Does Ethnic Federalism Promote Conflict?
Ethiopia as a Case Study
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Introduction

Does Ethnic Federalism promote conflict or have no effect at all? This is an important question because several states, especially throughout Sub Saharan Africa, consist of many ethnic groups, with some numbering close to 100 or more. This also plays a large role in domestic conflicts. It behooves us, therefore, to consider whether a government based on ethnic federalism can impact the rate of conflicts. This paper will test two theories about ethnic federalism and whether it causes conflict. The theory behind ethnic federalism, a federal political system governed by both the federal government and autonomously governed regions based on ethnicity, is that it would promote peace in states with diverse populations. However, I will test theories that purport that it may cause conflicts.

Theoretical Overview

There are several debates from scholars about whether ethnic federalism promotes peace or conflicts. One of the most influential arguments is from Lijphart, who argues for consociational democracy. The consociationalist school involves forms of federalism, including ethnic federalism, as it advocates for "pure parliamentarism...electoral systems that employ proportional representation in large districts over more majoritarian ones, and meaningful federalism that devolves considerable resources and autonomy to constituent subunits of the larger state."[1] The consociationalist school asserts that this system is efficient in mitigating ethnic divisions. An integral part of the consociationalist argument is the establishment of group autonomy in the state, where relevant ethnic and/or religious groups have political control over the affairs in their territorial region, with little interference from central government actors.[2]

However, critics of the consociationalist school reject that these core institutional arrangements are the superior method of addressing ethnically diverse or divided states. Rather, critics assert that the consociationalist structure can actually *increase* the likelihood of political violence when applied to the most diverse states.[3] Scholars like Powell argue that the political system consociationalists assert as the best in diverse states would actually increase the likelihood of extremist parties emerging, as the political consolidation of single ethnic and/or

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[1] Joel Selway, and Kharis Templeman. "The Myth of Consociationalism? Conflict Reduction in Divided Societies." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, No. 12 (2011), 1543
[2] Ibid., p. 1545-1546
[3] Ibid., p. 1543

religious group makes it so that political parties/actors have "rigid ideological stances far from the median voter in the electorate," which would threaten the state's political stability.[4] Other critical scholars like Cox, Horowitz, and Reilly further this by countering that the consociationalist structure incentivizes political parties/actors to engage in centrifugal rhetoric and strategies in order to gain voters and political power, appealing to extremist, rather than moderate ideologies.[5] This is because the political parties/actors only represent their ethnic group, and thus must get support from just this demographic, rather than from the whole population at large. Thus, they have clear incentives to harden ethnic divisions, rather than to work across ethnic groups or for the national good.[6]

Similarly, other scholars, like Anderson, theorize that factors such as "ethnic outbidding" make ethnic federalism less peaceful for states. Ethnic outbidding occurs when entrepreneurial ethnic leaders and politicians take advantage of any autonomy afforded to them and manipulate the political rhetoric in a way that pits ethnic groups against each other and/or against the central government in order to secure the political support of one's own ethnic group in the process. Case studies in the literature that cite this have been based on authoritarian states like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Entrepreneurial ethnic leaders, in order to compete against other politicians/political parties, amplify ethnic-based or nationalist rhetoric that mobilizes its population in order to win more political power. The result of this is the likely social disintegration of the state, and more conflict across ethnic lines. It is clear in the literature though, that ethnic entrepreneurship can happen in any system where there is any kind of political competition, regardless of how undemocratic it is, as there is still some forms of political competition in any authoritarian regime.[7]

I theorize that ethnic entrepreneurs have an incentive to amplify ethnic-based or ethno-nationalist rhetoric, including extremist and/or diversionary rhetoric, because that is the way to attain political power from the support of the population in an ethnic federalist system. The incentives for ethnic entrepreneurs to engage in ethnically divisive rhetoric is for the pursuit

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[4] Ibid., p. 1547 ; G. Bingham Powell, *Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability, and Violence*. (Harvard University Press, 1982)

[5] Gary W Cox. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 34, No. 4 (1990) ; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. (University of California Berkeley Press, 1985), 326. ; Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly, and National Research Council. *Electoral systems and Conflict in Divided Societies*. (National Academies Press, 1999), 29-31

[6] Selway and Templeman. "The Myth of Consociationalism? Conflict Reduction in Divided Societies." pp. 1547

[7] Liam Anderson. "Ethnofederalism: The Worst Form of Institutional Arrangement...?" *International Security* 39, No. 1 (2014), 170

of attaining and maintaining political power. I theorize that ethnic entrepreneurs thrive substantially in an ethnic federalism political system because engaging in ethnically charged rhetoric becomes the most promising and likely way to get political positions and continued support. I will explain the logic behind this in depth later in the paper, under the section "First causal mechanism: ethnic entrepreneurs."

Other scholars, like Berhane and Tefera, theorize that the reorganization of borders in an ethnic federalism system that seeks to "accurately" divide along ethnic lines actually creates more ethnic conflicts over ethnic groups' emerging claims of certain lands belonging to their "ethnic homeland"/territory, which inevitably comes at the expense of other ethnic groups. This especially becomes the case as already existing community needs for natural resources for their livelihoods now have ethnicity/nationhood attached to it, making conflicts more likely to occur, and the solutions to them more difficult to solve.[8] Since these conflicts are between regular civilians in the community, and not organized militias, this essay will not include cases of ethnic cleansing by ethnic based militias, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), into the theory testing, though it will be mentioned more in depth later in the "Historical Background" section.

My own theory is that both the theory of ethnic entrepreneurship and Berhane and Tefera's theory on the reorganization of borders along ethnic lines work together in causing more conflict within an ethnic federalist system. In this paper, I will demonstrate how both the role of ethnic entrepreneurs and the reorganization of borders along ethnic lines integrate in increasing the likelihood of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia.

Historical Background

The history of Ethiopia is an interesting case in Africa. The kingdoms part of modern day Ethiopia are amongst the oldest in the world, with the most prominent one being the Axum Empire from the 1st century AD, though civilization existed far beyond then, which is cited in ancient Greek philosophy, the Torah, Bible, and Quran. For several centuries, modern day Ethiopia was ruled by several kingdoms. However, in the 18th century, massive decentralization and chaos was prominent as a result of there being no dominant ruling empire at the time. This changed in the mid 19th century when Emperor Tewodros II reinstated the empire, and started

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[8] Zerihun Berhane and Samuel Tefera. "Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience." *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities* 14, No. 1 (2018), 117-121

the foundational process of making Ethiopia into a nation state. Following emperors after his reign, stemming from the northern and central part of Ethiopia, did the same and consolidated more territory into the empire southward. Throughout its history, Ethiopia has long retained its independence against foreign invaders, which was also the case during the Scramble of Africa in the 1800s, as Ethiopia, under Emperor Menelik II, defeated Italian troops seeking to colonize Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia was occupied by the Italians for five years starting in the late 1930s, but recovered its independence in January 1942. It was only in 1974 when the monarchy/feudal system that had ruled Ethiopia for so long was overthrown by the militaristic and communist Derg regime.[9]

Under Derg, the regime committed mass killings against civilians and organizations that opposed the regime. At the time though, the most notable forms of violence that most affected civilians and soldiers alike was that between national forces and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which sought to make Eritrea its own independent state. As a result of these conflicts, there were many internally displaced persons and refugees. By the time it was 1991, there were approximately two million Ethiopian refugees in the Horn of Africa region. Other than this war, the Tigrayan Peoples' Liberation Front's (TPLF) led an armed resistance against the Derg government. When it was first created in 1975, the TPLF had advocated for independence for the Tigrayan ethnic group, but when they defeated Derg and became the ruling regime in Ethiopia, they had changed their stance into seeking self-determination for Tigrayans within Ethiopia, and governing Ethiopia as a whole.[10]

Along with the TPLF, other ethnic based liberation fronts created in the 1970s included the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which advocated for an independent state for the Oromo ethnic group. However, the OLF is also notable for its consistent cases of targeted ethnic cleansing against the Amhara ethnic group. As many of Ethiopia's historical rulers and emperors hailed from the Amhara ethnic group, the OLF identified the Amharic ethnic group itself as a threat to its goals of independence, and blamed the Amhara ethnic group for the oppression of the Oromo people. The same is written in the TPLF manifesto as well, as they label the Amharas as the number one enemy of the Tigrayan ethnic group. This context is also relevant to one of the sub case studies that will be addressed in this essay. All together, the armed resistance of these

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[9] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, (University of California Press, 2002)
[10] Ibid. ; Sorenson, John. "Ethiopia's Refugees." *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 10, No. 4 (1991): 3-5.

