

Elements Deemed Critical to the Functioning of Federalism: "A Study of the Functionality and Practices of Federalism in Ethiopia."

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Abstract: Ethiopia adopted federalism in 1995, which is intended to accommodate ethnic diversity. Federalism is an attempt to give us a valuable tool for accelerating development and resolving inter-ethnic conflict. The Ethiopian Federal Constitution establishes the legal basis for ethnic federalism, with the preamble indicating the character and state-building strategy of the new nation. The paper intended to examine the power distribution between the federal and state governments in Ethiopia and regional autonomy; the factors considered essential to the working of federalism in Ethiopia; how federalism provides a framework for the equal recognition of cultural and religious diversity in Ethiopia and the contribution of ethnic-based federalism in promoting democracy. The research was conducted in four regions (Oromia, South Nation and Nationality People (SNNP), Sidama and Somali), Addis Ababa city administration, selected federal institutions, and Ethiopian Civil Service University. Both quantitative and qualitative method of data collection was employed for the study. The study found that Ethiopia's federalism provides a framework for the equal recognition of cultural and religious diversity and has contributed to the development of democracy in the country. The study found that some regional states were not fully practicing their autonomy.

Keywords: ethnic-based federalism; ethnic diversity; Nation, Nationality, and People

Elements Deemed Critical to the Functioning of Ethiopian Federalism

Introduction

Federalism is widely practiced in many countries around the world today. However, federalism's formation, practices, and functions vary across countries. Most countries have a history of transitioning from a unitary to a federal political administration system. In contrast, others have formed a federal system to unite their nation and resist external aggression. For example, in Belgium, a traditionally unitary system between 1970 and 1993 gradually transformed into a federal system. On the other hand, Austria formed federalism after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Ethiopia, on its part, transformed from centuries and many decades of the high central and unitary system to a federal system.

Federalism becomes operational when the elements of federalism are put into practice. Some elements necessary for federalism to function include: accommodating ethnic diversity, as reflected by the diversity of identity, religion, culture, tradition, another social and economic background, and power-sharing, including administrative and political power-sharing. In this regard, central and regional or state

governments must agree on the proper distribution of power and resources, which is the theme element of functioning federalism. Federal systems employ accommodation of differences to keep their units together. Lack of diversity accommodation might lead to disputes and endanger unions, especially in multicultural federal systems like Ethiopia.¹

On the other hand, the Ethiopian federal system looks to promote ethnic groups by including them in its structure. The accommodation of diversity and the protection of minorities in such disparately structured federal institutions, to extract valuable lessons (ibid.), Federalism is recognized as a valuable tool for accelerating development and resolving inter-ethnic conflict. The Ethiopian Federal Constitution establishes the legal basis for ethnic federalism, with the preamble indicating the character and state-building strategy of the new nation. This strategy is divided into two parts: protecting the rights of ethnic groups and preserving the unity of the Ethiopian state, hence the phrase "unity in

¹ Legesse Tigabu Mengie (2016). Federalism, unity, representation of minorities, ethnic federalism. Mizan Law Review, Vol. 10, No.2

diversity." These two elements are emphasized throughout the preamble.

Introducing a federal structure is another milestone in Ethiopia's democracy. In Ethiopia's current setting, the relationship between democracy and federalism is inextricably linked, and ethnic federalism is critical to ensuring and promoting democracy. Properly implemented, federalism can significantly contribute to democratic building. On the other hand, the FDRE Constitution is the basis for setting the framework for power distribution between the different levels of government. As Strasbourg (1997) noted, the Constitution is the only foundation for the division of powers in the majority of the federal states surveyed. One of the principles of federalism is the distribution of power between the different levels of government. The distribution of power can encompass administrative and political decentralization. Political decentralization can be defined as a collection of constitutional reforms (Falleti, 2010)², as it corresponds to the constitutions, the architecture, and discipline of the States' decision-making processes.

The distribution of power for example America, separation of powers is a principle that divides power among the executive, legislative, and judicial parts. This gives many institutions—the Congress, the executive branch, and the judiciary—the power to influence the nation's agenda and make choices. This also creates a system of checks and balances in which authority is distributed so that no one branch becomes dominant.³

"Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, an 18th century French social and political philosopher, coined the term "trias politica" or "separation of powers." His book, Spirit

² Faletti, T. (2010). *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ <https://wnorton.com/college/polisci/american-government12/brief/ch/03/outline.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/separation-of-powers-an-overview.aspx>

⁵ According to the United States Constitution, Congress' main power is to pass laws that, once signed by the president, become the law of the country, guiding American life. Congress is also responsible for ensuring that the government's public policies are implemented in line with the law and as efficiently and effectively as feasible. Furthermore, because Congress is supposed to represent the people of the United States, its members

*of the Laws, is regarded as one of the most important works in the history of political theory and jurisprudence, and it served as the inspiration for the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the United States Constitution. His model divides the state's political authority into legislative, executive, and judicial powers. He claimed that for these three powers to be most effective in promoting liberty, they must be separate and operate independently."*⁴

The federal system includes two tiers of government, each chosen by the people and has separate responsibilities. The national government is in charge of dealing with issues that affect the entire country, such as safeguarding the country from outside threats and fostering national economic development. Subnational, or state governments, are in charge of problems that affect their territories, such as protecting the well-being of their citizens through education, health care, public safety, and other government services. Because the institutions at each level form an interacting network, a system like this, by necessity, cooperation between different levels of government. All national concerns are handled by the federal government of the United States, which is led by the president and members of Congress,⁵ who are all chosen by citizens across the country. The fifty states, each led by an elected governor and legislature, are responsible for all concerns at the subnational level. As a result, the federal and state governments have distinct roles, and voters elect leaders at both levels.⁶

