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Ethiopia: A Rising regional power?

Makeda Fikremariam

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Ethiopia: A Rising Regional Power?

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by Makeda   Fikremariam

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FACULTY COMMITTEE: HONORS COLLEGE APPROVAL:

_____   _____
Project Advisor: Melinda Adams, Ph.D   Bradley R. Newcomer, Ph.D.,
Professor, Political Science   Dean, Honors College

_____
Reader: David Owusu-Ansah, Ph.D
Professor, History

_____
Reader: Kenneth Rutherford, Ph.D
Professor, Political Science

_____
Reader: ,
       ,

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full, at on December 2, 2020 at 4 pm .

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Introduction

Within the past twenty years, Ethiopia has been slowly rising in the ranks within the global community, which have led historians to consider Ethiopia as a political force to be reckoned with. Historically speaking, Ethiopia's former name was the Abyssinia Empire, but is generally understood to be one of the oldest civilizations. Including the infamous Lucy, other remains have been found in Ethiopia, including what scientists consider to be the stem for the *Homo* genus (Powell 2015). Another historical perspective for Ethiopia contains it's biblical importance in the Old Testament with the mention of Queen Sheba and King Solomon, who began the Menelik dynasty and the Ethiopian Empire (Monges 2002).

Some may argue that the country's historical perseverance was the beginning of Ethiopia's pan-Africanism, in addition to escaping the grasps of colonialism. The country's weight in the African continent only continued as it became home to the Organization of African Unity and eventually the African Union (Ani 2017). In more modern terms, Ethiopia's economic growth is also another factor to demonstrate their rising superiority within the international community. According to the World Bank, Ethiopia's growth over the past decade has lifted the gross national product to an average of 10% per year. This is only theorized to increase with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) being built on Ethiopia's Blue Nile. This project is primary funded by Ethiopian citizens and is expected to generate 5,520 megawatts of electricity which will allow the government to sell surplus electricity (Tafirenyika 2015).

It is by considering these facts, that this project considers Ethiopia's potential to be a rising regional power within the Horn of Africa.

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Beginning with my patient and understanding committee members, Dr. Melinda Adams, Dr.

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I hold dear to my heart. I would also like to thank my family and friends who experienced this

project alongside me, kept encouraging me until I crossed the finish line, and inspired me to think

big.

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Abstract

This study analyzes Ethiopia's potential to be considered a rising regional power in East Africa. This project began with a qualitative analysis considering literature on hegemony, and broadly accepted regional powers within the international community. It then considers regional powers within the African context (Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa) to gain an understanding in how the existing literature fits within Africa. The second substantial chapter then considers prominent Ethiopian leaders whose legacy is still felt in the 21st century, including individuals such as Emperor Menelik and Haile Selassie. This analysis shows Ethiopia's complex history which complicates the country's ability to be labeled a rising regional power, especially with the rising ethnic violence.

Literature Review:

I.   Introduction:

When considering the major political powers within the international sphere, the most common answers tend to be focused around developed and industrial nations. By focusing on those specific countries, this approach limits the consideration of developing countries. While the former dominates political discussion over power, the latter are treated as a second thought within popular discourse in political science. This project seeks to widen our understanding of power in the international system by focusing on regional powers, specifically outside of the Western World. Fueled by the lack of diversity when considering power, this research paper turns to analyze Ethiopia and the country's potential to be considered a regional power. With its cultural history, ability to combat colonial influence, and potential to control Africa's largest body of water (the Nile), Ethiopia is rightfully situated to fit the criteria for a country rising in power.

The goal of this chapter is to begin the analysis by conceptualizing regionalism and what it means to be a regional power. By focusing on literature that discusses common actors within the regional discussion, I will draw out characteristics that are shared amongst these states. The next chapter will take a broader approach and consider regionalism within the African context. Before embarking on this journey for considering Ethiopia's potential to be labeled East Africa's prominent regional power, it is crucial to understand the common terminology used within international relations literature about power, hegemony, and regional powers. However, due to overuse of these terms throughout history, there is variety in what is considered to be the true definition. This complicates discussions within IR as analysts use the same terminology but are referring to different concepts.

This literature review will begin by aiming to understand various theories on hegemony and regional powers. Political scientists tend to turn to countries such as India, Brazil, and China when considering rising regional countries. Throughout this literature review, I will show how these theories are applied and found within those countries.

II.   Defining Hegemony

To have a true understanding about Ethiopia's place on the global field, it is important to comprehend what power means on the international scale. With rising powers, it is clear that the distribution of power is a dynamic concept that is constantly changing. Regionalism and international stability are strongly assessed by the influence of dominant powers to maintain influence or for subordinate states to successfully threaten the status quo.

Defining hegemony is difficult as it has multiple uses within political science. It is used as a synonym for both leadership and empires. Within various schools of political thought it is considered to be a normatively loaded term (Destradi 2010). The weight, and power behind 'hegemony' is often associated with major political entities that have abused their influence in the world to further enforce their dominance. Now, with the rise of 'southern' states such as China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, scholars have turned to find an operational definition to hegemony. A definition that would assist in classifying and sorting these rising powers, based on their proximity to 'hegemonic' status. It is this endeavor that shined a light into the lack of consensus behind a definition for the term. Most literature focuses on a state's rise to power, and their interactions but there is minimal focus of analyzing and predicting their involvement in shaping their regional order. The aim of this paper is to fill that gap by understanding Ethiopia's potential and apply this theoretical information into understanding the future for the Horn of Africa.

The most significant contributions to the concept of hegemony was done by Antonio Gramsci on cultural hegemony. The Gramsci perspective focused on establishing hegemony as a process where there is "spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population by the dominant fundamental group" (Lears 1985). In other words, this can be applied to political theory by understanding that hegemons aim to establish a new order with a universal ideology which aligns their interests with those around them. To successfully become a hegemon, it depends on the ability of the actor to form alliances with surrounding states. In most cases, this is considered hard hegemony with a subtle form of domination without the clear use of force. In contrast, intermediate hegemonic strategy is seen with material benefits and rewards for their subordinates (Destradi 2010)

III.   Defining Regional Powers

The focus in the literature shifted from hegemony to regional powers after the Cold War, when the world wanted to understand and create a space for regional powers to emerge as key actors. Instead of looking towards the two major powers in the East-West dichotomy during the Cold War, the rise of regional powers became relevant as the developing countries were now expected to take care of conflicts within their own backyard in the post-Cold War era. This trust soon turned into an expectation for these regional countries to speak and step up once their neighbors acted in manners that caused tension on the global scale. A prime example of this tendency can be found with the expectation that the international community had for India to influence the Sri Lankan Civil War (Prys 2010). As their neighbor, India was positioned as the dominant country with the greatest degree of influence.

Realizing this, hegemons rely on the rising local actors to keep their regional interests a priority by presenting it as a common goal. This was evident in the growing relationship between

India and the United States, for the former to act as a barrier to Chinese expansion starting in the 1960s (Conclusion: The Past and Future of Rising Regional Powers 2016). A key motivator for the United States was not a desire to cultivate a relationship with India as a growing country. Rather hegemons have been creating alliances out of fear of losing resources due to a threatening power. However, this does not mean that hegemons are neglecting the potential of these regional rising powers. Instead, their relationship is dependent on the reality of the prominent threat of another rising country. With Indian-US relations, if China slows in growth the US has less incentive to help strengthen India. In contrast, if China continues their growth, the US will need a partner within the region to prevent resource control.

As mentioned previously, a difficulty within political science is the overuse of terminology with no understanding of the differences between the terms. This tendency is played out again when understanding regional powers. Political scientists have applied global theories instead of finding the proper tools to analyze, identify, and differentiate between various regional powers. When looking towards international examples, the literature conflicts in how to define these prevalent cases as either regional, intermediate or emerging middle powers. The main differences between middle and regional powers rests on legitimacy, involvement with institutions, and maintaining order (Nolte 2010).

Martin Wight believed that regional actors could be understood as middle powers. Unlike hegemons, regional powers are not aiming to influence at the global level but rather within their own backyard. These actors are focused on a limited region where they can operate on their accord. While the terminology is different, the theory is supported by Detlef Nolte's research which identified four common traits of regional powers.

1. Geographically are a part of the region in question.

2. These regional powers are able to stand up against any coalition of other states in the region.

3. They are also highly influential in regional affairs.

4. States can also have power that extends to influence on the world scale.

Depending on the abilities of the state, they have two options for defending their power against coalitions in the region. They can display superiority in terms of power capabilities, if they have the largest power share in the region. If the country lacks material resources, they will focus on influencing the region by taking on the responsibility to act as the "role model" and set rules. Through other tactics, such as territorial denial, diplomacy, economic strengthening, and signaling of resolve to participate in the balancing coalition, these rising powers can skew the terms of cooperation in their favor. Nolte's last trait is corroborated when analyzing how major regional powers have also worked to strengthen their international relationships and alliances.