ethnic-based militias against the central government, Derg, by the TPLF, OLF, and EPLF was the cause of most of the internal conflicts and displaced people in Ethiopia before the TPLF's eventual rule in 1991 after it defeated Derg, and implementation of ethnic federalism in 1994. Figure 1 shows the many actors that were engaged in an armed conflict against the Derg government.[11]
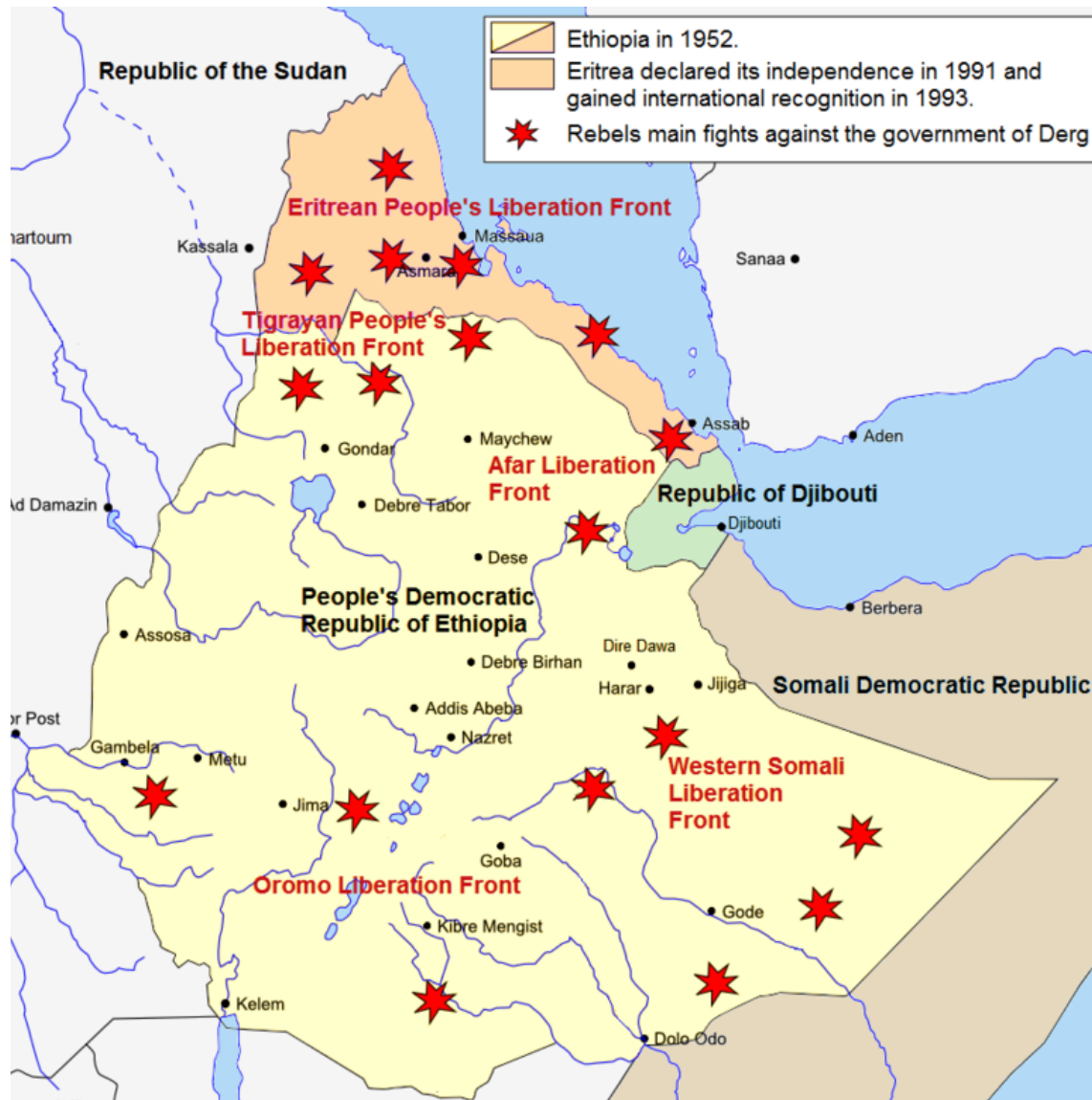

Figure 1

The TPLF ruled Ethiopia from 1991 to 2018. Like the previous regime, they also repressed the population, but whereas the Derg regime was ultimately nationalist, the TPLF repressed the population on an ethnic basis. The military under TPLF conducted military/police

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[11] People's Democratic Programme of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). (May 1983)
https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ethiopia/tigray-program.pdf

brutality and ethnic cleansing against several populations based on their ethnicity, with prominent cases being against the Anyuak, Amhara, Afar, Somali, and Oromo ethnic groups. The TPLF was corrupt, looting billions of dollars and resources from the economy. When the TPLF ruled Ethiopia, it was overwhelmingly composed of elites from the Tigrayan ethnic group. Likewise, over 80% of the army's officers/generals were Tigrayan. However, Tigrayans only make up around 6% of Ethiopia's population.[12] Throughout the TPLF's regime, countless atrocities were committed, with the prominent one being the mass killing of students in the capital, Addis Ababa, that were protesting against the illegitimate elections in 2005.[13]

TPLF lost power in 2018 after nation-wide protests from the population. Hundreds were killed by the military during these protests, which took place over several months in 2017. The governance of the federal government went to the current Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, who was part of the TPLF system and was nominated by TPLF to be the next Prime Minister. He soon created a new political party, called the Prosperity Party, which is a current popular party in Ethiopia. While ethnic federalism still remained in place, Prime Minister Ahmed has promoted nationalist rhetoric, and the relations between the current federal government and the TPLF have worsened overtime as the TPLF have been reduced to only holding power in the Tigray region, whereas it had previously controlled the country as a single party-rule system since 1991. This resulted in a war between the federal government forces and the TPLF forces, starting in November 2020, after the TPLF forces attacked the Northern Command military base of the federal government. Both actors give completely different accounts of what occurred, however. Several cases of ethnic cleansing and violence have been reported to be committed in this war by both sides, but since this is currently happening and finding credible evidence and studies is difficult and largely unavailable (as there is currently a lack of internet and connection services in northern Ethiopia), cases of ethnic violence in this war will not be mentioned in this essay.[14]

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[12] "Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census." United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), December 2008.
https://web.archive.org/web/20090325050115/http://www.csa.gov.et/pdf/Cen2007_firstdraft.pdf.
[13] Haili, Degeufe, "Ethiopia: The many crimes of the TPLF," *Green Left Weekly* 1175 (2018) ; McCracken, Matthew J, "Abusing self-determination and democracy: How the TPLF is looting Ethiopia," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 36, No. 1 (2004), 209
[14] Melesse, Kassahun. "Tigray's War against Ethiopia Isn't about Autonomy. It's about Economic Power." Foreign Policy, November 19, 2020.
https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/19/tigray-tplf-war-against-ethiopia-abiy-ahmed-isnt-about-autonomy-its-about-economic-power/. ; "Ethiopia: More than 1,100 Detained under State of Emergency." Al Jazeera, March 31, 2018.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/3/31/ethiopia-more-than-1100-detained-under-state-of-emergency.

Now to cover recent history, I will give the political context of important changes that were made in Ethiopia in the past few years. This is important because it explores other factors *other* than ethnic federalism, or that worked *alongside* ethnic federalism, that could have contributed to the increased ethnic conflicts.

First, Ethiopia is considered to be a weak state because there is so much conflict, not just within the country, but in neighboring countries like Somalia and South Sudan. There is a lack of rule and order in many unstable parts within Ethiopia, and it is not common for civilians to be protected by the military or police during ethnic conflicts. In fact, in many of the accounts during massacres against Amharas in the Oromia region, it has been reported and recorded on camera that local police officers do not assist civilians. In addition, police brutality is common in Ethiopia.

Another important event to take into account was the unstable transition of power in the federal government in 2018. When the TPLF lost power in 2018 after nation-wide protests, the governance of the federal government went to the current Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed. Such a change may have contributed to the mass increase of ethnic violence in the case studies starting in 2018 that were not as severe in the years prior. Soldiers must have been re-assigned elsewhere, or the sudden changes of local and regional politicians and officials may have made it so they could not handle the conflicts. The most important change though, was the return of the OLF leaders and militias, as Ahmed gave them a safe passage back to Ethiopia after the TPLF had banned and exiled them since 1991. Ahmed allowed for the OLF's return on the basis of increasing cooperation with influential opposition groups. However, the federal government and the OLF soon broke relations, and they engaged in a civil war, which was contained in the Wollega zone within the Oromia region. This also borders the Metekel zone. Thus, as a result of this development, the OLF has been responsible for far more murders of thousands of Amhara civilians in Wollega and the Metekel Zone as well since 2018. Though the OLF is both a political and military entity with influence, they could fit the ethnic entrepreneur causal mechanism. However, since the OLF engages in ethnic cleansing as an ethnic-based militia, rather than it being regular civilians competing over land and resources, it does not fit into the overall theory. Even so, it is important to keep in mind that the OLF are a strong contributing factor to the ethnic cleansing and violence occurring in Ethiopia.

Figures 2 and 3 show the rates of conflict in Ethiopia in 2018, and Figure 4 shows the rates of conflict in Ethiopia throughout 2020 and 2021.
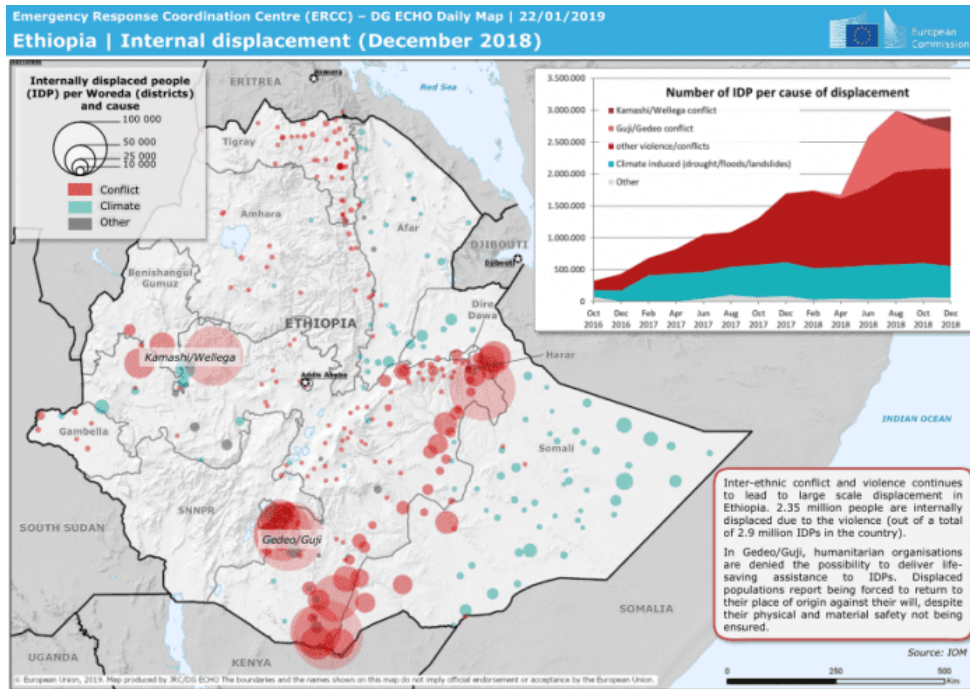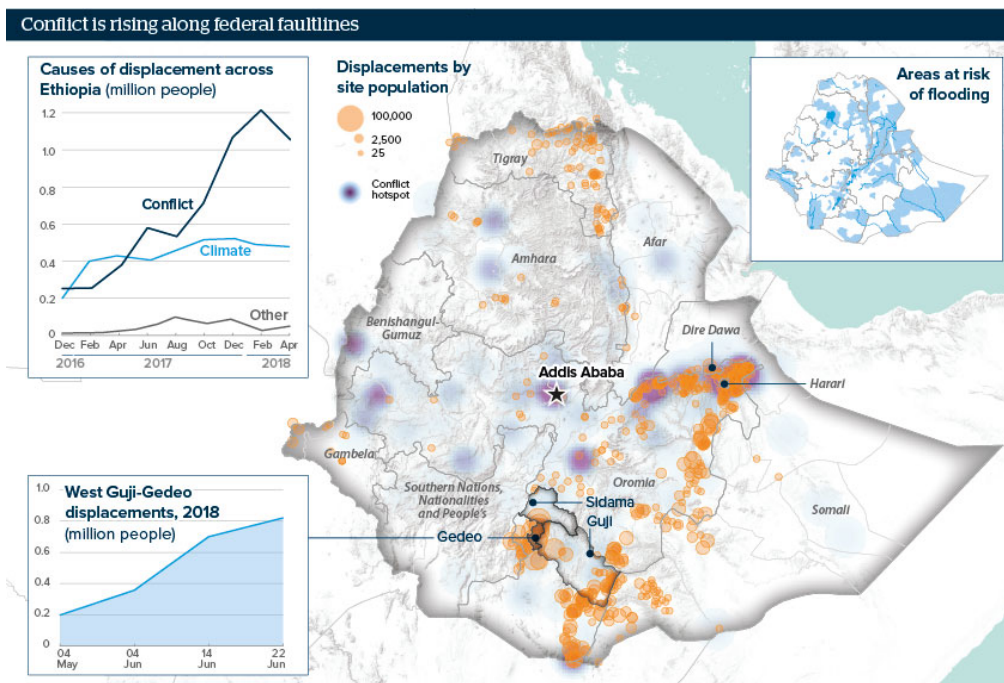

