The Quest for Peace: Examining the Impact of Ethnic Federalism on Conflict Management in Ethiopia

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Abstract:

The main objective of the study is to critically examine the impact of conflict management on conflict management in Ethiopia. The diverse policies that Ethiopia's previous administrations implemented have left both positive and negative legacies. In an attempt to promote national peace by addressing ethnic diversity and reducing conflict, the current regime has experimented with ethnic Federalism in a way never seen before since 1995. However, in Ethiopia, ethnic Federalism has not been able to resolve interethnic disputes. Ethnic group conflicts are become extremely widespread. People have died as a result of these wars, and other people have also been displaced and property destroyed. In addition, ethnic minorities are being driven out of different regions as a result of ethnic strife. Despite this, differing opinions persist regarding the purpose of Ethiopia's ethnic Federalism. Ethnic Federalism is seen favorably by some and is seen as a valuable instrument for resolving interethnic conflicts. However, several elites argue against ethnic Federalism as a policy and practice because they fear violence and the dissolution of the country. The study uses a qualitative content analysis design to address the paper's objective. Sociological and instrumentalist theories are also employed to address the issue. Consequently, this study has clarified how ethnic Federalism affects conflict resolution. The study implies that even if ethnic Federalism was implemented more than thirty years ago, it has not been able to resolve ethnic tensions throughout the nation.

Key Words: Federalism, Ethnic Federalism, Ethnicity, Peace, Ethiopia

1. Introduction:

Federalism, which can be classified as territorial or ethnic, is increasingly regarded as the most incredible option for advancing the administration of multi-ethnic societies prone to violence (Alemayehu, 2004). By giving ethnic groups cultural autonomy and some degree of authority over local governance, a federal model can help reduce conflict (Mengisteab, 2001). Therefore, governments with a multi-ethnic population use federal political systems more often these days to preserve their territorial integrity and meet the aspirations of their ethnic communities. Thus, federal political systems are designed to protect state stability by preventing, resolving, or at least lessening conflicts motivated by ethnicity.

Divide and rule, a strategy devised by British colonialists, is largely responsible for the intra-state Federalism seen in Africa. In opposition to the planned unitary system, which was expected to cause instability, the British colonialists deliberately devised a federal policy aimed at dividing and ruling then-existing powerful and cohesive principalities or administrative units, causing them to become unstable and fragment (Fiseha, 2007: 101; Burgess, 2012). In the most recent instance, multi-national Federalism was deliberately maintained to aid in political fragmentation during the tumultuous period of South Africa's apartheid. However, the South African government was trying to establish a decentralized ethnic type of Federalism to achieve political integration based on shared rule and self-rule in South Africa (Elazar, 1987; Studlar, 2006).

Despite the significant ethnic diversity within the populations of most African states, there is a propensity across the continent to employ federal structures to accommodate ethnic diversity that is much less evident (Van der Beken, 2009). Federalism, however, can be a workable system for state-building in Africa, where state formation is a relatively recent phenomenon and where many ethnic groups have been robbed of their identity and dignity by both the colonial and post-colonial states. This is because Federalism allows these groups to regain their identity. Furthermore, Ethiopia was formerly a unitary state, and the main reason for establishing the current system was that the previous one was ineffective (Mengisteab, 2001).

More than 80 languages and many ethnic groups make up the multicultural, multilingual, and multi-ethnic nation of Ethiopia. Then, the government constructed an ethnic-based federalism system that fully acknowledged language and ethnic autonomy while maintaining national unity since 1995, following its whole and declared legitimate rule over the nation. With ethnicity as its only priority, the administration constructed a new administrative framework. As a result, the nation underwent a dramatic change in its economic, cultural, and demographic characteristics and a

revolution in its political ideology. According to Mohammed and Yıldırım (2023), this severe shift also led to a new understanding and consciousness of ethnicity and the viewpoints of various ethnic groups.

However, there is a lot of debate over ethnic Federalism, especially Ethiopian Federalism. On the one hand, some scholars support the use of ethnic autonomy as a means of resolving inter-ethnic disputes. According to Eshete (2003), resolving the national question and establishing an Ethiopia where each nation, nationality, and people's identity, language, and culture are valued equally is the only way to prevent Ethiopia from collapsing. Additionally, according to Aalen (2006), the leaders of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) asserted that ethnic Federalism may create a favorable environment for the different Nation Nationalities to have a voice in their affairs. They were seen as a helpful instrument for resolving ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia and with a favorable perception. Furthermore, Kymlicka (2005) and Lijphart (2002) agreed that ethnic Federalism allows various ethnic groups to have self-rule, which can lessen regional secession and promote ethnic harmony and national unity.