With turning the focus away from hegemonic powers came a general weakening of the current system which gives these rising states a platform to reset the international structure to their benefit. For these rising powers, this opportunity provides them a chance to challenge the global order by demanding a status and benefits they did not previously enjoy. Nolte's analysis of this power structure included AFK Organski's interpretation of this tendency, when he applied the Power Transition Theory to regional powers. The dominant power defines and enforces the rules within the international order to maximize net gains. However, regional powers should also be recognized by their growing economic influence but also as system challengers out of dissatisfaction of the current order (Nolte 2010). By creating new norms, these regional powers also destabilize the system for the dominant power which further places these countries on the radar.

Much of international relations has centered around the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, led by the United States. However, our understanding of the international sphere has changed as political scientists have recognized the rise of developing countries within the Southern Hemisphere (Stephen). Specifically, between the IBSA states (India, Brazil, and South Africa) the world has noticed their economic expansion and the political implications of that growth. By focusing on their relationships, this trio has begun restructuring the international field to insert their voice on global issues. This coordination has also begun a "fight" against developed countries by countering efforts from the Northern Hemisphere. As they gain in power, the IBSA states will seek to balance the dominance of the established powers. Another example of this fight is the Asian Infrastructure Bank, which China established to counter the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This initiative lends legitimacy to Chinas international endeavors and extends their sphere of influence while changing the rules of the game. This is a clear example of China actively seeking to shape international institutions to assert its presence and influence at the global level.

    i.   *Economic Growth*

Through extensive economic growth some countries such as India, China and Brazil are being recognized on the global level and thus can demand greater influence within international institutions and through relationships with other countries. Between the years of 1980 and 2004, India managed to grow their economy without facing any recessions (Nayar 2006). By implementing governmental macroeconomic policies, India experienced growth that drew attention from the international community. Regardless of who is experiencing the growth, economic ascension is a common sign of rising superiority.

Due to colonialism, historically India focused on exporting raw materials and thus has placed a wider emphasis on agriculture. Currently, in terms of its national GDP, agricultural importance has decreased but 60 percent of the workforce are still engaged in the sector. This contrast is supported by prevalent poverty rates which still fuel domestic insurgencies (Nayar,2006).

Prabhat Patnaik's research into India's growth demonstrates how some researchers are skeptical about the relationship between India's growth rate and persistence of poverty. Patnaik explains how trusting GDP can be difficult as it does not include all transfers within the economy, and thus cannot serve as a representative measure of growth (Patnaik,2011). Keeping in mind the antithetical dynamic between economic growth and poverty rates in India, economists have provided policy suggestions that will encourage economic growth to continue the resulting political power. Without handling internal matters first, it is harder to gain recognition by neighboring countries or the greater international community. This is an important distinction because it demonstrates the significance of domestic stability in a countries ability to have a prominent role in global policy making. While economic success does not always translate to elimination of internal struggle, it is a factor that influences the latter. India's situation is a clear example of this relationship. Overall, the country is experiencing economic growth, however the persistent poverty rates demonstrate that this growth is not experienced equally throughout the state and is cause for political tension and eventual violence.

In contrast to India, Brazil experienced both economic growth and poverty reduction. Between 1990 and 2012, Brazil has experienced a reduction of poverty rates from 48.8 percent to 28.1 percent. In addition, Brazil has underwent an increase in foreign domestic investment from 57.8 billion dollars to 157.6 billion between 2005 and 2013 (Sauer 2017). They have enjoyed these benefits because of a heightened dependency on Brazilian primary products and raw

materials. Given that Brazil's economy constitutes half of the total economy within South America, it is clear to label Brazil as a regional economic power. After their transition into a representative democracy, Brazil can also be considered politically stable. This allows the international community to have further confidence in their market and strengthen the argument for Brazilian supremacy.

By its historic economic growth, Brazil has become a key player in expanding its influence. It is able to formulate its regional agendas and initiatives that incorporates various countries. Recognizing its position within Latin America, Brazil reoriented its economy from a market of distancing, to a market of regional integration. Increasingly with newer administrations, Brazil has shifted its agenda to coordinate regional cooperation and integration efforts with an eye towards boosting development through political dialogue throughout various sectors. As integration is a way of gaining access to foreign markets and strengthening the country's bargaining position, Brazil has developed and consolidated a process of regional integration through initiatives such as the Common Market of the South, i.e. Mercosur (Saraiva,2010). However, most of Brazil's economic prosperity and diplomatic relations are associated with the Silva administration beginning in 2003. Specifically, with their Africa policy, President Silva increase integration and positive relations by reopening embassies and visiting African nations (Seibert, 2011).

Discussions that are centered around growth and globalization would not be complete without mentioning China. One international motivator is the focus on India was to counter China's obvious growth and extension of power within Asia. With a rapidly increasing population size and a scarcity of natural resources, China has also experienced an increase in external relations to supplement its growth. While China is seen as a major threat to American

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hegemony, they are beginning their rise with a focus on regional affairs. China is seen as the superior alternative with soft containment strategies against US constraint in the region (Ali, 2010).

ii.   International Relations

As the world continues to grow with international relationships, it is helpful to analyze these relations to understand the type of regional power countries are. For India, their potential to rise to global standing is dependent on their economic relation with China, as their largest trade partner (Hall 2010). The two have mutual apprehension towards the growth of the other, but the lasting economic benefits outweigh any fear.

For India to become a key player within their region and maintain prosperity within their borders, India must maintain feasible relationships within their neighborhood. Hall wrote of the four arcs which determines India's diplomatic relations.

1. Arc of Prosperity: land east to India

2. Arc of Energy: land between the Persian Gulf and Russia

3. Arc of Instability: land west after Pakistan, and the land between Pakistan and Bangladesh

4. Arc of Communications: recognizing the importance of the Indian Ocean as the link between Europe and Asia.

The convergence of all four arcs creates a vortex where India sits in the middle and has the ability to develop peace that maintains balance in the region. Past having influence on the global field, India also meets the material trait found with other regional powers. India has built their army to be the third largest in the world (Hall 2010). While a mainly peaceful nation, having the ability to forcefully extend their power across Asia raises international interest.

This analysis of the four arcs is relevant to the broader study, as it presents one example of how a country can be classified as a regional power, and the overlapping factors that are considered. It should be noted that the balance of arcs is also relevant in Ethiopia's ability to remain a powerful actor within East Africa. Ethiopia's Arc of Prosperity and Energy refers to land east of Ethiopia, and the Nile's upstream countries. Past Ethiopia's internal political struggle, the two arcs are merged as the potential to control the Nile River with a hydroelectric dam which will determine the fate of Ethiopia's prosperity within the region. Correspondingly, the Arc of Instability can focus on Ethiopia's historical tension with Eritrea or neighboring conflict in Somalia, and Sudan. Similar to India's Arc of Communications, Ethiopia is strategically located to serve as the middle point between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Both countries face the challenge of balancing and utilizing their regional arcs to establish international success.

Historically, since the departure of the British, Indian and Pakistani conflict has been a source of instability within Southeast Asia. It has driven countries away from the region, while encouraging others, such as the US, to intervene for the sake of peace (Nayar). India has motivation to encourage peace within the region, as it can incentivize foreign investors into their markets, and allow for India to continue their rise into regional dominance.

In comparison to donations by the Western world, Indian monetary aid to Africa is more easily seen as collaboration towards a common goal. These rising states are taking advantage of working the current system to strengthen their relationship with other developing countries. By reinforcing that all participants are equals, the countries are able to create a relationship guided by respect and non-interference in domestic affairs. This is a direct counter to how Western aid is viewed, and commonly implemented. With time, this eventually leads to a decline of the

dominant actors in developing countries. However regardless of how aid is framed, most countries are often motivated by self-interest for all parties involved.

A similar motivation has been adopted by the Chinese and coined as the Beijing Consensus. The idea was first categorized to recognize China's new power and position as a competitor to the US. In contrast to Western values, this concept is supported by Confucian ideals of "living peacefully with neighbors, bringing prosperity and providing safety" (Cho 2008). Chinese diplomatic relations and thus economic aid is generally considered condition free after the recipient country acknowledges the One China policy. For example, governmental differences with African countries does not determine their relationship (The Rising Power of China 2015). To achieve 'peaceful development' China has switched from American centered diplomacy, to neighbor centered policies.

China's dependency on global energy is a crucial aspect of determining their foreign policy. There is now a growing importance for collaboration with states that provide natural resources, but also states that can establish the safe movement of assets. There has been conflicting research on labeling Chinese goals, due to the mix of Chinese globalism, unilateralism, diplomacy and force. As a result, China has been recognized as a "regional power without a regional policy". To assist in this analysis political scientists in the past have assumed that China's Asia-Pacific policy is composed according to the rational actor model (Christofferson 1996). Past that general starting point, analysts are unable to elaborate thoroughly the specific outlines of China's policies.