Figure 2

[15] Figure 3

[15] "Ethiopia Tops Global List of Highest Internal Displacement in 2018." Norwegian Refugee Council, September 12, 2018.
https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/september/ethiopia-tops-global-list-of-highest-internal-displacement-in-2018/. ;
"Ethiopia's Local Conflicts Will Pose Governance Risks." Oxford Analytica Daily Brief, July 10, 2018.
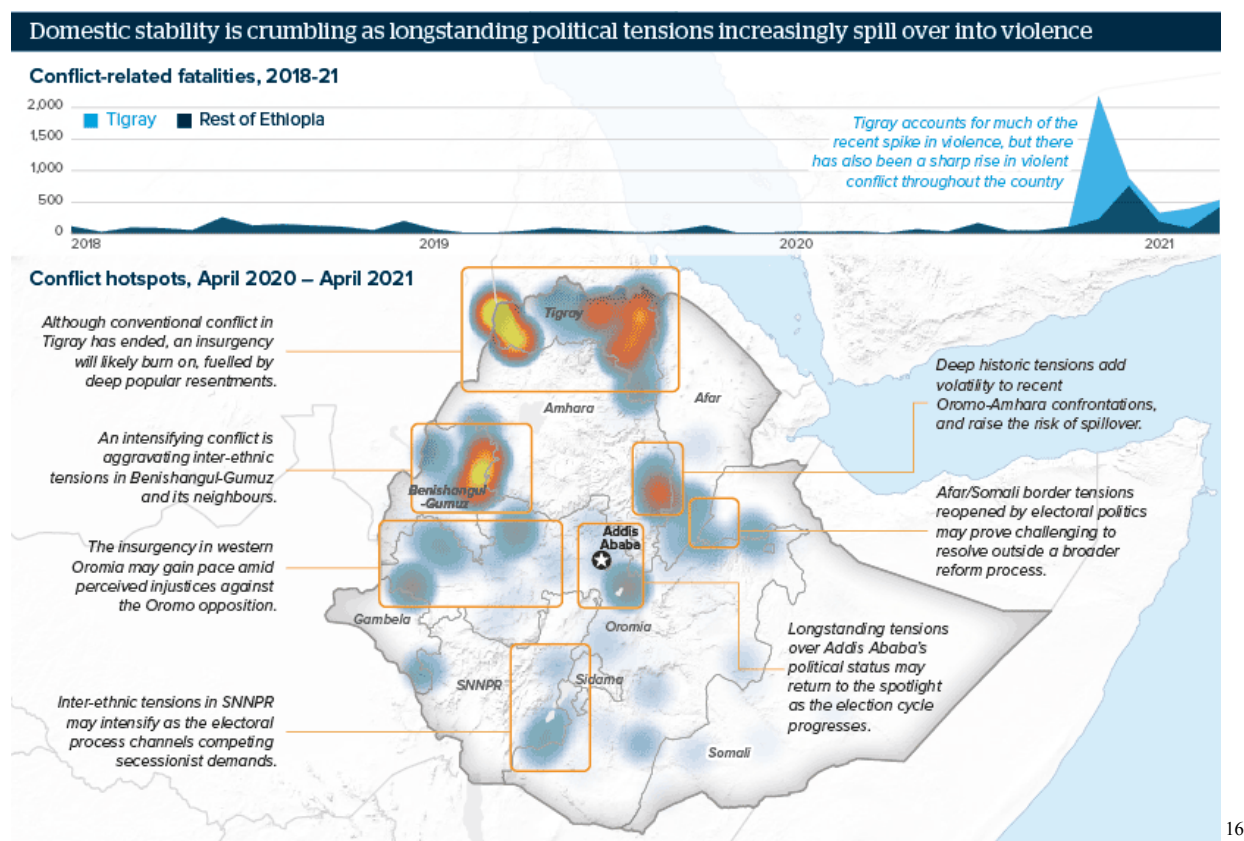https://dailybrief.oxan.com/Analysis/GA236003/Ethiopias-local-conflicts-will-pose-governance-risks.

Figure 4

Methodology & Data

It is difficult to find documents or statistics that show the number of ethnic conflicts, and/or the number of deaths and internally displaced people as a result of these conflicts, from before 1991, when the TPLF came into power and instituted ethnic federalism in 1994.[17] It would be ideal to compare the number of internally displaced people due to ethnic conflicts before ethnic federalism was instituted, to the number of internally displaced people due to ethnic conflicts after ethnic federalism was instituted. However, this has only been largely documented in the latter half of the past decade, as a result of the increasingly high amount of ethnic conflicts, and internally displaced persons as a result, in Ethiopia. Therefore, in order to determine if there is a correlation between the number of ethnic conflicts and ethnic federalism, I

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[16] "Ethiopia Stands on the Brink of a Deepening Crisis." Oxford Analytica Daily Brief, 2021. https://dailybrief.oxan.com/Analysis/GA261188/Ethiopia-stands-on-the-brink-of-a-deepening-crisis.

[17] It is important to note that TPLF created the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which was labelled a coalition of different movements within Ethiopia. EPRDF is sometimes listed as the central regime ruling Ethiopia. However, the EPRDF was ultimately dominated by TPLF, and Ethiopia was ruled by TPLF as the only dominant ruling single-party from 1991 to 2017. Thus, when referring to the ruling authoritarian regime that actually governed Ethiopia, I will appropriately be using TPLF instead of EPRDF.

will use documents from organizations and scholarly articles to determine the rate of ethnic conflicts prior to 1994. Meanwhile, I will use available statistics documenting the number of internally displaced persons due to ethnic conflicts to determine the rate of ethnic conflicts after 1994.

Regarding studying any correlation, I want to emphasize that on top of also distinguishing from the number of victims from the widespread suppression and murder by Derg forces against civilians who opposed the Derg regime, it is even more especially hard to document the cases of "traditional" ethnic conflicts between just civilian ethnic communities and ethnic conflicts/cleansing from ethnic based militias like the OLF against unarmed civilians. Also, as natural-based catastrophes accompanied mass violence during this unstable period in Ethiopian history, documenting the number and type of conflicts is especially difficult.[18]

The reason why the number of internally displaced people is being used as the predominant use of measurement is because it is difficult to determine the number of deaths from ethnic conflicts in many cases, and each ethnic conflict leaves several thousands of civilians displaced and in need of assistance from organizations. Thus, it is far clearer to document, especially since the organizations that account for internally displaced people, like the United Nations, tend to document the number of displaced persons in their camps and the cause of the displacement.

To determine causation, I will investigate the reason why ethnic conflicts increased or decreased after ethnic federalism was instituted in Ethiopia, which will be operationalized by documents, quotes, or policies from politicians. Due to there being much information asymmetry between government officials and public media/sources because of the lack of freedom of press and the manipulation of the media by state actors, I will cite scholarly articles and sources to support the official documents, quotes, or policies from politicians that I manage to find. This will be demonstrated in the case studies of the Gedeo-Guji ethnic conflict and cases of ethnic cleansing and violence against Amharas in the Metekel Zone and Oromia region.

Case Study: Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

Correlation

I will now address correlation prior to 1994. As was established in the historical background section, the armed resistance of ethnic-based militias against the central government,

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[18] Sorenson, John. "Ethiopia's Refugees." *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 10, No. 4 (1991): 3-5.

Derg, by the TPLF, OLF, and EPLF was the cause of most of the internal conflicts and displaced people in Ethiopia before the TPLF's eventual rule and implementation of ethnic federalism.[19]

Also, although the number of internally and externally displaced Ethiopian people documented in reports were very high before 1991-1994, it is largely due to natural disasters, such as the devastating spread of famine in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as a war in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in the late 1970s, due to the invasion of Somali state forces. Thus, it is hard to distinguish the number of displaced people due to natural disasters and the war with Somali state forces, and the number of displaced people due to the internal conflicts between all the ethnic-based militias and the government military.

