members of the ruling elites. Ryan Henry, the Principal Deputy Secretary of Defense policy unabashedly expresses that AFRICOM is meant to support, “indigenous leadership efforts that are currently going on...and to complement rather than compete with any leadership efforts currently going on,” (cited in Cruz and Stephens, 2010:193). Expectedly, upholding status quo would not sit well with the vast majority of Ethiopia’s south who are opposed to the mono-ethnic Tigre-dominated state.

While the rest of Africa rejected hosting AFRICOM on the African soil because of a poignant fear of neocolonialism and imperialism linked to the traumas of colonialism,<sup>76</sup> Ethiopian civilians seem to fear AFRICOM and other U.S.-Ethiopia military-to-military relations not because they condone terrorism or because they hate the U.S., but predominantly because they legitimately fear Ethiopian ruling elites would turn this capability against them when they demand reform in governance, equal economic opportunity, democratization and human rights.

Recent developments suggest that counterterrorism is one of the overriding reasons the U.S. continues to engage with Ethiopian elites. In the post- 9/11period relationships between the two nations have incrementally grown from using Ethiopia as a proxy to invade Somalia so as to oust Islamists to leasing some of Ethiopian airstrips and bases for America’s drone wars in Somalia and Yemen.<sup>77</sup> Publicly known American-made high-tech weapons owned by the Ethiopian government include two American arms such as AC-130 warplanes, numerous Humvees and the privilege of sometimes

using spy satellites.<sup>78</sup> Of the high-tech weapons it owns, Ethiopia used the Humvees to transport elite troops who cracked down on civilian opposition in the capital city, following the disputed 2005 general elections, which shocked the American government and diplomats.<sup>79</sup> In addition to pointing to the problems of temporarily strained bilateral relations, the controversy over Ethiopia's use of Humvees highlighted America's limited ability to control the Ethiopian elites in times of national emergencies, where the local elites fear losing power and resort to using whatever is at their disposal.

In sum, in the 1990s and the post-9/11 periods, U.S. interventions focused predominantly on counterterrorism in the Horn of Africa. The period also marked the deepening of military-to-military relationships between the U.S. and Ethiopia. These neorealist considerations have effectively overshadowed and exacerbated long-standing internal ethnonationalist conflicts. So far, it is evident that the Tigre elites subscribing to American interventions are prevailing. The following section will examine U.S. elites' support for Meles Zenawi's government based on distorted intelligence they receive from the self-interested Ethiopian-cum-Tigre intelligence community that has nothing good to say about the marginalized Ogaden and the Oromo people.

### **5.3.3 Democracy and Human Rights Promotion: Gap between Rhetoric and Reality**

Democracy and human rights promotion<sup>80</sup>, as empty rhetorical appendages some U.S. officials and expatriate experts attach to the primary U.S. interest of using Meles Zenawi's government as a partner on the war on terror and piracy in the Horn, have

primarily served as languages that justify and legitimize the current ironfisted rule of Tigre minority elites in Ethiopia since the 1990s (Jalata, 2011: 11). The rhetorics of prominent U.S. officials and experts with connection to the current regime will be compactly examined below to show the mismatch between alleged U.S. interests in democracy and human rights promotion and the reality of continued support to the Ethiopian authoritarian rulers who terrorize their own people. U.S. interventions have discriminated against members of the Oromo, Ogaden and other ethnic groups in choosing the Tigrean elites who masquerade as representatives of “all Ethiopians” as America’s sole partners.

The U.S., which had nearly two decades of a strained relationship with the ethnic Amahara-dominated socialist regime, switched its allegiance to members of the ethnic Tigre Liberation Front guerillas who were fighting the Derg. America approached young TPLF guerilla fighters, groomed them and helped them ascended to the helm of state power in the early 1990s, as a strategy of toppling the Mengistu regime (Cohen, 2000; CIA, 2002:6). Justifications for handing state power to Tigre elites has been a long process that have been perfected over several decades. Paul Henze (1985:74), CIA station chief in Ethiopia in the 1960s and 1970s and one of the architects of American-Tigre alliance<sup>81</sup>, argued for a birthright entitlement of Tigre elites to rule Ethiopia as: “...the Tigreans as much as the Amahara, are an imperial people who, despite their loyalty to tradition, think of themselves as having a right—and perhaps even a duty—to play a role in the larger political entity of which they are a part.” Using his power in the U.S. intelligence community and his opinion-making power as retired consultant, Henze

endorses a single ethnic group from over eighty six of them and promotes Tigre as predestined leaders of Ethiopia. By omission, he relegates major groups such as the Oromo and the Ogaden to statuses of subject people, as they traditionally have been in the history of the empire.

Apart from discriminatory attitudes toward population groups, Henze was openly dismissive of the coming to power of Oromo elites and the Oromo national movements they created and led, when he writes, “The claims of the Oromo Liberation Front of widespread organization and effectiveness inside Ethiopia cannot be substantiated by firm evidence. Oromia as a territorial entity has no meaning inside Ethiopia. It is an exile construct,” (Henze,1985:65). This statement dismisses the long-standing Oromo struggle for national self-determination. Viewing Oromia as an exile construct is also historically inaccurate as Oromos have called their land “Oromia” before they were conquered.<sup>82</sup> Henze’s whole work, *“Rebels and Separatists in Ethiopia: Regional Resistance to a Marxist Regime,”* prepared for the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense Policy, contains a dualist and prejudiced worldviews and depictions of the northern and southern ethnic groups of Ethiopia, casting the former in favorable light.

Other high-ranking agency leaders and State Departments officials with close ties to Ethiopia have been giving diplomatic cover to the repressions in Ethiopia in their testimonies in front of Congressional Subcommittee on Africa and in other public statements they have made. Often, such covers manifested themselves in the forms of promoting Ethiopia as a successful multiparty democracy, where civil liberties are



alleged to be fully guaranteed while the reality has been quite the contrary (Jalata, 2011:8; Jalata, 2001:102).

In his testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Mr. Geroge Moose, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, constructed a false image of the Meles Zenawi government concerning human rights, democracy and economic reform.<sup>83</sup> He describes rigged elections in which the ruling party emerged as a sole victor as: “I think all agree that there was a clear progress over the seriously flawed regional elections which took place in 1992...because of the decision by most opposition parties to boycott, those elections, the EPRDF affiliated parties won 442 of the 514 seats.”<sup>84</sup> Assistant Secretary Moose omits the fact that the OLF and other opposition parties were forced out of electoral politics after years of an all-out civil war between TPLF and OLF troops to control state power (Tronvoll, 2009:453). Characterizing the ruling party’s universal sweep of 86 percent of the seats in parliament by a Tigre-dominated ruling party, with an overall popular base of six percent of the country’s population, is inaccurate and misleading. Rigorous studies on Ethiopian politics confirm that elections are a mere façade for legitimizing EPRDF supremacy in Ethiopia (Tronvoll, 2009:449, Gudina, ND: 24). Despite continued official U.S. justifications, scholars conclude that multiparty democracy in Ethiopia has failed under the EPRDF (Lyons, 2007: 205; Tronvoll, 2009:349). Tronvoll accurately observes the holding of elections is ambiguously equated with the promotion of democracy (200:449).

U.S. official rhetoric is disconnected from reality in the areas of human rights. Officials often make statements covering up or minimizing the extent of mass violence in crucial conflict regions of Oromia and Ogaden. Assistant Secretary Moose testified, “In point of fact...there are only about 250 Oromos in detention,” while scholars and human rights organizations estimate over 19,000 Oromo political prisoners languishing in the Ethiopian prison system over the last two decades (AI, 1995 cited in Tronvoll, 2009:454).

USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Africa, John Hicks’s testimony was similar to that of George Moose’s in that Hicks’s testimony also focused predominantly on defending Meles Zenawi’s government. Hick’s opined in front of the Congress that the outcome of elections represented “...considerable technical progress.”<sup>85</sup>

The observable problem with the so-called U.S. interest in democracy and human rights promotion is the gulf between rhetorics and local realities. There is little credible evidence to suggest U.S. commitment to “democracy” and “human rights” in Ethiopia. The high level attention the U.S. pays to its geopolitical objectives (counterterrorism, security and energy) makes pushing democracy and human rights agenda in the already U.S. friendly state of Ethiopia. Most importantly, despite the fact that Ethiopia is the second largest recipient of U.S. assistance in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods,<sup>86</sup> none of that assistance is predicated upon the nation’s records on democratization and respect for fundamental human rights (USG Congress, 1994: 12). This fact may be well known among some Washington insiders themselves although they seem to be reluctant to declare that their primary interest in Ethiopia is not really in

promoting democracy and human rights. Washington's primary interest is using Ethiopia as "an essential ally of America in [sic] the 'war on terror'".<sup>87</sup>

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a critical investigation of how U.S. interventions have bolstered up successive Ethiopian regimes. The chapter found that both during the Cold War and the post-Cold War eras, geopolitical interests have underlain U.S.-Ethiopian relations. In the process of achieving the aforementioned strategic goals, the U.S. has consistently allied with friendly repressive regimes of Haile Sellassie and Meles Zenawi, disregarding the systematic violence these rulers have inflicted on the disadvantaged ethnic groups of the empire's south. The next chapter analyzes how U.S.-Ethiopian relations influence structural violence in Oromia and Ogaden regions of Ethiopia.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE INTERNAL SYSTEMATIC VIOLENCE DIMENSIONS OF U.S.- ETHIOPIA RELATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Using Johan Galtung's theory of structural violence as an analytical lens, as discussed in chapter three, this chapter provides a critical examination of U.S. intervention-inspired domestic systematic violence in Ethiopia. While this chapter uses other relevant evidence from human rights reports, it primarily focuses on the textual and contextual analyses of the Ethiopian anti-terrorism law—'Anti-terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009'. The objective in so doing is to analyze how this law, inspired by U.S. intervention related to counter-terrorism in the Horn, has been indirectly contributing to the legalization of discrimination and massive rights abuses against ethnic 'Others' in Oromia and Ogaden, which are key conflict regions of paramount security concerns for the ethnic Tigire-led Ethiopian state. One can assert that as stamping out terrorism and terrorist networks in the Horn has been an all-pervading U.S. priority in the Horn, stamping out internal political opposition has been an all-pervading Ethiopian priority in the internal outlying rebellious regions of Oromia and Ogaden.