That being said, there is still a plethora of data demonstrating Chinese dominance and engagement with the international sphere. Through aid, waiving international debt or building infrastructure, the Chinse have created mutually beneficial relationships that contrast to many

relationships their trading partners have had with hegemonic powers (Ali 2010). With their growing economic interests in East Asia, there has been a rise in establishing and joining multinational organizations. Through this, China has strengthened various diplomatic relationships, and focused on strategic issues while demonstrating an influential voice in the region (The Rising Power of China 2015).

Before delving into Africa, it is important to review the two-pronged approach when discussing a states rise to claim regional power. First, the aforementioned states have experienced economic growth which has been prompted by increasing growth rates and diminishing poverty rates. Secondly, they are also increasing their political capital and power. Beginning within their region, there is an increasing amount of expectation and influence to act accordingly as the moral rule setter and enforcer. For the BRICS countries, their influence has expanded past their backyards into the rest of the world beginning with Africa.

IV.   Within African Context

The purpose of the research paper is to interpret Ethiopia's rise within the region and compare the growth to other regional powers and theories. The rise of regionalism in Africa has two perspectives, how it influences external actors within the continent and internal responses to regionalism. This section of the literature review will tackle both aspects, by observing Brazilian, Russian, Indian, and Chinese (BRIC) economic involvement in Africa and how some African countries have adopted regionalism.

With the aforementioned economic growth within regional powers, some have also increased their involvement within Africa with a focus on economic assistance. In contrast to donations by the Western world, monetary aid to Africa is primarily introduced as collaboration towards a common goal when it is clear that both parties benefit with the established relationship. These

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rising states are taking advantage of working the current system to strengthen their relationship with other developing countries. By reinforcing that all participants are equals, it is easier to contrast these relationships, which are guided by respect and non-interference, with those made with the Western World. With time, this eventually leads to a decline of the dominant actors who had been involved in developing countries.

For India, looking back to their historical development as a grand civilization, there is a belief that India has an obligation to play a large role internationally (Cohen 2000). India has focused on reintegrating various communities back into African markets, instead of forcing African citizens to buy Indian products (Narlikar 2010). Through their economic assistance, India has emphasized their core values of decolonization and commitment to Third Worldism. Nonetheless, India is still participating in strategic behavior as their work in Africa provides India greater legitimacy and prestige in international institutions.

Brazil's history with the continent goes back as early to 1538 via the Portuguese involvement in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. While they did not partake in the scramble for Africa, Brazil remained close with other Portuguese colonies on the continent. To defend Brazilian involvement in Africa, the government has encouraged building solidarity by utilizing their common colonial history. Similar to India, Brazil has claimed a moral, political and historical obligation to their fellow colonized states. Through the passage of the 1986 South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone, formal relations were established in the Southern Hemisphere to promote peace, security and cooperation (Seibert 2011).

As mentioned previously, regionalism in the form of alliance formation has made it possible for such countries as Brazil, India and China to enter into Africa. However, regionalism has also taken hold within the continent. Recently, there has been a movement to find African solutions

for African problems. This change has been taken to the institutional level with calls from the African Union for Pan-Africanism and integration within the continent. While these calls have been with the goal of unifying the continent against external forces, it also encourages further African regionalism. Most prominent examples include the African Union (AU), and its acknowledged regional economic communities such as: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), to list a few. Generally speaking, regional organizations can be broken into five categories: the aforementioned economic communities recognized by the AU, general economic, energy based, river & lake, peace & security, and environmental organizations. Most countries are member states of numerous organizations. For an example of a conservative number, Kenya is a member of nine regional organizations while the Democratic Republic of Congo is involved in fourteen (Byiers 2017). This overlap is explained by the fact that one organization does not provides all the solutions. Membership in numerous communities allows countries to reap the benefits that each organization offers. For example, COMESA provides Kenya protection from dumping which strengthens their agricultural sector, which cannot be done under the EAC. However, this lessens complete involvement or investment each country can have into one organization as their membership and role is often stretched thin.

With this, has come a shift towards African regionalism as it is an attractive option for weak states. Political and economic weakness justify the role of regionalism as it helps manages the pressure from globalization. Regionalism provides an alternative to the states to retain their autonomy but continue growth. Instead of facing the pressures of hegemonic powers, these states now have the opportunity to turn towards a helpful neighbor.

To understand state weakness, it is crucial to understand power. Robert Keohane defines a weak state as those "..who can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system" (Taylor 2003). With this weakness comes the absence of loyalty and lack of internal compliance to the state. This also encourages movements in one country to seep into the next, thus creating regional issues. Keohane's definition is only one attempt at defining state weakness, but regardless of the criteria used African states are consistently considered to fit the bill. In additional to political weakness, African countries tend to also have small economies. Smaller markets are encouraged to participate in socio-economic integration, as independence makes developed and diversified markets harder to achieve. Regionalism provides countries a platform to access a larger market area. With this access, states can overcome fragmentation of small markets and ensure access to technological advances.

Regionalism can be understood as a "series of bargains among the political leaders of the major states in the region" (Taylor 2003). This collaboration eventually leads to the convergence of interests among these states. While it aligns states in a region, it is done under the leadership of one dominant state. That being said, while regionalism provides an opportunity for smaller states to grow, it also allows for Western ideals to resume within Africa. The South African Renaissance, which calls for economic integration through regionalism, essentially is calling for the "promotion of Western political and economic values" (Gandois).

Gandois found that there are three different categories of regionalism within Africa:

1. Macro-Regions call for the coordination of transnational capital flow within a geographical region. Examples include the EU, NAFTA, and the South African Development Community. This category is the most abstract, which makes it harder to create a sense of region.

2. Sub-Regions are constructed upon historical and economic legacies. Initiatives from this level are implemented more efficiently because they can integrate a wide range of states.

3. Micro-Regions are considered to be a subgroup within the previous category. These focus more on historical legacies between countries that are geographically near one another.

Understanding these three levels is crucial as it allows political scientists to estimate how citizens will respond to various initiatives and compare different strategies across the continent. This research on Ethiopia will contribute to this conversation.

Chapter One: Regionalism and Major Powers in Africa

I.   Introduction

Before focusing on Ethiopia and whether or not it can be considered East Africa's

regional power, it is important to truly understand regional actors within the continent. This

chapter takes a more detailed approached to understanding regionalism than the preceding

general literature review. In this chapter, the actions and characteristics of Nigeria, Kenya, and

South Africa will be considered. The chapter also briefly discusses the landscape of regional

institutions on the continent. By focusing on the institutions, it will provide a framework for

understanding how major powers within the Horn of Africa operate. By analyzing how these

countries have acted in their backyard, and within regional institutions, the chapter provides

context for understanding Ethiopia's actions and classification.

II.   Challenges towards African Regionalism

To understand the complexity of regional institutions within Africa, this section begins

by addressing common challenges facing the continent and regional institutions. Many African

countries face high poverty rates which limits government expenditures on welfare programs that

seek to improve the quality of life for citizens. States' economic constraints provides another

level of pressure on regional institutions, as most countries lack the resources necessary to

contribute to regional bodies. States' inability to fund regional bodies is exacerbated by their

involvement in numerous organizations (Byiers 2017). Together, these two factors coupled limit

the effectiveness of regional institutions from the onset as there is limited financial support for

their endeavors.

Another factor that contributes to weak regional institutions is the general distrust of

regional hegemons. Regional leaders have a difficult time convincing smaller countries to join

collective movements when these countries fear being dominated and are worried about the equitable distribution of resources. For example, southern African states are sometimes distrustful of South Africa, as they believe it reached its current dominant status at the expense of smaller neighboring countries. After fighting for independence, African states were not eager to cede any autonomy to a regional organization. Following colonial rule, many countries continued to suffer the consequences of colonial policies that divided communities along ideological and linguistic lines and hindered the effectiveness of regional cooperation. For example, various countries inherited different political ideologies, such as Kenya and Tanzania, which experienced a divide between capitalism and socialism. There was a linguistic divide among the Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone African states, with the inheritance of different political institutions, and legal and educational systems (Eke 2017).

These obstacles are crucial to keep in mind when considering Ethiopia's ability to coordinate within the Horn of Africa. Success for regional powers rests to some extent on their ability to establish relationships that address and overcome these complications.

III.   African Powers

Having noted the challenges faced by African countries, we can begin the analysis of successful regional powers to understand the paths each country took or did not take on the road to success. McNamee's (2016) research touches on characteristics found in successful African countries and focuses on three important factors that can determine success in their region.

(1) Domestic success within their borders

    a. With regional success, countries can utilize their power to create an arena for the diffusion of ideas and principles (Flemes 2009).

b. In this chapter, domestic success will be operationalized by analyzing the country's poverty rates, peaceful transition of power, and violence within its borders.