Conversely, according to Egwe (2003) and Nyong'o (2002), ethnic Federalism worsens individual rights, starts ethnic conflicts, speeds up secession, and ultimately causes nations to fall apart. Ottaway (1995) argues that ethnic-based Federalism does not lessen ethnic tensions but intensifies interethnic conflicts. Furthermore, ethnicity-based Federalism is purposefully created by the EPRDF administration to "divide and rule" to bolster its position, according to Aalen (2006), Vestal (2009), and Walle (2005). For Bayu (2021), both a source of conflict and a means of resolving disagreements inside the nation are the ethnic federal setup.

Even with the establishment of an ethnically based federal structure, diverse, complicated, and grave identity-based conflicts are still evident in various places of Ethiopia today for a variety of reasons. Thus, keeping other variables constant, this study

investigates whether ethnic Federalism is employed in Ethiopia as a tool for controlling ethnic conflicts or as fuel for them. Therefore, the study is attempted to answer the basic question: what is the impact of ethnic federalism for conflict management in Ethiopia?

2. Methodology:

An approach to qualitative content analysis research design has been used in this work. The need for comprehensive qualitative data justified the selection of the qualitative content analysis approach and debate to address the conceptual concerns under investigation. Academic journal articles, conflict situation reports, conference papers, books, working and policy papers, occasional papers, briefings, organization websites, web articles, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations were among the secondary data sources that the researcher used. Ultimately, the gathered literary pieces are examined through themes with significance from the qualitative data and qualitatively interpreted (Terry & Nikki, 2021).

3. Conceptual Framework:
3.1. Federalism:

The definition of Federalism is disputed among academics. Elazar (1987) claims that the name "federalism" originated from the Latin word "Foedus," which means "Covenant." A spatial or territorial division of authority between two or more levels of government in a given political structure is what Börzel (2000) defines as Federalism. According to Riker (1964), Federalism is a type of governance where two levels of government control the same territory and population; each level has at least one area of authority, and there is a constitutional guarantee of each level's autonomy within its respective jurisdiction. Riker, therefore, defined Federalism as a political structure in which the functions of a central government and regional governments are split up so that each type of government has specific responsibilities for which it makes final decisions. Moreover, Federalism is a system of government in which strong member states and a

powerful central government share and divide power by definition. Still, there are differing opinions about Federalism and how it differs from other types of government (Alemayehu, 2004).

Federalism also entails a territorial distribution of authority among the central government and its constituent divisions, which are occasionally referred to as provinces, cantons, regions, and possibly cities and states (Watts, 1998). Put another way, Federalism is an institutional and administrative framework created by the stakeholders' decision to preserve variety through shared governance while sustaining unity (Odion, 2011). Federalism is also a form of political structure, according to Elazar (1987) that brings together disparate polities within a more extensive political system by encouraging each state to uphold its political integrity.

Furthermore, Federalism's political order also necessitates the following: a) defining boundaries and member unit composition (i.e., based on geography, ethnicity, or culture); b) allocating power between member units and central institutions; c) distributing power-sharing or a form of influence by member units in central decision-making bodies within the interlocking political systems; and d) preserving adequate democratic control over the central bodies (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003).

To conclude, Federalism is a form of government that divides powers between the several branches outlined in the Constitution. Typically, there are two primary levels: the state, provincial, or regional level and the national, central, or federal level. However, in other circumstances, a federal system may establish a complicated structure of overlapping territorial and linguistic Federalism, or it may recognize the constitutional powers of local government, dictating a threefold allocation of power.

3.2. Ethnic Federalism:

Federations built around ethnically divided groups to develop their homelands have been called ethno-federalism (Gagnon, 2021). A form of power-sharing inside a nation-state in which regional

subunits based on ethnicity are granted a high degree of territorial autonomy is known as ethnic Federalism, according to Turton (2005). Ethnic Federalism and multi-ethnic Federalism are primarily used synonymously. Following the book's publication by Burgess and Pinder (2007), multi-national Federalism has gained greater recognition and attention in recent years. The US federal model, which has long served as the model for power division in liberal democracies, gave rise to multi-national Federalism (Tremblay & Gagnon, 2022).