Now, I will seek to determine the rate of ethnic violence and those internally displaced as a result after the implementation of ethnic federalism. As mentioned in the methodology, it is very difficult to find data on the number of ethnic conflicts and/or the number of those displaced. This is especially the case for finding data from the 1990s and early 2000s. Thus, the earliest data I could find was from 2009. According to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the number of those internally displaced due to conflict and violence has been growing. The earliest data found was in the year 2009, where 350,000 were IDPs due to conflict and violence. This number steadily rose each year until it was approximately 400,000 IDPs due to conflict and violence in 2014. In 2015, it was 450,000 IDPs, then drastically dropped to 258,000 in 2016, then increased substantially in 2017 when there were 1,078,000 IDPs, making a rise of 725,000 new displaced persons in one year alone. And from 2017 to 2018, there was a 1,817,000 increase in new IDPs, as 2,137,000 were displaced due to conflict and violence alone. This incredibly large increase in IDPs has largely been due to the ethnic violence occurring between the Gedeo and West Guji regions in southern Ethiopia, followed by the ethnic conflicts along the border of the Oromo-Somali regions.[20] From 2018 to 2019, the number dropped to 1,414,000 in 2019, only to rise again in 2020 to 2,060,000, which likely is due to those displaced as a result of the currently ongoing war between the national government and the TPLF forces.[21]

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[19] Ibid. ; People's Democratic Programme of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). (May 1983)

[20] "Ethiopia Tops Global List of Highest Internal Displacement in 2018." Norwegian Refugee Council, September 12, 2018. https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/september/ethiopia-tops-global-list-of-highest-internal-displacement-in-2018/.

[21] "Ethiopia." Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, December 31, 2020. https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia.

Establishing a correlation between ethnic violence and ethnic federalism in this paper is not easy due to the lack of data in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, since pre-ethnic federalism Ethiopia had the most documented cases of conflicts between liberation militias (and the Somali state military) and the regime's military, rather than ethnic conflicts between civilian communities, it will likely be the conclusion in this paper that there was more documented ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia after the implementation of ethnic federalism. This difference in the nature of conflicts before and after ethnic federalism was implemented could be interpreted as an inevitable tradeoff. Even though there is not an equal amount of data available to numerically compare the cases of IDPs due to ethnic conflict in both time periods, the data documented in the past paragraph demonstrates that there has indeed been a drastic increase of ethnic violence in Ethiopia. This counters the null hypothesis, which would be that ethnic federalism had no effect on the rates of ethnic conflicts. However, the data shows that there is in fact a correlation, and will be supported furthermore in the causation section.

Causation

If the causal mechanism of 'the reorganization of regions/borders along ethnic lines' were tested to be true, then there should be sufficient evidence showing that a significant amount of ethnic conflict occurs along the borders of regions and districts, which are categorized by ethnic names. If the causal mechanism of ethnic entrepreneurs were tested to be true, then cases of ethnic conflict, violence, and cleansing would occur in regions and districts where politicians and elites spew hate speech and instigate tensions between ethnic groups. This is accelerated and proven by the measurement of the popularity of these politicians, which is shown in their influence, mass following, and media presence. Not all politicians are equally popular or influential in Ethiopia. Only some politicians representing the most populous ethnic groups have the most following and popularity.

First causal mechanism: ethnic entrepreneurs

The first of the two causal mechanisms I will address is the role of ethnic entrepreneurs. I theorize that ethnic entrepreneurs have an incentive to amplify ethnic-based/ethno-nationalist rhetoric, including extremist and/or diversionary rhetoric, because that is the way to attain political power from the support of the population. As it becomes far easier for ethnic groups to mobilize due to the political system under ethnic federalism, influential political elites take

advantage of this and instigate conflicts over ethnic identity and declaring special ethnic claims to lands and resources at the expense of other ethnic groups, in order to increase their political support and position from their ethnic group.[22]

Along with political power, there are material conditions at stake too. Regions get separate amounts of funding from the federal government that politicians distribute. In addition, since the ethnic federalism system is said to be implemented so that different ethnic groups can have some autonomy in governance, there is always an insatiable demand for smaller ethnic groups to have their own districts and even regions within the state. Thus, given this desire for a new ethnic-based district or region within many in the population, and the separate funding that comes with it, elite entrepreneurs arise within these ethnic groups who engage in ethnically divisive rhetoric in order to be the new political leaders in this fight for a separate ethnic based district or region. Since creating an ethnic-based district/region means that land previously part of another ethnic-based district/region will be "stripped away" to become part of a new district/region for a separate ethnic group, tensions between these ethnic groups over land and resources arise. Thus, there are always incentives by these ethnic entrepreneurs to engage in ethnically divisive and charged rhetoric because they have to demonstrate that they are *more* deserving of the land that would be part of their own district/region compared to the other ethnic groups living there. This would involve ethnic entrepreneurs emphasizing differences, rather than similarities and tolerance, between the ethnic groups, since there is a desire to ultimately not share the land among ethnic groups because of the way power is set up in the ethnic federalist system. Differences between the ethnic groups are being strongly emphasized by ethnic entrepreneurs because they are taking advantage of the population's desire for a different district/region, knowing that they will likely hold the political leadership position in this potential new district/region that they otherwise would not have in the existing district/region they are currently in and sharing with other ethnic groups. The rhetoric ethnic entrepreneurs engage in can quickly become extremist since only differences are emphasized. This can lead to other ethnic groups being labelled as outsiders/migrants, not indigenous to the land at all, undeserving of living amongst them, and alien from one's own history, heritage, and culture. Hate speech and narratives against the other ethnic group(s) may continuously arise because they are seen as

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[22] Berhane and Tefera. "Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience." pp. 121

preventing the other group from fulfilling its right of having ownership and sole claims to what they consider to be their land/ethnic homeland.

Competition over land and resources have definitely always existed amongst those living in the same community, and there may have already been desires within the population of certain ethnic groups wanting their own autonomy. However, there are strong separate incentives for ethnic entrepreneurs to take advantage of these existing issues and desires by stirring up the population in order to have political power because they would not have this political power if the current status quo environment stayed with there being no new ethnic-based district/region.

Second causal mechanism: reorganization of regions/borders along ethnic lines

The second causal mechanism I will address is the reorganization of regions and borders based on ethnicity when ethnic federalism was implemented. Some theories in the literature purport that the new organization of borders in an ethnic federalism system that seeks to "accurately" divide regional borders along ethnic lines actually creates more ethnic conflicts over claims of the "ethnic homeland"/territory. This especially becomes the case as already existing community needs for natural resources for the populations' livelihoods now have ethnicity/nationhood attached to it. Therefore, disputes within the community that were previously just about the sharing of land and resources now have the added element of there being a material and political benefit of ethnic groups mobilizing in order to secure these resources. In addition to this consequence, there is also now tensions between titular and non-titular groups, as some ethnic groups now become minorities in the redrawn region they are in, whereas they were not minorities before. Because the political system is based on ethnicity now, these ethnic minorities have far less opportunities to be involved in representative politics, and increasingly fear being discriminated against and taken advantage of. Overall, these factors make the eruption of conflicts more likely, and the solutions to them more difficult to solve. This is because economic and social problems within the population are now restructured to be based on ethnicity, and the population and politicians in this system now seek to solve these problems based on what would best benefit their own ethnic group, rather than through socio-economic policies.[23]

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[23] Kefale, Asnake. "Ethnic Decentralization and the Challenges of Inclusive Governance in Multiethnic Cities: The Case of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia." *Regional & Federal Studies* 24, No. 5 (2014). ; Berhane and Tefera. "Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience."

Figure 5 shows a map of the regions within Ethiopia before ethnic federalism was implemented, and Figure 6 shows a map of the regions within Ethiopia after ethnic federalism was implemented.

Figure 5

Figure 6

Application of both causal mechanisms

   I will now apply this causal mechanism to the situation in Ethiopia. First, I will give some important context on the geopolitical environment. When the TPLF implemented ethnic federalism, both the politics and regions within the country were redrawn and largely based on ethnicity. Prior to the TPLF, during the Derg regime, the country was made up of several small long standing provinces. The politics stemmed from the central government, which was communist, and it was not a federalist system. Thus, ethnicity was not the main basis in which politics was administered, as it was largely nationalist and influenced by socialist ideology. The only provinces named after ethnic groups were the Tigray, Keffa, and Sidamo provinces. And the Borena province in the south was named after one out of the many branches of the Oromo ethnic group. Since the TPLF implemented ethnic federalism, there are now nine regions: Afar region, Amhara region, Benishangul-Gumuz region, Gambella region, Harari region, Oromia region, Somali region, Tigray Region, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNRP). As this southern portion of the country has a far more diverse and highly concentrated

amount of ethnic communities living amongst each other, the SNNPR region could not be created under the name of a single ethnicity. Ethiopia has over 90 ethnic groups, many of which have historically lived amongst each other for centuries. This is especially the case for the most populous ethnic groups. Thus, drawing a border and labelling lands based on ethnicity will not ever be satisfactory to the populations, or accurate, as integration between ethnic groups and mobility throughout the country of ethnic groups from all directions and regions has been incredibly common. Thus, conflicts start to arise between ethnic groups, as a political and territorial claim to lands based on ethnicity suddenly becomes the only way to attain resources. Because it is almost impossible for there to be a completely ethnically homogenous region, with the closest homogenous regions being the Afar and Somali region, a large amount of the population lives outside of what should now be considered their "ethnic homeland." This was made worse for certain ethnic groups who had lived comfortably before ethnic federalism, but suddenly found themselves to be ethnic minorities in the new region they have been re-drawn into. As a result of this ethnic federal system, which now bases all politics and parties on ethnicity, tension arises between the now titular group and non-titular groups. This is because the titular ethnic group tends to secure the most economic and political power, and non-titular groups feel like they are not receiving the same amount of resources, and fear a growing sense of discrimination as they become minorities in a region, and are largely excluded from positions of political influence in a system that bases it on solely one's ethnic group. As a result, there has been an increase in conflicts between these groups that are largely ethnic and local based.