(2) Effective, inclusive and transparent institutions

(3) Convincing their neighbors that their agenda is not self-serving

a. As stated previously, this step is crucial due to many state's hesitation towards hegemonic powers and agendas that do not equally benefit them. This is accomplished by formulating a political project that neighboring countries can identify with (Flemes 2009).

Using these three characteristics, the remainder of this section will analyze major contenders for influence within the African context: Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa along with regional institutions. This section relates to the broader research question at hand because it will help address the extent to which Ethiopia can identify with these actors. Previously in the literature review, this project considered economic growth and international relations to understand classification of regional powers in the global community. However, the remainder of this paper will use McNamee's (2016) classification as it provides the manifestation of the aforementioned duo. Economic growth is considered under the umbrella term of domestic success, which allows other points of growth or decay to be considered. By convincing their neighbors the agenda is not self-serving, countries are addressing their international relations.

Effective, inclusive and transparent institutions is included in this analysis because it adds a degree of legitimacy to the government from both internal parties and external viewers. Through the proper implementation of these institutions, the country can also operate in the

international field with moral weight behind their actions and words, knowing with certainty that it reflects the desires and attitudes of their citizens.

        i.   Nigeria

Until 2016, Nigeria had the largest economy in Africa and as seen with other regional powers, economic superiority has been a helpful factor for countries to successfully establish power within their backyard. However, in this case economic power did not lead to success within their borders as the country consistently faced crisis. To understand the complexity behind Nigeria's internal conflict, it is vital to understand Nigerian colonial history, and economic dependence on oil.

Modern Nigeria originated as the British colonized and combined a diverse group of independent and occasionally hostile ethnic groups into one country. Now characterized with linguistic and cultural differences, Nigeria houses roughly 250 different ethnic groups and 70 nationalities (Rotberg 2007). However, tension within Nigeria is split between the predominantly Muslim northern region, and the Christian south. The differences between the regions were only exacerbated as the colonial administration did not spread western education to "insulate the north from modernity" (Elkaim 2012). In comparison to the south, this choice perpetuated ineffective administrative rule without the proper tools to govern. Different colonial policies in the north and south exacerbated differences. Educational opportunities contributed to economic growth in the south, while the north lagged behind. The tension continued well after colonial rule and led to a general mistrust and concern over political dominance. Post-independence, ethnic ties were stronger than national identity contributing to political unrest characterized by coups, secessionist movements, and civil war. While ethnic fractionalization is

not inherently a negative trait, within Nigeria it is problematic as ethnic and religious identities are more important than identifying as African or Nigerian (Elkaim 2012).

In terms of the Nigerian economy, commercial oil production began in 1956 and has been of heightened economic importance since the 1970s (Mähler 2010). However, the importance soon became over dependence as Nigeria decreased exporting other agricultural products and had weak resource management. The latter is especially influential as Nigeria does not fairly distribute the revenues collected from oil. The percentage of oil revenues refunded to the producing regions was reduced from 50% to 20% by 1979, and by 1999, it dropped to 3% (Mähler 2010). This inequitable distribution of wealth fueled resentment and distrust from the Niger Delta to the central government. With a lack of transparency, it is difficult to locate where the money is going as social infrastructure projects are not improving. Most Nigerians do not have sufficient access to health care, drinking water or electricity and more than 80% of the population lives on less than 2 dollars a day (Mähler 2010). Since oil is capital intensive and there has been a decrease in exporting labor-intensive goods, Nigeria has also faced rising unemployment rates.

As economic marginalization and poverty were evident along ethnic, religious and geographical lines, Nigeria is more prone to acts of civil unrest in an attempt to gain control. (McNamee 2016). The rise of Boko Haram has been called a "manifestation of the failure of successive Nigerian governments to curb corruption, deliver public services, generate economic opportunity, establish accountable security institutions and engage both the North and Southern regions" (Elkaim 2012). With minimal respect for the rule of law, high levels of fractionalization, and increasing conflict within the country, Boko Haram was able to take

advantage of the deteriorating political climate and develop as a religious sect to answer a legitimate security issue.

In terms of regional institutions, Nigerian commitment to economic integration goes back to the early 1960s. Before a political union within the region, Nigeria believed that economic integration beginning at the sub-regional level was crucial. A strong economic union would give stability for potential sub-regional collective security action. This consistent desire for integration is seen in Nigeria's involvement in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The country's desire to become the industrial heart of Africa was only plausible within a west African integration network (Olatunde 1980). However, the possibility of Nigerian economic domination raised suspicion from neighboring countries. As McNamee mentioned, it is crucial for a country to have the ability to convince others that their agenda is not self-serving. While Nigeria struggles to contain domestic tension, there has been success in managing differences in the region between Anglophone and Francophone states, and in neighboring countries such as Equatorial Guinea. The country's security dedication to ECOWAS comes to no surprise, as about 55 percent of the population in West Africa live in Nigeria (World Bank 2019). By focusing on regional security, for the most part Nigeria has taken steps towards convincing their neighbors, that any regional actions are not self-serving.

However, these shortcomings do not prevent Nigeria from claiming their right to leadership and dominance within the continent due to their historical role, population and military strength. When taking these factors into consideration, Nigeria can be classified as a secondary regional power instead of a hegemon (Flemes 2009). They receive this classification

due to their comparatively poor economic performance within the continent, weak democratic consolidation, and minor role in global affairs.

ii. Kenya

Kenya's influence can be seen within East Africa as they have the region's strongest international trade and investment links. With that advantage, they also serve as hubs for various economic sectors. Due to their geographical position, white settler industries concentrated in Kenya which resulted in a larger market and a developed infrastructure. However, this did not come without any consequences from their neighbors. Initially member states in the East African Community (EAC) felt Kenya had an unfair advantage due to the economic stability that the British left. Kenya's economic state post-colonialism was more appealing to foreign investors, which worried member states about the distribution of benefits. In addition, Kenya represented the Africa that the rest of the world wanted to see, with typical "African" landscapes, open minded people, and social harmony (McNamee 2019). With foreign support and importance within East Africa, Kenya was central to the economic and security architecture within the region. They were considered the remaining beacon of political stability in a sea of weak states (Khadiagala 2009). In terms of economic performance, the EAC depends on Kenya to a large extent. In comparison to other member states, Kenya has the largest and most dynamic economy. Due to a better national infrastructure, and diversification of exports, Kenya is also able to maximize on the benefits of intra-East African trade (Kimenyi 2016).

However, it is also important to note that Kenya's international status and visibility in the region is what made it an easy target for al-Shabaab. Before the groups rise, Kenya attempted to pre-emptively strike but it ended poorly and resulted in al-Shabaab turning its focus towards Kenya. Between January 2012 and April 2015, al-Shabaab launched attacks which resulted in

more than 600 causalities (Watkins 2016). The primary target has been pipeline routes linked to the Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET). Initially, the Ugandan oil route was to pass through Kenya. However, with the rising instability, Uganda decided that the route would pass through Tanzania instead.

Politically, Kenya's mantle was soon removed after the 2007 elections as it wreaked domestic havoc and led to widespread international criticism. Due to unusually high voter turnout, lack of access to political centers, and questionable voting hours, there were widespread recognitions that the election was flawed. The violence that followed the elections lifted the veil on Kenya and the political instability that was hidden. The fierce government response to the protests revealed the gradual democratic erosion facing social and political institutions, the extent of privatization, and violent marginalization along ethnic lines (Khadiagala 2009). As previously mentioned, many African countries did not want to cede autonomy to regional and international institutions, which includes limiting international offers for assistance. External bids to mediate violence faced a legacy of national pride which manifested in Kenya believing it could use security forces to restore order and stop violence. The government adopted a mindset that there was no crisis that warranted foreign mediators. However due to Kenya's importance within the region there was a consistent push for resolution as the violence impacted major transport routes from Mombasa and created fuel shortages.

Historically, the violent response was not a major surprise considering that Kenya was under repressive rule beginning after colonialism. The presidential position had centralized power and controlled land allocations. Political officers were able to stay in power by utilizing patronage and repression. This only heightened ethnic tensions and income disparities, as officials pushed poorer ethnic groups off previously owned land (Klopp 2007).

Kenya still has failed to recognize the importance of effective, inclusive, and transparent institutions and success at home. With the 2007 election, Kenya managed to lose trust within the region and the international community. This is important when considering Ethiopia's classification, as Kenya is a major contender for controlling the region as a hegemonic influence.

  iii. South Africa

Similar to how the other African case studies face division within their population, South Africa faces notorious inequality and division along racial lines. Inequality continued well past apartheid, but it can now be understood in a different light. Since there has been some societal improvements, the total share of income earner in black households have been rising but not at a rate where the gap is greatly lessened with their white counterparts (Nattrass 2001). Discriminatory policies are not simply "black or white" but rather based on preconditions that have a racial undertone. For example, an employer cannot refuse a candidate's application based purely on race, but rather educational background, previous work experience, or other factors which are inextricably linked to race.