## **6.2 Putting the Anti-Terror Law in Perspective**

The Ethiopian anti-terrorism law, which was finally enacted on May 28, 2009, evolved over many years in a complex and contested local political context, as a legal mechanism of the ruling EPRDF's response to the challenges it has been facing from armed and unarmed opposition since the EPRDF violently ascended to power in 1991.<sup>88</sup> The high-level internal interests of Zenawi's EPRDF in this law are less understood than its alleged importance in global counter-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa. Before this law, the government used to respond to opponents by applying naked and unjustified direct violence to peaceful protesters and armed rebels alike. In a confrontation between the opposition and the ruling party over contested election results in 2005, TPLF's elite troops and police used direct and excessive violence in the capital (Addis) and in the Oromia and Ogaden regions of Ethiopia.<sup>89</sup> During this single incident alone the Ethiopian police massacred more than 193 protesters; arrested more than 100 opposition leaders, journalists and aid workers; and detained 20,000 people in Addis Ababa alone.<sup>90</sup>

More than showing that the government used excessive force against civilians and that the whole rhetoric about "democracy" in Ethiopia was a façade for tyranny, this event played a great role in exposing the draconian strategies/laws that the ruling party adopted to legitimize its direct and indirect violence against its opponents. As a lesson learned, the EPRDF laid the groundwork that would ensure the party will win the next elections without any competition and without flagrantly damaging its image internationally by massacring en masse.

One can identify the two most important foundations the EPRDF laid in preparation for winning the 2010 elections and in an attempt to monopolize power and consolidate a one-party state. These are: (a) passing a slew of laws that legalize and justify governmental violence against dissidents, including by using the ‘Anti-terrorism Proclamation’ of 2009; the ‘Charities and Societies Proclamation’ of 2009 targeting national and international civil society groups; and the ‘Mass Media and Freedom of Information Act’ of 2008 targeting the private press and journalists; (b) following a coercive party enlarging strategy, which “increased the number of party members from 760,000 in 2005 to 4.5 million in 2008,”<sup>91</sup> which was accomplished largely by applying intimidation and financial and food aid incentives to the hungry.<sup>92</sup>

The cumulative effects of using the illegitimate laws as justifications for domestic state-perpetrated violence, and the strategy of enlarging the ruling party to control all aspects of people’s lives in towns and villages was poignantly reflected in the outcomes of the 2010 general elections, where the ruling party won 546 (99.6) percent of the total 547 seats in the House of People’s Representatives.<sup>93</sup> Making a mockery of a Western-backed “democracy”, only one seat was permitted to an independent candidate.

In addition to the two armed rebellions waged by the OLF and the ONLF in Oromia and Ogaden regions, it was in this tense local context that Ethiopia’s rubber-stamp parliament passed the anti-terrorism law, which will be the mainstay of the analyses that follow. The structural violence, manifested in the forms of direct violence and the ruling party’s use of state and donor resources, were clearly visible from the

election results of all the five elections (1992, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010) in which the ruling party effectively paralyzed the opposition and competed against itself, winning landslide victories, more or less similar to the 2010 results, despite the sugarcoating of repression and authoritarianism as “democracy” by leading U.S. officials, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Anna Gomez, the head of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) to Ethiopia in 2005, astutely observed that “democracy” and “elections” are used as cover-ups for one-party tyranny in Ethiopia as follows: “It is time the EU and the US realize that the current regime in Ethiopia is repressing the people because it lacks democratic legitimacy and is actually weak.”<sup>94</sup> In a similar vein, another EUEOM to Ethiopia found that in the period leading up to the 2010 elections for the national parliament and state councils, not only were the lines between the state and the ruling party blurred, but also that the EPRDF abused its power and used state resources in order to garner uncontested political control (EUEOM, 2010:5). The application of anti-terrorism law plays out in a politically hypercharged environment, where the EPRDF (dominated by TPLF) faces unprecedented levels of legitimacy deficits outside its traditional narrow Tigirean base in places like Addis Ababa, Oromia, Ogaden and other southern parts of the country.

### **6.3 Anti-terror Law as Means of Personal and Structural Violence**

The need for an anti-terrorism law in Ethiopia presents a real dilemma since there is no evidence that any foreign terrorist organizations operate within Ethiopia (USIP,

2004:1). Even Somalia, where there is credible link between the top leaders of Somali Islamist insurgencies, (sometimes referred to as, “high value targets (HVTs) in the counterterrorism lingo), poses direct security threat “mainly as a point of transit through which materiel and people move unchecked into other East African countries,” (Menkhaus, 2004:11).

Despite Ethiopia’s persistent complaint to U.S. diplomats in Addis that it is facing the perils of internal terrorist threats, experts find that Ethiopia has its own priorities that drastically differ from those of the U.S. in terms of how it wants to leverage the war on terror and the problematic relationship of patronage with the U.S (Shinn, 2004:5; Lyons, 2007:192). According to David Shinn, a veteran diplomat and a U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia from 1996-1999 (during a high stake armed conflict between the OLF and the TPLF), Ethiopia’s primary national security preoccupation is with “...indigenous groups including the Oromo Liberation Front, and the militant wing of the Ogaden National Liberation Front..”<sup>95</sup>, each of which represent specific local grievances of their long-repressed ethnic Oromo and Ogaden-Somali constituencies. The secular nationalist rebel groups, the OLF and the ONLF, state in their official policies that they have unwavering anti-terrorism policies as far as the interests of the U.S. are concerned and define their military actions as ‘acts of self-defense’ against the Ethiopian Defense Forces, which both view as a Tigre-dominated colonial military occupying Oromia and Ogaden regions respectively (OLF, 1973; ONLF, 1998).



Mainly based on incompatible ethno-nationalistic objectives between the nationalist rebel actors and the mono-ethnic-led state, elites in Addis have actively sought U.S. assistance to help them proscribe the OLF and the ONLF as foreign terrorist entities in the U.S, but that failed to materialize so far. Addis elites have consistently manipulated or lobbied U.S. officials with the objective of sparking in their minds a fabricated association between the OLF and terrorism.<sup>96</sup> Evidence further corroborates that Ethiopian officials tried to feed U.S. officials false intelligence about the alleged links between Somalia HVT militants and the OLF in order to have the U.S. officials facilitate the proscription of the OLF and the ONLF as foreign terrorist organizations. During a four-hour meeting with Donald Yamamoto, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Ethiopia (2006-2009),<sup>97</sup> Getachew Assefa—the chief of Ethiopian’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS)—furnished the Ambassador with the following false intelligence:

...that Ethiopia shares U.S. views on high value targets like Robow and al-Turki as threats to regional stability. But domestic insurgent groups, like the OLF and the ONLF, should also be treated as terrorists because they have safe haven camps in extremist-held areas in Somalia and receive support and assistance from the very HVTs that the U.S. and Ethiopia are trying to neutralize. Such support makes ONLF and OLF accomplices with international terrorist groups.<sup>98</sup>

This shows how Ethiopian officials wish to leverage ‘counter-terrorism’ to their internal needs. What is false and malevolent about this high profile piece of information is that OLF moved its camp to Eritrea in 1998, eight years before the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006 and that there is no evidence to suggest that the organization had any

association with terrorist-linked Somali HVTs mentioned. In fact, the OLF and ONLF claim that their struggles are secular. The reason OLF moved its base to Eritrea in 1998 was partly because the growing Islamic militancy made its cross-border operations from Somalia into Ethiopia difficult, including a traumatic memory of Somalia militants killing many top OLF officials in the 1970s (Jalata, 2007). Beyond verbal manipulations, the Ethiopian government organized a series of bombings on civilians in the capital city and blamed it on OLF and the Oromo to demonstrate to the skeptical U.S. that NISS complaints are true. On the contrary, the clandestine investigation of the incident by the U.S. embassy in Addis implied that the bombings were strongly likely to be an inside job by EPRDF forces.<sup>99</sup>

Ethiopia's anti-terrorism law has been a strategy aimed at making up for the Ethiopian regime's inability to secure direct assistance from the U.S. to crack down on internal opposition. The following sections present and analyze the relevant articles of the anti-terror law and then assess the laws overall impact on human rights in general and political dissent and freedom of speech in particular.

### **6.3.1 Major Problems with the Content and Application of the Anti-terror Law**

As the contextualized perspective on anti-terrorism above shows us, the enacting of the anti-terrorism law in 2009 does not mark the beginning massive of human rights violations in Ethiopia's south. It rather marks the beginning of the legitimating of previously unjustified acts of state-sponsored discriminatory violence against the Oromo and Ogaden and others. It makes violations of human rights an acceptable norm, but the

dissent against such violations an aberration (exception) in Ethiopia. The content of the “Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009” opens by echoing universal counter-terrorism clauses that are familiar with officials in Washington such as “whereas, terrorism is a danger to the peace, security and development of the country and a serious threat to the peace of the world at large,” (Negarit Gazeta, 2009). Nonetheless, the problem lies with the imprecise and the overbroad ways in which it presents “terrorism and related crimes” in the document. The category of local groups and individuals against whom the law is applied is also a crucial part of the problems with the law.

According to article 3 (1-7) “terrorist acts” encompass the following:

Whoever or a group [sic] intending to advance a political, religious or ideological cause by coercing the government, intimidating the public or section of the public, or destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, or, economic or social institutions of the country:

- 1) causes a person’s death or serious bodily injury;
- 2) creates serious risk to the safety or health of the public or section of the public;
- 3) commits kidnapping or hostage taking;
- 4) causes serious damage to property;
- 5) causes damage to natural resource, environment, historical or cultural heritage;
- 6) endangers, seizes or puts under control, causes serious interference or disruption of any public service;
- 7) threatens to commit any of the acts stipulated under sub-article (1) to (6) of this Article; is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from 15 years to life or with death.

There has been a consensus among international human rights organizations that the imprecise and overbroad definitions of ‘acts of terrorism’ in the law allowed the Ethiopian government to crack down with impunity on individuals and groups opposed to the repressive policies of the ruling party (HRW, 2009:1-2; AI, 2011:21). Commenting on the law in its official draft form, HRW validly criticizes the human rights implications of it as follows:

..the law...contained numerous provisions that fundamentally contravened human rights guaranteed by the Ethiopia’s constitution and international law...[it] is dangerously broad and inimical to fundamental human rights. The draft Proclamation is even more alarming when placed in the context of concerns over political repression, suppression of free speech and independent civil society, the impunity conferred on security forces, and the potential for consolidation of ruling party power...

From a conflict analysis perspective, a close examination of the introductory part of article three above, is not only consistent with HRW’s findings, but the sweeping stroke applied to the writing of this law underscores that Ethiopia’s counter-terrorism is largely a domestic affair rather than a regional or international one that upon which the U.S. is embarked. Ethiopia wants to capitalize on the global counter-terrorism narrative for its own sake, often without serious repudiations from its GWOT allies.