This is supported by a 2009 International Crisis Group report as they stated that, "The EPRDF's ethnic federalism has not dampened conflict, but rather increased competition among groups that vie over land and natural resources, as well as administrative boundaries and government budgets."[24] Also, according to data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), major conflicts have increased substantially in Ethiopia from 1997 to 2016, with the main perpetrators being ethnic militias/rebel forces in the ethnic conflicts.[25] Data from Abbink's study also supports this, as he found that there was an increase in ethnic conflicts from 1991 to 2005, citing a variety of diverse sources coming from "Ethiopian newspapers,

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[24] "Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents." International Crisis Group, September 4, 2009. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/ethiopia-ethnic-federalism-and-its-discontents.
[25] Berhane and Tefera. "Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience." pp. 120

human rights reports (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Ethiopian Human Rights Council), yearly US State Department reports on human rights, and from interviews."[26]

All of this is not to say that there were no conflicts before ethnic federalism. However, conflicts before that were likely mainly about sharing resources, but are now explicitly linked to one's ethnic identity, making it far easier for large portions of the population to mobilize across ethnic lines against another ethnic group. In this system where territory and politics is linked to one's ethnicity, several ethnic groups consistently seek to have special administration zones/districts within regional states, which has already been implemented in some regions. Because of this demand, from 1997 to 2016, there were at least 33 major cases of ethnic conflicts linked to ethnic groups' competition for regional autonomy, political power, and disputes over territorial boundaries. In these cases, ethnic entrepreneurs have fueled these conflicts, as they need the continuous support of the population that supports them, which would be members of their own ethnic group, to seek to secure special zones, which is often contested against by other ethnic groups in the same community.[27]

Most conflicts in rural Ethiopia (approximately 80% of the population) occur because of disputes over land and regional/district borders that exist between newly defined ethnic groups. Since land and important resources, such as forests, water sources, and pasture, are sought after by the whole community, there now becomes an incentive under the ethnic federalist system to declare oneself as part of a stringent ethnic identity because of the political/legal advantage or mobilization efforts that come with it, in order attain better land and resource rights. Thus, as this causal mechanism demonstrates, claims over land and resources by individuals now become one of a whole group, based on ethnic identity, bringing disputes and conflicts that could have been between different individuals, into a conflict between whole communities along ethnic lines. Thus, even individuals who have not had any disputes over a certain land or resource now feel entitled to it and engage in the dispute because it now becomes about increasing political support for one's own ethnic group. As a result, small disputes can turn into big ethnic conflicts very fast.[28]

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[26] Jon Abbink. "Ethnicity and Conflict Generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno-Regional Federalism." Journal of Contemporary African Studies 24, no. 3 (2006), 408-414
[27] Berhane and Tefera. "Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience." pp. 121-122
[28] Ibid., p. 396

Addressing the ethnic entrepreneur causal mechanism, on the elite level, basing policies on ethnic identity became the only way to politically organize, and it determines potential boundaries, and thus *who* gets certain resources and government funding within the regions. Thus, political elites become 'ethnic entrepreneurs,' positioning their policies along stringent ethnic lines, often at the expense of other ethnic groups. Now in this ethnic federalist system, when there are disputes over land and resources along the regional/district borders, ethnic entrepreneurs and some parts of the population are incentivized to cite cultural and linguistic differences between those in the communities as reasons why their claims to the land and resources are legitimate. Ethnic entrepreneurs have played a role in pushing this, as well as popular claims of being historically disadvantaged, which oftentimes incites more anger and violence between ethnic groups over these disputes over land and resources, while ethnic entrepreneurs seek and profit off these conflicts by garnering more support and power in this ethnic-based political system.[29]

Given the theoretical applications and available statistics mentioned above, I deduce that conflicts after the TPLF's implementation of ethnic federalism did not decrease, but just decreased in its scale, in terms of it being consistent in specific locations (especially along ethnic borders/newly "disputed" lands), and are not as directed at the TPLF as the central government, but between ethnic groups as a result of the policies made by the TPLF (the TPLF's drawing of borders, inability to provide effective attention, rule and order, and mediation to these conflicts).[30] This is Abbink's argument, which he supports through his collection of data on ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia dating back to the 1990s. Large ethnic regions in Ethiopia have a significant number of ethnic minorities within them, making up a high percentage of the population. Rather than the TPLF making the effort as the central government to implement equality and representation in the country as a whole, these issues based on governance and ethnicity have just simply been passed down towards lower levels of the administration within these regions, much like how the conflicts are now.[31]

Thus, I conclude that when applied to Ethiopia, this causal mechanism of the reorganization of regions/borders according to ethnicity being a large contributor to the increase of ethnic conflicts, is very fitting. This is supported by the fact that most of the internal

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[29] Ibid., p. 396
[30] Ibid., p. 391
[31] Ibid., p. 394

displacement due to ethnic conflict in the country is concentrated along the ethnic borders between regions.[32] I would consider this causal mechanism to be even larger than the ethnic entrepreneurship causal mechanism because the evidence for it is more abundant and the restructuring of borders along ethnic lines has affected every region, and has structurally changed the whole political landscape. Examples of more ethnic conflicts due to this causal mechanism include those along the Oromia and Somali regional border, the Afar and Somali regional border, the Tigray and Amhara regional border (Welkait and Raya), the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regional border (Metekel), and more. I will now be applying these causal mechanisms to specific case studies in Ethiopia to demonstrate what the role of ethnic entrepreneurs and the reorganization of ethnic based regions/borders are in ethnic conflicts. The first sub case study will be on the Gedeo and Guji ethnic conflict and the second sub case study will be on cases of ethnic cleansing/violence against Amharas in the Oromia region and Metekel zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz region.

I will now address why these sub case studies were chosen and not others, and if there are cases/regions that are the exception to the conclusion I made in this paper. It is far easier to find evidence of cases from the Oromia region compared to others because it is among the most influential regions and its local politics has immense influence on the national politics. This is because the Oromo ethnic group is the largest, this region is geographically the largest, and the region holds the highest population compared to other regions. It is also easier to find evidence of cases of ethnic violence against Amharas because they are the second largest ethnic group and are also influential politically.

There are several other cases of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia that go under-reported because it affects smaller ethnic groups, and there is often less attention and resources given to them, unfortunately. This is especially the case for ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia. This is why I chose the cases I did. These case studies include the cases involving the two most populous ethnic groups, so there was evidence I could attain. Although the Gedeo-Guji ethnic conflict involves an ethnic minority in southern Ethiopia, where there is less attention given politically, it is still amongst the most catastrophic ethnic conflicts in the country, so that was why it was covered.

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[32] "Ethiopia." Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, December 31, 2020.
https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia.

Regarding regions that could be the exception to the conclusion I made, even amongst regions that are more homogenous than others, which would only be the Afar and Somali regions, there is still ethnic conflict along the borders. Thus, it is very difficult to find a region in Ethiopia where ethnic conflicts are the exception from the norm. For example, there are ongoing ethnic conflicts between Afars and Issa Somalis along the Afar-Somali regional borders due to both ethnic groups claiming ownership over towns and integral resources, such as wells and grazing land. Thus, even though there are far less cases of ethnic conflicts within these regions compared to others, there is still that same amount of ethnic conflicts along the regional borders. Therefore, although the seriousness and number of the ethnic conflicts definitely varies from region to region, they are an ongoing problem in every region.

Sub Case 1: Gedeo-Guji ethnic conflict

The Gedeo and Guji ethnic groups largely live in southern Ethiopia. The Guji are one of the branches of the Oromo ethnic group, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The Gedeo are a minority ethnic group largely residing in a region (SNNPR) where over 50 ethnic groups reside. During both the imperial and Derg regime, both ethnic groups lived within the same Sidamo region. As was the case with several other ethnic groups, when the TPLF implemented ethnic federalism and restructured the borders, the communities between these ethnic groups were split up as most of the area where the Guji lived were now part of the Borena Zone in the new Oromia region, while most of the Gedeo were put in the Gedeo Zone within the SNNPR region. Even so, over 245,000 Gedeos still lived in the Borena and Guji Zones, and a significant number of Guji lived in the Gedeo and Sidamo zones.[33]

For cultural context, the Gedeo and Guji have historically had friendly relations, as they have coexisted for centuries, and even shared myths of common ancestry. This is demonstrated in the common intermarriages and economies interdependence between the communities.[34]

Similar to several other cases of ethnic conflict in Ethiopia, the first major conflicts over the recently new border boundaries occurred between the Gedeo and Guji ethnic groups in 1995, then again in 1998, and are still continuing. The most recent case of major ethnic conflict

[33] Girum Kinfemichael. "The Quest for Resolution of Guji-Gedeo Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia: A Review of Mechanisms Employed, Actors and Their Effectiveness." *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities* 10, No. 1 (2014), 61-62
[34] Ibid., p. 75-77

between the two ethnic groups occurred along the regional border throughout 2018, in which over 1 million were internally displaced. Armed mobs and youth groups attacked and burned entire villages, and there was mass violence, rape, and murder.[35] Before the war between the federal government and the TPLF that started in November 2020, the Gedeo-Guji ethnic conflict had the largest case of internally displaced persons in the country.
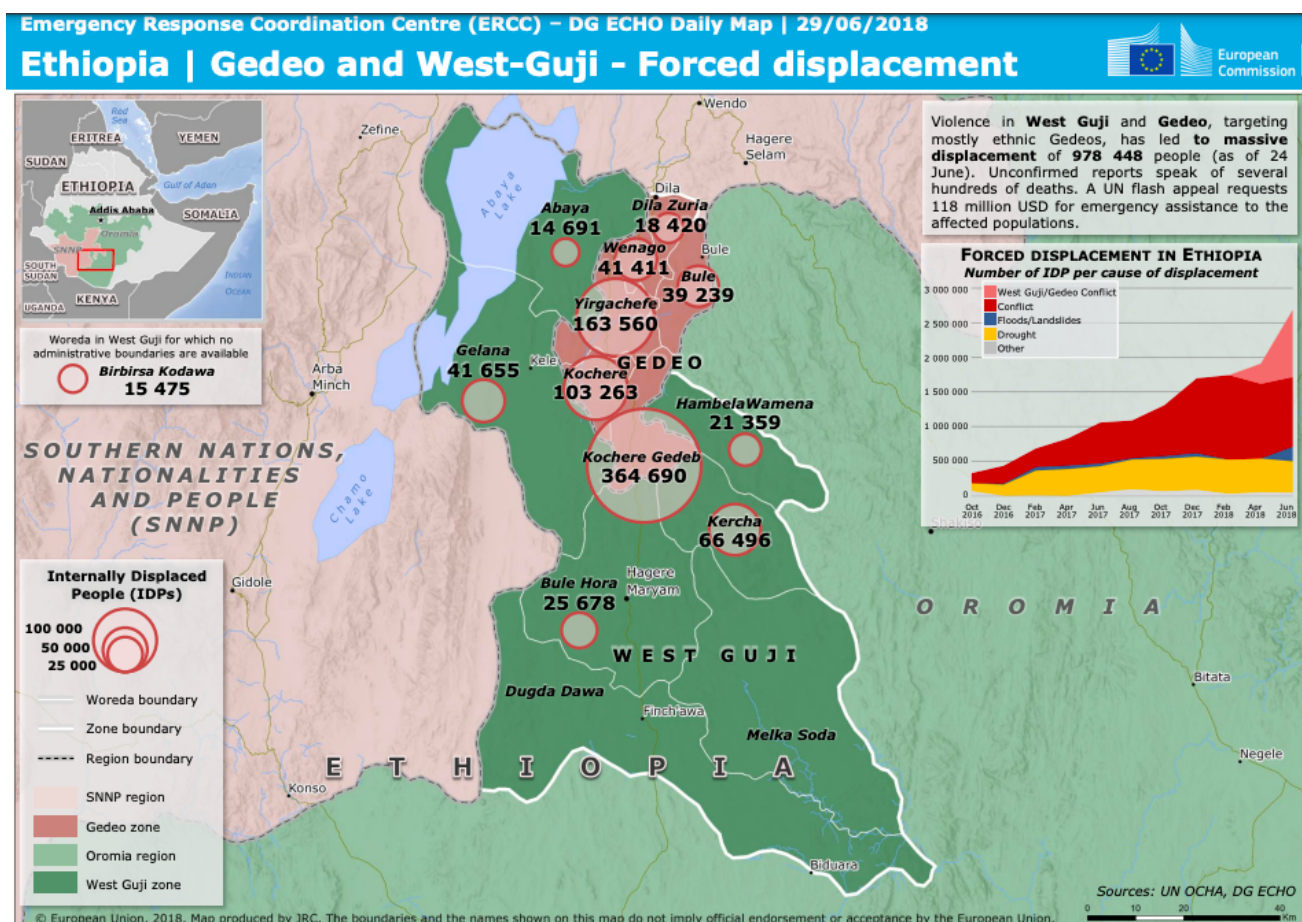
To reiterate, if the causal mechanism of 'the reorganization of regions/borders along ethnic lines' were tested to be true, then there should be sufficient evidence showing that a significant amount of ethnic conflict occurs along the borders of regions and districts, which are categorized by ethnic names. If the causal mechanism of ethnic entrepreneurs were tested to be true, then cases of ethnic conflict, violence, and cleansing would occur in regions and districts where politicians and elites spew hate speech and instigate tensions between ethnic groups.