With South Africa's apartheid regime, the country faced a different predicament than most African states in consideration. Apartheid served as an example for how quickly and intensely instability can spill past domestic borders and influence the international community. During Apartheid regime, most regarded South Africa as a political pariah and adopted a diplomacy of isolation (Flemes 2009). Feeling the constraints of their past, the African National Congress-led government in South Africa did not want to mirror the former regime's aggressive policies of regional hegemony and begun by focusing on trade policies within the South African Development Community (SADC). Soon the relative economic strength led South Africa to become the SADC's most important member (Saunders 2014).

Careful not to be seen as a hegemon, Africa was at the center of South African's foreign policy. This can be seen through military intervention into Angola, Zaire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi (Flemes 2009). However, their dedication to the region was questioned due to unilateral decisions. For example, when South Africa ignored the concerns of other SADC members and signed a bilateral trade agreement with the EU (Saunders 2014).

The military approach slowly shifted into a moral approach to their international policies as South Africa wanted to demonstrate how the country had grown since the apartheid regime. South Africa was able to increase credibility as an advocate for multilateralism by following their words with actions. Before the end of apartheid, South Africa had taken steps to destroy their nuclear arsenal and joined organizations to control international nuclear trade, and by 1994 gained inclusion in the United Nations' Register for Conventional Weapons.

Similar to the international community favoring Kenya, South Africa also benefited from this attraction after the political transition in 1994. The country received political clout with Nelson Mandela opening the country to foreign interest and investment. However, that was only the beginning as South Africa's second president, Thabo Mbeki adopted a more pan-Africanism and intervention policy than Mandela. Mbeki wanted to transform the Organization of African Unity, introduce continental measures to improve governance, and reduce western intervention into the continent. By the end of his term, Mbeki successfully formed relationships throughout the region but was not able to achieve many of the larger continental goals due to lack of external resources or support (Saunders 2014).

South Africa's third president, Jacob Zuma continued the pan-Africanism perspective but had an international twist. By 2010, South Africa had officially joined BRICS by presenting the country as the "gateway" into Africa (Saunders 2014). However, many political commentators

did not understand how South Africa was selected to join BRICS, as their economy did not come close to other countries. Their inclusion went to represent Africa as more than providing raw materials to other emerging global markets. With South Africa, BRICS became a political club representing the developing world to counterbalance western influence

As the only African country in BRICS and the EUs, top ten global strategic partners (McNamee 2016) it is clear that South Africa is accepted by the Western world. However, this acceptance does not extend as fully within the African continent. Neighboring countries believed South Africa grew at the expense of others such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Swatini (Eke 2017). As the only African country in BRICS, this highlighted tension within the continent as countries became more critical of China's intention in Africa, and Zuma's relationship with China. Many accepted South Africa's growth but did not welcome their superiority and agenda.

Within the context of McNamee's characterization of regional powers, South Africa compares better to Nigeria and Kenya. However, it is clear that South Africa has not managed to fully convince their neighbors their agenda is not self-serving. There is still a clear racial divide within the country that raises questions on how successful domestic strategies have been in equitably allocating economic resources. As mentioned before, South Africa presents an interesting case for comparison as Ethiopia could learn from Cape Town's shortcomings.

IV.   East African Regional Institutions

As mentioned earlier, after colonialism many countries were opposed to joining institutions that would require ceding a certain degree of autonomy. However, the fear of losing sovereignty did not prevent countries from acknowledging the benefits of collaborative organizations. Understanding regional institutions is crucial as it provides context for whether African countries face restriction or freedom when operating within their region.

Post colonialism, in addition to the antagonism felt towards the outside world, there was a general consensus to create a distinct African personality. This can be seen with the "African solutions for African problems" mentality. With states struggling for legitimacy it was common to resort to force for sustaining power. With this development, it decreased attention and resources as they have not been focusing on sustainable state development and regional institutions.

Within the East African context, political leaders have taken steps to incorporate regional institutions. Initially heads of government joined to discuss regional organization; however, these leaders realized how ineffective the meetings were. These meetings eventually became consolidated by 1967 with the East Africa Order-in Council as the head of governments continued to meet but with a single regional authority. Eventually, this led to the member states wanting to declare a political federation for the region with a focus on equitable distribution. These steps turned into the Treaty of East African Cooperation which established the EAC in 1967 (Ramolefe 1972) with Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda as the initial member states. This community was short lived due to limited economic and political unity. This is a common issue as various organizations operated with a top to bottom routine instead of focusing on sub-regional integration first (Masinde 2017). Instead, there should be an effort to focus on structural economic transformation at the regional level to increase overall productivity.

With no durable political framework there was no mechanism to address corruption with a general disrespect for rule of law within the member-states and community. The EAC was re-established in November 1993 as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania signed once more to consolidate cooperation (Bar 2018). By 2007, Rwanda and Burundi joined, with the Republic of South Sudan being the newest member in 2016. The admittance of South Sudan provided the EAC an

opportunity to prove the effectiveness of the community. Many believe their entry into the EAC would help South Sudan resolve their problems by following the example of Rwanda towards political stabilization and decreasing poverty rates.

This hope was further encouraged as the EAC became the key driver for regional integration within East Africa. With more than 143.5 million people, a combined GDP of $11.0 billion the Community established a customs union and a common market. In comparison to the EACs predecessor, this version was more institutionalized and aimed for deeper integration. However, this does not mean that the EAC was free of challenges. There was still tension in truly restoring and maintaining stability, with growing terrorism and security threats throughout the region.

Chapter 2: Analyzing Ethiopia's Potential as Regional Power

I.   Introduction

Before analyzing where Ethiopia currently lies in the geopolitical ladder within East Africa, it is crucial to have an understanding of the country's modern history and previous rulers. The objective of this chapter is to provide context for understanding various political situations that Ethiopia must solve to be considered a regional power as explained in the previous chapter. The first section will range between the 1800s-1970s, while the next section will provide context for the military regime and revolution that led to the modern federalist state. The following chapter will consider the three conditions proposed by McNamee for defining and understanding regional powers. Some analysis into Ethiopia groups the country with others in Northern Africa, however this chapter will continue to consider Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa, and relationships with neighboring countries such as Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia.

State modernity is a common dilemma considered throughout various monarchs and political administrations. In this chapter, modernity will be understood as attempts to build the nation state, industrialization, urbanization, bureaucracy, and mass literacy.

II.   State Building Emperors 1800-1970s

i.   Emperor Tewodros II - 1855-1868

Ethiopia in the 1800s is understood under the definition of *Zemene Mesafint*, or the "Era of the Lords". In this context, the Lords were referring to the Sheh rulers who had established a dynasty with kings throughout the region. The system functioned with the idea of puppet kings serving one Ras, or central chief. However, this was seen as a time of disorder and chaos with no strong central authority (Prunier 2015). This lack of centrality explains the rise and reign of the

first Emperor who was soon labeled the modernizer of Ethiopia having learned from Zemene Mesafint. Due to the lack of central authority with the Lord system, Emperor Tewodros II's rise was characterized by successful rebellions. During his reign, Ethiopia witnessed the first step attempt to stop slave trade, and the establishment a well-developed literary Amharic system (Zewde 2001). His military success which led to his appointment as "King of All Kings" continued during his reign to begin the process of Ethiopian state expansion. While he was the first step towards modernization, that did not stop both internal and external influences that eventually led to his decline. Internal tension between competing regions for the crown, and coups for his reign led to frustration that led to extreme actions which eventually led the Emperor to lose control. The last half of his reign was characterized with continuous rebellion with no peace or order, however his successors kept building on the process of national revival. This would become a trend that continues into the 21st century.

ii.   Emperor Yohannes 1871-1889

The next prominent Emperor was Yohannes who served between the years of 1871 to 1889. Continuing the trend of modernization, Emperor Yohannes continued geographical expansion into the western, southern, and south-eastern direction (Prunier 2015). In terms of organizing the government, Yohannes established loose states within the border with the Emperor at the top. While not an example of a true modern state during this time era, Emperor Yohannes took modernization a step farther, for eventually Emperor Menelik II to complete the modernization process. However, under this reign, Ethiopia faced more external pressure than before. Neighboring countries, such as Sudan, Egypt and Kenya were being colonized by the British, as an effort to show Ethiopia how easily the British could invade. Encroachment into Ethiopia was deemed justifiable to attempt eradicating slavery, which Emperor Tewodros II was

not able to successfully accomplish. However, the British deemed Egypt to be a more viable economic partner instead of Ethiopia or Sudan. In 1882, the British through Egypt, were concerned with any potential control Ethiopia could enforce over the Nile and thus Anglo-Egyptian resources (Zewde 2001). Their influence in Northern Africa eventually led to a full aggression strategy to control more land and natural resources. Soon, with Italy, the two European powers began consolidating resources and support for one another to watch Ethiopia and the Blue Nile. On the eastern border, Emperor Yohannes dealt with growing Italian influence on the Red Sea, which would eventually culminate into an invasion with the next regime. Italian military incursion began with the Battle of Massawa which opened the interior of Ethiopia and served as the precursor for the notorious Battle of Adwa in 1896.

      iii.   Emperor Menelik II 1889-1913

Emperor Menelik II was gaining political support while Yohannes was still in power. The end of Emperor Yohannes reign was characterized by internal conflict because while he was considered Emperor, respect and awe was given to Menelik II. His supremacy in the ranks is explained by Menelik II's military experience and supremacy as he was able to win the southern and western regions of Ethiopia, which provided additional economic resources or rent to Emperor Yohannes. Due to his political and military might, after Yohannes' death, it made sense for Menelik II to serve as the next Emperor. For the most part, the various regions and rulers had no contention over Yohannes' successor, except the Tigray region. As Emperor Yohannes was a Tigrayan native, their frustration over the crown leaving their region would come back to fuel Tigrayan dissent against the Ethiopian state.