The core principle of federalism states that the federal government cannot intervene in state issues and States cannot interfere with the powers vested in the federal government unless the framework of the working constitution

are required to help and serve their constituents – the people who live in their states and districts. Citizens can learn a lot about what their government is doing by watching news coverage of legislative hearings, debates, and other activities. Congress is occasionally called upon to carry out specific judicial and electoral tasks. It serves as a judicial body in the impeachment and removal of the president, and it has the power to elect the president and vice president if no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes after a presidential election.(

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/congress-united-states/>

⁶ Garry Willis, ed. 1982. *The Federalist Papers* by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay. New York: Bantam Books, 237.

must allow the areas of intervention. Federalism, which refers to the division and sharing of power between the national and state governments, is another fundamental idea enshrined in the Constitution.⁷ However, Ethiopia's perception of federalism differs from that of the other federalist countries in several ways. Therefore, the study sought to determine the power distribution between the federal and state governments in Ethiopia and regional autonomy; what factors are considered essential to the working of federalism in Ethiopia; how federalism provides a framework for the equal recognition of cultural and religious diversity in Ethiopia and the contribution of ethnic-based federalism in promoting democracy. The general objective of answering the question was to examine elements that are deemed critical to the functioning of federalism in Ethiopia.

II. Elements that are Deemed Critical to the Functioning of Federalism in Ethiopia.

2.1 The Federal Power Control and Regional Autonomy in Ethiopia

In this section, we will examine the relationship between the federal⁸ and state governments, regardless of how much power they have. There is a constitution clearly defining the power separation between the federal and state governments. The division of power between the different levels of government enables the federal and state governments can do effective on their responsibility and assuring their authority. In this regard, the federal government has its constitution and the regional governments also have their constitution but not against the central or national government constitution. The core characteristic of the FDRE constitution is the establishment of the institution and accommodation of ethnic diversity. The FDRE constitution grants a nation, nationality,

⁷ Jump to essay-1See *Bond v. United States*, 572 U.S. 844, 857–58 (2014) (Among the background principles . . . that our cases have recognized are those grounded in the relationship between the Federal Government and the States under our Constitution.).

⁸ Gosaye Birhanu. (2009). The central government, often known as the federal government or national government, is the country's overall government. The other layer of governance is made up of federating units known by various titles, such as states in the United States, Lander (Germany), Provinces (Canada), Cantons (Switzerland), and regional states (Ethiopia).

⁹ Young (2002). 'Regionalism and democracy in Ethiopia'; and K Mengisteab, 'New approaches to state building

and people extensive rights, including the right of self-administration.

The three federations differ significantly in their approach to distributing authority for enforcing federal legislation. A Canadian federation is a form of legislative federalism that balances executive and parliamentary powers. In contrast to the Canadian and Ethiopian federations, the German federation takes a different approach to administrative duty division. The Lander has been entrusted with the task of enforcing federal laws. The Basic Law specifies how the Lander governments should carry out federal law on their own and under the federal government's supervision. It also specifies which matters remain under the federal government's executive authority.

Other major components of the discussion imply that the leading political party and economic practice will influence the feasibility of ethnic federalism.⁹ The ruling party, Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and its successors, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), play a critical role in defining the lifespan, character, and vigor of federated Ethiopia. The governing party's achievements are conveyed in one of two ways.¹⁰

2.2 The Role of Federalism in Recognizing Ethiopia's Cultural and Religious Diversity

Language and religious diversity is the manifestation of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a patchwork of roughly 100 languages categorized into four divisions. Most languages belong to the Semitic, Cushitic, or Omotic groupings, all part of the Afro-Asiatic language family. A tiny number of languages belong to a fourth group, Nilotic, which is part of the Nilo-Saharan language family.¹¹ Religion diversity is also a manifestation of Ethiopia. Accordingly, there are two major religions and other endemic religions that are practiced in Ethiopia.

in Africa: the case of Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalism', *African Studies Review*, 40 (3), 1997, pp 111–132. See also Mengisteab, 'Ethiopia: state building or imperial revival?', in AI Samatar & A Samatar (eds), *The African State: Reconsiderations*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, pp 177–190

¹⁰ Abdi Ismail Samatar.(2007). Ethiopian federalism: autonomy versus control in the Somali region. , *Third World Quarterly*, 25:6, 1131-1154, DOI: 10.1080/0143659042000256931

¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia/Ethnic-groups-and-languages>

Christianity accounts for 43 percent, Muslim 33 percent, protestant 23 percent, and 1 percent endemic. The church has long held a dominant position in Ethiopian culture and politics, serving as the state religion of the ruling elite till the monarchy's¹² demise in 1974.

The federal government's working language is Amharic, and English is the federal state's de facto second language. Different regional states use six languages as their working languages. In primary school, more than 20 languages are employed as a medium of instruction. Beginning in grade one, English is taught as a topic and is used as a medium of teaching in secondary and higher education.