In this case, traditional disputes over land and resources were accelerated as there were now contending claims about which ethnic group owned the land, at the expense of the other. Prior to the implementation of ethnic federalism, both communities peacefully shared the land in the same region, and ethnicity was not the sole determinant of politics. In 2018, tensions arose too high, and there was ethnic conflict along the border, leading to the deaths of many, and displacement of over 1 million people, and mass destruction of property.[36]

As can be seen from the map in Figure 7 below, most of the conflict and internal displacement occurred in the West Guji district, which lies directly along the Oromia and SNNP ethnic regional border. This fulfills the causal mechanism of 'the reorganization of regions/borders along ethnic lines' increasing the rates of ethnic conflict.

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[35] Yarnell, Mark. "The Crisis Below the Headlines: Conflict Displacement in Ethiopia." Refugees International, November 14, 2018. https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1450859.html.
[36] Kinfemichael. "The Quest for Resolution of Guji-Gedeo Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia," pp. 77

[37] Figure 7

Ethnic entrepreneurs played an important role in accelerating ethnic strife between the ethnic groups as well, as the politicians that were supposed to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in mediation committees were those that represented just their ethnic group and not the community as a whole. This is due to the structure of the ethnic federalist political system, as parties and politicians are based solely on ethnicity. Thus, not only did their support stem solely from their ethnic group, making it so that they would only remain popular if they satisfy the desires of just that ethnic group, but the elites had their own interests in claiming the lands and resources for their own ethnic group, as this would only increase the amount of resources under the ethnic-based district they govern. Thus, there is ultimately a lack of neutrality in the whole mediation process. It was these ethnic entrepreneurs that continued to promote distrust between the ethnic groups on several occasions in order to bring an advantage to the claims of their own

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[37] "Ethiopia: Gedeo and West-Guji - Forced Displacement." ReliefWeb. OCHA Services, June 29, 2018. https://reliefweb.int/map/ethiopia/ethiopia-gedeo-and-west-guji-forced-displacement-dg-echo-daily-map-29062018.

ethnic group. Their promotion of the legal/physical and ideological division of these communities specifically based on their ethnicity has created consistent conflicts between the Gedeo and Guji, who were once very co-existing neighbors. Overall, with ethnicity systemically being ruled as the most dominant factor in seeking to provide solutions for political, economic, and social issues, differences and diversionary tactics (for political gain) rather than unification, tolerance, and the use of historically established traditional mediation institutions (eg. Gondoro tradition for example) were emphasized when it came to resolving disputes.[38]

Moreover, in addition to ethnic entrepreneurs accelerating and maintaining ethnic divisions and conflicts for their own political power gains, the elites from the Gedeo and Guji political sphere that were tasked with mediating the ethnic conflict were also loyal to the federal government, the TPLF. Even though the TPLF claimed that ethnic federalism was established to give ethnic groups some autonomy, the TPLF was still a single-party ruled authoritarian government that retained control over all government finances, the military, and the country's policies. Therefore, politicians in Ethiopia with ruling positions were all loyal to the TPLF, and could not counter its policies. This negatively influenced the mediation process between the Gedeo and Guji. As Merera Gudina, a long time professor, stated, "they were the mouthpieces of the TPLF/EPRDF party programme rather than resolving local conflicts at local level in accordance with the realities on the ground."[39]

Because the Gedeo ethnic group is a very small minority, and the Guji branch of the Oromo ethnic group is also smaller, this case does not get enough media coverage in domestic Ethiopian media. Thus, the ethnic entrepreneurs in this area are not prominent nationally. However, their incompetence in mediating the conflict played a role in intensifying these conflicts over land and resources, as they put their own political interests first. Thus, I find that both the causal mechanisms of the restructuring of the ethnic-based regions/borders and the actions of elite entrepreneurs have contributed to the increase of ethnic conflicts between the Gedeo and Guji. This case study largely fits the causal mechanisms that demonstrate that ethnic federalism promotes more conflicts.

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[38] Kinfemichael. "The Quest for Resolution of Guji-Gedeo Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia," pp. 84
[39] Ibid., p. 84

Sub Case 2: Ethnic cleansing/violence against Amharas

For the second sub case study, I will focus on the ethnic cleansing and violence against the Amhara ethnic group in Ethiopia, as they have been labelled as scapegoats, putting them in a particularly vulnerable situation. The ethnic cleansing and targeting of Amharas in Ethiopia is a unique case. Amharas are the second most populous ethnic group in the country. In order to explain the popular justification of the ethnic cleansing of Amharas by extremist ethno-nationalists and elite entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, I have to give some ethnic background to the historical context. The historical imperial monarchs of Ethiopia have mostly been composed of Amharas, with Tigrayans and Oromos also playing a role as well. Emperors like Atse Tewodros II, and especially Emperor Menelik II, consolidated Ethiopia into a nation-state in the 1800s. These emperors were part of the Amhara ethnic group, and through war, they had consolidated the southern part of what is now Ethiopia into the state. Emperor Yohannes IV, a Tigrayan, and Abba Jifar II, an Oromo monarch, were also significant actors that played a role in consolidating the Ethiopian state. Ethiopia was ruled by this monarchy until Mengistu Hailemariam of the Derg regime led a successful coup against the last Emperor, Haile Selassie in 1974. It was in the 1970s when ethnic liberation militias like the TPLF and OLF were created, each blaming Amharas for the oppression of their ethnic groups. Both of these liberation fronts have been responsible for several massacres against innocent Amhara civilians. They cite their historical grievances as justification. These ideologies have increasingly become extremist and condoning of ethnic cleansing against Amhara civilians living in the Oromia region and elsewhere, especially since the TPLF came into power in 1991.

Areas that have especially been dangerous for Amhara civilians is the Wollega zone in the Oromia region, which is the OLF's base. Especially since 1991, there have been thousands of Amharas murdered and displaced in the zone. Since the return of the OLF forces in Ethiopia in 2018, ethnic cleansing against Amharas has been rampant in Wollega, with new massacres occurring almost every other week. Wollega is amongst the most unstable and dangerous parts of the country.[40] Since 2018, several thousands of Amharas have been ethnically cleansed from the Wollega zones at an accelerated rate. The perpetrators are not only the OFL militia, but Oromo

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[40] "Armed Group Attacked Village Killing Ethnic Amharas, Destroying Homes." Amnesty International, November 2, 2020.
https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2020/11/ethiopia-over-50-ethnic-amhara-killed-in-attack-on-village-by-armed-group/.

extremists and the OLF supporters who do not see Amharas as deserving to live in Wollega because they are not Oromo. The purpose of these attacks is to cleanse them out of the zone and Oromia region. Signs stating "Go back home Amharas" were cited as being put in public places from as early as June 2000.[41] With there now being an official Amhara region under ethnic federalism, this is where the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing expect Amhara civilians to run too, even though there are millions of Amhara civilians that have been living outside of the now labelled Amhara region for several generations.

Likewise, there is ongoing ethnic cleansing against Amhara civilians in the Metekel zone in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. The Amhara ethnic group makes up the majority ethnic group in the Metekel zone, as they had prior to ethnic federalism as well, when Metekel was its own region back then. However, Amharas became ethnic minorities when Metekel was restructured to be a zone within the now Benishangul-Gumuz region, named after the Gumuz ethnic group, rather than being part of the Amhara region. Thus, there started to be targeted ethnic violence committed against Amhara civilians by Gumuz extremists and militias along the Metekel zone starting in 1991-2001, from 2013-2014, and have gotten worse, to the form of ethnic cleansing starting in 2018 and onward. Competition over land has been cited as a reason for trying to cleanse the Amharas out, as the Gumuz participating in the ethnic violence have mimicked the popular rhetoric that Amhara farmers and civilians do not belong in the region, but to "their own" region. When Metekel was its own small region before ethnic federalism, this ethnic cleansing against Amharas did not occur as it has after ethnic federalism was implemented.[42]

If the causal mechanism of 'the reorganization of regions/borders along ethnic lines' were tested to be true, then there should be sufficient evidence showing that a significant amount of ethnic conflict occurs along the borders of regions and districts, which are categorized by ethnic names. In the case of the concentrated ethnic cleansing of Amharas in the Metekel zone in the

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[41] "AAA 2021 Quarterly Report on Human Rights Violations Against the Amhara People in Ethiopia." Amhara Association of America, April 2021.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IkBUi8IgDBrgCrMnRfCKd5RRWUUI93QI/view?fbclid=IwAR29lwDRzIMTuiM5tgO0Dv7c-2-Cmid19qMQs5uxJT16CDykV41CcSoti0U.

