Ethiopian Constitution, the Flag, Map, and Federalism

by Mastewal

There have been contentions to the Ethiopian present constitution and even the flag and its administrative arrangement in the way it is governed federally. In the forefront of these oppositions have been the political parties and the Ethiopian diaspora, who have been airing their concerns. Some, who oppose the present flag, are seen with the flag used during the Emperor Haile Selassie's rule with the lion carrying the cross. Some use the civil flag of Ethiopia. Why changes have been made in the Ethiopian flag and its administrative regions have their historical backgrounds. But, the argument goes on and on as pros and cons in fear of disintegration of the country.

The contentions can be damaging if the struggle for changing the above if not made in a civilized way and go out of hand as evidenced in some instances. Innocents can be incited to adopt radical changes. If you remember Aesop, the Greek fabulist and storyteller in your school time, then you come across in what he is presumed to have said, "the injuries we do and those we suffer are seldom weighted in the same scales."

I just want to quote George M. Church in respect to changes. He is taking the comparison between a dinosaur and ostrich. As you all know dinosaur is an extinct creature, which lived in our world over hundred millions years ago. May be the dinosaur evolved to an ostrich.

"What dinosaur traits are missing from an ostrich? The ostrich has a toothless beak, but there are mutations that cause teeth and claws to come back to their mouth and limbs. You need to replace the feathers with scales, but there are no feathers on their legs and feet, so you just need to make its whole body like its legs are."

George M. Church

Thus, the more it changes, it remains the same. But, the way we do it has to be purposeful. The aspirations for change if it matters in retrospect to benefit the majority and the country at large has to be evaluated. This article reviews the contentions and the historical perspectives and the reality on the ground on the changes made pertaining to the trio - the flag, the federal government and the constitution.

Whether the changes in the constitution, the flag and the federal governance had been rationale or won the blessings of the Ethiopian majority is a matter of question addressed in this article. Such changes might not be a prerogative of the ruling party alone. It was a matter concerning all - the Ethiopians.

Hence, the presently used flag, constitution and federal arrangement of government are presented below for information and to compare with opposing narratives.

1. The Ethiopian Flag:

Let us look also if interests the definition of a flag. Wikipedia defines it as "**a piece of fabric** (most often rectangular or quadrilateral) with a distinctive design and colors. It is used as a symbol, a signaling device, or for decoration. The term flag is also used to refer to the graphic design employed, and flags have evolved into a general tool for rudimentary signaling and identification, especially in environments where communication is challenging (such as the maritime environment, where semaphore is used). The study of flags is known as "vexillology" from the Latin vexillum, meaning "flag" or "banner".[1]

Very often, the colors used in a flag represent the values of that country or other entity. In some countries, different colors and emblems are used. In the United States - Stars and Stripes-we have blue, white and red colors used in the stars and the stripes. The British flag known as the 'Union jack' has blue, white and red colors depicting the crosses. The United States as a colony of the United Kingdom must have borrowed the colors of the Union Jack. In some, black often represents determination, ethnic heritage, and/or defeating one's enemies. Blue often represents freedom, vigilance, perseverance, justice, prosperity, peace, and/or patriotism.

In Ethiopian perspective, the flag has colors and symbolism. As defined the Ethiopian flag, the Green: "represents the richness and the fertility of the land as well as hope, " Yellow: "represents religious freedom and peace." Red: "represents the sacrifice of the fathers, who spilled their blood in defense of Ethiopia "

There are different arguments regarding the changes made in the Ethiopian flag. However, it is noted that, first change was made in the order of the color of the flag from red-yellow-green to green-yellow-red though the changes have not been made in the actual colors as discerned from the following flags. Also, it is noted that changes were made in the emblems from that of Emperor Menlik to the present EPRDF's flag. Let us see the flags below to see the distinctions.

A year after Ethiopia decisively defended itself from Italian colonization at the Battle of Adwa, Emperor Menelik II on 6 October 1897 ordered the three pennants combined in a rectangular tricolor from top to bottom of red, yellow, and green and another one with the first letter of his own name (the Amharic letter "ሠ") on the central stripe. In 1914, the flag was reversed to its current flag. The flag's tricolor scheme has existed since the early 19th century, and the colors red, yellow, and green have carried special importance since at least the early 17th century.

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1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag

1881-1897 Three colored pennants with the red in the top

6 October 1897 to 1914

1914 - 9 May 1936

The above flag must have been used during Lij Iyassu, who was the son of King Mikael Ali of Wollo and Woizero Shewarega Menlik (1913-16), Empress Zewditu Menlik (1916-30) and the early reign of Emperor Haile Selassie.

There were two flags during Emperor Haileselassie's rule. The first one with the lion emblem, which was adopted on 5 May 1941, was used in offices of the Emperor, ministries and administrative offices. The royal flag often featured the emblem of a Lion of Judah, a crowned lion carrying a cross centered in the banner's yellow midsection. The flag is understood to be a link between the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the peoples, and the nation that were united. The second one, a civil flag, was used in schools, police stations, etc. The civil flag without the emblem was used during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and was used during the early years of the military government of Ethiopia.

5 May 1941-1 January 1975

Civil flag of 1975

The military government of Ethiopia, that is the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMCA) first used the flag that was used during the Imperial rule by removing the crown from the lion's head and the cross and changing it to a spear-point and keeping the lion carrying the flag attached to the spear. See below.

However, after embracing socialism, the emblem in the flag was changed to show the adherence using as an emblem of a socialist symbol representing the peasant and the worker. The symbol in the flag shows the cogwheel and plough for agriculture. It is surrounded by a green wreath and the lion with a spear and sword at the bottom of the symbol.

Flag from 12 September 1975-12 Sep 1987 12 September - 28 May 1991

In 1987, President Mengistu Haile Mariam proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia under a flag with an even more openly Marxist design, including a red star at the top, which is shown above in the right. The shield is circular in shape and is blue bearing the "obelisk of Axum", a cogwheel, a red ribbon depicting a golden lion's head, a spear and a scepter, a yellow star on red and the country's new name at the top in Amharic characters.

From 1 to 5 July 1991, a national transitional conference involving 24 national and multinational political organizations and other professional groups was called to discuss a transitional charter. The only organization excluded from the conference was the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF - an umbrella political organization that included EPRP, Meison, EPDA and a faction of EDU), as it failed to officially

renounce violence as a means of struggle. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army (EPRA), the United Oromo People's Liberation Front (UOPLF), the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromo (IFLO), the Somali Abbo Liberation Front (SALF), the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the Sidama Liberation Front (SLF), the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM), the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), and the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM) participated in the Charter. All of these groups claimed to have been engaged in armed struggles and to have had armed forces under their command.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), which was formed in 1991 used a flag, which was shown above as a civil flag. This was replaced later in May 1992 with a flag having the below emblem.

Emblem of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia

As per the 1994 Constitution the Ethiopian flag is defined as per the below articles.

1. The Ethiopian flag shall consist of green at the top, yellow in the middle and red at the bottom, and shall have a national emblem at the center. The three colors shall be set horizontally in equal dimension,
2. The national e**mblem on the flag shall reflect the hopes of the Nations, Nationalities Peoples, as well as religious communities of EthiopiaNationalities, Peoples as well as religious communities of Ethiopia to live together in equality and unity,** and
3. Members of the Federation may have their respective flags and emblems and shall determine the details thereof through their respective legislatures.