Tremblay and Gagnon (2022) state that multi-national federalists point out four significant drawbacks to the American model. First, inside the borders of the federal state, the American model acknowledges the presence of only one demos, or people. Certain federal states are international, though. They are made up of several demos, some of which are minorities with a concentrated geographic area and one of which is a majority. Despite being forced to become a part of the state, these minorities nevertheless regard themselves as political subjects and organize into demos. Accordingly, ethnic Federalism is a political structure in which authority is distributed among the states or regions that make up a nation according to their shared ethnic or cultural characteristics. It addresses a nation's heterogeneous ethnic or cultural makeup by allowing various ethnic groups to exercise self-governance and autonomy within a more expansive political framework.

In summary, states or regions are usually drawn in an ethnic federalist system according to the geographic concentration of specific ethnic groups. Concerning cultural, educational, and linguistic policy and the administration of justice, each area or state is endowed with a certain amount of self-rule. Protecting minority rights, advancing self-governance, accommodating the interests and aspirations of many ethnic groups within a nation, and encouraging a sense of equality and inclusion among varied people are all objectives of ethnic Federalism. It is frequently used in countries with substantial ethnic or cultural diversity when the

central government seeks to balance the requirements for shared governance and national unity, as well as the demands for self-determination and regional autonomy.

3.3. Peace:

For millennia, intellectuals, clergymen, and political activists have written and demonstrated favor of "Peace" and against violence. Nevertheless, a "theory of peace" is still somewhat of a novelty (Webel & Galtung, 2007). Like many theoretical ideas, "Peace" is hard to explain. According to a claim made by Johan Galtung, the investigation of the notion of peace has always been and will continue to be a challenging task in peace research (Galtung, 1981). In the early years of peace studies, there was a common belief that peace was the opposite of war. Early peace studies were greatly impacted by the contemplation of the Second World catastrophe atrocities and a sense of human survival crisis resulting from the possibility of a full-scale nuclear catastrophe between the two superpowers (the United States and Russia). The absence of war defines peace (Matsuo, 2007).

Galtung (1967) defined peace as the absence of institutional and interpersonal violence. Development and conflict reduction activities are also part of peace (Ibeanu, 2006). Furthermore, peace is generally believed to encompass a variety of circumstances that ensure favorable human conditions and existence rather than only the absence of violence (Jeong, 2017). Peace can also be a relationship that exists when primary human conditions are present, but there is no direct physical violence (positive peace) (Galtung, 1967). Thus, in modern times, peace includes not only the absence of conflict and violence but also injustice and prejudice.

In conclusion, peace is a harmonious state marked by the absence of conflict, violent action, and the lack of fear of violence. Although peace is most commonly understood to be the absence of retaliation and hostility, it also refers to the existence of genuine efforts at reconciliation, the state of interpersonal or international relationships that are healthy or have recently healed, prosperity

in terms of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a functional political system that serves the true interests of all.

4. Theoretical Framework:
4.1. Sociological Theory of Federalism:

Livingston (1952) argues that the essential essence of Federalism lies not in the subtleties of legal and constitutional language but in the economic, social, political, and cultural factors that have necessitated the external manifestations of the concept. The essence of Federalism is found in society, not in its legal or executive structures. The federal government establishes and defends the federal characteristics of society. Livingston portrayed a diverse culture that might be broadly distributed or concentrated in particular parts of the globe. When Livingston uttered those words, he meant this. These distinctions may also be distributed among members of a society such that certain attitudes are present in particular geographical areas, or they may be distributed widely throughout the population as a whole. They could constitute a federal community if they are arranged physically or territorially. A community not organized territorially cannot be considered federal (Livingston, 1956).

This theory is significant because it considers the sociological aspect of society's nature. According to this paradigm, the particular nature of the society is crucial since it directly affects the political structure. Thus, a federal system or federation arises from a fundamentally federal society. In a community like this, diversity's constituent parts play a critical role in uniting its members. Livingston posits that the variation could be attributed to many factors, including social distances, the state's historical setting, colonial background, economic disparities, religious affiliation, racism, and nationalism (Livingston, 1952).