[42] Ibid. ; "Security Situation in Benishangul-Gumuz Region." ቪኦኤ አማርኛ. VOA Amharic, September 15, 2020. https://amharic.voanews.com/amp/benshangul-gumuz-peace-9-15-2020/5584504.html. ; Mekonnen, Siyanne. "Analysis: Weeks Long Attacks on Civilians Leave Several Dead, Injured in Metekel Zone, Benishangul Gumuz Region." Addis Standard, September 17, 2020.
https://addisstandard.com/analysis-weeks-long-attacks-on-civilians-leave-several-dead-injured-in-metekel-zone-benishangul-gumuz-region/. ; "What Happened in Benishangul-Gumuz?" BBC News አማርኛ, September 16, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/amharic/news-54179472.

Gumuz region, the Metekel zone is bordered exactly along the Gumuz and Amhara regional ethnic border. Wollega is also bordered very close to the Metekel zone. This is shown in the maps of the Metekel zone in Figure 8, and the neighboring Wollega zone in Figure 9.
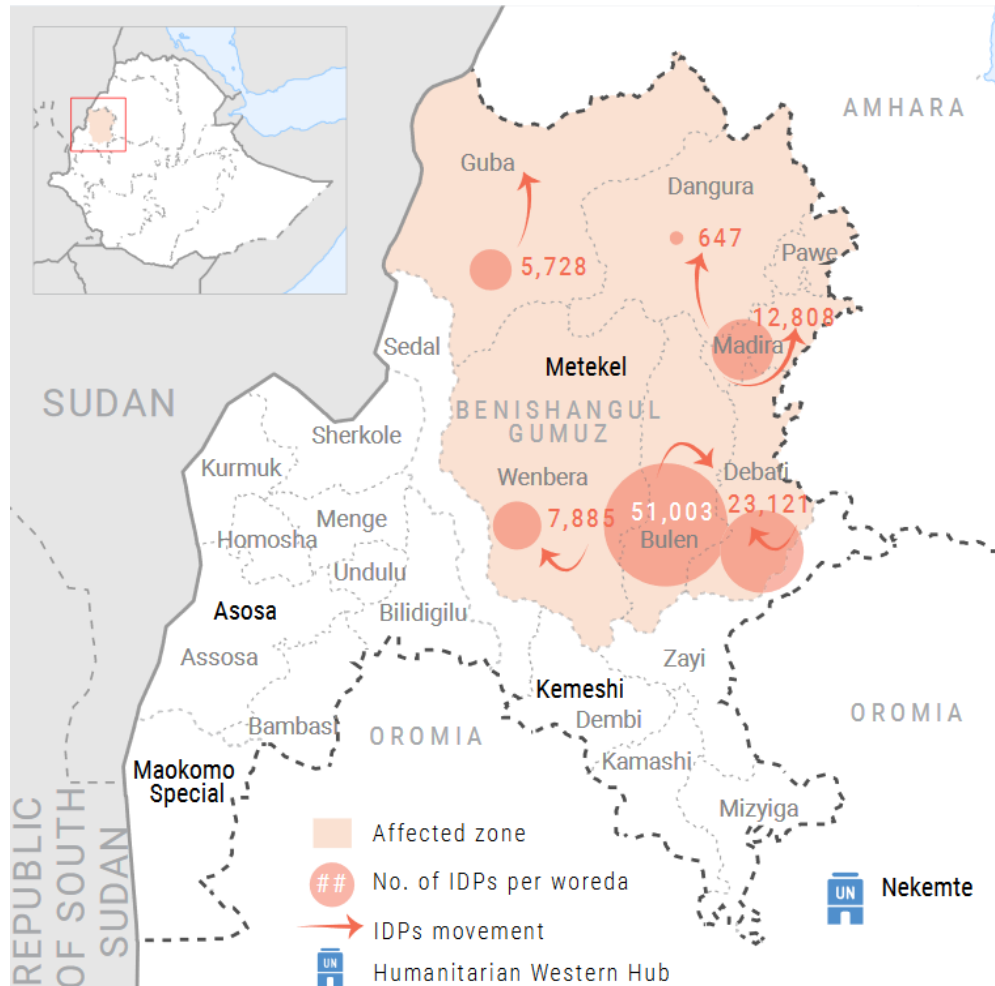

Figure 8

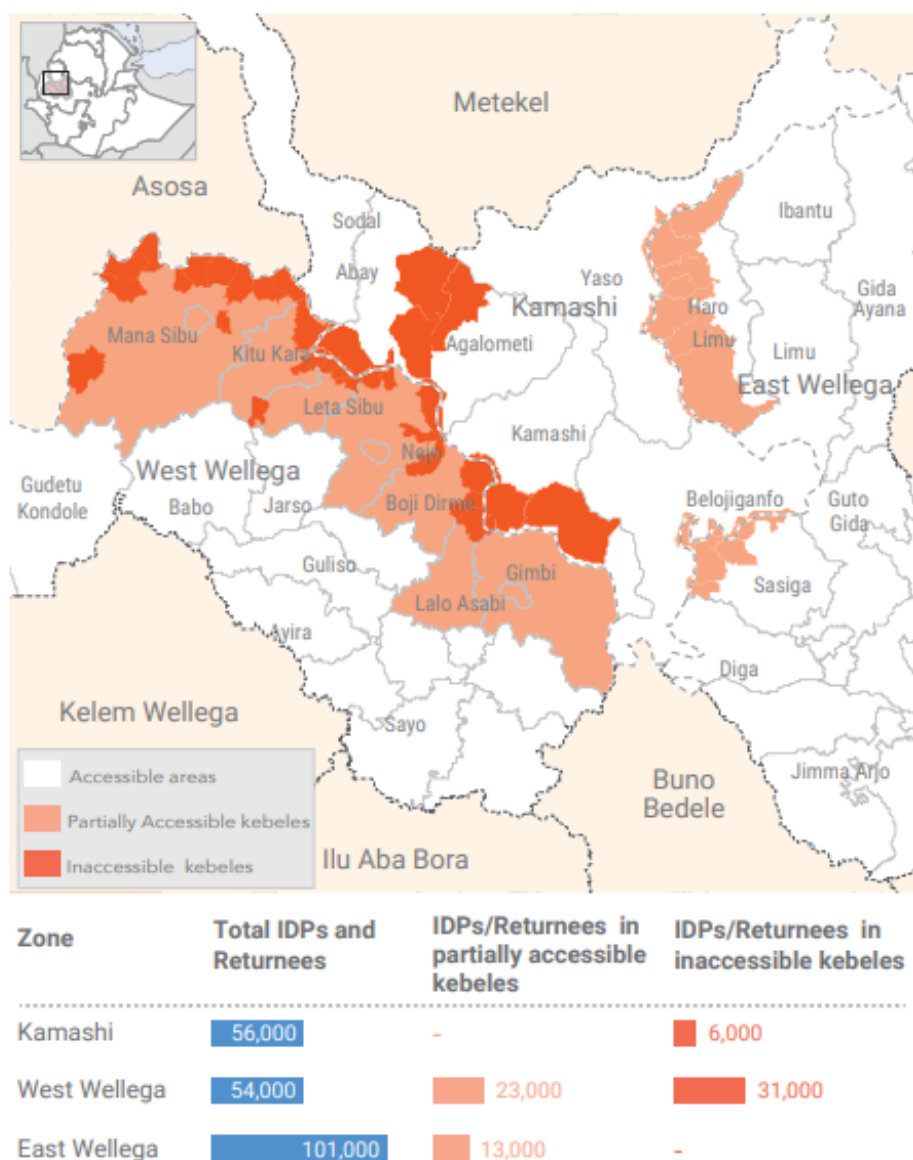| Zone	Total IDPs and Returnees	IDPs/Returnees in partially accessible kebeles	IDPs/Returnees in inaccessible kebeles
Kamashi	56,000	-	6,000
West Wellega	54,000	23,000	31,000
East Wellega	101,000	13,000	-

Figure 9

A major case of mass ethnic violence against Amharas that has gotten the most media attention occurred in the summer of 2020 in the Oromia region. On June 29, 2020, popular Oromo musician Hachalu Hundessa was murdered. Shortly before his death, he criticized Emperor Menelik in an interview. However, Hachalu did not espouse extremist rhetoric or hate narratives. Even so, it was widely assumed and spread online by Oromo extremists that Amharas were behind his death, with no evidence whatsoever. This rhetoric was so quick to arise and spread because of the already popular hate narratives against Amharas amongst Oromo extremists and propagandist Oromo media channels such as the Oromo Media Network (OMN), which is owned by an Oromo extremist and politician Jawar Mohammad. Therefore, after

Hachalu was murdered, mobs of Oromo extremists in several communities and cities within the Oromia region targeted Amhara and Gurage civilians, killed them, and destroyed their homes and properties. Though Gurages are from southern Ethiopia, they were targeted because they were seen as an Amhara-adjacent ethnic group according to their extremist ideology. Over 300 Amhara, Gurage, other non-Oromos, Christian Oromos, and other ethnic minorities in the Oromia region were murdered within a few days after Hachalu's death. Several of these acts of ethnic violence and the damage from it were caught on camera and documented. During this time, Oromo extremists were being broadcasted on OMN, a channel with millions of subscribers, calling for the ethnic cleansing of all Amharas in the Oromia region.[43]

Aside from the documented manifestos displaying anti-Amhara hate narratives from politically powerful movements like the TPLF and OLF, ethnic entrepreneurs have played a significant role in inciting ethnic violence against Amhara civilians, especially in the Oromia region. In providing evidence for this, the first example of this is shown in the Ireecha celebration (peaceful traditional Oromo holiday) taking place in the capital, Addis Ababa, in 2018. Here, the governor of the Oromia region, Shimeles, announced to a crowd of thousands of people, and was broadcasted to millions more, "we have finally broken the backs of the neftegna." "Neftegna" is a traditional word that rural Amharas have named themselves out of pride. It means "rifleman," as rural Amharas have traditionally held rifles to defend the country against outside intruders such as colonizers in the 1800s. However, "neftegna" has become an ethnic slur used by ethno-nationalist extremists in Ethiopia, and is often used in hate speech and in declarations of Amharas to leave the Oromia region in ethnic cleansing cases. Therefore, for the governor of the Oromia region to confidently say this ethnic slur in a violent manner, in the capital of the country, on a national holiday, shows how accepted it is for politicians/ethnic