The below is the flag that has been in use in Ethiopia since the formation of the FDRE. The star in the middle is defined to testify Ethiopia's bright future, while the yellow rays which emit are equidistant and are said to represent the equality of all Ethiopians regardless of race, creed, or sex. In recent years, the Government of Ethiopia has taken a conscious effort to increase the usage of the flag with the emblem, instead of the plain tricolor civil flag, which had been seen far less.

A map drawn on 18 October 1991

2. The Ethiopian Administrative Areas and Their Relative Maps:

There are different maps of Ethiopia at different times. The size of the country differs from time to time depending on the strength of the leaders. Let us see these maps and review them with their context. The below different maps of Ethiopia show the boundaries and administrative areas.

In the below shown map, we have in the north the Beni Amir and Saho (that live in the present day Eritrea). Below it, we have Tigray, Agau, Amhara, and Dankalia. In the West, we had the Shankella. In the center and south of the country were inhabited by the Oromos, the Gurages, and the Sidamos. The Somalis were living in the south and south east of Ethiopia.

15 to 16th century map of Ethiopia

1887 map of Abyssinia by Francesco Faselo

Old days Ethiopian (Abyssinia) Map

The map drawn in the 1840 during the end of the Zemene Mesafent shows the administrative areas like the Lordship of Tigray, Lordship of Wollo, Lordship of Begemder, Lordship of Gojjam, and Lordship of Shoa. In addition, Aussa that included the present day Djibouti and also Keffa are shown in the map.

Woube Hailemariam (1799-1867) was ruler of Tigray and Semen from 1831 to 1855. Webe helped his father to expand his domain toward Welkait.[2]

As a matter of fact, Ethiopia and Abyssinia were mutually used in different historical context. The below is an excerpt of the poem written in honor and praise of Emperor Menlik in his jubilant victory over the invading Italian military force in the Battle of Adua. Abyssinia is mentioned in place of Ethiopia in the poem. Most people in the north of Ethiopia frequent the use of Habesha in relation to their food and traditional clothing.

ምንሊክ ተወልዶ ባያነሳ ጋሻ፡
ግብሩ Eንቁላል ነበር ይህን ግዜ ኣበሻ።።
በሠራው ወጨፎ፡ ባመጣው Eርሳስ፡
ተፈጠመ ጣልያን፡ ኣበሻ Eንዳይደርስ።።

Map of Ethiopia in 1935

As discerned from the above map drawn in 1935 gregorian calendar, we had administrative regions different from what most Ethiopians know. These include the Wolkait and Semen, which were administrative regions by themselves. It is also true to Wag, Lasta and Saynt. We had Danakil in the east and Benishangul in the west. In the

[2]Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia By Thomas P. Ofcansky, David H. Shinn

south, we had Limmu, Gurage, Janjero, Kambata, Kulo Konta, Wolamo, Gera, Gura Farda, Benessa, Gimira, Maji, Bako and Borana as administrative regions.

During the Italian short occupation of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tigray and part of Afar were merged together with their main city in Asmara. Gondar, Gojam and Wollo were taken as Amara with their capital in Gondar. Harrar had its capital in Harrar. Oromo (Galla) and Sidamo had their capital in Jimma. Shewa's main city was Addis Ababa. Ogaden was administered as part of Somalia with a capital in Mogadishu.

Italian map of Ethiopia

The Ethiopian administrative regions of the 1935 and during the Italian occupation were re-drawn to form 12 provinces. It was divided into 12 provinces (taklai ghizat) by Imperial Ethiopian Government Decree No. 1 of 1942 and later amendments. The 12 provinces were: Arsi, Begemder, Gamu Gofa, Gojjam, Hararghe, Illubabor, Kaffa, Shewa (Shoa), Sidamo, Tigray, Welega, and Wollo. Wolkait and Semen were merged with Begemeder forming Begemeder and Semien. Wag, Lasta, Saynt and Danakil became part of Wollo. Benishangul being partitioned and added to Gojjam and Welega. Gurage, Kambata became part of Shewa. Sidamo extended to the south incorporating Borana and included Wolaita and Kulo Konta. The province of Kaffa included Limmu, Jimma, Kaffa, Beenessa, Gura Farda, Gimira, Goldea, and Maji. Gamu Gofa included Kulo Konta and Bako.

Bale was created as a 13th province when it was split off from Hararghe in 1960. Eritrea was annexed by Ethiopia and made the 14th province in 1962.

Provinces of Ethiopia since 1962

The southern half of the boundary with Somalia was a Provisional Administrative Line and not clearly demarcated. As per persistent negotiations and influence from the USA eventually persuaded the British in 1948 to abandon all of the Ogaden to Ethiopia in 1954. Ethiopia regained authority over the Ogaden region from the British government as a result of an agreement signed on July 24, 1948. General Asfaw Wolde Giorgis was appointed as Governor of the Ogaden region and Commander of the Third Army Division. Ethiopian government troops commanded by Major Tsige Dibu suppressed an uprising of ethnic Somalis in Gridida in November 1951. In 1956, Emperor Haile Selassie toured the Ogaden in order to defuse tensions in the region. In July 1959, the Ogaden region was administratively divided into two districts – Qabridaharre (Kebri Dahar) in the south and Jijiga in the north – each with its own governor. Acting Governor of the Ogaden region, Demise Teferra, became the governor of Qabridaharre (Kebri Dahar), and Germame Neway became governor of Jijiga.[3]

The annexation of Ogaden, thus, created crisis starting from July 24, 1948 to January 31, 1977, where different wars were waged between Ethiopia and Somalia. The Ogaden Liberation Front (OLF) commanded by Garad Makhtal Garad Dahir launched a rebellion against the government in Hodayo in eastern Ethiopia on June 16, 1963. Somali government troops intervened in support of the OLF in January 1964. The parties agreed to a ceasefire on March 6, 1964. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was established by Yusuf Dheere Mohamed Sugaal in 1976.

During the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE), Ethiopia was again re-divided into twenty-five administrative regions and five autonomous regions in 1988. The autonomous regions consisted of Eritrea, Aseb, Tigray, Dire Dawa and Ogaden.