"Diversity-related concerns in Ethiopia are deeply rooted in the country's social and political history. However, since the early 1990s, Ethiopians have been discussing diversity at both the official and societal levels. Though other forms of diversity exist, Ethiopia has been described as a "museum of peoples" (Beshir, 1979; Wagaw, 1999)."¹³

Regional federalism and individual libertarianism may not work effectively in places where multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-cultural societies have thrived despite failed assimilation attempts. On the one hand, in today's environment, a large-scale integration attempt may not be possible without infringing on basic rights. Instead, economic integration could lead to gradual and voluntary assimilation. However, this will not be easy to do, as bringing about

¹² The phrase refers to states in which the monarchy, or supreme authority, is vested in a single ruler who serves as the head of state and is born into the position. In most monarchies, only males can succeed to the throne, usually from father to son (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/monarchy>).

¹³ Abebaw Y. Adamu.(2013). Diversity in Ethiopia: A Historical Overview of Political Challenges. THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY DIVERSITY <http://ondiversity.com/>

¹⁴ Mengisteab. (1997). New approaches to state building in Africa: the case of Ethiopia's ethnic based federalism. *African Studies Review*, 40(3), 111-132

¹⁵ Van der Beken (2008). Van der Beken, C. (2008). Ethiopia: Constitutional protection of ethnic minorities at the regional level. In E. Brems & C. Van der Beken (Eds.). *Federalism and the protection of human rights in Ethiopia* (pp. 126-160). Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co.KG Wien.

significant and inclusive economic changes and integration for the benefit of the general population.

The imperial rule was a powerful centralized state¹⁴ that used homogeneity as a nation-building method to ensure state integration.¹⁵ The dictatorship aimed to build a national culture, language, and religion for all Ethiopians as part of its national integration agenda.¹⁶ Amharic was the only language utilized for media, court, education, and other publications as a result of this policy. Other than Amharic and English, it was illegal to teach, print, or broadcast other languages.¹⁷ Amharic was used as a "language of administration as well as a language and culture of integration" in practice.¹⁸ Other languages and cultures suffered as a result of the dominant Amharic language and culture spreading through administration and education.¹⁹ The "Amharization" project was centered on Amharic linguistic hegemony, and as part of that process, Amharic language proficiency was regarded for governmental positions and a variety of economic resources.²⁰

2.3 The Contribution of Federalism in Promoting Democracy in Ethiopia

No single theory can explain the relationship between democracy and federalism from a federalism and democracy relation perspective. According to Dimitris N. Chrysochoou (1998), democracy and federalism have distinct concepts and interpretations. However, there is a point where both democracy and federalism have a similar picture; for example, both federalism and democracy seek to

¹⁶ Alemu & Tekleselassie.(2006). Alemu, D. S. & Tekleselassie, A. A. (2006). Instructional language policy in Ethiopia: Motivated by politics or the educational needs of children? *Planning and Changing*, 37(3&4), 151-168.

¹⁷ Boothe & Walker, 1997; Keller, 1988; Markakis, 1989). Boothe, K. & Walker, R. (1997). Mother tongue education in Ethiopia: From policy to implementation. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 21(1), 1-19

¹⁸ Tronvoll. (2000, p. 13). Tronvoll, K. (2000). Ethiopia: A new start? Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,Mrgi,countryre p,eth,,469cbf930,0.html>

¹⁹ Van der Beken.(2007). Van der Beken, C. (2007). Ethiopia: from a centralized monarchy to a federal republic. *Afrika Focus*, 20(1-2), 13-48.

²⁰ Smith. (2008). Smith, L. (2008). The politics of contemporary language policy in Ethiopia. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24(2), 207-243.

embrace diverse interests collectively within a viable political framework. Their concept and principles must protect societies' essential liberty and rights; this right will include both natural and democratic rights. Federalism and democracy have a relationship in this scenario that involves the exchange of practical methodological and theoretical variables.

The concept of one-person, one-vote is central to democracy. In such cases, the majority member has a higher voice than the minority member and is governed by majority decisions while respecting the minority's rights. In the principle of federalism, the minority in a large population does not lose their rights due to their small number, and this can be one of the links between democracy and federalism. Democracy is assumed to be a tool for individual and communal self-determination and thus for personal and group freedom, and this is what the plausibility of federal principles entails.

Federalism and democracy have been harmonized. Democracy would fail if federalism did not exist, and vice versa. Democracy is not only a formula for establishing legitimate government; it is also a process for achieving peaceful resolution of disputes, particularly in areas where ethnic communities are fragmented or diverse. Federalism (true federalism) is a method of managing ethnic conflict and is frequently viewed as a solution and means to ethnic conflict.

Federalism, the protection of rights, and the rule of law are all characteristics of democratic promotion (Levy, 2007). The various types of federalism and democracy and how they interact significantly impact centralized or decentralized governments, particularly the division of power. Federalism is a system of power-sharing among states. Power is distributed horizontally in a democracy. On the other hand, knowledge of federalism in autocratic government experiences that support dictators' influence to change it into a democratical system see (Benz and Kropp, 2014; Lane and Ersson, 2005; Obydenkova and Swenden, 2013).

III. Methodology

IV. Discussion

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Categories	Category	Frequency	%	Regions/city		%
Gender	Male	239	62.2	Oromia	153	39.8
	Female	145	37.8	Somali	60	15.6
	Total	384	100	SNNP	78	20.3
Age	18-30	138	35.9	Sidama	42	10.9
	31-40	203	52.9	Addis Ababa	51	13.3
	41-50	38	9.9	Total	N=384	100%
	>50	5	1.3			

Under this section, we will examine the research methodology and its approach. The research methodology will help us construct and demonstrate the research problem and purpose and how to present the findings based on the data collected during the study. This chapter on research design and technique also explains how the study's goal will achieve the final research result. The research methodologies used for the study of this paper were discussed in this chapter. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed in this study. In the section, the research design, research techniques, study area, sources of data such as primary and secondary data, population size was examined.