Article three indicates clearly that those individuals and groups that Ethiopia views as “terrorists” are those who dissent politically, religiously and ideologically from the current mono-ethnic authoritarian order in Ethiopia. The law’s draconian spirit is reflected in the fact that its stated goals are to protect the government and its institutions

from political “others” rather than, for instance, protecting citizens from the claimed terrorist threats. As the later section of this analysis reveals, the application of the law on domestic dissidents suggest that the state uses it to deny opposition groups the rights to peacefully and lawfully organize and challenge the incumbent government’s policies. In other words, if one is not an EPRDF member and if one expresses opposition to the government, then by implication one is well qualified to be called a “terrorist” and what one legitimately does or says as “terrorist activities.” The problem with sub-articles listing what constitutes terrorist activities can be demonstrated by the law’s application to individuals and groups who are clearly no terrorists by any domestic or international standards (HRW, 2009:1).

### **6.3.2 Applications of the ATP: Justifications of Personal and Structural Violence**

Among several other purposes targeted at silencing the opposition and uprooting all forms of dissent, the application of the ATP highlights the two main objectives of the government in using it:

- 1) Due to armed and political opposition from the two vast regions of Oromia and Ogaden, Ethiopian authorities wanted to proscribe its armed opponents such as the OLF, ONLF, Ginbot 7 and others as “terrorist organizations.” Predominantly EPRDF elites wanted to systematically eliminate the unarmed lawful opposition groups and individuals by simply labeling them “OLF or ONLF” and by then charging them under this law with terrorism.

- 2) Equally important, after two decades of dominating multi-ethnic Ethiopia, high level EPRDF officials saw the anti-terrorism law as new instrument of further consolidating their power.

Affirming the first objective of the ATP, in 2011 “at least 108 opposition party members [largely from Oromia and Finfinne/ Addis] and six journalists have been arrested in Ethiopia for alleged involvement with various domestically proscribed “terrorist” groups [OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7]”<sup>100</sup> and charged with crimes under the ATP. The profile of those arrested included senior opposition leaders, journalists and ordinary activists who are naturally the critics of the repressive national policies and practices of the government (AI, 2011:5).

Needless to list their names and their multiple party affiliations here, charges brought against them were orchestrated under the anti-terror law. For instance, two Swedish investigative journalists—Martin Schibbye and Johan Persson, who visited ONLF controlled Ogaden region in 2011—were charged with terrorism offenses on three counts:

1<sup>st</sup> charge: against both defendants: ‘Rendering Support to Terrorism,’ through providing ‘a skill, expertise or moral support, or giving advice’ (Art. 5(1/b) ATP; 2<sup>nd</sup> charge: against both defendants: ‘Participation in Terrorist Organization’ (Art. 7, ATP); 3<sup>rd</sup> charge: against both defendants: ‘Violation of Political Sovereignty, for the purpose of engaging in subversive activity, or to perform on behalf of a foreign power or organization acts which are within the jurisdiction of the public authorities.’ (Art.242, Criminal Code).

These journalists were slapped with these charges and sentenced to jail terms of 11 years for the legitimate journalism work they were doing, trying to expose the human rights abuses by state security forces in the Ogaden area. The law which sanctions the structural violence of punishing them with 10-15 years in Ethiopia's squalid and overcrowded prison also subjected them to direct violence involved in arresting and interrogating them by the authorities. Nicholas Kristof<sup>101</sup> describes the violence the two journalists were subjected as follows:

In a filthy Ethiopian prison that is overridden with lice, fleas and huge rats...Martin Schibbye, 31, and Johan Parsson, 29, share a narrow bed, one man's head beside the other's feet...the prison is a violent disease-ridden place, with inmates fighting and coughing blood, according to Schibbye's wife, Linnea Schibbye Steiner...It is hot during day time and freezing cold at night...Fortunately, she added, the 250 or so Ethiopian prisoners jammed in the cell protect the two journalists, pray for them and jokingly call their bed "the Swedish Embassy".

The press coverage dedicated to the jailing and the prosecution of the two journalists has helped highlight not only that the terrorist charges against journalists and politicians are trumped-up, but also revealed the violence that many of Ogaden and Oromo political prisoners endure in Ethiopian prisons and torture facilities.

Other charges brought against six Ethiopian journalists copy verbatim provisions under articles 3 and 4 and 6 of Anti-terrorism Proclamation. The sentencing of the Swedish and local journalists to 11-14 years in jail directly stifles free speech and press freedom and "makes mockery of the rule of law."<sup>102</sup> Among the charges cited against the six journalists are 'Encouragement of Terrorism,' (Art. 6 ATP). Some of these

journalists are simple everyday bloggers, like Eskinder Nega, who was honored by PEN America for his dissident writing. They hold range opinions critical of the government, including alluding to the need for an Arab Spring-type revolution in Ethiopia against Meles Zenawi's regime. Other than rhetorically justifying their alleged involvement with banned rebel groups, there is no real evidence linking them to actual physically harmful terrorist activities. ATP's Article 6 ambiguously, broadly and inaccurately views publishing all dissenting opinions by anyone as incitement to terrorism:

Whoever publishes or causes the publication of a statement that is likely to be understood by some or all members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to them to the commission or preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism stipulated under article 3....

The other important category of people who are targeted disproportionately because of their membership in a nationality group or because of their imputed opinions, or because of guilt by association, are Oromo politicians and political parties. This can be viewed within the EPRDF's crafty objective of consolidating political power by appending "terrorist" labels to Oromo civilians in order to weaken or liquidate or prevent them from ever rising to national political power. The question of disproportionately isolating and targeting members of the Oromo ethnic group at a ratio of 108 Oromo opposition leaders to 6 journalists from Amahara ethnicity, and to none from the dominant Tigre group, as can be inferred from the 2011 Amnesty International report (p.5), highlights that more than anything the application of the ATP in the pretext of counterterrorism, is tantamount to following an implicit policy of ethnic apartheid in the



guise of a law. Since the Oromo are the most numerous people in Ethiopia and have the potential of voting the EPRDF out power if legitimate and fair elections were to be held, the EPRDF considers the Oromo opposition as threats and prefers authoritarian policies rather than one-person-one-vote democracy. This perception has shaped the disproportionate crackdown on Oromos in the country.

Of the 300 additional rounds of ethnic Oromos arrested, at least 89 were “members of the two largest Oromo political parties—the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM) and Oromo People’s Congress (OPC).”<sup>103</sup>

The direct violence aspect of the application of the law involves subjecting prisoners or convicts to torture and other ill treatment at *Maikelawi*, one of Ethiopia’s infamous secret torture prisons (AI, 2011: 5, 6, 27-29). Bekele Gerba and Olbana Lelisa, the top leaders of the OFDM and OPC respectively, complained that they experienced torture and other ill treatment (AI, 2011:15). Under article 23 (2 and 5), the ATP stipulates that ‘hearsay or indirect evidence’ and evidenced extracted from suspects through torture can qualify as admissible evidence. This points out the shaky evidentiary and procedural rules applied in terrorism arrests, charges and trials. Despite that, it is apparent from data collected for this research that the government deliberately targeted people of high political and social profile.

As mistreated as Oromos are in Ethiopia, it is a travesty of justice that they receive cursory attention from the international media and U.S. officials. As a result, their plight in and outside the Ethiopian prison system is often overlooked because of the

strong terrorism propaganda that Ethiopian-cum-Tigre elites spread about them in the name of “sharing intelligence.” In a news report highlighting how the trials of politicians and journalists are testing Ethiopia’s anti-terrorism law, Peter Heinlein, a VOA reporter based in Addis who himself experienced detention because of his coverage of the story, alludes to the forgotten state of Oromos and the disproportionality of their trials under this law<sup>104</sup>:

Almost forgotten has been the case of more than 100 ethnic Oromo political activists. Prosecutors have alleged they were involved with the outlawed Oromo Liberation Front, or OLF. Oromos are the largest of Ethiopia’s ethnic groups, and the defendants include top leaders of the two main Oromo opposition parties, as well as former members of parliament...The sheer number of these cases has drawn attention to Ethiopia’s anti-terrorism legislation.

Indicating that Ethiopia’s anti-terrorism law was inspired by the U.S. counter-terrorism effort in the Horn and also due to the concern that it is veering in a destructive direction, the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Booth was in the courtroom auditing the verdict of the trials (Heinlein, 2012-1). The U.S. never officially expressed concerns over the misapplication of the law to convicting journalists and politicians performing legitimate work in their trades. This neglect by silence of human rights violations amounts to endorsing repression.

## **6.4 Legitimacy Problems in Enforcing the Anti-Terror Law**

As political leaders who were never voted into power by the majority of Ethiopians, the EPRDF suffers from internal legitimacy deficit. EPRDF dominates

Ethiopia's south by force in addition to applying structural constraints on the civil liberties of the peoples of the nation. It enforces the ATP through the police and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), which numbers over 200,000 personnel, making it one of the largest militaries in Africa.<sup>105</sup>

The “elephant in the room” about this army is not its bloated size. A serious problem lies in the ethnic composition of ENDF's top commanders and the conversion of former TPLF guerillas into the so-called “national army”. The army sides with the ruling EPRDF/TPLF under the Commander-in-Chief who is the Prime Minister or formerly Meles Zenawi. This predominantly former ethnic Tigre guerilla force, which was supposed to undergo disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, was converted to a national army in 1991 under the aegis of the U.S.<sup>106</sup>

The U.S. cooperation with Ethiopia on counter-terrorism, inter alia, includes “the sharing of intelligence and training of Ethiopian security personnel,” (Shinn, 2004:6). In an Ethiopian security and defense system, where high-ranking military officials are predominantly members of Tigre<sup>107</sup>, instead of urging the Ethiopian government to facilitate the creation of a professional army representative of the diversity of the country, a former U.S. official with active influence in the Beltway expresses a view that praises this predatory institution:

Ethiopia has a tough, effective security apparatus that dates from the revolutionary opposition's long conflict with the Derg regime. Many are veterans of this military campaign. Their acts are firm, some would say harsh, and they have developed an impressive intelligence capacity.

Although he should know, Ambassador Shinn omits the ethnic nature of this security apparatus that U.S. assistance has helped bolster over decades.