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[43] "Recent Violence in Ethiopia's Oromia Region Shows Hallmark Signs of Ethnic Cleansing." Minority Rights Group, May 22, 2020. https://minorityrights.org/2020/07/22/ethnic-cleansing-oromia/. ; Meseret, Elias. "Ethiopia's Week of Unrest Sees 239 Dead, 3,500 Arrested." The Washington Post, July 9, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/ethiopias-week-of-unrest-sees-239-dead-3500-arrested/2020/07/08/8eb30952-c100-11ea-8908-68a2b9eae9e0_story.html. ; Zelalem, Zecharias. "'My Son Died the Worst Kind of Death': Horrific Details of Violent Unrest in Ethiopia." Zecharias Zelalem, July 20, 2020. https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-07-14-my-son-died-the-worst-kind-of-death-horrific-details-of-violent-unrest-in-ethiopia/. ; Abera, Etenesh, and Bileh Jelan. "Spate of Targeted Attacks, Excessive Use of Force by Security in Oromia Leave Death Trails, Destruction." Addis Standard, July 16, 2020. https://addisstandard.com/in-depth-analysis-spate-of-targeted-attacks-excessive-use-of-force-by-security-in-oromia-leave-death-trails-destruction/amp/. ; "Recent Genocidal Violence in Oromia Region: A Partial Docurmentation of Casualities Following Assassination of Oromo Vocalist Hachalu Hundessa." The National Movement of Amhara (NaMA), n.d. https://ethioexplorer.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/004_Genocidal-Violence_NaMA_Redacted.pdf. ;

entrepreneurs to engage in and perpetuate hateful narratives against the Amhara ethnic group. Governor Shimeles knew that espousing hateful narratives against Amharas would gain him the support of Oromo ethno-nationalists and extremists that have traditionally supported the OLF.[44]

The second example I will demonstrate comes from the anti-Amhara hate speech espoused by the incredibly popular Oromo politician Jawar Mohammad. Arguably among the most popular opposition politicians in Ethiopia, Jawar has millions of loyal supporters. Aside from him showcasing calls for ethnic cleansing against Amharas in the Oromia region on his network, OMN, he himself has promoted violence against Amharas. In an interview, he has threatened that his followers, "Queeros" (extremist Oromo youth mobs), will go out and cause mayhem if he says so. Though Queero simply means "youth" in the Oromo language and in itself is not originally a bad word. The movement of Queeros itself as extremist mobs have been responsible for the murder of several Amhara civilians in the Oromia region. Jawar has publicly declared that he is proud that his village has beheaded Christians and Amharas.[45] As a politician, Jawar has violently advocated for the independence of Oromia as its own state, with screaming chants of "Ethiopia out of Oromia." Thus, it has been in his interest to incite hate narratives against Amharas and make them the scapegoat for the reason why Ethiopia is a country and Oromia is not. Knowing that hate narratives against Amharas are popular among Oromo extremists and OLF supporters, Jawar has strongly spread this ideology on a larger scale using media platforms. This is dangerous because it has led to real life consequences of Oromo extremist mobs/Queeros targeting and killing Amhara civilians in the Oromia region due to calls for ethnic cleansing through his media outlets.[46]

The third example I will demonstrate is the case of ethnic violence against Amhara civilians in the Oromia region in July 2020, where it was cited that local politicians assisted extremist mobs/Queeros in targeting Amharas and non-Oromos, as they gave them the documents that listed which properties belonged to which ethnic group.[47] There is also a video documenting local politicians and leaders in a town in the Oromia region announcing to an enormous crowd to not sell property or businesses to Amharas because "this is Oromo land

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[44] "The Controversy Surrounding Shimelis Abdisa Speech." Ethiopian News. Ezega, October 9, 2019. https://www.ezega.com/News/NewsDetails/7301/The-Controversy-Surrounding-Shimelis-Abdisa-Speech.

[45] "Stop Jawar." https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBaFKS2MyuJheOcm0RTt0Vw/videos.

[46] "Jawar Mohammed: 'Ethiopia out of Oromia.'"May 2, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXah_qtW8sg.

[47] Abera, Etenesh, and Bileh Jelan. "Spate of Targeted Attacks, Excessive Use of Force by Security in Oromia Leave Death Trails, Destruction." Addis Standard, July 16, 2020.

only." They advocated for the complete non-interaction with Amharas, Gamos (southern minority ethnic group notorious for being ethnically cleansed by Oromo extremists), and other non-Oromo civilians living in the Oromia region, and to even attack them if this was violated.[48]

 If the causal mechanism of ethnic entrepreneurs were tested to be true, then cases of ethnic conflict, violence, and cleansing would occur in regions and districts where politicians and elites spew hate speech and instigate tensions between ethnic groups. In this case, ethnic conflict, violence, and cleansing is occurring in the Oromia region, where Oromo politicians and elites consistently spew hate speech and instigate tensions between ethnic groups, and particularly against the Amhara ethnic group. This is accelerated because the popularity of such politicians, like Jawar Mohammad and Shimeles, are far greater than any other politician in the country, which is shown in the huge crowds they attract and the millions of followers on their media and social media platforms.

Thus, I find that both the causal mechanisms of the restructuring of the ethnic-based regions/borders (especially in the case of Metekel) and the actions of elite entrepreneurs have contributed to the increase of ethnic cleansing and violence against Amharas in Ethiopia. This case study largely fits the causal mechanisms that demonstrate that ethnic federalism promotes more conflicts.

Conclusion

Although the anti-Amhara hate narratives from the TPLF and OLF were documented in their manifestos before the TPLF came in power in 1991 and officially implemented ethnic federalism in 1994, incentives to use these narratives and entice the cleansing of Amharas out of the Gumuz (Metekel zone) and Oromia regions became apparent to ethnic entrepreneurs in these regions in order to claim the land and resources only to their own ethnic groups. This became advantageous in ethnic federalism since ethnicity was the basis and the sole way to politically organize, rather than socio-economic policies. The ethnically charged rhetoric from powerful political elites like Oromia governor Shimeles, Oromo politician Jawar Mohamed, and several local Oromo politicians confirm the influential role that ethnic entrepreneurs play in inciting more ethnic conflicts. Lastly, the reorganization of the regions/borders along ethnic lines has

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[48] "Declaration and Discussion by Oromo Community to Attack Non-Oromo (Amhara + Gamo)." YouTube, November 5, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/?app=desktop.

contributed to the ethnic conflict between Gedeos and Gujis and the ethnic cleansing and violence against Amharas in the Metekel zone in the Gumuz region and throughout the Oromia region.

There are some parts of the causal mechanism that do not fit the case study. First, though it strongly fits the reorganization of regions/borders causal mechanism, there is a lack of evidence of local ethnic entrepreneurs instigating ethnic cleansing in the Metekel zone of the Gumuz region. This may have to do with local Gumuz politics not playing a big role in national politics, making video and documented evidence hard to find. Second, in the case of ethnic violence and cleansing against Amharas in the Oromia region, the hate narratives within certain large parts of the population and the influential role of ethnic entrepreneurs are so strong that the ethnic violence has occurred in places that are not always along the regional borders. A lot of the ethnic violence instigated by these ethnic entrepreneurs and hate narratives has recently increasingly occurred in cities, and not just in the rural places. Thus, in rural places within the Oromia region, as the video of the local politicians telling Oromo civilians not to sell to Amhara civilians demonstrates, ethnic violence does often erupt over both competition over land and resources and ethnic entrepreneurs' instigation. Meanwhile, in cities in the Oromia region, the ethnic violence is less about competition over land and resources, but is more due to extremist mobs influenced by these influential hate narratives and the ethnic entrepreneurs that spread it. Thus, this case study only partly fits the causal mechanisms.

To conclude this section, I find these ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia to be mostly fitting to the causal mechanisms. Thus, according to these available findings, ethnic federalism has likely not promoted peace in Ethiopia. The nature of the conflicts have just become more local and ethnic based, and have increased as such.

Discussion

I seek to address any unanswered questions and what this conclusion means for Ethiopia's future. A haunting question often asked in the Ethiopian political sphere is: what would be the solution or alternative to ethnic federalism? I propose that the first step is to abolish ethnic federalism, and just have a regular federalist political system not based solely on ethnicity. The regions and its borders need to be redrawn to make the regions smaller, in order to prevent the case of there being major regions that are disproportionately more powerful than others and

create more ethnic minorities within a region. With smaller provinces, there will be less ethnic minorities, and a lesser chance of one ethnic based region that is the biggest to abuse the human rights of ethnic minorities and threaten secession, which would cause a long civil war.

Hate speech targeting specific ethnic groups should be censored and banned, especially among politicians. This is necessary in order to diminish the chances of ethnic entrepreneurs inciting ethnic conflicts. However, in this new federalist system not based on ethnicity, there will be less incentives for them to even incite ethnic conflicts since they would need to garner the support of any parts of their population and it does not need to be specific to one ethnicity. Political parties and the competitive political area will need to be based on economic and social policies that would benefit the population, and not just based on ethnicity and how many resources one ethnic group should claim at the expense of the others, which are likely ethnic minorities.

The most important part of all of this is to ensure that both the federal and regional governments do not abuse their power in an authoritarian way, as is currently the case, and to ensure that there is rule of law and protection of human rights. Even if ethnic federalism is abolished, if the government does not provide the rule of law to protect civilians from ethnic-based violence, continues to unjustly arrest innocent civilians and political opponents, and does not implement policies to tackle ethnic discrimination, the matter of whether or not ethnic federalism promotes peace or not in Ethiopia may not make much of a difference in the future.

Obviously, it will take much time, likely decades, to heal from and transform the political, social, and security landscape in Ethiopia in order to have a healthy and democratic political landscape. Any proposed alternative to ethnic federalism would still likely face the problems of ethnic conflicts in the early years of its development since it would not be easy or quick at all to recover from these current ethnic tensions and problems plaguing the society.

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