Research design: The research design is used to determine which approach is more suited and applicable for the given research study. In another way, the research design is the stepping-stone or the foundation of the research to achieve the desired goals and objectives. In another way, the research design determines how relevant information for a study is gathered.

Data gathering method: both survey questionnaires and in-depth-interview were used for data collection. Well-structured questionnaires were set for the citizens selected from the study area (Oromia, South Nation, and nationality, and People (SNNP), Somali, Addis Ababa, and Sidama regions). At the same time, interview questions were held with Political Party Leaders and members of the Legislature, Academician, and Officials. The research was conducted in four regions (Oromiya, South Nation and Nationality People (SNNP), Sidama and Somali), Addis Ababa city administration, selected federal institutions, and Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU). A simple random sample and purposive selection approaches were applied to select the representative and respondents for the survey questionnaires (quantitative) and interview for a qualitative study, respectively.

Data sources: Both primary and secondary data sources were used to gather the information for the study. The primary data, called the raw data, was gathered first-hand. The response gathered from the participants during the survey questionnaires and interview was used as primary sources. The published book, journals articles, annual report, seminar report, the constitution was used as secondary sources.

Total	N=384	100
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Source: computed from the survey (202)

Table 2: Federal Power Control and Regional Autonomy in Ethiopia

The federal government in Ethiopia interferes frequently with the functioning of Regional, District, and Village level governments		
Level of agreement	Frequency	Percent
Yes & that is fine	40	10.4
Yes & that is not ok	203	52.9
No, it does not interfere frequently	94	24.5
Don't know	47	12.2
Total	N= 384	100.0

Source: computed from the survey (202)

As table 2 show that the interferes of the federal government with the functioning of the Regional District. The village, 203 (52.9 %) out of 384 respondents believe that the federal government interferes in regional issues and that is not good, 94 (24.5%) out of 384 said that No, it does not interfere, whereas 40 (10.4 %) believe that the federal government interferes in regional issues & that is fine.

4.1 Elements that are deemed necessary for Ethiopian federalism to function

This section discusses the variables that are critical to federalism's practices. Respondents were asked to rank their priorities based on their opinions and perceptions (Most significant to least necessary). More than half of the respondents, 200 (52 percent) out of 384, believed that Translating the constitutional distribution of powers between the federal and regional government into actual practice is the most crucial element deemed necessary for Ethiopian federalism to function. 88 (23 percent) believed that entrenching ethnic federalism in the constitution is the second element deemed necessary for the function of federalism Ethiopian (see table 3).

Table 3: Important factors in the implementation of federalism

	Issue	Frequency	percent	Rank
a	Translating the constitutional distribution of powers between the federal and regional government into actual practice	200	52	1 st
b	Entrenching ethnic federalism in the constitution	88	23	2 nd
c	Ensuring equitable distribution of power between the different levels of government	54	14	3 rd
d	The ability of political elites to collaborate and work together	42	11	4 th
	Total	384	100	

Source: based on the results of a survey (2021)

4.3 The Role of Federalism in Recognizing Ethiopia's Cultural and Religious Diversity

This section deals with the federal recognition for cultural and religious diversity in Ethiopia see (Table 4). Most respondents (76.2%) thought that federalism offers a framework for equal acknowledgment of Ethiopia's cultural variety. Federalism also provides a framework for equal recognition of Ethiopia's religious diversity. More than half of the respondents (78.2%)

stated that since Ethiopia's adoption of federalism, each nation's nationality and people must follow their culture and the religion to which they belong. However, a tiny percentage of respondents (16.2 percent) and (11.7 percent) did not agree with the assertion.

Table 4: In Ethiopia, federalism creates a framework for equitable cultural and religious diversity acknowledgment.

Variables	Level of agreement				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor di	Agree	Strongly agree
Federalism provides a framework for the equal recognition for cultural diversity in Ethiopia	6.8%	9.4 %	7.6 %	43.2 %	33.1 %
Federalism provides a framework for the equal recognition for religious diversity in Ethiopia	7 %	4.7 %	10.2 %	40.4 %	37.8 %

Source: based on the results of a survey (2021)

4.4 The Federal Power Control and Regional Autonomy in Ethiopia

The above statement was asked the respondents in quantitative survey questionnaires to know how the participants perceive the federal and state relation. Two hundred three out of three hundred eighty-four (52.9%) respondents agreed that the federal government interferes in regional affairs (see table 2). This question arose from the interviewees of sixty-four participants to get their opinion. Accordingly, forty out of sixty-four (62.5 %) respondents claim that the federal government regularly interfered with the regional, district, and village operations.

The study of Ethiopia's federal system regardless of the central government interference in regional issues has been many debates in many scholars. The division of authority between the federal and the state are central to federalism. There is a significant division of authorities between the governments at the state or national level. In other words, there is a line in which the federal government and state governments rely on one another, but it does not mean that either the federal or the state governments can do in charge of the other.

"Although the Constitution clearly defines the powers of the central and state governments, the power is in the hands of the ruling party, and the ruling party, which the TPLF leads, is the sole decider. According to the Constitution, States may issue their constitutions without inferring the federal Constitution. In practice, though, everything is nothing, and there is no such thing as Ethiopia."