The following tables provide the breakdown of the ENDF by Principal Defense Departments:

## High Ranking Military Officials

### Principal Defense Departments

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff	General Smora Yenus	Tigre
2	Armed Forces Head of Training	Lt.General Tadesse Worde	Tigre
3	Head of Logistics	Lt.General Gezae Abera	Tigre
4	Head of Intelligence	Br. General Gebre Dela	Tigre
5	Armed Forces Head of Campaign	Major General Gebreegzher	Tigre
6	Armed Forces Head of Engineering	Lt.General Berhane Negash	Tigre
7	Chief of the Air Force	Chief of the Air Force	Tigre

### Heads of the Nation's four Military Commands

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	Central Command	General Abebaw Tadesse	Agew
2	Northern Command	Lt.General Saere Mekonene	Tigre
3	South Eastern Command	Lt.General Abraha Wolde	Tigre
4	Western Command	Br. General Seyoum Hagos	Tigre

## Army Divisional Commanders

### Central Command

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	31st Army Division	Colonel Tsegaye Marx	Tigre
2	33rd Army Division	Colonel Kidane	Tigre
3	35th Army Division	Colonel Misganaw Alemu	Tigre
4	24th Army Division	Colonel Work Aynu	Tigre
5	22nd Army Division	Colonel Dikul	Tigre
6	8th Mechanized Division	Colonel Jamal Mohammed	Tigre

### Northern Command

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	14st Army Division	Colonel Wodi Antiru	Tigre
2	21st Army Division	Colonel Gueshi Gebre	Tigre
3	11th Army Division	Colonel Workidu	Tigre
4	25th Army Division	Colonel Tesfay Sahiel	Tigre
5	22nd Army Division	Colonel Teklay Klashin	Tigre
6	4th Mechanized Division	Colonel Hinsaw Giorgis	Tigre

### South Eastern Command

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	19st Army Division	Colonel Wodi Guaae	Tigre
2	44st Army Division	Colonel Zewdu Tefera	Tigre
3	13th Army Division	Colonel Sherifo	Tigre
4	12th Army Division	Colonel Mulugeta Berhe	Tigre
5	32nd Army Division	Colonel Abraha Tselim	Tigre
6	6th Mechanized Division	Colonel G/Medhin Fekede	Tigre

### Western Command

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	23rd Army Division	Colonel Wolde Belalom	Tigre
2	43rd Army Division	Colonel Wodi Abate	Tigre
3	26th Army Division	Colonel Mebrahtu	Tigre
4	7th Mechanized Division	Colonel Gebre Mariam	Tigre

### Commanders in Different Defense Departments

No	Job Division	Name & Rank	Ethnic Group
1	Agazi Commando Division	B.General Mohammed Esha	Tigre
2	Addis Ababa & Surrounding Area Guard	Colonel Zenebe Amare	Tigre
3	Palace Guard	Colonel Gerensay	Tigre
4	Banking Guard	Colonel Hawaz Woldu	Tigre
5	Engineering College	Colonel Halefom Eggigu	Tigre
6	Military Health Science	B.General Tesfay Gidey	Tigre
7	Mulugeta Buli Technical College	Colonel Meleya Amare	Tigre
8	Resource Management College	Colonel Letay	Tigre
9	Siftana Command College	B.General Moges Haile	Tigre
10	Blaten Military Training Center	Colonel Salih BeriHu	Tigre
11	Wourso Military Training Center	Colonel Negash Heluf	Tigre
12	Awash Arba Military Training Center	Colonel Muze	Tigre
13	Birr Valley Military Training Center	Colonel Negassie Shikortet	Tigre
14	Defense Administration Department	B.General Mehari Zewde	Tigre
15	Defense Aviation	B.General Kinfe Dagnew	Tigre
16	Defense Research and Study	B.General Halefom Chento	Tigre
17	Defense Justice Department	Colonel Askale	Tigre
18	Secretary of the Chief-of-Staff	Colonel Tsehaye Manjus	Tigre
19	Indoctrination Center	B.General Akale Asaye	Amhara
20	Communications Department	Colonel Sebbhat	Tigre
21	Foreign Relations Department	Colonel Hassene	Tigre
22	Special Forces Coordination Department	B.General Fisseha Manjus	Tigre
23	Operations Department	Colonel Wodi Tewk	Tigre
24	Planning, Readiness and Programming Department	Colonel Teklay Ashebir	Tigre
25	Defense Industries Coordination Department	Colonel Wodi Negash	Tigre
26	Defense Finance Department	Colonel Zewdu	Tigre
27	Defense Purchasing Department	Colonel Gedey	Tigre
28	Defense Budget Department	Ato/Mr. Berhane	Tigre

Table 1: Commanders in different Defense Departments; adapted from Ginbot 7 (2009).

The tables show that the top leadership of the army is almost fully controlled by members of one ethnic group, demonstrating that the army is not an ethnically or politically neutral institution in Ethiopia. The tables also show us that the ENDF is

“national” only in name, but essentially ethnic in character and composition. They prove that there is a typical monopoly of the top military leadership of the army by ethnic Tigrean elites. As the report asserts, it is indeed a sign of enormous predicament that elites from the Tigre ethnic group (6%) of the country’s population are dominating the majority of Ethiopian population groups (94%) by controlling crucial security institutions.<sup>108</sup> Reading the anti-terrorism law against this context of absolute power, the implication is that the law enforcement and security agents who implement it do so not because they are concerned for the rule of law, but out of loyalty to uphold the repressive system of which they are an integral part. Although most Ethiopians know about this and complain regularly to the USG, the problem of the domination of the multiethnic nation’s defense and security infrastructure by members of one ethnic group still remains officially unacknowledged by Washington.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Through a contextualized analysis of the Ethiopian ‘Anti-terrorism Proclamation’, the study found that so far the law has been applied domestically with twin goals: (i) to legitimate or justify massive human rights abuses by the ruling party on the basis of real or perceived political and ideological dissent thereby stifling free speech, press freedom, the freedom of association and assembly; (ii) to maintain the status quo of EPRDF hegemony by using anti-terror law as instrument of labeling, proscribing and instilling fear in individuals and groups opposed to the government’s policies in the

disenfranchised areas of the nation's south. In other words, the law has been used as EPRDF's grand strategy of perpetuating structural and direct violence with impunity.

Another scholar concludes that the Ethiopian regime uses the ATP as "a catch-all, implicate all" strategy of cracking down on dissent (Hassen, 2012: 6). This research has found no evidence of the application of this law to trying and convicting individuals and groups belonging in real external terrorist organizations such as Al Shaba or others in the region. On the contrary, the victims of the law are unarmed, ordinary Ethiopian civilians who are routinely labeled "terrorists", but who have neither participated in credible terrorist attacks nor have affiliations with non-Ethiopian Islamic extremists.

The role that the U.S. counter-terrorism interventions in the Horn have played in ethno-national relations in Ethiopia seems to be largely an indirect or inspirational one that has contributed to the legitimating of the creation of the anti-terror law itself. Counter terrorism has exacerbated Ethiopia's manipulation of the law to its internal advantage with little criticism or call to accountability from the U.S. government.

Although many U.S. officials claim that the U.S. has no leverage over Ethiopia because the ruling elites are strong-willed, this study finds that the U.S. does have a great deal of leverage over Ethiopia because Ethiopia is one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa, receiving more than \$3 billion in development assistance alone in 2008 (HRW, 2011:5; Tepperman, 2009:1). With 80 percent of the country's population barely living on \$ 2 a day,<sup>109</sup> Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet, the ones who have been benefiting from the influx of U.S. assistance are the ruling



elites who have used the assistance as an incentive to build up the pervasive one-party “architecture of repression” by rewarding those who join them [EPRDF] and by punishing those who do not (HRW, 2009:12-19). Some experts estimate youth unemployment at as high as 70%, but official unemployment figures deliberately remain unavailable altogether (The Economist, 2007:3).

Despite the denials, the U.S. has long-standing significant influence and relation with Ethiopian governments and elites. The tragedy of this relationship is that the U.S. has little to no legal mechanism of ensuring the accountability of Ethiopian elites for all the aid it funnels into the country. Washington’s only attempt at establishing a legal accountability system for the assistance it provides to Ethiopia by attaching “human rights and democratization” preconditions failed in Congress in 2007 (USG, 2007). This markup bill, titled “Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007,” was struck down with the help of Washington lobbyists, on which Ethiopian elites “spent \$ 2.3 million securing the services of three firms, including DLA Piper.”<sup>110</sup> In the aftermath of the failure of the markup bill in congress, U.S. officials continue to exalt the country variably as the “linchpin, anchor state, bulwark, ally” against terrorism. This has insulated Ethiopia against criticism and actions from the West regarding the misapplications of the anti-terror law. This study confirms the commonly held views and perceptions among Ethiopians in the homeland and in Diaspora in the U.S. that the America backs the dictatorship in Addis (Goldberg, 2010:1; Colombant, 2012:1).

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

As analyzed in chapters five and six, U.S. intervention in Ethiopia is replete with complex and subtle destructive aspects. This chapter summarizes and theoretically reflects on those destructive aspects of superpower intervention in local protracted ethnic conflicts. For various reasons related or unrelated to conflict resolution, negotiation is often invoked and used by the Ethiopian state and rebel groups (OLF and ONLF) as a method of conflict resolution in Ethiopia. In terms of negotiation, this chapter first presents negotiation as understood in industrial contexts in the West and then critiques the shortcomings of the application of negotiation in contexts of the Ethiopian dictatorship and opposition to dictatorship. It proposes eclectic strategies of fixing the destructive interventions by extrapolating from the analysis and by proposing fundamental conflict resolution methods that can address the role of international intervention in this asymmetric conflict. It sets a positive vision by recommending specific strategies of overcoming the indirect roles of U.S. intervention that have abetted repression so far. The chapter proposes an approach that allows for pursuing stability, conflict resolution and the protection of human rights simultaneously. This is important

because the U.S. has heavily and exclusively focused on achieving stability by allying with repressive elites, instead of empowering every party and national groups. Conflict resolution is proposed with the view to expanding what appears to be the present American parochial search for quick military solutions to protracted and old conflicts in Ethiopia.

## **7.2 Destructive Interventions as Problems of Power Politics**

During the periods of the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism, realist considerations seemed the most important factors behind U.S.-Ethiopia relations. In power politics, a state seeks to follow offensive or aggressive interventionist policies with the objective of preventing or containing the expansion of other competing superpowers (Mearsheimer, 2001; Morgenthau, 1967). The U.S. power has been expressed as national security interests in Ethiopia and the region. Principal actors in this power competition were America itself and the Soviets during the Cold War, and America and non-state Islamic extremists during the War on Global Terrorism. Offensive realism undergirds the U.S. desire to increase its relative power and presence in the region in order to maintain stability at any cost. What is destructive about U.S. intervention is the act of exclusively promoting stability while abetting repression (Hagmann, 2012:1). This study demonstrated that chosen Ethiopian elites have benefited from alliance with the U.S. The process of choosing local elites in/for American proxy wars with other state and non-state actors in the region seems to have hurt the non-elite population groups of Ethiopia's south. The essence of the destructiveness of focusing on one's own interests is succinctly

captured by a traditional African proverb that follows: “When two elephants fight it is the grass that suffers.” The elephants here can be the Soviets and U.S. during the Cold War, the Americans and Islamist groups in the Horn during the GWOT, intrastate wars between Ethiopian governments and Ethiopian rebels such as the OLF and the ONLF. The “grass” that suffers in domestic conflict overlaid by international competition is the innocent civilians or population groups who just happen to be there (Rothabart et al., 2012). To borrow Mearsheimer words, “the tragedy of great power politics,” in this conflict is that the peoples of Oromia and Ogaden peripheries are at the receiving end of direct and structural violence.