Critics have also pointed to the sociological theory of Federalism. First, this theory only portrays variety; it does not explain the factors that can promote harmony amongst the many ethnic groups to build a federation-wide comprehensive

government. Secondly, it is noteworthy that a society based on ethnic variety could not be conducive to forming a federal political system. Examples of ethnic diversity connected by a specific geographical region include the Welsh, Scotts, and Ulster Irish. However, they continue to live side by side under the protection of the United Kingdom's unitary form of government. The same holds for Ghana, South Africa, France, Indonesia, Ceylon, and Ghana. Thirdly, societal preferences and divisions can lead to the creation of any locally specific government, complete with a constitution or political structure. These can range from confederations to governments based primarily on the consolidation of power mixed with a fair dose of de facto rebellion (Rath, 1984).

Once a unitary state for many years, Ethiopia experienced a restructuring in 1995 that "accepted ethnicity as a formal political factor" (Abbink, 2011). Ethnic Federalism was favored in order to resolve the "perceived" complaints of different ethnic groups that were endorsing the "nationalities issue" (Adegehe, 2009). Thus, following a protracted period of unitary, authoritarian, and monarchical administration, Ethiopia established a federal system of government in 1995. The result was the establishment nine regional states, each with its own set of sovereign rights and obligations as stated in the federal Constitution.

4.2. Consociationalist Theory:

The founder and leading representative of conscoiationalist theory is Arend Lijphart. It is based on four components (Lijphart 1990: 491): firstly, a grand coalition, which involves the inclusion of representatives from different segments in the executive. Secondly, proportionality means the proportional representation of different segments in representative institutions such as the civil service and the allocation of public funds. Thirdly, the mutual right of veto, which gives each, segments a right of veto, and fourthly, the autonomy of the segments, which means that decisions on internal matters of the segments should be their responsibility. The school of sociationalism claims that this method effectively minimizes ethnic

divisions according to Selway & Templeman (2012). Therefore, consociational theory predicts that in a divided society, a system of government can be created that divides decision making between the political representatives of competing groups so that conflict can be contained and a stable government can be maintained or created.

In Ethiopia, the theory of consociational democracy has not received much attention in either the theory or practice of Ethiopian federalism. This is partly because the concept of power-sharing is still alien to the country's political traditions. Hegemonic control has long been the main tactic used by Ethiopian rulers to maintain their power. In addition, the 1995 constitution prohibits power-sharing and proportional representation by providing for a parliamentary majority system.

4.3. Instrumentalism Theory:

Instrumentalists view ethnicity as a socially manufactured focal point for collective mobilization (Brass, 1991). Brass said that particular political elites and ethnic activists build ethnicity through the rivalry between rival groups for resources, social status, and political clout within the multi-ethnic category. Ethnicity has acted as a catalyst for political tensions in several different countries, according to Markakis (1994). These tensions are caused by two objective factors: competition for resources under extreme scarcity and the state's involvement in regulating the distribution of these resources (Abrha, 2019). Additionally, the "instrumentalist" perspective holds that intellectuals and political leaders use ethnic sentiments and allegiances for their political ends, including the creation of states (Rosens, 1989). The instrumentalist account of Yugoslavia highlights Serb nationalists' aspirations for a Greater Serbia (Cigar, 1995) and a similar Croat nationalism (Djilas, 1995). Ethnic cleansing resulted from the Serbs' historical desire for a Greater Serbia with deep cultural roots. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Milosevic and Serb separatists tried to implement it when the opportunity arose. According to Oberschall (2000), Greater Serbia had to drive non-Serbs out of areas where they constituted the majority and from the routes that connected Serb population centers.

Thus, the central claim of instrumentalism is that human character does not depend on ethnicity, and ethnicity is not inherently desirable. Ethnicity hides a political or economic basis of principles. Ethnicity can be used to obtain access to governmental finances or political influence. This is why it is so common in multi-ethnic societies. Conflicts arise when leaders use ethnicity to acquire political power or appropriate public resources.

5. Discussion:
5.1. Ethnic Federalism and Conflict Management in Ethiopia:

Ethiopia appears to have adopted Federalism in response to the difficulty in determining an appropriate governmental structure that might be a tool for managing the country's complex ethno linguistic diversity and reducing conflict. Despite this, the country still has major issues with ethnic conflict. In actuality, Federalism has a conflicting history of racial conflict (Adegehe, 2009). However, it led to the recognition of the cultural and linguistic rights of the nation's ethnic communities. Conversely, it appears to have altered and produced ethnic disputes within the region (Abbink, 2006).