The independence of the states is one of the principles of the federal system. However, the situation on the ground is not as specified in the Constitution. The central government allegedly intervened in the regions as it pleased, and in some cases, it intervened to seize land from regional communities for personal use. There was eviction, assassination, and confiscation of property. The intervention had such an impact on the regions that some were at odds with the central government.

In contrast, others were paralyzed to the point where they could not make decisions and could not move or function without the central government's direction. To this end, the TPLF EPRDF has applied the divisive principle labeled four regions: Somalia, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, and Gambella, referring to them as partner states to keep them out of politics. The TPLF has been doing this for two decades. For personal gain, the TPLF EPRDF plunders fertile land and large tracts of farmland, especially in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz.

"The TPLF, for example, claims that the region's resources, particularly in Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella, are vast and suitable for farming, but that the region is unable to cultivate them, according to the interviewee. Because the federal government sought to make land looting and seizing easier, it was placed under the Ministry of Agriculture."

The TPLF, its officials, relatives, and associates displaced Oromo peasants in the Finfinnee area without the Oromia region's recognition. Between 1995 and 2018, an estimated 171,000 Oromo peasants were displaced. This level of dislocation has not been experienced in the country in fifty or sixty years. The community's demographics, such as language, culture, and religion, shifted and eventually dissolved. Farmers have devolved mainly into beggars.

"The TPLF-led dictatorship imposed ethnic politics and the deconstruction of Ethiopian history through corporate corruption, ultra-vires, and pseudo-federalism. Misappropriation of national assets, combined with the regime's dictatorial tendencies, has resulted in periodic political opposition and protests since the party came to power. Within the party, political marginalization prompted a divide, motivating state elites in the Amhara and Oromia regions to support the public rebellion."

In Ethiopia, the federal government has pursued inciting interference and suspicion among state governments for the past twenty-seven years. Outside of its mission, the federal government led by TPLF interfere with the issues of state governments. It has also been used to prolong and provoke

conflict between states, resulting in and deploying regional conflicts. In Ethiopia, it was known as federalism, but it was a colonial system in reality. For the past 27 years, Ethiopia has had both excellent and bad relations with its neighboring regions. It specifies what the federal government is interfering with under the Constitution's power of intervention. However, the government action was not justified by the Constitution. Instead, it was based on the will of the ruling party, the TPLF.

Although federalism implies a fair political and resource distribution of regions, this was not the case in Ethiopia. The main reason for this is that the country is ruled by a single political party, allowing the TPLF to plunder and perplex the people as it sees fit. States are not completely autonomous and free of central government involvement in some aspects. For example, in the case of inhumane treatment, the federal government will step in. The federal government intervenes when the state's capacity is limited. As stated in Article 51²¹ of the FDRE constitution, it is challenging to manage violence and when the massacre is racially motivated. There has been testing so far, although most interviewees claimed that the motivation was policies rather than in the face of.

“The FDRE constitution gives the states much power, but in practice, it depends on the interests of the political party, and the states have not been able to formulate their policies. The party makes all of the decisions. In fact, without federal funding, some regions have been unable to meet their budgetary. The state government receives more than 87 percent of the federal budget in some regional states. Some others can arrange themselves in an environmentally appropriate manner. The weak economy and inefficient use of local resources in some regions enable the TPLF to impose the "you can do this" or "you can't do that" philosophy on regional governments. For the past 27 years, the TPLF has acted as custodians for the majority of the region, and it is impossible to assert that the regional states have operated freely.”

It is not reasonable to state that Ethiopia had federalism; rather, "I can say that it has a unitary system." This is because everything is run by a single unit of the central government. For example, we can see what happened in the Oromia National Regional State's Finfinnee Master Plan. The issue of the Finfinnee Master Plan stemmed from the developmental state mindset, according to the TPLF and her allies. This ideology has the potential to constrain regional economic planning and management. The TPLF proposed stealing land from farmers in the Finfinnee area within a 100-kilometer

²¹ Powers and Functions of the Federal Government (see FDRE constitution 1995).

²² Powers and Functions of the Federal Government .See Article 51 (1-21) of the FDRE constitution

radius of the Oromia region. This meant that the central government would intervene in the regions and plunder the resources as they saw fit. Today, instead of adhering to the principles of federalism, the EPRDF-led government is using it as a tool to stay in power.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that the TPLF EPRDF is the mother of all problems. As a result, the majority of people are trapped in a vicious cycle of identity politics. State leadership that the federal government does not want cannot remain in position. They are unable to determine "what is right" and "what is wrong."

The central governments were interfering with the political interests of the states beyond the boundaries set by the Constitution and the states' interests. But according to the FDRE Constitution, the federal and state governments should perform their parts following the Constitution's separation of powers. The state government acts on a state level, whereas the federal government acts on a national one. The federal government, for example, performs the functions outlined in Article 51²² regarding the federal government's powers and functions, such as coining money, managing foreign and inter-regional trade, organizing defense forces, and declaring war. Similarly, the regional government sets the state's administrative structure, monitors regional business activity, etc. It should, in general, carry out the functions outlined in Article 52²³ of the Constitution, which specifies the state's authorities and functions.

Separation of powers between the states and the federal government, on the other hand, is enshrined in the Constitution, but there is a limitation in the implementation phase. States have been administered by self-government and their councils since Ethiopia adopted federalism. Of course, there will be interference between the federal and state governments in a country with two governments, as allowed by the Constitution. This does not imply that the region is not a self-governing entity and that no one will interfere in affairs; intervention also does not imply that the state and federal governments will cooperate. For instance, when a state begs federal assistance and human rights violations occur in that state.