However, it is fair to say that the respect was properly placed as it was Emperor Menelik II who was able to complete the modernization process that began with Emperor Tewodros II

almost 60 years prior. While Ethiopia reached the modern shape under Menelik II, it was not done without any tension as he incorporated an ethnic dimension to conquering land. As a leader from the Amhara region, the majority of conquerors were Amhara and there was a clear divide between the oppressed and oppressors across ethnic lines. In response, the Oromo elite, as the major ethnic group in Ethiopia, did not see the reason for subjection. With expansion, brought more land and possible sources for revenue to the imperial government. To control and ensure a steady flow of *birr*, Ethiopia's currency, Emperor Menelik II utilized the *Gabbar* system, which some describe as almost worse than slavery (Zewde 2001). Gabbar fits into a broader feudal-colonial system that previous Emperors utilized, with the imperial government at the center requiring rent from their land. Gabbar is specifically referring to the status that a majority of peasants were reduced to. In this condition, individuals were forced to render services to government officials, and provide housing or resources (Gnamo 2014) This system varied across different regions as it was up to the leaders, but since they did not receive any form of official payment, any money was from the peasants working the land. Not only is land a source of contention for many in Ethiopia, it is a recurring theme that has led to the downfall of many historical regimes.

In terms of infrastructure, modernization was crucial for Ethiopia to keep its independence and minimize the ability of European powers to convince Ethiopians about the benefits of colonial influence. However, it is important to note that without a colonizing power to bring European modernization, structurally, Ethiopia was different in comparison to their African neighbors. Towards the last years of Menelik II, through European involvement, they introduced a trainway system, a banking system, and pushed for educational reform which would later come back to support a revolutionary movement (Prunier 2015).

Emperor Menelik II is most notably known for leading Ethiopia to victory in the Battle of Adwa against the Italians in 1896. Italian influence had seeped into Ethiopia shortly after *Kifu Qen*, or the Great Famine of 1888-1892. The famine greatly influenced the Northern regions of Ethiopia, which provided the Italians a way in to find allies in their pending invasion (Kaplan 1990). While tension with Italy was not a new concept, the tension was forced after the signing of the Wuchale Treaty of 1889 between the two countries. Emperor Menelik II made it clear that Eritrea was not a part of Ethiopia and drew lines with Italy for clarification over Italian influence in the region. However, this treaty soon became known as an incident as there were two versions of the treaty, one in Amharic and one in Italian. Not knowing, the latter gave more power to the Italians and their scope of influence to include Ethiopia. Once Emperor Menelik II was made aware, he rejected the entire treaty which eventually led to a full invasion by the Italians under General Oreste Baratieri (Reckonings 2011). Due to poor planning on the Italian side and sheer numerical superiority under Emperor Menelik II, he was able to lead the country to victory.

This battle was particularly significant because it raised Ethiopia's status in the international world and became a beacon for independence and dignity surrounded by colonized countries. Shortly after the decisive win, the Italians signed the Treaty of Addis Ababa which recognized Ethiopia as an independent state. Within Ethiopia, the national pride of winning the war provided a brief movement of unity and an attitude against any further foreign incursion. It was a point of national unity that even today, some cite the Battle of Adwa as an explanation for current pride found in many Ethiopians.

Throughout the Ethiopian emperors during this era and beyond, rulers struggled to establish a nationalism that could surpass any ethnic or religious identity for a prolonged period of time. During Emperor Yohannes' time, the poor central government added to the difficulty as

there was nothing to identify with besides regional rulers. By the 1890s, the central state was much more prominent that a national identity was feasible. However, many monarchs and rulers had strong religious and ethnic traits that were specific to the Shoans from the Zemene Mesafint era. In response, the next Emperor understood the importance of establishing a modern and secular national identity for the survival of the Ethiopian state as a unitary force. It was only with Ras Tafari Mekonnen, who would take on the title of Emperor Haile Selassie did Ethiopia enter the 20th century, as Emperor Menelik II's successor lost power soon after his enthronement.

iv.   Emperor Haile Selassie 1930-1974

Emperor Haile Selassie might be the most well-known Ethiopian emperor, after Menelik II. There are various factors that led to his international acknowledgement, but many historians note Selassie's absolutism that Ethiopia had never seen before.

Internally, Emperor Selassie had clear intentions to increase the power of the monarch and guarantee economic privilege of the nobility. This is evident in the 1931 proposed Constitution, only one year after his enthronement. This constitution served as a framework for absolutism and executive aggrandizement, with the intention of presenting the Constitution to any foreign out lookers (Zewde 2001). The inclusion of the latter explains any civil liberties given to the people on paper, when de facto treatment was the opposite. Past the difference in theory and practice, this Constitution lacked legitimacy because Selassie believed the people were not ready for involvement, limited any overview of the Constitution and thus enforced it from the top down. Through various methods of coercion, the central government continued to deny democratic rights past the signing of the Constitution. Due to Selassie's short-term thinking, this was a quick solution to maintain power, but it also gave no room for organic expression or formation of civil societies which inflamed opposition to the regime.

While Menelik II experienced military victory against the Italians, a part of Emperor Selassie's regime was characterized by Italian occupation between 1936 and 1941 with the Emperor abroad for that time frame. This was encouraged with British support, as both countries understood Ethiopia to be in Italy's economic zone, as long as the British could build on Lake Tana (Zewde 2001). This invasion was more successful than the Battle of Adwa for a number of reasons: Selassie's absolutist structure weakened any form of unity Ethiopians felt towards one another which led some regional powers to side with and help Italy, and those in political power were civil administrators and not military leaders. Due to the embarrassment felt on the Italian side, this second invasion was more effective on their end while the Ethiopians were not actively prepared; in other words when compared to the Battle of Adwa, the two countries switched roles. That being said, this occupation is also considered a glorious chapter in Ethiopian history because there was a readiness to die for liberty and independence against the Italians (Zewde 2001). Nationwide there were military actions against the occupation, however it was World War II which encouraged European parties to help push Italy out in 1941.

With the departure of Italian occupants, Emperor Haile Selassie returned from exile in London and resumed his absolutist agenda. From the beginning of his regime, Selassie was against the feudal land system and began the political culture of privatization of land. Especially with the rising cost, to broaden his support base Selassie provided grants for those who served in the war. However, since the government was also trying to increase revenue there was additional pressure on the peasantry class thus continuing the actions of previous administrators. Similar to Menelik II in 1882, Emperor Selassie's land arrangement made land easy prey for famine which eventually uncovered the regimes irresponsibility, which was a factor that led to the fall of Ethiopia's longest reigning Emperor.

There was an attempted coup in 1960 due to political oppression but due to poor organization, it was not successful. However, instead of responding to the structural issues that led to the coup, Selassie rewarded those who stayed loyal. In regards to peasant rebellions, it was highly emphasized in the Tigray region which demonstrated the intensity of emotions felt against the regime. As mentioned before under Menelik II, there was a push to reform the education system. In response, it was the students that empowered the revolution against Emperor Haile Selassie. Not only were they resilient but they were dispersed across various locations and educational levels. However, due to Ethiopia's political history there was not much democratic foundation for the students to learn from and responded to intolerance in a variety of ways.