Proponents of ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia claim that the concept was created with the intention of nation-building by earlier administrations (before the EPRDF) to solve concerns of ethnic discrimination. The EPRDF and advocates of ethnic Federalism first assert that Federalism's creation aimed to convert the empire-state into an ethnic federalist democracy (Habtu, 2003). It is easier to regard federal structures as helping to lessen ethnic conflict in deeply divided communities, according to Hueglin and Fenna (2015). Ethiopian Federalism facilitates the representation of minority ethnic groups at the municipal and national levels, according to Andreas (2003). Fiseha (2006) asserts that the current Federalism serves as a correction for historical inequalities and instability. Thus, some

of the nation's issues have deeper historical roots and are not the product of Federalism. Consequently, Ethiopian Federalism shouldn't be completely ignored; on the contrary, preserving Ethiopia's variety may even guarantee Ethiopia's security and unity (Van der Beken, 2009).

However, some who opposed ethnic Federalism contended that the new political structure falls short of ideal standards of inclusivity and fairness. According to Fessha (2016), ethnic autonomy is not a panacea for Ethiopia. Abrha (2019) asserts that ethnic Federalism has not settled ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Conflicts between different ethnic groups are, therefore, becoming familiar. Numerous innocent people have died as a result of these conflicts, and there has been significant property damage and mass population displacement. Ethnic conflicts, which have also occurred in universities, often result in closures. Ethnic conflicts are also driving ethnic minorities from various places. Thus, there is an urgent need to reevaluate Ethiopia's ethnic federal structure before the current state of affairs worsens and gives rise to ethnic violence.

The implementation of the system of ethnic Federalism with the freedom to secession was also erroneous. Its declared goal was defeated when it created and reproduced conflicts from the higher municipal level of government to the lower national level. Therefore, according to Hadu and Abebe (2019), an ethnic federal structure like this could exacerbate Ethiopia's ongoing ethnic conflicts. Additionally, Abebe (2012) argued that while Ethiopia's implementation of an ethnic federal system has allowed minorities to exercise their legal, cultural, and linguistic rights, the ethnic federal experiment has run into severe problems. Therefore, for the first time in the country's history since its modern founding, ethnic Federalism paved the way for institutionalizing, accepting, and acknowledging ethno cultural diversity. Equally important, ethnic Federalism strained relationships between the government, society, and other communities, increasing the likelihood of ethnic conflict and jeopardizing national cohesion (Bayu, 2021).

Conversely, what causes most of Ethiopia's persistent interethnic conflict and instability is contentious and challenging to answer. The Ethiopian state historically evolved into a non-colonial empire-state over millennia. There are several different racial groups in the country. Thus, Ethiopia's problems are linked to the 20th century, imperial practices, and military communist programs (Habtu, 2003). Similarly, Fiseha (2018) said that not all of the issues were brought about by Federalism but instead had earlier historical roots. Consequently, in the case of Ethiopia, the problem of an unsuccessful attempt to construct a nation through assimilation and centralization is associated with the "federal restructuring" of the country (Adegehe, 2009).

According to Adegehe (2009), many disputes that arose at the local and regional levels due to the country's federal structure may be categorized as autonomy disputes. Within the framework of this study, autonomy disputes encompass a wide range of issues, including self-determination/secession, politics of resource sharing, political power, representation, identity, citizenship, ethnic and regional boundaries, and more. Moreover, ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia may be exacerbated by such an ethnic federal structure (Ahadu & Abebe, 2019). The main shortcoming of the Ethiopian ethnic federal system is the disagreement among the various political factions about how to deal with ethnic diversity. As a result, disagreement exists about the legality of the nation's current federal structure among the different political parties (Abebe, 2012).

Furthermore, structural weaknesses and politically motivated ethnic issues are the main reasons society's institution of tolerance periodically fails (Kasse & Woldemariam, 2022). Likewise, social, political, and economic factors—rather than fundamentally atavistic or primal sentiments—often play a role in establishing ethnic consciousness and mobilization in the Ethiopian context. However, key components such as language, ancestral ties, and presumed shared ancestry have developed into a foundation for political mobilization and solidarity building. It is

not meant to suggest that racial and ethnic unity and separation are typical social processes. Elites are more prone to suffering than regular people (Balcha, 2007).