[3]http://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/69-ethiopiaogaden-1948-present/

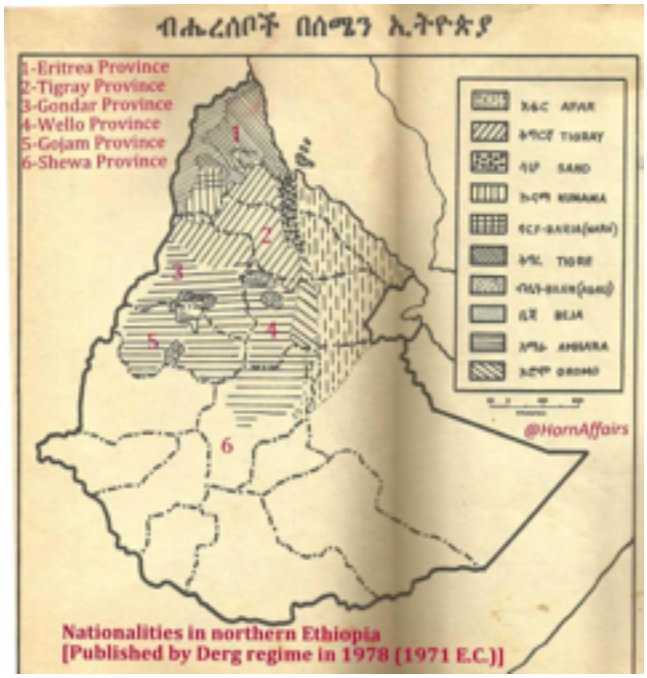
Eritrea was divided into two by separating Assab as an autonomous region, which included part of Eastern Tigray and the Aussa Awraja of Wollo. The other autonomous regions were Dire Dawa which was expanded beyond the city to its periphery. Ogaden Region was created as an autonomous region. Begemeder was divided into northern and southern regions; Wollo into north and south; Gojjam into eastern, western, and Metekel; Hararghe into western and eastern; Ogaden was created as autonomous region by taking part of Hararghe, Bale, Borana from Sidamo; Gamu Gofa into Northern and southern Omo; Kaffa was created and jimma incorporated into Illubabor; Assosa was separated from Welega and Gambela from Illubabor; Shewa was divided into northern, southern, eastern and western regions.

Map of the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - 1988

The Ethiopian Constitution of 1987, Article 2 stated that the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as a unitary state in which all nationalities live in equality. **Most nations are unitary in nature (local government with a powerful national government).**

The institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, which was established during the PDRE, made the below shown map in 1988 depicting the distribution of nation/ nationalities in the central and northern part of Ethiopia. As shown in the map, the Tigrigna speaking people are found to inhabit the northern part of the Province of Gondar in addition to Tigray and part of Eritrea. This area of the Gondar Region is now under the Regional Administration of Tigray. There is opposition from the Amara people, especially in Gondar claiming that it is of Amara's land and not of Tigray. Afar people of

Tigray, Wollo, and Hararghe were re-grouped into a new Afar Administrative Region. The Amhara Administrative Region was formed by combining Gondar, Gojjam, Wollo and part of Shewa. The map shown below gives a picture of the settlements of different nationalities in northern and central parts of Ethiopia. The map was drawn on the study of the Institute of the socialist government of Ethiopia. The settlement of the ethnic groups or nationalities must have served as a basis for the formation of the regionalized government in 1991.



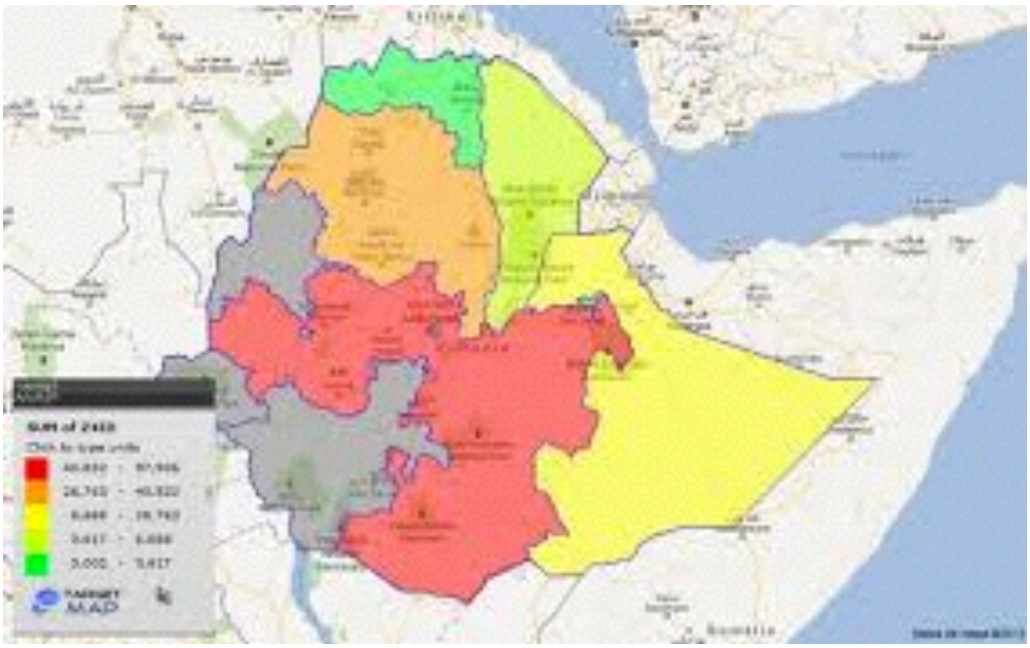
There are more than 80 different ethnic groups within Ethiopia. Since the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was organized based on identity, the constitution stipulates border delimitation to be conducted based on demographic data and, if necessary, by a popular referendum in the concerned area.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia had a charter in 1991. The Charter recognized the right of self-determination for each of Ethiopia's ethnic "nations, nationalities and peoples," within a federation, and called for the creation of ethnically based regional administrations to replace the administrative regions of 1988. One of the first tasks of the new Council of Representatives was to legislate for this. A Boundary Commission was set up in August 1991 to map the boundaries of the new regions. A map was drawn on 18 October 1991 and Proclamation 7/1992 to establish the "National Self-Governments" of the regions (plural: kililoch; singular: kilil) was issued on 16 January 1992. The first elections for the fourteen councils were held on 21 June 1992. Following the elections, five of the regions were merged to form the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region in 1992

Article 48 of the FDRE Constitution states that:

"All State border disputes shall be settled by agreement of the concerned States. Where the concerned States fail to reach agreement, the House of the Federation shall decide such disputes on the basis of settlement patterns and the wishes of the peoples concerned."

Since 1995, Ethiopia has been divided into 10 administrative regions based on ethnic lines. These are Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul, Southern Peoples' State, Gambela, Harrar and Addis Ababa. The process of forming the new states was conducted based on identity, essentially language, and without regard to the pre-1991 provincial maps. The below map shows these regions.



Map of Ethiopia in 1996

Thus, in line with the above 1996 map showing the distribution of nationalities, the new Tigray Regional State consists areas previously located in Tigray province, and in addition parts of Gondar and Wollo administrative regions. It is in this process that the four weredas namely: kefeta humera, wolqait, tegede, and tselemet, which were part of Gondar administrative region became part of Tigray State.

As mentioned above, the Afar State is composed of the previous eastern Tigray, eastern Wollo, and northern Hararghe administrative regions. Amhara State consists most of the areas in Gondar, Gojam, Wollo, Shewa administrative regions as well as some areas of Tigray province.

Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State composed of Sidamo, Kaffa, Gamu Goffa, Gurage, Kambata and Hadiya. Oromia is organized as a regional administration by amalgamating Wollega, Illubabor, part of Shewa, Bale, Arsi and Hararghe. Parts of Bale, Hararghe and Sidamo were merged to form the Ogaden Region. Gambela became a regional state by being separated from Illubabor and Benishangul from Gojjam and Wollega.