III.   Derg Regime 1984-1991

The revolution that led to the authoritarian regime of the Derg, is often described as a "massive change.. [one] that turned the world upside down" (Zewde 2001). Recognizing the recurring issue of landlordism, the Derg regime proposed radical land reform that led to their base of support. Broadly speaking, the absolutist government structure of Emperor Selassie led those low on the social ladder to rise against the high and mighty. The concept of military intervention was not a new concept for Ethiopians to understand to struggle with the Derg regime, and Mengistu Hailemariam as their leader. Due to authoritarian traditions that are woven into Ethiopia's past political leaders, it created a conducive environment to accept a "strongman" such as Hailemariam. By utilizing his military power and skill, he formed close relationships with the communist bloc, including countries such as Cuba, Yemen and Moscow. As a result of the revolution, Ethiopia went from one extreme to another. In other words, Ethiopia traded in Emperor Selassie for a military regime with Marxist doctrine deeply ingrained into their political philosophy. While this era is colloquially known as the Derg regime, with the "election" of

Hailemariam, the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) officially assumed state power.

However, soon after, through force and subterfuge, the PDRE acted as the guardians of the revolution that tore down an unequal imperial system. Once in power, the Derg's land reform focused around the nationalization of financial institutions and transferring resources into the hands of the government. Between the years of 1974 to 1987, Ethiopia was characterized with brutality and chaos that was coined *Key Shibir* or Red Terror to explain the actions of the regime (McGhee 2013). To consolidate power, Hailemariam and his allies arrested and killed opposing voices or anyone that seemed to oppose their slogan, *Ityopia Teqdem* or Ethiopia First. Since much of the hostility came from regional forces, under Hailemariam Ethiopia experienced politicization of ethnicity which would continue to influence the next political regime. In regards to the Eritrean question, the Derg adopted a policy of a unitary-multiethnic state by unifying the two countries and claiming all nationalities had the right to self-determination. This policy would also come back during the 1990s under Meles Zenawi and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). While there was debate within Ethiopia on how to accomplish this goal, there was a sense of unity amongst Eritrean political parties against the Derg. There were slight differences in ideology, but eventually the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) gained the most domestic support and represented the anti-Derg sentiment within Eritrea. Their Ethiopian counterpart or support came from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). As mentioned before, the Tigray political elite had felt a sense of marginalization since the crown left their region with Emperor Menelik II. This was emphasized by past economic hardships due to the worsening famine and economic crisis in 1984. Similar to Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie, the famine revealed the lack of government proactive initiatives and how overstretched

resources were. The dynamic combination of the TPLF and EPLF would support the revolution that ousted the military junta. Throughout the last half of the 1980s, the two parties had various military victories in their respective countries which culminated in both parties conquering Addis Ababa and Asmara in 1991.

However, to gain wide political support and legitimacy the TPLF recognized the importance of a national agenda which eventually led to the establishment of the EPRDF with the coalition representing the three main regions: the Tigrayans under the TPLF, the Amharas with Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement and Oromiyaa with Oromo Democratic Party.

IV.   EPRDF 1988-2019

    i.   Background

At this point in Ethiopia's history, it is important to note recurring themes that have continued to weaken the state and lower the legitimacy of the government. Through Emperor Tewodros II, Yohannes, Menelik II and Haile Selassie, Ethiopia experienced various attempts of modernization and establishing a national identity that surpasses any ethnic loyalty. However, while the fall of each Emperor and the Derg portrays the importance of land allocation, resources, natural disasters, and the ultimate consequence of centralizing political power. By understanding Ethiopia's placement in a regional conflict complex (Van Veen 2016), it helps explain why there has been a theme of centralizing political power and keeping coalitions under control. In response, Ethiopia has often had self-appointment rulers who do not deliver on promises.

As mentioned earlier, the EPRDF came into existence to counter Hailemariam and the *Key Shibir* he led through Ethiopia. To counter the military junta, the party had strong central leadership and emphasized the importance of unity and cohesion among the Tigray people.

While the party was a coalition of the four major regions, it was dominated by the TPLF. This domination will become problematic to explain further dissent and political decisions for the formation of the 1995 Constitution. Similar to the military supremacy under the Derg Regime, once in power the TPLF continued to use military force to consolidate power. This soon became a source of dissent as the party continued to use the same force that brought them into power. Some historians have found more similarities than differences between Hailemariam and the EPRDF first President Meles Senawi. The greatest difference was the former's alliance with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the latter's Leninist ideology and partnership with the Western world.

Given the Cold War threat with the USSR rising influence, the EPRDF required the assistance of the United States and allies to consolidate their position. At this time Ethiopia, a mainly Christian country, also represented an opportunity to counter Islamic fundamentalism that was growing in the Horn of Africa. Looking back, historians have noticed the shortcomings of Western influence during Ethiopia's transitory period and not encouraging the inclusion of opposition parties (Berhe 2001). While the EPRDF's reign of terror cannot be equalized to *Key Shibir,* it represented more continuity than dissimilarity in a party that claimed to represent the reform Ethiopia desperately needed.

ii.   Ethnic Federalism

Post 1991, government officials claimed they found the way to achieve ethnic and regional autonomy, while maintaining the state as the primary political unit. After World War II, ethnicism was associated with backwardness as it was seen as an obstacle to state building, while the nation state was worn with a badge of modernity. This was especially challenging for

Ethiopia as the country has struggled since Emperor Tewodros II to establish a national identity and unitary state.

In 1991, soon after the EPRDF assumed state power the Transitional Government of Ethiopia held a conference with 27 groups participating to establish a charter for the future of Ethiopia (Habtu 2003). At this conference, the groups acknowledged the need to end all hostilities, health ethnic wounds and create peace and stability. Some political parties, such as the Oromo Liberation Party (OLP) left the conference which helped the TPLF consolidate more power. Since many of the movements that fought against the Derg were ethnically based, Zenawi continued the thought to express political aspirations along ethnic lines and established nine regional states on the basis of the dominant ethnic group (Habtu 2003).

While Menelik II was known as the Emperor that brought modernization into Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi is known as the father of ethnic federalism which was consolidated in the 1995 Constitution. In response to the politicization of ethnicity done by Hailemariam, Zenawi felt the need to acknowledge the diversity within Ethiopia before it led to further conflict. While ethnic federalism is not a new concept within international affairs, Ethiopia was a unique case as the Constitution granted nationalities the right of self-determination up to secession. The founders believed this was the only solution to solving Ethiopia's main problem of ethnicity and political unity, by enhancing the political participation of the entire population and giving a voice to previously oppressed people. Similar to the 1931 Constitution from Emperor Haile Selassie, this document was merely words on paper as the EPRDF's actions and constitution did not align. A deep analysis into the party system showed that the EPRDF coalition controls all the regional states in the federation through member parties. Instead of regional leaders being held accountable to their electorate, they turned towards the party hierarchy located within the

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EPRDF (Aalen 2002). In other words, the regional governments cannot act independently from the federal government since the federation system was being reinforced from the top bottom. Since there was little meaningful public participatory debate, like in 1931, the EPRDF lost any legitimacy they gained by excluding the opposition from refining the federal pack (Aalen 2002). In response, ethnic federalism was seen as an EPRDF experiment, instead of a project from and for the Ethiopian people.

Ethnic federalism, with the right of secession, can be seen as an ideal plan in theory, but practically its heightened polarization between ethnic groups. The EPRDF idea was that this would encourage more ethnic/regionally based political parties to join their coalition to further legitimize their power. Instead, Zenawi opened up a pandora box within Ethiopia with many groups demanding their version of self-determination or secession. Firstly, this was a practical issue due to decades of interdependence (voluntary or not) between the regions which minimized the governments likelihood to take demands seriously. Under the EPRDF, self-determination was repressed which eventually led to confrontations and informal fragmentation that weakened the political structure.

Secondly, this worsened the ethnic question in Ethiopia because it became easy to politicize tension into an "us vs. them" mentality. Ethnic identity and thus differences were emphasized with transactions with the government offices that required citizens to state their ethnic affiliation. This was problematic for individuals who came from two different groups and those who wished to identify as Ethiopian. The EPRDF hoped to represent unity but this tendency contributed to the fear of state instability (Habtu 2003). As mentioned before, land and natural resources has been a recurring point of contention in Ethiopian history. Conflict over scarce economic resources consolidated ethnic alliances, group formation and thus power

relation (Berhe 2001). If properly implemented, ethnic federalism could have solved the ethnic question that has plagued Ethiopia's history. However, the culture of consolidating power, and suppressing opposition undermined the regions and thus limited any potential Ethiopia had to fully democratize.

    iii.   Eritrea

Following the question of ethnicity and national identity, the next consistent question was Eritrea. As mentioned, the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea was initially drawn under Emperor Menelik II and the Wuchale Treaty with the Italians. While that treaty initially led to the Battle of Adwa, it represented the first legitimate step towards distinguishing between the two countries and peoples. While the influence of Eritrea in Ethiopian politics has been a consistent factor, the alliance between the TPLF and EPLF during the end of the Derg regime brought Eritrea back into the political consideration of Ethiopia. However, this partnership was not without tension as the two parties soon realized their ideological and military differences. Since Eritrea reflected a more diverse population than the Tigray region under the TPLF, the EPLF advocated for a clear, and distinct nationalist plan with an independent Eritrea. In contrast, as seen with the transition into the EPRDF, the TPLF put their nationalist agenda on pause to achieve greater political power (Plaut 1999). This tension was further exacerbated when the TPLF proposed self-determination, up to the point of secession. The debate around ethnic federalism included the question and their right for independence. The EPRDF agenda did not align with Eritrea's desire for a unified multi-ethnic state, that was not compatible with secession.