In conclusion, academics still disagree on how ethnic Federalism affects stability and peace in Ethiopia, particularly in general. Ultimately, the researchers' perspectives on Ethiopia's ongoing war and insecurity diverge. Above all, they ignored the underlying causes and sources of the nation's disputes.

5.2. Ethnic Federalism and Politicization of Ethnicity:

The nation's expanding ethnic consciousness has created, reconfigured, and mobilized identities for specific political, social, and economic goals (Baweke, 2015) in the post-1995 era. While the exact number of ethnic groups in the country is uncertain, over 80 have been recognized by several government papers and scholarly publications (Kefale et al., 2021; Birhanu, 2020). Therefore, ethnicity plays a big part in the struggle for domination and power among Ethiopia's elites (Eresso, 2021), which fuels conflict between ethnic groups (Abebe, 2016). The Tigray Conflict happened recently. The Ethiopian Defense Force Northern Command was attacked by the TPLF Special Forces in November 2020, sparking the start of the battle. After that, the violence affects the surrounding regions of Amhara and Afar (Gavin, 2021). In short, ethnicity is the most delicate and emotionally charged subject; when it becomes politicized, it can shape social behavior and benefit political elites (Baweke, 2015). Consequently, over time, ethnic conflict has persisted among different ethnic groups as a result of political elites' politicization and mobilization of ethnic groups. The nation has faced several issues due to the Elite's greedy desire for wealth and political power, particularly after 1995.

In conclusion, Ethiopia has been implementing ethnic Federalism since the early 1990s to advance the autonomy of several ethnic groups and settle historical grievances. However, over time, the system turned ethnicity into a political issue, which exacerbated tensions and raised the possibility of

violence between various ethnic groups. By creating a system in which ethnicity became closely linked to political power and separating the country's administrative divisions along ethnic lines, ethnic Federalism enhanced group identities. A zero-sum game attitude has resulted from the competition between ethnic groups for resources, representation, and power. As a result, ethnic concerns are increasingly prioritized before national unity. The prioritization of ethnic identity and the distribution of resources based on ethnicity also led to a feeling of alienation and marginalization for some groups, which fueled animosity and complaints that culminated in interethnic disputes and demonstrations, endangering the stability and unity of the Ethiopian state.

5.3. The Design of the Federal States:

Conflict and issues might arise from the symmetric or asymmetric construction of federal entities and administrative organizations. Both Aalen (2002) and Mikael et al. (2005) have noted that the delimitation of Ethiopia's federal units has resulted in highly disparate constituent parts and an asymmetrical federal system, as well as numerous regional states with ethnic heterogeneity inside their borders and several states where the struggle for regional hegemony among various ethnic groups or clans has caused destabilization and the weakening of the regional governments.

All federal units in an asymmetric federation have different powers from one another. In contrast, under symmetric federal arrangements, all federal units have the same number of representatives in the second chamber of parliament and the same set of competencies. According to Lancaster (2012), Ethiopia and Russia, for instance, both have high degrees of asymmetric Federalism and incongruent Federalism. Since enacting their most recent constitutions, they have had moderate to high levels of conflict. At the same time, sub-national governments are treated differently under asymmetric Federalism—as in Russia, where each ethnic republic has its president while the Oblasts and the Krai have appointed governors—sub-regional states are treated equally under symmetric

Federalism, as in the case of the United States (Ibid). Furthermore, disputes were influenced by how regional states were formed, creating dominating ethnic groups and minority groups. As a result, ethnic cleansing and acts of violence against minority ethnic groups have occurred throughout the country, including in Benishangul Gumuz Regional States and Oromia.

In conclusion, Ethiopia's state structure has dramatically impacted the nation's level of peace since the federal system was put into place in 1995. Ethnic rivalry and conflict over resources and political power have returned due to the establishment regional states with an ethnic basis. Inter-communal tensions and occasional outbreaks of violence have emerged from this, especially along ethnic fault lines. Although the federal system has given various ethnic groups some degree of representation and self-governance, the polarizing character of ethnic-regional politics has made it challenging to establish long-lasting peace in Ethiopia.