A myriad of important and specific negative roles of U.S. intervention in Ethiopia can be extrapolated from the study itself. Stability, anti-communism and counter-terrorism have been pursued at various stages of U.S. intervention in alliance with narrowly-based and self-interested local elites. Implied in the American pursuit of stability in Ethiopia is not only the disconcerting fact that Ethiopia is as unstable as ever, but also that Ethiopian leaders can follow repressive policies in some regions as long as they invoke the language of stability and counter-terrorism, at least rhetorically. Another writer also corroborates my findings and concludes that American aid to Ethiopia, along with aid from other donors, accounts for one-third of the national Ethiopian budget (Hagmann, 2012:2). Despite that, Hagmann finds that the U.S. has not reacted to repressions in Ethiopia. The findings of this study are consistent with Hagmann’s opinion in the New York Times that the U.S. continues to blindly support the highly centralized and elite-controlled one-party state.

The following is a summary of some specific roles of destructive interventions in upholding repression in Ethiopia: (a) the militarization of U.S. policy during the Cold War saw the rise and fall of Emperor Haile Sellasie's personal rule; (b) religious mythologies were used as diplomatic justifications of the iron-fisted rule of the emperor; (c) the post-9/11 context in the Horn of Africa rewarded and legitimized Ethiopian elites leading the one-party state, while delegitimizing popular demands for reforms in the areas of human rights, democratization, peace and development; (d) Washington's counter-terrorism priorities inspired the legislation of the Ethiopian anti-terrorism law and its abuse against legitimate opponents of the government's repressive policies; (e) the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, which is tightly controlled by the minority Ethnic-Tigre have benefitted from AFRICOM's military support—this has sharpened the popular perception that American intervention is part of the problem, not the solution ; (f) the various aspects of U.S. intervention put elites first, but disregarded human suffering as analyzed in chapter seven.

The destructive aspects of U.S. interventions listed “a” through “f” above can be fixed simply by discontinuing to do those things. The destructive aspects of this intervention suggest that supporting the oppressive elite system is dangerously flawed, shortsighted and unsustainable. It is flawed because the policy of alliance with elites excludes the majority of Ethiopian peoples who resent such flagrant and destructive exclusion. Current interventions are parochial in the sense that the U.S. perceives that stability can be achieved only through coercive and military means. They are also parochial in that diplomacy and conflict resolution have no place in U.S. interventions in

Ethiopia. Pursuing counter-terrorism as an immediate U.S. goal is also myopic and unsustainable, without enlisting the cooperation of the populations. Enlisting popular cooperation can be done if a non-realist alternative approach to local conflicts in Ethiopia is followed. Viewing the world only in terms of power politics appears to contribute to structural and direct violence in the nation presently. This need to be alternatively addressed without further alienating and infuriating the masses of people at the expense of pleasing a few ethnonationalist elites. On the domestic front, an elaborate conflict resolution proposal will be made in the following sections.

### **7.3 Negotiations in Authoritarian Environment**

Negotiation as a method conflict resolution is one of the most frequently invoked idea by parties to conflict in Ethiopia. In this authoritarian environment, where repression and rebellion are abundant, exactly what actors mean when they say, “we are ready to negotiate” is a much more complex issue than it appears to be on the surface. Overlapping local and international issues, entrenched positions, parties and interests in this case make ‘negotiation’ less straightforward than Western price negotiation between a customer and a shopkeeper or labor negotiation between employers and employees (Rubenstein, 1993:147; Fisher, Ury and Patton, 2011:3-4). It enhances clarity to first briefly discuss negotiation theory and to critique the theory itself. The problems and dangers of negotiation practices in authoritarian context are also worth examining.

#### **7.3.1 Negotiation in Theory**

Fisher and Ury developed the theory of negotiation in North America with the ambitious goal of applying it to resolving every type of conflict effectively and peacefully ( Fisher, Ury and Patton, 2011:xxi, 11). These theorists thought of negotiation as the best way of dealing with differences. Their “principled negotiation or negotiation on merits” is built on four principles<sup>111</sup>:

(A) ‘People: separate people from the problem’: This principle concerns issues of how to deal with emotions in search of the so-called objective merits of a problem. It considers strong human emotions and perceptions undesirable and calls for getting rid of them.

(B) *‘Interests: focus on interests, not positions’*: this is aimed at meeting underlying interests by overcoming the shortcoming of focusing on stated positions.

(C) *‘Options: invent multiple options looking for mutual gains before deciding what to do’*: this point recognizes the difficulty of narrow decision-making about options in the presence of an opponent. It calls for the creation of many options to solving a problem.

(D) *‘Criteria: insist that the result be based on some objective standard’*: this point is meant resolve parties’ opposing interests by resorting to external objective standards such as market value, expert opinion, custom and law so as to determine the outcome of negotiation.

While the clear and concrete steps of principled negotiation above are its strengths, one can critique the theory for two major shortcomings. First, the four steps imply that real world conflicts come packaged neatly and that they can be solved in linear fashion.

This is one of the weaknesses of negotiation since real world conflicts have multiple and complex dimensions in terms of issues, parties, positions, cultures and worldviews guiding conflict resolution practices. The theory assumes rationalistic expertise gained in schools, where in this case of an African conflict, the types of traditional negotiation recognized are those led by well-respected religious and secular elders. That means emotions and position will be the integral part of Horn negotiation practice as the elders are also party to the conflict in some ways. The most important weakness of Western negotiation approaches is the fact that it oversimplifies the process and time required to get to a negotiated agreement. Arrival at agreement is presented as a simple “getting to yes” linear process (Fisher, Ury and Patton, 2011).

Second, the context in which Western negotiation theory was developed and used presents another challenge to transferring the concept wholesale to authoritarian environments, where reason (rationality) has little or no place. The founders and the thinkers behind the Harvard Negotiation Project come at negotiation from Western realist and rationalist perspectives. For instance, Fisher and Ury, the authors of the best-selling book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements without Giving In*, built their careers and experiences in highly realist environments such as service in the U.S. army and the White House respectively during the post-World War II period (2011). The examples they give also come from a Western industrial environment where negotiations between ‘shopkeepers’ and ‘customers’ are highly featured. As a result, the focus of such an approach is on meeting immediate needs such as raising the pay of an employee or industrial dispute settlement, instead of addressing the fundamental structural issues that



have led to these conflicts in the first place (Rubenstein, 1993: 153). These critiques of negotiation theory do not, however, mean that negotiation as a method is inapplicable in highly charged ethnic conflicts. One can cite successful negotiated settlements such as that of South Africa (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 175; Lieberfeld, 2000: 19). In the South African case, negotiations were supplemented by local and international anti-apartheid grassroots movements and targeted sanctions that aimed at altering the power asymmetry between the parties to the conflict before the real settlement process began (Ramsbotham, 2005:177). Thus, negotiation in authoritarian and repressive environment needs to be supplemented by other extraneous and parallel events if they have to lead to any significant outcome.

### **7.3.2 Precarious Negotiation Practices in Ethiopia: North versus South**

A review of past negotiation practices between three Ethiopian regimes and opposition actors from Oromia region points out to the deceptions and dangers of state-sponsored negotiation in this authoritarian environment (Nedhi, 2012: 14). The leaders of the Ethiopian state have used negotiation as a tactic to buy time for more military attacks and as means of leading prominent Oromo leaders into their death traps. Nedhi discusses the dangers of past negotiations with Abyssinians leaders, where five prominent Oromo dissident negotiators were trapped and killed.<sup>112</sup> Common to all these precarious negotiation efforts are the fact that processes were initiated by partisan state leaders in order to lure and kill popular opponents by promising them deceptive resolution to problems. These processes are characterized by the absence of neutral third parties as the

so-called third parties are appointed by the state. Their primary interests are to uphold the interests of the state. These ‘negotiation’ also took place in a space controlled by the forces of the emperors and there was no way they could be effective. Effectively, Ethiopian negotiations are reduced to tactics of waging wars as Nedhi put below<sup>113</sup>:

Ras Ali, grandfather of Lij Eyasu [an Oromo prince], marched to Showa with 12000 Oromo horse men to fight Haile silasse [sic] who was then crown prince. Before the war began Haile Silasse sent Ft. Habte Girogesis [sic]<sup>114</sup> to Ras Ali for mediation and peaceful settlement. Habte Giorgis [sic] an Oromo of political skill and master of Habesha palace intrigue, succeeded in slowing down the Wollo army. In the meantime [sic] the Showans [the Emperor’s army] got time to organize and prepare their army for attack. The Wollo army had a devastating defeat at the battle of Sagale, because Ras Ali lost momentum in false negotiation. Ras<sup>115</sup> Ali was killed, Eyasu thrown into prison and Haile Selasse rose to power and the rest is history.

While one can agree with Nedhi’s observation that negotiation was invoked to trap and assassinate prominent opposition leaders, one cannot agree with Nedhi’s conclusion that negotiated settlements with Ethiopian leaders is impossible merely because the past negotiations failed, promises broken and people were put in harm’s way. Nedhi believes that the Oromo should never negotiate with Amahara-Tigire because negotiations did not work in the past. This is flawed because he presents conflict resolution as something that is permanently fixed not to work. Nedhi assumes that valid negotiations are the only ones that are initiated and controlled by state leaders. This is a weak argument since substantive negotiation that takes place in a neutral location in the presence of a neutral third-party may actually yield sound outcomes. One can agree with Nedhi that negotiations in the present form are precarious and dangerous. For future negotiation to

work, it has to be supplemented by preconditions that can alter power asymmetries as in the case of former South Africa.

Most recent negotiations between Ethiopian rebels (OLF and ONLF) and the EPRDF government also suggest the continuation of precarious and deceptive negotiation practices from the imperial times. These practices have nothing to do with Fisher and Ury's theory of negotiation. In fact, the present practice in Ethiopia is a complete distortion of principles of negotiation. Negotiation is still being used as tactic of buying time to build up momentum and to attack opponents, not to solve problems. Contemporary Ethiopian elites also invoke the idea of negotiation and conflict resolution to internationally present themselves in positive light as peace-seekers and to present Others as 'war-mongers' and 'extremists' or even 'terrorists'.