The re-drawing of the administrative regions have some problems as reflected in tense conflicts in Gondar versus Tigray, Ogaden and Oromia, etc. There is opposition to the ceding of land from Gondar to Tigray. The contest is on the annexation of Wolkait territory to Tigray State. Gondar was inhabited by Amharas and Tigrayans, just like Tigray Province was populated by Tigrayans and the Afar. In fact, there is no relation between the current State and the former administrative region of Tigray, though there has been a Province by the name Tigray before 1991.

Having an insight in the developments of Ethiopian administrations as discussed above and on how it had been evolved into different divisions through its years of history, it is noteworthy to exam the contentions on the recent division of the country into ethnic-based administrative areas. The administrative divisions were made more based on ethnicity. On the contrary, however, it is noted that the administrations were not made on economic basis. Also, the contenders to the ethnic-based administration, there are no tangible recommendations or suggestions coming out from the contenders outside Engidashet Bunare (Water Engineer) and Shiferaw Lulu (Hydrogeologist), who recommended/proposed the eight river basin states for better development/civilization, and greatness of the nation as to better facilitate national cohesion. These are Abay basin, state; Awash, Ayisha and Danakil basins state; Baro-Akobo basin state; Genele-Dawa basin state; Tekeze and Mereb basins state; Wabi-shebele and the Ogaden basins state; Omo-Ghibe basin state; and Rift valley Lakes basin state.[4]

Some say it should be divided into administrative areas based on economic potentials. But, how this can materialize is not suggested or studied in its pros and cons and how it can be applied.

3. The Contention of the Ratification of Ethiopian 1994 Constitution:

The Transitional Council or Parliament was composed of more than thirty political parties most of which are ethnic-based. The Charter created the posts of the president and prime minister, an 87-member Council of Representatives and a 17-member multi-ethnic Council of Ministers. The seats were divided into the represented parties with the

[4]

majority by the EPRDF (32) and OLF (12). The other organizations were allocated between 1 to 3 seats each, with the remaining 6 seats left empty so that the transitional council could allocate them to the political forces that had failed to participate in the conference due to several reasons.

Further agreement was reached on sharing executive powers. The council organized itself into committees and elected Meles Zenawi as a President - head of state, Tamirat Layne as a Prime Minister - head of government both from EPRDF; Dr. Fekadu Gedamu (Gurage) as a Vice Chairman and Tesfaye Habiso (Kambata) as a General Secretary. The composition of the cabinet consists of 6 Oromos, 4 Amharas, 2 Tigrayans, 1 Afar, 1 Somali, 1 Kambata, 1 Adere, 1 Wolita, and 1 Gurage.

There are arguments that the Constitution was ratified without the consent of the Ethiopian people. However, this contention may not be valid taking the process in which it was made as discussed here-after. Ethiopian constitution, which was drawn by the Constituent Assembly that was elected in June 1994, came into force in 21 August 1995 after deliberation and approval by the General Assembly.

As a matter of fact, the making of the Constitution went through several steps. The first step was the establishment of the Drafting Commission in August 1992. This was accomplished by inviting political organizations. There were more than 100 organizations, which were not members of the House of Representatives (HOR). These were established after May 1991 outside of the HOR through print and electronic Media to register at the HOR if they are interested to be members of the Drafting Commission. Seven legally registered political organizations were chosen by the HOR from the many organizations which applied for membership. These were South Ethiopian Democratic Front (SEDF); Ethiopian National Unity Party (ENUP); Forum 84 organization (Forum 84); Ethiopian Muslims Movement (EMM); South Ethiopian Peoples' Coalition (SEPC); and Ethiopian Democratic Movement League (EDML). The same procedure was followed concerning professional associations and 15 such organizations were chosen by the HOR. These were Ethiopian Workers Association (3), Ethiopian Teachers Association (2), Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce (3), Ethiopian Legal Professionals Association (2), Ethiopian Health Professionals Association (2), and from different Women's Associations (3). Another seven representatives of political organizations in the HOR were added. These included the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU, an organization of the old aristocrats and royalists who were in resistance during Mengistu's reign), Harari National League, the Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (EPDM), Kafa National Democratic Organization, Ethiopian National Democratic Organization (ENDO), Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and Isa /Gurgura Liberation Front. EPDM and OPDO represented the EPRDF. The OLF and other Oromo organizations had withdrawn from the Transition before the establishment of the Commission and was at war with TGE.

The Commission elected Ato Kifle Wodajo (a Liberal and longtime official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the military regime) of ENDO as chairman and Ato Dawit Yohannes (a Revolutionary Democrat and long time in exile in the USA). The Commission decided on the procedure of preparing the Draft Constitution and its members had to agree that concepts of constitution to be forwarded for public discussion and approval. But issues on which there was disagreement among members to be left for the decision of the public. The documents were prepared in different Ethiopian languages and deliberations forums for local residents were organized in then 23,320 Kebeles, the lowest administrative units and for workers in different institutions, for women, elders, religious leaders, and different political organizations. Special forums were organized for the Ethiopians residing abroad and their views and stands were collected. Local discussions took three days and four to seven hours a day. According to the Commission's report on the procedure of the constitution making it is said that "seen in general, the number of the public (participants) was few the first day, became more on the following meetings and had the tendency of decreasing on the last day." Members and supporters of WPE, EPRP, AESM, and OLF boycotted the meetings.

The results of the discussions were collected and were formulated into constitutional articles by experts stationed at the office of the Commission. In the meantime constitutional experts were invited from abroad to hold lectures on the question of self-determination, on federalism and experiences of other countries on these issues. The experts at the office presented their work to the meeting of the Commission for debate. Heated debate took place between members with different positions. Votes were given on each article and almost all articles passed through majority votes. Only on few articles there were no compromises and minority positions were not discarded. In such cases two opposed stands or positions were formulated and put into the draft constitution to be presented to the House of Representatives. Examples were articles 39 (on the right to self-determination) and article 40 (right to property). The final draft with 72 articles was presented to the HOR at the end of March 1994. A Constituent Assembly included 545 (These were representatives who were elected from the then existing Woredas (=districts). There are 547 of them today). The election took place in May 1994 and the assembly met for six weeks from the end of November to the 8th of December 1994. As for regional representation, 37 Harari, 23 from Addis Ababa and 2 from Dire Dawa. The finally approved Constitution had 106 articles. Concerning the voting on the two articles which contained minority and majority positions in the drafts of the drafting Commission and the HOR, there were 515 members present when article 39 was debated upon. 508 voted for while 5 were against and 2 abstained. On article 40, only 3 abstained, 0 were against and 496 supported it. When it came to Federalism, 507 were presented when it was deliberated upon. 500 were for Federal structure, 5 were against and 2 abstained. Interestingly 24 of the present were against having Independent Judiciary, 494 were for it while 9 abstained. Any way after the Constitution was approved by the Constituent Assembly preparations were underway for establishing the Federal Democratic Republic in accordance with the Constitution. Election for the new two chambered parliament,

House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation took place in May 1995 and the Houses met in August 1995, endorsed the approved Constitution as the supreme law of the country, and established the new government and elected the President who signed on the law the same day.