Ethiopia has had a federal system of government since the inception of federalism (1995) which accounts for more than two decades. The Constitution establishes their powers, and it is clear that the federal government and the states are distinct entities and have joint powers and responsibilities. The Constitution has no such gaps bearing on state rights. The issue, however, is with the implementation.

²³ Powers and Functions of States. See Article 5 (1-2) of the FDRE constitution

Some regional governments lack autonomy due to the EPRDF's political culture. The party, which TPLF led, made every decision. In Ethiopia, only four regions (Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR, and Tigray) were members of the party, while the other five regions (Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Afar, and Harari) were not included in the party.

Those four regions have political decision-making authority, and their proportions are balanced. For example, the Oromo ethnicity, which has more than 40 million people, and the Tigray ethnicity, 6 million, have equal representation in the political part structure; each has nine people. The TPLF was the primary decision-maker, whereas the others did not always meet the needs of the community they represented. Their sole responsibility is to carry out the TPLF's mission as messengers and trustees. For 27 years, other states such as Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Afar, Somalia, and Harari did not participate equally in political decisions.

On the other hand, article 89 of the FDRE constitution states that all regional states have the right to an equitable distribution of resources. According to the essay, all nations benefit equally and have equal opportunities for advancement. The federal system ensures equal access to the political, economic, and social sectors in general. The federal system will also provide exceptional assistance to developing regions in their economic and social development in this regard.

The Role of Federalism in Recognizing Ethiopia's Cultural and Religious Diversity

In line with the preceding statement, participants were asked how the federal framework can accommodate Ethiopia's cultural and religious diversity (see table 4.4). Cultural diversity recognition: Most respondents (76.2 percent) believed that federalism provides a framework for equal recognition of cultural diversity in Ethiopia. The question also arose for the participants who were involved during the interviewee. Accordingly, sixty out of sixty-four (93.75 %) of the interviewees argued that adopting federalism in Ethiopia has a high contribution to equal recognition of cultural diversity in Ethiopia. The interviewees

"One of the reasons Ethiopia has chosen federalism is that it allows nations, nationalities, and peoples to treat their identities (culture, languages, and religions) equally. People have become suspicious and alienated due to previous regimes, so adopting federalism will be intended to create a unique

relationship between nations, nationalities, and peoples free of discrimination."

A five-point Likert scale was used to test the respondent's outlook to know the people's opinions on religious diversity. The information was gathered from 384 respondents from various research areas. More than half of the respondents (78.2 percent) stated that since Ethiopia adopted federalism, each nation's nationality and people practice the religion they belong to. The majority of interviewees (100 %) believed that after 1991, religious diversity had gained acceptance.

"Religious diversity is visible in our country. Ethiopian nationals and citizens practice Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and indigenous religions. These religions have become a part of Ethiopian history, and since the country's adoption of federalism, every nation, nationality, and people have been free to practice whatever religion they wish."

It is known for its diversity of identity and identity expressions, such as language, culture, history, nations and nationality, and so on." Ethiopia now has a wide range of religious diversity. Since antiquity, our country has been home to waqefata (now known as traditional beliefs), Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and other religions. They all, without exception, characterize their religion.

This is an objective reality that everyone needs to recognize, enjoy, and coexist with." We are currently living and exercising a new constitutional, objective, and practical chapter. As a result, "today is not the same as yesterday." Let us examine a few facts from previous governments and compare them to the current reality of religious tolerance, coexistence, and constitutional protections.

The FDRE constitution fundamentally altered Ethiopia's previously imbalanced religious relations, providing recognition and security for religious diversity. For instance, the Emperor always professes the Ethiopian Orthodox faith.²⁴ Article 127, the church has no right to perform any of its duties without the approval of the Emperor or the state.²⁵

During the Derg²⁶ administration, under Article 46 there are three sub-articles on the rights and duties of citizens that indicate Ethiopians are guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, the exercise of freedom of religion may not be contrary to the interests of the state and the revolution, public morality, or the freedom of other citizens, and state and

the revolution's early years, the number of its members was severely reduced. See Pliny, the Middle Aged sic, 'The Lives and Times of The Derg' North East African Studies, Vol. 5 (1984-85)

²⁴ See Article 126 of 1955 Ethiopian constitution

²⁵ See Article 127 of 1955 Ethiopian constitution

²⁶ Derg signifies committee or central-committee in Amharic. In 1974, the Derg was founded. It began with 120 members representing various army groups. During

religion are separate. In practice, however, the military regime was hostile to all religions. The Constitution was not applicable, and many religious adherents and institutions suffered morally and spiritually.²⁷

Similar thought to the above statement: "We briefly reviewed the three constitutions, and their unique behavior is oppressive and undemocratic." Another conclusion is that Ethiopians never systematically ascribed to these governments and fought valiantly for their collective human and democratic rights.