For instance, a widely publicized hybrid (traditional and modern) negotiation between the EPRDF government and the OLF in 2008 yielded no outcome. Evaluated based on the criteria of procedures and third parties, this negotiation was centrally-controlled by the state. The state forced 125 elders from various zones of the Oromiya regional state and congregated them in Hilton Addis Hotel for weeks to conduct a two-day initial dialogue among third parties.<sup>116</sup> This is procedurally ludicrous because pre-negotiation dialogue is supposed to be for the actors, not for elders who were acting as state-appointed "third parties." At the end, the elders issued a press release demanding OLF's participation in negotiation with the government. The elders were hand-picked by

EPRDF officials and put in the luxurious four-star hotel that some of them might have never even seen before. The space was controlled by the ruling party and OLF representatives never showed up or invited. The whole process was used as propaganda, where government officials and some of the affiliated elders gave international interviews on the BBC and the Ethiopian Television. This is to show that both procedurally and substantively the practice of negotiation in Ethiopia is far removed from what is known in Western standard theory and practice.

The state invokes negotiation usually at times of local upheavals to appease the masses. The effort is usually announced on state-controlled media by the Prime Minister of the country himself, whose leadership is being challenged. Whenever there is an international pressure or a local movement he announces on the state-controlled-television stations how ready his government is to talk with rebel groups such as the OLF, the ONLF and the Ginbot 7:

Principles are important in negotiating with the OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7. In principle, resolving differences peacefully is a civilized and appropriate method. It is possible to achieve peace in our country only by accepting the constitution and the constitutional system and in this framework to push one's agenda in a peaceful way. Any organizations, groups and even disgruntled individuals who accept these principles, we are ready to negotiate and return them to the constitutional framework.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to using the rhetoric of negotiation for domestic and international propaganda consumptions, the processes and substance of contemporary Ethiopian

negotiation practices are flawed and precarious since the state sets the preconditions (the rules) for other actors in conflicts to which the state is the strongest party.

There are ways one can improve current flawed negotiation practices. As pointed out in chapter two, the parties have incompatible goals. The OLF and the ONLF are seeking self-determination for the Oromo and Ogaden populations respectively. Ginbot 7 is interested in the unity of Ethiopia in which Amahara and Gurage ethnic groups takeover power from the Tigire groups. The ruling EPRDF is interested in perpetuating the domination of the Ethiopian state by the members of ethnic Tigire. The conflict is asymmetrical since EPRDF is militarily the most powerful of all the actors.

In order to make negotiations and/ or other conflict resolution efforts work, it is crucial that each of these actors participate in the construction of independent processes and substances for negotiations. Then the parties have to agree on a third party and location. Since there is a power asymmetry, it is futile to carry out negotiations at the level of top leaders alone. A successful effort towards a negotiated settlement has to involve the society, grassroots leaders, problem- solving workshops involving mid-level leaders and finally the elites (Lederach, 1997 in Ramsbotham et al., 2005:24). Negotiating in the context of power asymmetry is likely to reward the most powerful party, the EPRDF. First and foremost, the power imbalance must be offset through local and international anti-ethnic tyranny campaigns against Ethiopian ruling elites. There is so much that can be replicated from the South African example if one has to follow and improve on negotiation as a primary means of conflict resolution. South Africans started

from the scratch by overhauling the existing structure and by entering into a new constitutional social contract (Ramsbotham et al, 2005:179). Essentially the problem in Ethiopia is a similar problem of ethnic domination although the color of the dominant ethnic group is as black as those dominated in Ethiopia. The dominant group is also a minority.

Every opposition actor contests the present Ethiopian state structure and ownership (Lata, 2012; Sarbo, 2009). The following section highlights how state-ownership is the source of direct assault and structural violence and proposes a negotiated reconfiguration of state ownership to reflect the country's ethnic diversity. This is by no means a radical proposal since many of the actors are demanding self-determination, including secession from the Ethiopian state. My proposal seeks to find solutions within an envisioned inclusive new system.

### **7.3.3 Ethnic Elites' Ownership of State and Conflict Resolution**

As discussed in chapter seven, the Oromo and the Ogaden peoples have been facing structural and direct assault in a state system owned and dominated by the elite members of the two northern groups, the Amahara and Tigire, since the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ever since, the political and geographic periphery has lacked political influence and proportionate representation. Armed groups such as the OLF and ONLF representing the state of Oromia and Ogaden have long proclaimed that they struggle for the self-determination or independence of those two big regions from a minority-controlled Ethiopian state (Hewitt et al, 2012:125, 126). The EPRDF government has systematically

cracked down on opposition groups and civilian members and sympathizers mainly directly through the armed forces it controls and through draconian laws such as the anti-terrorism law. From records of human rights groups, it is apparent that civilians are the ones bearing the brunt of the repression, while the armed actors (state and rebels) enjoy relative safety and security (Rothbart et al., 2012).

The wars between various actors underscore the problematic nature of the Ethiopian state itself. The state is problematic because Amahara-Tigre groups view the state as their private property (Lata, 2012:105). The privileging of certain groups on the one hand and the systematic alienation and persecution of others on the basis of their ethnic affiliations on the other hand have fueled violence and rebellion. It is clear from the foregoing analysis that the ruling elites have used the resources of the state and foreign support in creating mega repressive architectures across Ethiopia's south. The repressive architectures have affected not only the human rights of the locals, but they have also served as vehicles of stifling the freedom of speech of foreign scholars and journalists. Reflecting on what constitutes terrorism in Ethiopia, Tobias Hagmann, a specialist in East African politics and a visiting scholar at the Department of Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley, opines: "Next time I travel to Ethiopia, I may be arrested as a terrorist. Why? Because I have published articles on Ethiopian politics. I wrote a policy report on Ethiopia's difficulty with federalism. I gave a talk in which I questioned Ethiopia's May 2010 elections..."<sup>118</sup>

This research proposes that a conflict resolution (negotiation) effort among domestic actors in Ethiopia should begin with an objective of overhauling or reforming the current pseudo federal state system in which the Tigre-controlled EPRDF dominates the entire nation. Regional scholars conclude that Western attempts at maintaining stability and state-building will not succeed without first settling the deeply contentious status of state ownership (Lata, 2012:105; Serbo 2009). The ownership of the Ethiopian state is contested since the ruling elites are narrowly-based and lack legitimacy in the eyes of the vast majority of the peoples south who feel oppressed. If the ownership of state is a problem, it becomes important to clarify who exactly owns the Ethiopian state. According to Clapham (1995:177 in Lata, 2012: 106-107) "...in Ethiopia the state is owned by one distinctive group within the domestic population...the Ethiopian state is essentially formed by the Amahara and Tigrean peoples of the northern Ethiopian plateau." As analyzed in chapter seven, the main problem with such a structure is that it has been a source of structural and direct violence as well as a source of national and regional instability because it is illegitimate, contested and authoritarian in character.

In situations of power asymmetry where some groups reap enormous benefits from the structure and others are deeply disadvantaged, conflict analysts suggest that the rebalancing of power imbalance by way of escalation is a necessary prerequisite to conflict resolution (Jeong, 2010:102; Rubenstein, 1993:157; Ramsbotham et al, 2005:177). This is applicable to the situation in Ethiopia. Practically, the idea of power imbalance, expressed in state ownership by narrowly-based elites from one ethnic group, is a reality in present day Ethiopia. The Oromo and the Ogaden people remain relatively



powerless and disadvantaged in Ethiopia compared to their northern Amahara-Tigre counterparts who have ruled the country for over a hundred years. The striking aspect of this structural violence is that the oppressive party not only commits egregious human rights violations, but it is also in constant denial of those. Mediation may not be a good conflict resolution method since the EPRDF is unwilling to admit that serious problems exist because of its powerful status as party that controls the political structure and the military installations of the nation. Thus, any viable method of conflict resolution must involve other forms of measures leading to the escalation of the conflict and to the isolation of the EPRDF locally and internationally. The South African model of first escalating the conflict and then setting in motion a series of grassroots, mid-level and top level negotiations<sup>119</sup> is a strong one to replicate so as to resolve the ongoing conflicts between the OLF and the ONLF of the south, and the EPRDF of the north.

## **7.4 Recommendations**

In this light of the above, this research recommends the following strategies toward enhancing future negotiations and conflict resolution in Ethiopia:

- Rebalance power asymmetry by organizing national and international anti-EPRDF repression campaigns in order to set in motion robust and official negotiations in the presence of third parties in neutral locations;
- Withdraw international humanitarian, diplomatic and military support to the despotic Ethiopian state on the ground that the ethnic compositions of the government and the military do not reflect the diversity of the nation. The

problem of a mono-ethnic state ownership needs to be addressed in designing and implementing peace accords. America should take side with the peoples of the country, not with authoritarian elites. America should come up with a bill by which it can hold the Ethiopian government accountable on issues of human rights and democratization. Beyond rhetoric, the U.S. should actually demonstrate its commitment to democratization, human rights, the rule of law and social justice.

- The United States should demand the repeal or reform of the anti-terrorism law and the freeing of all political prisoners and journalists. Since Ethiopian elites exploited counter-terrorism and their status as U.S. ally to advance their own interest to dominate, America should demilitarize its foreign policy towards Ethiopia. It should also make radical shifts in its future interventions in Ethiopia by not choosing Amahara-Tigre elites over the Oromo, Ogaden and others. Providing equal and fair chances of U.S. support to all groups is likely to contribute to sustainable stability rather than exacerbating internal repressions.
- All international businesses, including Chinese ones, should consider disinvesting from Ethiopia until the ongoing intrastate conflicts in Oromia and Ogaden are resolved and until a better formula is created for sustainable stability and peace.

- Create international peacekeeping measures in order to ensure the ethnically partisan Ethiopian National Defense Forces and the police do not coerce less powerful parties into a negotiated surrender.
- Start a broad-based informal and formal negotiation processes between the ruling EPRDF and OLF and ONLF under the auspices of track-one interveners (the UN, international and regional organizations, governments, international financial institutions) and mid-level interveners (reputable conflict resolvers, business, academic and religious leaders).
- Convene a national conference for all political and military actors in order to create a legitimate transitional government during which new social contracts and democratic institutions must be negotiated.
- Facilitate the holding of regional and national elections at the end of the interregnum in presence of international observers.
- The ruling EPRDF and the OLF, ONLF and others smaller parties must be pressured to take constructive steps and decisions towards a negotiated settlement. Successful negotiations are likely to make the parties to this conflict unhappy by the requiring them to compromise over certain positions and interests. The parties must be ready to compromise. The OLF and ONLF are often accused of being secessionist forces for wanting the independence of the Oromia and Ogaden states from Ethiopia. They should be willing to

rethink their positions and opt for alternative arrangements, for instance a functioning regional federalism, as a way of gradually empowering their populations to make their own decision via holding national referendums on whether they want to secede or be part of a new multi-national Ethiopia in which their rights are constitutionally protected. The EPRDF must also think of creative ways of sharing state power with the forces and population of the periphery in a new arrangement.