5.4. Unclear Ethnic Borders:

According to researchers like Berhane and Tefera (2018), the realignment of borders in an ethnic federalism system that aims to "accurately" divide along ethnic lines leads to an increase in ethnic conflicts because different ethnic groups are claiming certain lands as part of their "ethnic homeland" or territory, which invariably affects other ethnic groups. This is particularly true as the ethnic and national identities of the community become linked to the already-existing needs for natural resources for their livelihoods, increasing the likelihood of disputes and complicating their resolution. As such, redrawing borders in an ethnic federalist system contributes to increased conflict.

Moreover, defining the boundaries of ethnically constituted sub-national units of multi-ethnic federations has proven problematic and could cause ethnic tensions and conflicts. This is particularly true in urban areas and ethnic borderlands where two or more ethnic groups converge. The fluid and overlapping nature of ethnic identity in many multi-ethnic countries

makes drawing intra-federal boundaries cause conflicts (Adegehe, 2009). In Ethiopia, for example, several violent conflicts between neighboring ethnic groups erupted because of contested boundaries. In some cases, traditional territorial disputes over land resources between neighboring pastoral ethnic groups are becoming more dangerous nation-state-type boundary conflicts (Mengistu, 2015).

Since the federal system was implemented in Ethiopia in 1995, the problem of ambiguous ethnic borders has had a major effect on the country's level of peace. It has been a complicated process to draw ethnic boundaries, frequently resulting in disagreements and hostilities between various ethnic groups. Power struggles, resource competitiveness, and territorial disputes have flourished because of the lack of agreement and clarity surrounding these borders. This has increased inter-communal conflict and the likelihood of sporadic violent outbursts, especially in areas where ethnic boundaries are hazy or overlap. A sense of fear and marginalization among different ethnic communities has been exacerbated by the lack of distinct and widely acknowledged ethnic borders, which has also made it more challenging to construct stable governance systems and manage resources.

5.5. Identity and Territory:

Territorial changes brought forth by the new federal structure resulted in competition for shared resources and territorial claims and counterclaims (Assefa, 1996). Conflicts have also resulted between Guji and Gedeo, Afar and Issa, Afar and Amhara, among others. In the past three decades, conflicts have also revolved around questions of identity and territory. Examples of these conflicts are those between the Gamo and Welayita, Tigray and Amhara over Welkayit, Somali and Oromo, Somali and Afar, and Silte and Gurage.

Tensions and disputes have arisen in Ethiopia due to land distribution among ethnic groups as a component of ethnic Federalism. The goal of ethnic land distribution was to make up for past wrongs and provide fair access to resources. However,

among many ethnic groups, this strategy has resulted in disagreements over who owns and uses the property. Giving land to specific ethnic groups has fueled competitiveness and animosity amongst groups that may have ancestral or historical claims to the same areas because the land is a scarce and vital resource.

Conflicts occur when boundaries defined for ethnic territories overlap with areas claimed by numerous groups or when ethnic groups believe their access to land and resources is unfairly restricted. These land disputes have exacerbated interethnic tensions, threatening national stability and eroding social cohesiveness. Though meant to remedy historical injustices and encourage self-governance, land distribution among ethnic groups has unintentionally become a point of disagreement and strife.

5.6. Tensions in Majority and Minority Relations in Regional States:

Despite the assertion made by the proponents of ethnic Federalism that they created nine regional states based on ethnicity, most regional states still have a diverse population living inside their borders. It is not an easy undertaking to fulfill the interests of ethnic groups without creating another governmental system at the regional level. For example, the constitutions of certain regional states classified ethnic groups as either titular owners or non-titular non-owners. Therefore, the roots of lethal ethnic conflicts in such regional nations are the conflicting claims and counterclaims of both titular and non-titular ethnic groups. The cases of Agew and Gumuz Ayenew (2018) and Guji and Gedeo are concrete instances of how Habtu (2003) asserts that the new political structure has also compelled formerly dominant and dominated ethnic groups to adopt new forms of inter-ethnic relations, which in turn drives ethnic conflicts. Conflicts between ethnic groups can also arise from the contradictory interactions between the primary and minority ethnic groups.