Before the EPRDF came to power in 1991, Ethiopian nations, ethnicities, and peoples were oppressed and lost their identities at the hands of the ruling state, particularly during the reigns of Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie. As a result, the Ethiopian people suffered economically and socially. To be a part of the Ethiopian people during the Emperor's reign, you had to pretend to speak the royal language,[1] adopt the rulers' culture, embrace the rulers' religion, and serve as an agent for the rulers. The royal regime oppressed the people's identities, culture, and language, and the oppression of identities, language, and culture, linked to economic oppression under the one nation, one language philosophy. During the monarchy, other human and democratic rights were also unthinkable. To express the system's perfection, "Let no king be accused, Let not the heavens be plowed." No one had the right to question, resist, or disagree with the Emperor's decisions at the time, no matter what he did. Ethiopia's nations, nationalities, and peoples have been brutally massacred in their quest for identity. Raising the issue of identity comes with a price, and that price is death. The Emperor committed atrocities against Ethiopia's nations, nationalities, and peoples. The imperial rule was a

powerful centralized state²⁸ that used homogeneity as a nation-building method to ensure state integration.²⁹ The dictatorship aimed to build a national culture, language, and religion for all Ethiopians as part of its national integration agenda.³⁰ Amharic was the only language utilized for media, court, education, and other publications as a result of this policy. Other than Amharic and English, it was illegal to teach, print, or broadcast other languages.³¹ Amharic was used as a "language of administration as well as a language and culture of integration" in practice.³² Other languages and cultures suffered as a result of the dominant Amharic language and culture spreading through administration and education.³³ The "Amharization" project was centered on Amharic linguistic hegemony, and as part of that process, Amharic language proficiency was regarded for governmental positions and a variety of economic resources.³⁴

The FDRE constitution outlined the separation of state and religion. The state and religion are separate; there shall be no state religion. As stated in the sub-articles, the state shall not interfere in religious matters, and religion shall not interfere in state affairs.³⁵ The FDRE constitution also guaranteed the right to equality, which stated that all people are equal before the law³⁶ and are entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination. In this regard, the law shall provide equal and effective protection to all persons without regard to race, nation, or other social origins, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, property, birth, or another status.

With the freedom of religion, belief, and opinion, everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and promote religion.³⁷ This right shall include the freedom to

²⁷ See Article 46 (1-3) of Ethiopian constitution of 1987

²⁸ Mengisteab. (1997). New approaches to state building in Africa: the case of Ethiopia's ethnicbased federalism. *African Studies Review*, 40(3), 111-132

²⁹ Van der Beken (2008). Van der Beken, C. (2008). Ethiopia: Constitutional protection of ethnic minorities at the regional level. In E. Brems & C. Van der Beken (Eds.). *Federalism and the protection of human rights in Ethiopia* (pp. 126-160). Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co.KG Wien.

³⁰ Alemu & Tekleselassie.(2006). Alemu, D. S. & Tekleselassie, A. A. (2006). Instructional language policy in Ethiopia: Motivated by politics or the educational needs of children? *Planning and Changing*, 37(3&4), 151-168.

³¹ Boothe & Walker, 1997; Keller, 1988; Markakis, 1989). Boothe, K. & Walker, R. (1997). *Mother tongue*

education in Ethiopia: From policy to implementation. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 21(1), 1-19

³² Tronvoll. (2000, p. 13). Tronvoll, K. (2000). Ethiopia: A new start? Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,Mrgi,countryre p,eth,,469cbf930,0.html>

³³ Van der Beken.(2007). Van der Beken, C. (2007). Ethiopia: from a centralized monarchy to a federal republic. *Afrika Focus*, 20(1-2), 13-48.

³⁴ Smith. (2008). Smith, L. (2008). The politics of contemporary language policy in Ethiopia. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24(2), 207-243.

³⁵ See Article 11 (1-3) of the FDRE constitution

³⁶ See Article 25 of the FDRE constitution

³⁷ See Article 27 of the FDRE constitution

hold or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, as well as the freedom to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private.' Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-article 2 of article 90, believers may establish religious education institutions and a religious school.

“Diversity-related concerns in Ethiopia are deeply rooted in the country's social and political history. However, since the early 1990s, Ethiopians have been discussing diversity at both the official and societal levels. Though other forms of diversity exist, Ethiopia has been described as a "museum of peoples" (Beshir, 1979; Wagaw, 1999).”³⁸

The Contribution of Federalism in Promoting Democracy in Ethiopia

The question of how Ethiopian federalism has contributed to the development of democracy in Ethiopia arose for the respondents. How do you estimate the contribution of ethnic-based federalism in strengthening democracy? Forty-seven out of sixty-four (73.4%) of the participants argued the Ethiopian federalism has contributed to the development of democracy in Ethiopia. However, the participants had different views on the statement. The majority of the participants agreed that the FDRE Constitution establishes a federal and democratic governance structure. When we say democracy, we mean that the government and institutions are built on the vitality and fair representation of the people, that their operations are transparent and accountable, and that individuals' fundamental democratic rights are freely respected and enjoyed.

"There is no reason to think that Ethiopian federalism has contributed to the growth of democracy. The TPLF and its supporters in power have always used it as a tool of deception and manipulation."

Introducing a federal structure is another milestone in Ethiopia's democracy (language, religion, and culture. In Ethiopia's current setting, the relationship between democracy and federalism is inextricably linked, and ethnic federalism is critical to ensuring and promoting democracy. Properly implemented, federalism can significantly contribute to democratic building. In a democracy, the right to freedom of expression, the right to vote, and the people's voices are respected. Federalism has aided in the development of democracy in Ethiopia nations, and nationalities have been free to govern themselves locally since the inception of the

federal system, expressing their ideas in whichever language they desire—one of the manifestations of democracy. One of the hallmarks of democracy development in Ethiopia's move from a unitary to a federal government. Peace, democracy, and the rule of law are the most critical parameters for a country's development, while social and economic consequences are also significant. Since Ethiopia established the federal system, there have been substantial changes in this area. From kindergarten to fourth grade, and in some areas, from kindergarten to eighth grade, people of various nationalities are taught to speak, learn, and lead in their mother tongue. Participation in the political party that the people claim to represent and to form a party organization has greatly aided public organization in the political arena. It was, for example, illegal in the pre-1991 system to question or argue about democratic and human rights.