The main reason why Federalism was adopted was to create an administrative system in which self-determination, short of secession, of the ethnic groups would be practiced. Federalism in Ethiopia was introduced by the 1994 Constitution based on the principles of self-determination, shared rule and self of peoples of Ethiopia. It is actually the peoples who formed the federation as it says in the Preamble "We, the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia…Have therefore ratified, on 8 December 1994 this constitution…" According to the Constitution "All sovereign power resides in the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia" (art. 8/1). Rights of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are listed in Article 39 and read as follows: "1. Every Nation, Nationalities, and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession. 2. Every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history. 3. Every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to a full means of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and equitable representation in the regional and national government."

3.1 Transition from Unitary to Federal System of Government:

There have been federal arrangement of administration currently in Ethiopia by having self-administered regional states that are ethnic-based. The ardent supporters believe that the ethnic federal system has given full recognition to ethnic autonomy, while maintaining the unity of the state. There are fear by some that this type of arrangement would result in disintegration of the country and specially of the fear of Article 39. This article grants all peoples of Ethiopia the right to self-determination without any ambiguity. It has become one of the contentious Article that pervades the politics of Ethiopia more so than any other perceivable issue of interest.

'Unity in diversity' is a concept of "unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation" that shifts focus from unity based on a mere tolerance of physical, cultural, linguistic, social, religious, political, ideological and/or psychological differences towards a more complex unity based on an understanding that difference enriches human interactions.[5] Ethiopia is currently being administered as a federal government consisting of autonomous regions in which the basis of the federalism is unity in diversity.

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unity_in_diversity

Federal systems also include autonomous local governments such as county governments and municipal governments in cities, boroughs, townships, and villages local governments may stand in a relationship to their state governments that corresponds to that of state governments with the national government. The citizens in each jurisdiction elect many of the public officials. In addition, certain special districts exist with a single function, such as education or sanitation, and have their own elected officials.[6]
The United States and India with their state governments and Canada and China with their provincial governments are examples of workable federal systems in large nations with very diverse populations. Other federal states include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, and Germany. The national governments of these countries are clearly more powerful than those of their subdivisions, even though the constitutions delegate many powers and responsibilities to the subnational units. In certain prescribed policy areas, a state government may have a high degree of autonomy. In the United States, for example, state legislatures pass laws having to do with state affairs. State administrators carry them out and state judiciaries interpret them.

Ethiopian politics is mainly that of ethnicity, which has permeated daily life and overtaken democratic decision-making and shared political issues. The federal state, despite the nominal decentralized power to regional and local authorities, is said to be stronger than any previous Ethiopian States and has developed structures of central control and top-down rule that preclude local initiative and autonomy. Ethnic and cultural rights were indeed accorded, and a new economic dynamics is visible. Political liberties, respect for human rights and economic equality are however neglected, and ethnic divisions are on the increase, although repressed. Ethiopia's recent political record thus shows mixed results, with positive elements but also an increasingly authoritarian governance model recalling the features of the country's traditional hierarchical and autocratic political culture. This may produce more debate on the need for "adjusting the experiment".[7]

There are different arguments and opinions on Ethiopia's ethnic-based government. Let us see the below.

Mahmood Mamdani, who is the director of the Institute of Social Research at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and a professor at Columbia University wrote on the trouble of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism. He commented that "the system of ethnic federalism was troubled with internal inconsistencies because ethnic groups do not live only in a discrete 'homeland' territory but are also dispersed across the country. Non-native ethnic minorities live within every ethnic homeland. Ethnic mobilization comes from multiple groups, including Ethiopians without an ethnic homeland, and those

[6]https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/forms-government/

[7]https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17531055.2011.642516?src=recsys&journalCode=rjea20

disenfranchised as minorities in the region of their residence, even if their ethnic group has a homeland in another state".[8]

It is important that Ethiopian forces opposing ethno-nationalist ideologies adopt the principle of "**diversity in unity**." In so doing, they emphasize unity while integrating diversity in such a way that it is no longer antithetical to unity. Better still, by converting diversity into a construct triggered by elite conflicts, they counter its hypostatization, whose consequence is that diversity is approached as a political problem liable of a democratic solution, and not as a primordial attribute that is refractory to a sub-unit status. To say that diversity grew out of unity maintains the integrity of the whole, whereas the opposite, that is, the generation of unity from initial dispersion at best obtains a collection, which certainly does not amount to a nation.[9]

Maimire Mennasemay, who is a Professor at Dwon College is a proponent of the 'diversity in unity'. He opposed the Ethiopia's catchphrase "unity in diversity." He mentioned that the slogan is "diversity-centric," in that it gives primacy to ethnic identities and conceives of unity as an agglomeration of sovereign and static ethnic groups. As an assemblage of diverse entities, unity is less the overcoming of fragmentation than the political consecration of its artificiality.

Instead of "unity in diversity," Maimire proposes the formula "diversity in unity," which, he says, is "unity-centric" and, as such, friendly to democratic developments. Indeed, the suggested formulation no longer seeks the petrification of ethnic identities, rather, it promotes unity through the development of norms transcending particularism. Not only does it thus give primacy to unity, but it also turns unity into the framework of diversity. It does not obtain an artificial gathering by reducing unity to a mere sum of diverse entities; on the contrary, it lays out a diversified, rainbow-like unity, as opposed to conglomerate unity. In the rainbow-like unity, the parts belong to the same unity and are in solidarity with one another, unlike the conglomerate unity, which is composed of heterogeneous entities that remain distinct as oil and water.

On the contrary to the above, the EPRDF-led government in Ethiopia has believed that the successful management of Ethiopia's diversity to become one of the pillars of the ongoing Ethiopian renaissance. Ethiopia's nine regions have the right to self-governance and to draw-up and administer their own budgets to fund their economic, social and development policies.

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[8]http://quatero.net/the-trouble-with-ethiopias-ethnic-federalism/

[9]https://ecadforum.com/News/ethiopia-unity-in-diversity-versus-diversity-in-unity/ by Mesay Kebede

3.2 Individual or National Right

Some Ethiopians fear that the individual rights would be suppressed by giving more weight to national right. Such phenomenon is believed to create fear and breed unsettled commotion. There is a counter argument to this stand. Individual right being part and parcel of the nation/nationality can be addressed with the right to the nations/ nationalities. Both are cohesive in that the individual right is part of the national right. It is like arguing as to which comes first: the chicken or the egg.
Let us see the Bill of Rights of the United States, which lists specifically enumerated rights. The Supreme Court has extended further by recognizing several fundamental rights not specifically enumerated in the Constitution. Among these are:

- The right to interstate travel
- The right to parent one's children - Parents are assumed to be the best caretakers for their child unless proven unfit and that parents possess a fundamental right to raise their children as they see fit.
- The right to privacy referring to protection of personal information from public scrutiny.
- The right to marriage - Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. It goes further to include same sex marriage recently.
- The right of self-defense - Self defense is a constitutional right and all states recognize a statutory or common law right to use force against another person in self defense.

If a right is denied to everyone, it is an issue of substantive due process. If a right is denied to some individuals but not others, it is also an issue of equal protection. However, any action that abridges a right deemed fundamental, when also violating equal protection, is still held to the more exacting standard of strict scrutiny, instead of the less demanding rational basis test.