Consequently, even though the Ethiopian government has been using ethnic Federalism as a novel strategy to accept variety since 1995, the current state of intra- and inter-ethnic affairs seems to be challenging the long-standing interdependence and unity of the nation's citizens. Currently, violent conflicts resulting from human fault lines, race, and religion are causing hardship for individuals across the country. However, ethnic Federalism alone does not fully explain Ethiopia's current ethnic dynamics and conflicts; instead, many contextual and interrelated elements act together. Of the many factors that exist, ethnic Federalism is just one. However, it might be claimed that ethnic Federalism has decentralized power rather than conflict among the nation's various ethnic identities. Therefore, a thorough examination of the historical and contemporary sociopolitical and economic settings is necessary to comprehend ethnicity and ethnic relations in Ethiopia (Abebe, 2016).

To sum up, social cohesiveness and stability in regional states are greatly impacted by conflicts between the majority and minority populations. To reduce tensions and create a peaceful society, it is imperative that regional governments support inclusive policies, encourage intercultural communication, and guarantee fair opportunity for every group. Strong institutions and efficient dispute-resolution procedures are also necessary for handling and resolving disputes resulting from majority and minority relations.

5.7. Conflicts within States:

According to Aalen (2006), Ethiopia's ethno-national federalist model has also resulted in regional ethnic disputes among States. Ethiopia has various ethnic groupings and tribal affiliations, more ethnic groups than states, and ethnic states do not always wholly match fluid ethnic identities; therefore, this may not be surprising. Conflict may arise as ethnic minorities within States seek to defend their right to self-determination, Moore (2003) posing an unsolvable issue for the least populated ethnic groupings. Certain parties have pointed out that Ethiopia's constitutional recognition of group rights based on ethnic territorial autonomy is fundamentally flawed if it is not possible to provide a contiguous State for all ethnic groups.

For the smallest ethnic communities, the entitlement to a State or (a district within a State) may not be achievable and is typically not recognized by the relevant administrative body (Aalen, 2006). Here, the States, not the federal government, act as the administrative branches that deny minorities their rights and offer them no other options (Haile, 1996). Because fixed administrative boundaries and flexible ethnic identities do not always coincide, conflict is likely to persist even if the States establish districts for smaller populations. Due to these challenges, States frequently outsource ethnic conflicts to other States or districts, such as those involving recognition, self-rule, autonomy, and minority rights (Regassa, 2010).

One last point of complexity is the situation regarding the capitals of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, two autonomous, non-ethnic administrative regions with a multi-ethnic population. Even though these two cities are unique, they are part of ethnic States, which causes a continuous dispute over political power and jurisdiction (Abebe, 2016). Overall, this viewpoint suggests that ethnic Federalism exacerbates ethnic strife, erodes the growth of a robust national identity in Ethiopia, a wide-ranging Ethiopian cultural and political community, and impairs the nation's basis.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations:

Ethiopia has experienced ethnic conflict, violence, and warfare ever since establishing ethnic Federalism in 1995, even if it is not the only single factor. Although ethnic Federalism was enacted to promote self-governance and settle historical grievances, it has also exacerbated ethnic tensions and politicized ethnicity. Administrative regions have been divided based on ethnicity, creating a framework in which the distribution of resources and political power are strongly correlated with ethnicity. This has led to competition and zero-sum dynamics among various ethnic groups. The stability and unity of the Ethiopian state have been put in jeopardy as a result of the escalation of interethnic disputes and protests.

In addition, the focus on ethnic identity and the distribution of resources according to ethnic boundaries have made other groups feel excluded and marginalized. Ethnic tensions have been made worse by the inflexible borders of ethnic areas, which have given rise to disagreements over political representation, resource access, and land ownership. Ineffective management of these tensions can lead to violent clashes between ethnic groups, which would seriously jeopardize Ethiopia's peace and stability.

Promoting inclusive policies that attend to the complaints and aspirations of all ethnic groups is essential for conflict management in ethnic Federalism. To achieve this, it is necessary to defend minority rights, encourage multicultural communication, and advance equitable political representation and resource distribution chances. To manage conflicts peacefully and productively, it is also essential to strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms and improve regional administrations' ability to handle interethnic issues. Ethiopia can only successfully negotiate the challenges of ethnic Federalism and move toward a more inclusive and peaceful society by making these steps.

Individual and collective rights of citizens should be balanced under the Constitution. Institutions within the government should also be robust enough to ensure the security of citizens and marginalized ethnic groups. Lastly, to establish enduring peace, the ethnic federal system should be rearranged primarily with the populace's permission while taking individual and collective rights into account.

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