## **7.5 Conclusions**

The diplomatic justification of U.S. intervention mainly draws on the bedrock of religious mythologies and legends about common Judaeo-Christian values with Ethiopian elites from the north. Elites from both sides exploited this notion of “common values” primarily for other strategic realist goals. During the eras of the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism, the U.S. has militarized its interventions and foreign policy toward Ethiopia and the Horn. The priority of this militarized relationship has focused on strengthening the military capabilities of known repressive Horn regimes such as Ethiopia. U.S. policy-makers have failed to analyze who exactly they are entering into alliance with and what the long-term impact of that would be. In the case of Ethiopia, the U.S. has chosen narrowly-based authoritarian elites who oppress ethnic ‘Others’. If this trend is not addressed, the perception of the U.S. as benefactor of a brutal dictatorship is likely to further fuel legitimate popular resentments and threaten U.S. interests in Ethiopia and the Horn. Present approaches need to be revised in order to ensure the

sustainability of stability and counter-terrorism by empowering the majority who have long suffered massive human rights violations and structural injustices.

Theoretically speaking, the U.S. has been seeking to maximize its power in order to counter or defeat its ideological and Islamic extremist rivals in the Horn. In achieving this fundamentally realist ambition, America has wrongly and naively viewed authoritarian Ethiopian elites as a bulwark against Communist and Islamist threats. The main U.S. objectives have been achieving security and stability even when those objectives are expressed rhetorically in terms of humanitarian assistance, human rights and democratization. This case study concludes that American pursuit of stability has abetted preexisting ethno-nationalist conflicts in the region and worsened the spread of instability. This is partly so because the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship rewarded Ethiopian elites who carry out massive human rights violations in Oromia and Ogaden with impunity. Despite the huge leverage it has, the U.S. has taken little concrete actions towards some form of sustainable conflict resolution in Ethiopia. Indeed, the high-ranking U.S. officials have been in denial about U.S. leverage over Ethiopia. American officials say America does not have any leverage on Ethiopia, but massive evidence of U.S. assistance to Ethiopia, as discussed in the preceding chapters, show this is not true. We know that the U.S. bankrolls one-third of the Ethiopian national budget along other donors. Since the regime has direct access to American tax dollars, it can be validly argued that this assistance is indirectly financing structural and direct assault on Ethiopian subjects who are yet to become citizens.

On the domestic front, the Ethiopia's anti-terrorism law served as tool for legitimizing massive human rights violations. This draconian law, inter alia, has effectively institutionalized structural and direct violence against opposition parties and against members of the non-ruling ethnic groups such as the Oromo and the Ogaden-Somali. The structural violence is observable in terms of inequality in the distribution of power within the system between the northern and the southern ethnic groups. Mono-ethnic state ownership itself is proof of power imbalances in favor of one group in a fundamentally multi-ethnic state where the majority are systematically silenced and disadvantaged. On the other hand, direct assault is manifested in the implementation of the anti-terrorism law. People who do their legitimate professional work are labeled "terrorists" and thrown into jail for life or sentenced to death. The law has systematically contributed to dismantling dissent and freedom of speech. Journalists, politicians and leaders of civil society organizations have been subjected to torture and harsh living conditions in prisons and torture facilities across Ethiopia. The aim of direct violence is to destroy the physical human body via various forms of punishments such as denying movement, air, food, inter alia. All these are happening in the present system.

In terms of conflict resolution, this study proposed a series of negotiations between parties to the ongoing armed conflicts. It examined the merits and demerits of negotiation in this authoritarian setting. To improve on the theoretical and practical weaknesses of negotiation in this environment, the research underlined the importance of upsetting power imbalances as necessary perquisites for talks between the ruling EPRDF and the OLF, the ONLF and other smaller parties so that the EPRDF will be locally and

internationally isolated and pressured into serious negotiations. The study problematized state-ownership and pointed to the need for a new negotiated social contract in which everyone is represented as a proposal for conflict resolution. The study also provided specific recommendations on how to engage international and domestic stakeholders in the proposed eclectic conflict resolution process. It cautioned against the dangers of continued U.S. support for powerful centrist elites while sidelining the weak and poor populations of the periphery who desire stable social change in order to realize their potentials in life.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia Census, *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census*.

<sup>2</sup> Northeast Africa is most commonly known as the Horn of Africa in the United States foreign policy documents and regional literature.

<sup>3</sup> Samia Gutu, "The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia", February 2008.

<sup>4</sup> The CIA, Geography, Ethiopia.

<sup>5</sup> "It slightly less than twice the size of Texas," according to the CIA record.

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication with an exiled South Sudanese undergraduate classmate of mine Akol Kur Kuc (Addis Ababa University, 1998-1999). This also highlights how an attempt to monopolize the Nile can easily trigger violent conflicts.

<sup>7</sup> See endnote four.

<sup>8</sup> The Ethiopian constitution of 1995 refers to 'ethnic groups' as 'nations and nationalities'; the terms are synonymous in the country's current political lingo.

<sup>9</sup> The statistic is extrapolated from the most recent comparison of countries with the most ethnic groups in the world by Nationmaster, a web technology company based in Sydney, Australian.  
[http://www.nationmaster.com/about\\_us.php](http://www.nationmaster.com/about_us.php)

<sup>10</sup> Ethiopian Census, 2007:16.

<sup>11</sup> Ethiopian Census, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Jimma Times, "Ethiopia: Muslim critics reject national census for "missing millions". <http://www.jimmatimes.com/article.cfm?articleId=31653>

[http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo\\_eth\\_gro-people-ethnic-groups](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_eth_gro-people-ethnic-groups)  
(accessed January 2012).

<sup>13</sup> The use of the word 'empire' here is not a provocation since Ethiopia has been and has called itself an empire for over a century.

<sup>14</sup> John Markakis is a political historian who spent close to five decades of his professional life the study of Ethiopia and its neighbors in the Horn of Africa.



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He has taken the middle road between the status quo historiography and revisionist one.

<sup>15</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>16</sup> A close look at the missions, visions and political programs of Amhara political parties, who often cast themselves as “Ethiopian”, shows their interest reverting to the status quo ante. See the political program of Andinet Ethiopia <http://www.andinet.org/executive-committee/> and the diaspora-based Ginbot 7 <http://www.andinet.org/executive-committee/>

<sup>17</sup> *Waaqeffannaa* is a traditional Oromo religion as the Oromos call it. Foreign scholars call it “animist” to which the followers take a great offense arguing that their faith is actually an ancient monotheistic African religion.

<sup>18</sup> The prison house model has become one major approaches of interpreting and understanding the history and ethnography of peoples of Ethiopia. “The prison house of nationalities” is Leninist “...view that all ethnic groups in Ethiopia were equivalent politically and that all but one of them had been repressed by the hegemony of a single group, the Amhara” (Levine, 2011: 11) This is reversed now as others claim all, but the Tigrean group, are experiencing repression.

<sup>19</sup> Since there are claims to genocide and ethnic-cleansing by the south, the terms “marginalization” and “oppression” are moderate terms to employ here. Where there are flagrant human rights abuses, this study uses terms such as “massive human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity,” instead of “genocide” and “ethnic-cleansing” since the latter two have not been internationally recognized in Ethiopia.

<sup>20</sup> The 60 percent figure comes from writers who do not accept the official statistic, which puts Oromo at 34.5 percent (census 2007:16)—still the Oromo are the single largest group in Ethiopia and the Horn. It is common to see contrasting inflated and deflated figures for ethnic groups because of the contentions between groups. The less powerful often think their facts are misrepresented. As a remedy they attempt to provide their own “facts” real or fictitious.

<sup>21</sup> Human Evolution

<http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-evolution-timeline-interactive>

<sup>22</sup> Britain supplied 15,000 rifles and 5,000,000 ammunition while France supplied 500,000 rifles and 20,000,000 ammunition between 1868 and 1900 (Darkwa, 1975 in Melbaa 1999: 59) Other leading European powers also provided weapons and ammunitions: Italy supplied 50,000 rifles and rifles and 10,000,000; Russia supplied 150, 000 rifles and 15, 000, 0000 ammunition (p.59). The Oromo chivalry was resisting occupation at this time with inferior traditional weapons such as spears shields and the cavalry. Thus, the power asymmetry between the North and south was immense and remains to be so to date.

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<sup>23</sup> Walelign Mekonnen. 1969. "The Question of Nationalities." In this editorial article, which later led to his murder, Mekonnen opposed Amahara dominance and denied that one Ethiopia national identity on which everyone agreed existed. He is widely considered exceptional in the sense that he was Amahara himself who yet advocated for the right to self-determination of the south and Eritreans.

<sup>24</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> It is pseudo-socialist because on the surface the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam spoke the language of socialism but the government was still organized in the interest of ethnic Amahara elites. The revolution substituted one Amahara group for another.

<sup>26</sup> Tesfaye Gebreab was a party insider to the EPRDF and TPLF. He worked as a journalist for the state press until he chose a life in exile, first in South Africa and now in the Netherlands, over being complicit in the injustice committed by present Ethiopian regime.

<sup>27</sup> Beer bread is cultural analogy for something that is reckless concocted in the same way beer bread is made. Beer bread is one of the major ingredients in traditional home-based beer-making in many ethnic cultures.

<sup>28</sup> Ginbot7 follows a mixture violent and non-violent rebellion against the current Ethiopian government. As noted earlier, its goal is to restore the old order under which ethnic Amahara and affiliates will be able to control Ethiopia.

<sup>29</sup> HRW estimates the internal displacement of 500,000; and the refugee exodus into neighboring Somalia in thousands. This is also the war that made Somalia the arch enemy of Ethiopia.

<sup>30</sup> Hewitt et al., 2012: 125.

<sup>31</sup> HRW, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Mearsheimer, 2001:19.

<sup>33</sup> See endnote 1.

<sup>34</sup> Mearsheimer, 2001:21.

<sup>35</sup> Track two diplomacy is an official or non-official diplomacy seeking to supplement track-one diplomacy based on an analysis of the needs, values and interests of parties to a conflict. For further definition and cases studies, see Burton (1995), pp. 83-92.