In a different scenario the Indian fundamental rights contrasted with such rights contained in the US bill of rights. The fundamental rights in India are far more elaborate than in the United States. Thus, for example, the US bill of rights (first ten amendments) only names some rights. The Supreme Court, through the process of judicial review, decides the limitations on these rights.

The seven main fundamental rights of India as constituted in its constitution are:

- **right to equality** -no discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth
- **right to freedom**, which includes freedom of speech and expression, right to assemble peacefully, freedom to form associations or unions, right to move freely throughout the

territory of India, right to reside or settle in any part of the territory of India, right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation.

- **right to life -**no person can be awarded punishment which is more than what's predefined by the government, an offender cannot be convicted twice for the same offense, does not include the right to die.
- **right to freedom of religion -** No one can be forded to join a particular religion or reject a particular region.
- **right against exploitation -** No forced labor and no children employed as laborer.
- **cultural and educational rights -** All citizens have equal rights in the matter of culture and education.
- **right to constitutional remedies -** People can approach the Supreme Court if their fundamental rights violated

Reviewing the Ethiopian constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, it is noted that it requires full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedoms and rights, to live together on the basis of equality and without any sexual, religious or cultural discrimination. As per Article 10 of the Constitution, it is stated that human rights and freedoms, emanating from the nature of mankind to be inviolable and inalienable and human and democratic right of citizens and peoples to be respected. Article 11 focusses on separation of state and religion in that there will not be state religion and that the state shall not interfere in religious matters and religion shall not interfere in state affairs. Articles 14 to 17 dwell on human rights such as right to life and right of the security of person.

Article 25 with respect to **Right to Equality** asserts that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection without discrimination on grounds of race, nation, nationality, or other social origin, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status.

3.3 The Ethiopian Constitution and the National Right:

The Constitution asserts, among others, the following:
Article 5: All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition, and Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government;
Article 6: Any person of either sex shall be an Ethiopian national where both or either parent is Ethiopian;
Article 9: the Constitution to be the supreme law of the land;
Article 10: Human rights and freedoms, emanating from the nature of mankind, are inviolable and inalienable, human and democratic rights of citizens and peoples shall be respected;
Article 11: state and religion are separate;

Article 14: Rights to life, the Security of .Person and Liberty;
Article 32: Any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, within the national territory, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to;
Article 45: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia shall have a parliamentarian form of government;
Article 50: The Federal Government and the States shall have legislative, executive and judicial powers;
Article 53: There shall be two Federal Houses: The House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of the Federation;
Article 55: The House of Peoples' Representatives spall have the power of legislation in all matters assigned by this Constitution to Federal jurisdiction;
Article 72: The highest executive powers of the Federal Government are vested in the Prime Minister and in the Council of Ministers;
Article 73: The Prime Minister shallConstitution be elected from among members of the House of Peoples' Representatives;
Article 78: An independent judiciary is established by this Constitution;
Article 105: Amendment of the Constitution

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to a nationality" and that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality."

In Ethiopia's law of 1994, Article 39 stipulates the following:

1. Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession.
2. Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history.
3. Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments.
4. The right to self-determination, including secession, of every Nation, Nationality and People shall come into effect:
    (a) When a demand for secession has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Legislative Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned;
    (b) When the Federal Government has organized a referendum which must take place within three years from the time it received the concerned council's decision for secession;
    (c) When the demand for secession is supported by majority vote in the referendum;

(d) When the Federal Government will have transferred its powers to the council of the Nation, Nationality or People who has voted to secede; and
(e) When the division of assets is effected in a manner prescribed by law.

5. A "Nation, Nationality or People", for the purpose of this Constitution , is a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory.

Article 41 states that every Ethiopian has the right to engage freely in economic activity and to pursue a livelihood of his choice anywhere within the national territory.

Looking into the United States Constitution for comparison is worthy. The United States Constitution, originally comprising seven articles, delineates the national frame of government. It was ratified in 17th September 1787 in presence of delegates from the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Rhode Island and Georgia. As to be noted here, only the founding 13 states out of the 50 were represented in drawing the US Constitution. The other remaining 37 states were admitted from the first Vermont State in 1791 to the last Alaska and Hawaii States in 1959.

The United States Constitution, which came into force in 1789, decentralizes power into the following organs of government and has an in-built mechanism for check and balance. It has originally 9 articles. The three articles with their section 1 are shown below with respect to the legislative power - congress, the executive power - the President, and the Judicial Power - the Supreme Court.

Article 1 - Section 1
All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Article II - Section 1
The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Article III - Section 1
The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

The USA constitution has been amended for 27 times since it was ratified in 1789.

In the Ethiopian 1994 Constitution, Article 105 puts it clearly that there is the possibility of amending the Constitution. Hence, any formidable contentions can be addressed if it meets the legal requirement or the approval of the majority.

4. The Way Forward:

I would like to reiterate to the disagreement against the present Ethiopian Constitution, that legalizes the federal administration and especially that of Article 39. There is also dispute on the present flag.

There is a contention in that the Prime Minister is not elected by the people. Ethiopia follows the Parliamentary system. The Parliament elects the prime minister among the elected members, who hold the majority seat. As many counties like India, Israel, Britain, etc., the prime ministers are elected by their parliament. On the contrary, the prime minister in Australia is directly elected by voters.

The elites are divided also on whether Ethiopia has finally conjured up the right formula to rid itself from ethnic strife. Some raise points of view of amending the Constitution through a process and some to reject it and replace it.

On the contrary to the above contention of amending the constitution, Kjetil Tronvoll said that "future conflicts in Ethiopia will be put in motion not by the type of state model they chose, but by how they govern." This Ethiopia analyst at the International Law and Policy Institute further elaborated on this by saying that "if repression and political authoritarianism continues, it will eventually inspire resistance."

As discussed in the foregoing, in September 1987, the Ethiopian Shengo (Assembly) initiated regional reorganization by creating 24 administrative regions and five autonomous regions (Eritrea, Assab, Dire Dawa, Tigre, and Ogaden). This must have been done to defuse the nationalist discontent. The government's intention to grant autonomous status to Assab and Dire Dawa (the country's two economic cores) was to separate them from the regions of Eritrea and Ogaden. Most nationalist movements such as EPLF, TPLF, and OLF dismissed the PDRE's initiative and began to coordinate military strategy to increase their anti-government activities.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Constitution is said to be strongly committed, in full and free exercise of right to self-determination, to building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing its economic and social development.

Certain nationalist positions embrace the inclusions' view. There is a limit to inclusions, however, where multiple views of Ethiopian identity are incompatible with one another,

and conflict, rather than coexist. The best illustrations of this limit are nationalist positions which demand secession.

There are opposition to Article 39 of the Ethiopian Constitution by the opposition groups and intelligentsia considering that the article will open up a space for disintegration.