Ethiopia, without a doubt, saw massive political institution-building and the establishment of a democratic public culture after 1991. The ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front–Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF–EPRDF) maintains tight control over the process, including much talk but little action. During political insecurity and questioned legitimacy, this party built a network of political and economic control from its circle of trusted individuals, loyalists, and former comrades in arms. Ethiopia established a selective hold on politics and economics as a result. Non-party-affiliated businesspeople frequently complain about unfair and opaque competition and preferential treatment because of the rise of a new, party-affiliated business class. The majority of political decision-making appears to occur outside the cabinet of ministers and the parliament, as is evident at critical times. In contested and dangerous political arenas, such as Ethiopia's or Africa's, this informal, behind-the-scenes politics is unavoidable. It does, however, imply that long-term constraints in the political system have hindered the development of a formal democratic setup that could direct the handover of political authority.³⁹

“On the other hand, some argue that Ethiopian federalism did not allow for the development of democracy because everything was under the control of a single political party (the TPLF EPRDF).

The elections were held every five years, but it was a fake election which was almost unfair. The TPLF EPRDF either stole the ballot or brave the voice of and the electorate did not believe it. Because the voters did not elect the party in Ethiopia's previous five-round polls, it was impossible to call them democratic. Nonetheless, since 1991, Ethiopians have been extolling the virtues of democracy.”

³⁸ Abebaw Y. Adamu.(2013). Diversity in Ethiopia: A Historical Overview of Political Challenges. THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY DIVERSITY <http://ondiversity.com/>

³⁹ Abbink.j.(2006). Discomfiture of democracy? The 2005 election crisis in Ethiopia and its aftermath. African Affairs, 105/419, 173–199

The other is that every individual has the democratic right to support or oppose any political party they want. A democratic system, on the other hand, is one in which states can exercise their constitutional powers (legislative, executive, and judicial authorities) and are directly answerable to the people they elect. Ethiopia has merged democracy and politics in its implementation of democracy. However, TPLF follows the ideology of revolutionary democracy. This was why at the heart of a period, citizens were brutally deprived of their human and democratic rights, unjustly treated, killed, displaced, imprisoned, tortured, and incarcerated simply for expressing their opinions. Ethiopia, the TPLF EPRDF's approach to federalism was not democratic; rather, it was anti-democratic. Instead of creating a democratic environment for the country, he has sought to exacerbate the country's fractured and wounded past. However, this hurts the sense of nation-building.

People should understand not only their democratic rights but also respect others' democratic rights. The majority of Ethiopians are unaware of the country's democratic equality. This is why some individuals are only concerned with their democratic rights while ignoring others. Every person has the right to develop his or her own culture, language, and religion, which is one of the trademarks of democracy. Since 1991, nations, nationalities, and peoples have been able to express themselves in this regard freely. On the other hand, the Constitution provides that all states have their councils to address regional and national matters and that the right to self-determination, including secession, is guaranteed.

V. Conclusion

The study focuses on federal power control and regional autonomy, Ethiopian federalism's contribution to accommodating language and cultural diversity, and federalism's role in strengthening democracy. The study indicates that the federal government interferes in regional matters and that, as a result of the TPLF's meddling, some regional states have not thoroughly exercised their autonomy. The central governments were interfering with the political interests of the states beyond the constitutional and state-interest limitations. The separation of powers between the states and the federal government, on the other hand, is codified in the Constitution, but it is limited in practice.

As established by the Constitution, the federal government and the states are distinct institutions with combined authorities and responsibilities. There are no such loopholes in the Constitution that affect state rights. On the other hand, the federal government, led by the TPLF, interferes with state government issues outside its mission. Through corporate corruption, ultra-vires, and pseudo-federalism, the TPLF led government-imposed ethnic politics and the deconstruction of Ethiopian history. The TPLF can impose the "you can do this" or "you cannot do that" mindset

on regional administrations due to some regions' weak economy and ineffective utilization of local resources.

Ethiopia's historically unbalanced religious relations were substantially altered by the FDRE constitution, which recognized and protected religious pluralism. The separation of state and religion is outlined in the FDRE constitution. There will be no official religion because the state and religion are separate. As specified in the sub-articles, the state shall not interfere in religious matters, and religion shall not interfere in state affairs. The right to equality was also guaranteed by the FDRE constitution, which stated that everyone is equal before the law and is entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion because of the freedom of religion, belief, and opinion. Concerns about Ethiopia's diversity are deeply established in the country's social and political past. Ethiopian federalism is essential for ensuring and promoting democracy in the country. Federalism, when properly implemented, can make a significant contribution to democratic development.

Since the federal system's establishment, Ethiopian countries and ethnicities have been able to govern themselves locally, which has contributed to the growth of democracy. The ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front–Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF–EPRDF), on the other hand, keeps a tight grip on the situation. Ethiopia has combined democracy and politics in its democratic implementation. The TPLF's approach to federalism was anti-democratic, not democratic. TPLF has chosen to worsen the country's broken and wounded past rather than create a democratic atmosphere.

Acronyms

EPRDF Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
TPLF Tigray People Liberation Front

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