<sup>36</sup> See Johan Galtung (1969: 168) for further "definition and dimensions of 'violence'."

<sup>37</sup> The graph in Galtung (1969:173) provides a clear understanding of his conceptualization of typologies of violence.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.173.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>40</sup> See table 1 for a typology of personal somatic violence in Galtung (1969:174)

<sup>41</sup> See Galtung p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> Galtung, 1969:183.

<sup>44</sup> Kagnev Station was a Cold War United States Army Installation in Asmara, Eritrea off the coast of the Horn of Africa. The usage of 'Kagnev Station' is synonymous with 'Radio Marina' in much literature, including in Marcus (1995) and other declassified US national security documents.

<sup>45</sup> Barack Obama. (2009). "Obama's Speech in Ghana: President Addresses the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra," *American Government Archive*, July 11, 2009. Retrieved from,

<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090711110050abretnuh0.1079783.html>

<sup>46</sup> These steps were adapted from Creswell (2009:185-188).

<sup>47</sup> According to McVety (2011:187), the mission was named after Robert P. Skinner, the American consul at Marseille, France, who helped sign an agreement of friendship between the United States and Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia.

<sup>48</sup> Hereafter, the study will also refer to the Oromo and Ogaden peoples as "disadvantaged ethnic groups" or "the southern periphery", while it will refer to Amahara-Tigre as "centrist elites" or "ruling elites".

<sup>49</sup> Since its founding during Harry S. Truman's presidency ( 1945-1953), the NSC's function "has been to advise and assist the President on national security and foreign policies." The White House, "National Security Council." Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nsc>

<sup>50</sup> Congressional Research Services (CRS), 1985:5.

<sup>51</sup> 2004:94.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 2004:98.

<sup>53</sup> NSC, 1956:12.

<sup>54</sup> NSC, 1956:12.

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<sup>55</sup> *Time*, (1974:1)

<sup>56</sup> *Time Magazine*, "Man of the Year", *Time* 01/06/1936, Vol. 27 (1): p.15, 6p.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> NSC, 1956:3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> See *Time*, 07/22/1935, and the revised 1955 "The Imperial Constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia." This constitution attaches the Imperial dignity to what it calls the "Imperial Bloodline," which is based on a legend about the foreign ancestry of Ethiopian rulers as covered in chapter two of this research.

<sup>62</sup> Derg was the Coordinating Committee composed junior military officers including Mengistu Hailemariam.

<sup>63</sup> *Time*, 1974:2. "The End of the Lion of Judah." *Time*, 09/23/1974.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>65</sup> CRS, 1985:6.

<sup>66</sup> CRS, 1985:5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> USIP, 2004:1; Lyman and Dorff, 2007:xiii.

<sup>69</sup> Cruz and Stephens, 2010:193.

<sup>70</sup> The White House, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America: September 2002." See p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 2002: 11. Three specific interdependent strategic objectives were stated as follows: " countries with major impact on their neighborhood such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia are anchors for regional engagement and require focused attention; coordination with European allies and international institutions is essential for constructive conflict mediation and successful peace operations; and Africa's capable and reforming states and sub-regional organizations must be strengthened as the primary means to address transnational threats on a sustained basis."

<sup>72</sup> AFRICOM, 2011:1. "About U.S. Africa Command." Retrieved May 2012 from, <http://www.africom.mil/AboutAFRICOM.asp>.

<sup>73</sup> AFRICOM, 2011, Cruz and Stephens, 2010:193.

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<sup>74</sup> The White House, December 5, 2002:1-3. "President Bush Meets with Leaders of Kenya and Ethiopia.

<sup>75</sup> The White House, 2002:2.

<sup>76</sup> Cruz and Stephens 204-206.

<sup>77</sup> Whitlock and Miller, 2011: 1-4. "U.S. Assembling Drone Bases in Africa, Arabian Peninsula, Officials Say." *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2012, retrieved in May 2012 from:  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-building-secret-drone-bases-in-africa-arabian-peninsula-officials-say/2011/09/20/gIQAJ8rOjK\\_print.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-building-secret-drone-bases-in-africa-arabian-peninsula-officials-say/2011/09/20/gIQAJ8rOjK_print.html)

<sup>78</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Mark Mazzetti, "The U.S. Used Bases in Ethiopia to Hunt Al Qaeda," *Times*, February 23, 2007, retrieved in 2012 from,  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/23/world/africa/23somalia.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>79</sup> WikiLeaks, A classified cable originating from the embassy in Addis Ababa under the subject: "Managing a Tough Mil to Mil Relationship with Ethiopia." The writer of this paper saw with his naked eyes Humvees patrolling Addis Ababa roads and highways in 2005. This was a surprise to many of city residents since they had never seen such a sophisticated vehicle before.

<sup>80</sup> Lymann and Dorff, 2007:7.

<sup>81</sup> Brown 2011: 1. "Paul B. Henze, former CIA and national security specialist dies at 86." *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2011. Retrieved in 2012 from,  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/paul-b-henze-former-cia-and-national-security-specialist-dies-at-86/2011/06/02/AG4mSYHH\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/paul-b-henze-former-cia-and-national-security-specialist-dies-at-86/2011/06/02/AG4mSYHH_story.html)

<sup>82</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>83</sup> George Moose. 1994. "Statement of George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Department of State,"

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>85</sup> Hicks, 1994:8. "Statement of John Hicks."

<sup>86</sup> *The Economist*, "A Brittle Western Ally in the Horn of Africa-Ethiopia." *The Economist*, November 3, 2007. Vol. 385, Iss. 8553.

<sup>87</sup> See endnote 40.

<sup>88</sup> Mohammed Hassen, "Ethiopia's Anti-terrorism Law Legalizes Silencing Dissent and Destroying Dissent." A paper presented at the Oromo Studies

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Association's Mid-year conference held at Harvard University, 7-8 April, 2012.

<sup>89</sup> BBC, 2005. "Ethiopian Protesters 'Massacred'."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6064638.stm>

<sup>90</sup> See endnote number 2. These figures are very conservative official and international figures. It is likely that the figures were higher than those as the opposition parties claim.

<sup>91</sup> Tronvoll, 2009:469.

<sup>92</sup> HRW, 2010: 4. "Development without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia." HRW implicates the EPRDF's use of U.S. and Western financial and food aid in forcing people to either join the party and have food or refuse to join and starve.

<sup>93</sup> HRW, 2011. "Ethiopia: Country Summary."

<sup>94</sup> BBC. "Ethiopian Protesters 'Massacred'." *BBC News*, October 19, 2006. Retrieved from, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6064638.stm>

<sup>95</sup> Shinn, 2004:5.

<sup>96</sup> Trevor Trueman, 2012. "Twenty Four Years of the Struggle: Lessons Learned and Perspectives Gained," a keynote speech delivered at the OSA Mid-year conference on human rights in the Horn held at Harvard University, April 7-8, 2012. Dr. Trevor Trueman worked as physician with the Oromo Relief Association, one of the largest Western-backed relief associations in the region that helped IDPS and refugees in Oromia in the early 1990s. ORA operations in southern Ethiopia were closed down by the Zenawi's government and Dr. Trevor Trueman himself survived TPLF assassination attempts.

<sup>97</sup> See Yamamoto's profile

<http://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/yamamoto-donald-y>

<sup>98</sup> The Guardian (2010, December 8). "U.S. Embassy Cables: Ethiopian Intelligence Chief Gives Rare Interview." Retrieved from,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/210732>

<sup>99</sup> WikiLeaks. "U.S. Embassy Cables: Ethiopia: Recent Bombings Blamed on Oromos," Released 2011-08-30.

<sup>100</sup> AI, 2011:5.

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/opinion/sunday/kristof-whats-he-got-to-hide.html>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/28/ethiopia-convicts-journalists-opposition-rebellion?newsfeed=true>

<sup>103</sup> AI, 2011:7.

<sup>104</sup> Peter Heinlein, 2012: 1-2. "Trials of Politicians, Journalists Test Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Law."

<http://www.voanews.com/content/trials-of-politicians-journalists-test-ethiopias-antiterrorism-law/667114.html>

<sup>105</sup> State Department, 2005.

<sup>106</sup> Beyer and McAllister, 1991. Time. "Uncle Sam Steps In."

<sup>107</sup> Ginbot 7, 2009. "Total Domination of the Ethiopian Army by Ethnic Tigrean Officers." *Ginbot Report*, May 30, 2009.

<sup>108</sup> See endnote 20.

<sup>109</sup> The Economist, 2007:1. "A Brittle Western Ally in the Horn of Africa-Ethiopia"

<sup>110</sup> Propublica, 2009:5. "Opening the Window on Foreign Lobbying."

<sup>111</sup> Fisher, Ury and Patton, 2011: 11-15, 17-82. Italics added.

<sup>112</sup> These are examples of trends of deceptive negotiations between Oromo and various Ethiopian rulers:

Ras Gobena Versus King Menelik II (the former trapped and assassinated); Lij Eyasu Versus Emperor Haile Sellassie (the former trapped and killed); Dejezmach Balacha Versus Emperor Haile Sellassie (the former trapped and assassinated); Gerasu Duki Versus Emperor Haile Sellassie (the former trapped and assassinated); General Tadesse Birru Versus Haile Sellassie (the former deceived and assassinated); OLF versus EPRDF/TPLF (the former was forced out of the transitional government).

<sup>113</sup> Nedhi, 2012:15.

<sup>114</sup> Ft. or Fitwari, literally 'Commander of the Vanguard' in Amaharic, is a military title that is roughly equivalent to Baron in the Kingdom of England.

<sup>115</sup> Ras, literally 'head' in Amaharic, is a royal title that is equivalent to duke in West.

<sup>116</sup> BBC, November 17, 2008.

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<sup>117</sup> Interview given by Meles Zenawi on the state controlled Oromiya Television, Ethiopia Television and Addis Television on August 11, 2012.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W\\_v2L5\\_0dVI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_v2L5_0dVI)

<sup>118</sup> Hagmann, T. (2012). "Supporting Stability, Abetting Repression." The New York Times, July 11, 2012.

<sup>119</sup> Ramsbotham et al. 2005:177-181.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Habtamu T. Dugo was born and nurtured in Oromia, Ethiopia. He attended Addis Ababa University where he received his Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature in 2003. He went on to receive his Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies from Rhodes University in South Africa in 2008. He then received his Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University in 2012. He has nine years of experience as a journalist and journalism educator, and as a conflict analyst. He lives in the United States and teaches Journalism and Communication at Westchester Community College, State University of New York, beginning in Fall 2012. He is the founding Editor of *Oromo Press*, an online magazine. He is also a freelance writer for *The American Chronicle*.