In a paper on the 'Impact of the Inclusion of Secession Cause in the FDRE Constitution' on the prospect of Ethiopian Federation, Tsegaye Birhanu of Assosa University made an analysis as follows. "The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution is among very few constitutions in the world that included secession right in their constitution. This article vehemently claims that carefully designed secession right in constitution can help to effectively prevent secession and disintegration of a multi-national state. However, the secession right as it appears in the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution cannot prevent secession, if the right is going to be operationalized. The clause in the constitution lacks the capacity of making secession difficult. Similarly, repealing the secession right out of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution without bloodshed seems very difficult. Hence, the only option is revisiting and amending the clause and the procedures of secession in which it can wisely and effectively sabotage and prevent secession and disintegration while maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of the Ethiopian State."

The All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) officially called, in August 2018 as reported in the Reporter newspaper, for the removal of Articel 39 from the constitution. The party stated that the ethnic federal political system that has been implemented for the past 27 years has resulted in many clashes and conflicts among various ethnic groups of the country, putting in danger the territorial integrity of the country. Hence, AEUP calls for the amendment of the constitution in general and the removal of article 39 in particular.

But most nation and nationalities movements and political organizations support the federal arrangement of administration in Ethiopia.

The recently organized party of the National Movement of Amhara (NAMA) claims to be the vanguard party for the Amhara cause. This party aspires to forge the objective of the late professor Asrat Weldeyes's All Amhara Peoples Organization (AAPO). Its role is said to safeguard the Amhara people in every way. It aims to be compete against ANDM if it is committed to working for the Amhara people. By doing so, the Amhara nationalism will protect the interest of the Amhara people and at the same time end its long lasting marginalization. This in turn is assumed to be in the interest of Ethiopia's stability, security and national unity through a genuine federation based on respect of one another. In this matter, nationalism can be viewed as a tactical move to organize the Amhara people and try to abide by the rules of the game. It is a means to the threatened existence and protection of Amhara interests. It claimed that the Wolqaite Amhara

question and Colonel Demeke Zewdu's heroic self-defense to serve as the engine of Amhara Nationalism.

NAMA supports the idea that the Constitution needs either substantial amendment or replacement by a more progressive one. However, failure to fully implement and respect the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, is one of the limiting factors for the democratization of Ethiopia. It further claimed that TPLF and its subordinates to have been above the law and the Constitution.

They claim that Amhara State is the most democratic inside the ethno-federal system because minorities have self-administration. The biggest example to support this claim is the Oromia and Agew Awi zones inside Amhara. Thus, NAMA wants reciprocal benefits for their people outside Amhara. They assert by taking figures from the 2007 census that about 60 percent of residents in Adama Special Zone had Amharic as their mother tongue. Therefore, in a country where language-based federalism is the law, Adama (Nazret) would constitutionally comprise one of the Amhara zones inside Oromia. This eventually might disqualify Adama from being the seat of Oromia parliament. Also in Bishoftu (Debre Zeit) City of Oromia, residents with Amharic mother-tongue makeup even higher proportions of 72 percent. Jimma city in Oromia, out of 120,000 residents only about 48,000 were native Afaan Oromo speakers. Even in Mejenger Zone of Gambella, the majority by mother tongue are actually Amhara. NAMA also considered other candidates for Amhara zones that include small parts of Hawassa, Assosa and Dire Dawa which contain about 100,000 Amhara residents each. If we include Welkait and other parts of Tigray where a large population of native Amharic speakers live, it is possible to have over a dozen major Amhara zones outside Amhara State.

There are voices who seem to be somewhat skeptical if NAMA can be different in a good way from the other parties in Ethiopia. Some have critically question the consciousness of its leadership simply by pointing to the logo it picked as an emblem of the party which is "double-headed eagle". Its opponents say that the traditional emblem in history has always been a lion. NAMA's proposal, first of all, creating Amhara special zones, in Oromia or others, can lead to more ethnic conflict and territorial disputes. Secondly, it can lead to a more dangerous zero-sum game when it comes to ethnic politics, by weakening moderates and empowering extremists.[10]

ESAT had a Special Program with Major Dawit Wolde Giorgis. In his Speech on The 7th Vision Ethiopia Conference dated December 2018 focused on the 1994 Constitution of Ethiopia, he mentioned on how to create a transitional justice. He claimed that there is no constitution in Ethiopia as it was not ratified by the people. In addition, he said that the Constitution of 1994 can trigger conflict between the nation and nationalities of Ethiopia. He mentioned that Dr. Negasso Gidada to have rejected the Constitution and added that it

[10]https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2018/12/10/what-is-the-point-in-amhara-nationalism/

must go for referendum whether to accept it or reject it. In addition, he mentioned that Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, is in a trap now because of the Constitution and should dissolve the parliament and the constitution by decree. He recommended that Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) to change to a national unity party. National parties also have to either change into unitary parties or be replaced by civic organizations. He finally came up with the notion of an 'Election Commission' to be organized related to 'truth, reconciliation and justice'.

Is his suggestion really plausible or an overt misconception of the truth in the ground? It looks like it would be creating anarchy and more chaos if applied. The rejection of the flag, the constitution or the federal administration in Ethiopia has been circulating among the few Ethiopian elites. The option of enunciating the truth, the fact, and the inevitable is fine. But, replacing the parties of the nations and nationalities into mere civic organizations that are limited to advice, advocate, community and deliberative groups leaves much to be desired. Better, sound and right suggestions should be made.

Some persons adhere to the point of amendment instead of making the constitution null and void. One plausible point raised by Dereje Demessie Bulto, a lawyer by profession in USA, in an interview with LTV is that of the representation of a nation and nationalities in the House of Federation. He mentioned of the anomaly of the Article 61 in which "each Nation, Nationality and People shall be represented in the House of the Federation by at least one member and each Nation or Nationality shall be represented by one additional representative for each one million of its population". In this regard, having the population of the Oromo and Amhara into consideration, the two alone constitute over 50% of the House of Federation. Hence, any decision by the House of Federation can be passed or rejected by these two alone. Hence, the other nation and nationalities are at limbo with respect to decisions to be made pertaining to Article 62.

The other point of contention is that of balkanization of Ethiopia. In a 'divide and conquer' strategy that may be connected with a common geopolitical process, Balkanization, happened throughout the globe in different ways and shapes. The name derives from turbulent Balkans and refers to a division of a multinational state into smaller, ethnically homogenous entities or to an ethnic conflict within multiethnic state. The term as such began to be widely used and accepted after World War I, then referring to fragmentation of Ottoman Empire. Today, the term has negative connotation due to the violent tensions that are usually accompanied by fragmentation of entities. There is not perfection in drawing constitutions. But, constitutions can be amended to suit changes. This looks the palatable option for Ethiopia.[11]

In the 1991 Conference, the Charter was ratified by Adere Nationality (Harari National League), Afar Liberation Front (ALF), Benishangul People's Liberation Movement

[11] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Balkanization

(BPLM), Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM), Gurage People's Democratic Organization, Hadiya Nationality Democratic Organization, Horiale - Ogaden Liberation Front, Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), Issa & Gurgura Liberation Movement, Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), United Oromo People's Liberation Front, Omotic Group (Omotic People's Democratic Front), Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM), Wolaita People's Democratic Front, EPRDF{Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement, Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)}, and party organizations like Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG), Ethiopian Democratic Coalition (EDC), Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), Ethiopian National Democratic Organization (ENDO), and representatives of the University/higher education, and Workers. The others to whom assignment of seats were made in the Council were Agaw People's Democratic Movement, Burji People's Democratic Organization, Gedeo People's Democratic Organization, Kaffa People's Democratic Union and Yem National Movement[12].

These national organizations ratified the Charter, which gave the blessing for the way in which Ethiopia has been administered as a federation based on ethnicity. Some claim that the tension among nation/nationalities that is observed now can be calmed through a democratic process and by widening the democratic rights. Economic integration is taken to mitigate the national tension. People resort to national rights than personal rights as evidenced from the Keman't peoples in Amhara Region and the Sidama, Wolaita and Gurage in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Administrative Region

The Ethiopian people have a melting pot nature as many nations in the world. Just going to the history book, we notice that there were different influx of people in the kingdoms in Ethiopia.

- Adal Sultanate and pushing deep into Ethiopia with the rise of Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-ghazi, who overrun from south-east to the north of the country.
- The Sultanate of Showa was taken to be located in the northern Hararghe.
- The Sultanate of Dawaro was absorbed into the Afan Qallo Barentuma confederation.
- Hadiya Sultanate was an ancient kingdom located in southwestern Ethiopia.
- The Sultanate of Arababni (also known as Arbabni or Arabini) was a small Gurage Islamic sultanate located in what is now the Arsi Zone of Ethiopia.
- The Kambata kingdom was ruled by long line of its own kings known as Woma, ወማ. King Dagoye, from Oyeta clan, was one of the famous kings known for expanding Kambatta territories. The last independent king of Kambata was Wona Delbatao Degoye, who was killed while resisting Emperor Menelik II invasion toward the end ninetieth century.

[12] /http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/27301/No_051_The-Addis_Ababa

- Damot (Amharic: ዳሞት) was a medieval kingdom in what is now Ethiopia, and neighbor to the Ethiopian Empire. Originally located south of the Abay and west of the Muger River, under the pressure of Oromo attacks the rulers were forced to resettle north of the Abay in southern Gojjam between 1574 and 1606.
- The Sultanate of Bale was a Somali Muslim sultanate founded in the Bale Mountains of the southern Ethiopian Highlands and Horn of Africa.
- The Kingdom of Kaffa (c. 1390–1897) was an early modern state located in what is now Ethiopia, with its first capital at Bonga.
- The people of Wolaita had their own kingdom for thousands of years with kings (called "Kawo") and a monarchical administration. The earlier name of the kingdom was "The Famous Kingdom of Damot" - this included the south, south east, south west and part of the central region of the present Ethiopia. The famous King of this Kingdom was King (Kawo). The present day agew midir have a culture quite similar to that of Wolaita. King of Wolaita, Kawo Tona, from the Tigre dynasty was wounded and captured during the bloody war with the conquering troops of King Menelik, in 1880.
- The complexity of Gurage Peoples if viewed as a singular group, for example Ulrich Braukhamper states that the Gurage east people may have been an extension of the ancient Harla people. Indeed, there is evidence that Harla architecture may have influenced old buildings (pre-16th c.) found near Harrar (eastern Ethiopia), and the Gurage east group often cite kinship with Harare (Hararghe) peoples in the distant past. Braukhamper also states King Amda Seyon ordered Eritrean troops to be sent to mountainous regions in Gurage (named Gerege), which eventually became a permanent settlement. In addition to Amda Seyon's military settlement there, the permanence of Abyssinian presence in Gurage is documented during his descendants Zara Yacob and Dawit II's reigns. Braukhamper also notes that some Amhara troops and their families likely fled areas in modern-day Gondar and Gojjam into the Gurage region during the Ethiopian-Adal War of the 1530s, since Abyssinia was drastically outgunned by the Adal troops which received supplies and arms from the Ottoman Empire.
- The Amhara origins are thought to have been located near modern day (Amhara) Sayint, Wollo, a place that was known as Bete Amhara in the past.
- The Sidama people preserved their cultural heritage, including their traditional religion and language throughout the centuries under Ethiopia's Solomonic rule. As said by the historian Donald Levine, legends recall the great 15th-century Amhara emperor Zera Yaqob who the Sidama still remember as "Seraqo" and his reign as a golden age. Following the devastating 16th-century Ahmad Gran invasion and Oromo migration, the Sidama people had been cut away from the central government who strived for its survival at war for centuries to come.
- With both Ethiopia and Adal greatly weakened by the war, the Oromo people were able to invade into the highlands.
- The Oromo, a Cushitic-speaking pastoralist people whose original homeland was located on the Sidamo-Borana plain. The Oromos must have met the Sidamas in their migration to the north and may be why it is said in Oromogna “afaan Sidama” to mean amharic.

- The Boranaa (Oromos) fought the other tribes and the captured became Gabaro (the enslaved); the Ashengee, Raayyaa and Azaboo Oromos who are descendants of three sons of Hubana were christianized and assimilated by the Tigray; pre-Oromo peoples of Wallaga were assimilated with the Oromo people. The intermixing with alien groups and the population increase had a notable effect on the culture of Oromo through integration and absorbing them through Meedhicha and Gudifacha systems.[13] That is why it is observed that the Oromos have different culture in their food, dancing and clothing, which most often has semblance to their neighboring ethnic groups.
- Zequala Gedam and Zeway located in Oromia may have their stories way back in centuries related to the north of the country.
- Barara, the Royal City of 15th and Early 16th Century (Ethiopia), which was a Medieval and Other Early Settlements Between Wechecha Range and Mt Yerer.

5. Concluding Remarks:

There has been a concern by many Ethiopian opposition parties or the elites with regard to the Ethiopia's present flag that has been used by the EPRDF. Having the imperial flag precludes the Moslems as in the emblem, the lion of Judah carrying the flag with a cross. That of the military government, of course, fails to be considered with its socialist symbol. That of the present, has a significance in its focus as discussed above. The civil flag, as shown above also, can be used outside the government offices. Other than this, the contention may not hold water.

The above mentioned movements of different ethnic groups and the mixture they created through years have created a melting pot of mixed people in Ethiopia, where heterogenous society became homogenous. As sediments of clay, sand, and gravel form rocks, the different ethnic groups in Ethiopia have created the nation through mixtures made in a willful inter-marriage or through battles waged to expand territories or in search of water and grazing land.

C**itizenship is the common thread that connects all Americans.** It is mentioned that "**We are a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality".**

The above is also true to Ethiopia, where its citizens shared common history in political, social and economic aspects. They forge commonality through intermarriage. The winner and the defeated created mixtures in blood and in culture. They raised arms to defend themselves against foreign invaders and fought aliens together. They kept the country uncolonized.

[13] History of the Sayaoo Oromo of Southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia from 1730-1886, Negaso Gidada, PhD

The urgency should not be to be against federalism. It should be more on more democratization and economic development. These processes will bring more integration and thus create cohesive and naturally-blend unity. The cultural mix that is configured by interconnecting the country from north to south, from east to west and in every direction through holidays and religious celebrations have created a bondage between the Ethiopians. But, of course, what is bad is the negative pervasive attitude, which cannot replace the national equality that many aspire for in Ethiopia.

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