However, generally speaking between the years of 1991 and 1997, the two countries lived peacefully together. The end of 1997 was characterized by growing tension between the

two countries that eventually led to military action. First, Ethiopia decided to import oil instead of using the Assab refinery located in Eritrea. While not reactionary, shortly after, Eritrea proposed their own currency (*Nakfa)* and requested it be used equally with *birr* which was denied by Ethiopia. Border contentions had always been a source of conflict but had been managed to get pushed off until 1998 when both countries claimed Badme as a part of their territory. The conflict began with Eritrea taking the town by force and Ethiopia condemning Eritrean aggression and demanded withdrawal. Ethiopia's claim towards protecting their own sovereignty eventually led to a prolonged war with mass casualties on both sides. This was only worsened with rising distrust between the two leaders: Zenawi and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

The war eventually ended in June of 2000 with an agreement to cease hostilities between the two governments, and Ethiopia expelling all Eritrean military troops. The Algiers Peace Accord in December 2000 established a border commission to solve the contested territories that sparked the war in the first place (Mesfin 2012). At the beginning, both sides agreed to accept the results from the impartial commission and would consider them to be binding. However, in 2003, the commission granted the town of Badme to Eritrea which Ethiopia rejected.

While Ethiopia technically won the war, there was a post war policy of containment which only formally ended in 2018 under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. This led to a relationship characterized with tension, and empowering opposition forces in the other country. Due to the structure of the Eritrean government under President Afwerki managed to weaken and isolate Eritrea. With a weak underdeveloped bureaucratic infrastructure, concentration of power in the executive office, and a small circle of political allies, Afwerki presented no real threat to the Ethiopian government.

V.   Conclusion

By considering rulers from Emperor Tewodros II to the establishment of the EPRDF, there were common issues that each administration has attempted to address. Starting with the concept of modernization, Emperor Tewodros II first tackled the issue by establishing a well-developed literary Amharic system. The desire to create a modern nation state was continued throughout the following rulers through geographical expansion and legitimizing the central state. This entire process culminated with Emperor Menelik, as Ethiopia's borders finalized to what it is today. Throughout history, Ethiopia experienced moments of national pride, as seen after the Battle of Adwa, during Italian occupation, and the Revolution against the Derg military regime. However, rulers struggled to establish a consistent national identity that surpassed ethnic loyalties. In an attempt to answer the national identity question, leaders expanded the powers of the central state which inevitably led to their downfall.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, another consistent problem has been power struggles over natural resources. Due to Ethiopia's long history with feudal systems, land had been the core at determining socio-economic conditions for individuals, as well as a source of inequality that fell along ethnic lines. For both Emperor Menelik I, Haile Selassie, and the Derg Regime, famines have exposed poor land reform and infrastructure to help fight off the consequences of famines.

As Ethiopia is landlocked, since it's early foundation the country has had to deal with the influence and incursions of their neighbors. While Eritrea presents an interesting case for analysis, to understand Ethiopia's role in the region the next chapter will analyze other relationships. It will focus on Sudan, Egypt, and briefly Somalia to see how Ethiopia stands up to McNamee's 2016 classification of a regional power.

<center>**Conclusion: Ethiopia's Classification**</center>

I.   Introduction

   This final chapter will consider whether or not Ethiopia can properly accept the title of a

regional power, as defined by McNamee's (2016) qualifications: (i) domestic success within

their borders, (ii) effective, inclusive and transparent institutions, (iii) convincing their neighbors

that their agenda is not self-serving. As international affairs are a highly intersectional topic, this

chapter will adopt a similar approach when considering Ethiopia's qualifications. The first and

second factor will be combined under the umbrella of ethnic federalism, while the third will be

touched on in regards to Ethiopia's relationship with Somalia and other Nile Basin countries.

Ethiopia:	Domestic Success	Institutions	Regional Agenda
Has Ethiopia successfully achieved this criteria?	To be determined	In the past no but there is reason to be hopeful for the 2021 elections	Yes, but more work could be done
Complicating facts	Ethnic tensions and violence against specific groups of individuals	Current PM has delayed elections due to COVID-19 concerns.	Effects of the GERD project is yet to be seen or actualized

   The remainder of this chapter will go into detail as to why Ethiopia's received these

classifications followed the aforementioned qualifications.

II.   Domestic Success

       As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ethiopia's rulers have been trying to answer the

national question, or in other words have been trying to establish a national identity that

surpasses any ethnic identification. There is contention that reaches as far back to the

fundamental question of when Ethiopia was established. For example, some believe that

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Ethiopia's origin dates back to biblical times, while the Oromo Liberation Front believe the country was formed during the 19th century at the height of the Abyssinian colonial movement.

Ranging from Emperor Tewodros II to General Mengistu Haile Mariam, no ruler was able to accomplish this feat. By the time Haile Mariam entered office, ethnic relations took a turn for the worst. During the Red Terror, the regime responded harshly to any political dissent that fell along ethno-regional lines. To fragment any opposition, the regime fostered conflict by manipulating ethnic relations while denying alternative groups the ability to develop alterative visions for Ethiopia's future (Mengisteab 2001).

With ethnic identity heighted in response to the Derg's policy, the EPRDF continued the trend that began with their predecessor. When they came into power, the country was on the verge of disintegration and the EPRDF offered ethnic federalism as the system to fix Ethiopia. To them, this would solve the national question as creating a unified Ethiopia while maintaining the diversity that Ethiopia enjoyed, and exploited. Leaders believed this system would promote diversity by devolving political power to local communities and would serve as a method to manage differences and establish a way for groups to participate and influence policy making decisions (Mengistu 2015). The 1995 Constitution established 10 regional states and two federal cities: Afar, Amhara, Benishangual-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromia, Somalia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Tigray, Sidama with Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa as the two chartered cities. Following other federalist constitutions, this coalition party encouraged self-determination, but unlike their counterparts, the EPRDF allowed the regional groups rights up to the point of secession. A federalist system was logical for Ethiopia, as it is a popular choice for overcoming conflict in diverse countries as it devolves power and resources.

However, the system of ethnic federalism soon failed to answer to Ethiopia's conflicts. Historians reflect on the legacy of the EPRDF as a continuation of the Derg Regime minus the obvious violence, as the former continued to operate as a unitary state despite the federal administration system. Instead of opening the political arena to different regional parties and leaders, the federalist system created a permanent cleavage that only led to further exclusion (Mengistu 2015). As firm lines were drawn between the regions, it did not allow for free movement between the regions which eased the development of "us" versus "them" sentiment. Broadly speaking, ethnic federalism does not always necessarily increase ethnic violence, but rather issues were conveyed through an ethnic lens with the "territorialization of ethnicity" because it became the primary means of political mobilization (Aalen). By redrawing administrative boundaries, it flamed problems that did not exist before in regions where inhabitants lived peacefully and created problems for pastoralists who used to move freely between regions.

Some historians cite the failings of ethnic federalism to TPLF's hidden mission of weakening Amhara hegemony through their "divide and rule" plan. As the Tigrayans were a minority this constitution allowed the party to restructure the system in favor of the elite. The tension between the Tigray and Amhara region cites back to the crown leaving the former under Emperor Yohannes. However, the tension towards the Amhara leadership was not specific to the Tigrayans, as the TPLF was able to utilize feelings of hostility towards Amharas to mobilize other groups who had felt discriminated against.

Marina Ottaway wrote that "embarking on [the ethnic] path is bound to lead either to increased repression or to mounting ethnic conflict and eventual disintegration of the country" (Mengisteub). Similar to other commentators, they believed that Ethiopia's ethnic federalism is

not compatible with democracy as a country cannot pursue ethnicization and promote democracy at the same time.

Conditions were worsened as the federal arrangement the EPRDF had produced did not actually give the regions the autonomy promised in the constitution, but ethnicity still served as a mobilizing force within the country. As a result, Ethiopia was in a worse situation as they did not reap the possible benefits of ethnic federalism and only faced the consequences of the system. Theoretically, ethnic federalism could have worked in Ethiopia, however success was deterred as power remained at the hand of a single, minority but still dominant party. With a de-facto one party system under the EPRDF, the political arena was narrowed which decreased Ethiopia's ability to manage conflicts as seen through elections ranging from 1992 to 2010.

While clashes between ethnic groups is not news to Ethiopia, due to rising popularity and the intensity of violence, the international community has turned their focus to the country and its actions. The recent news began with the TPLF preemptively striking a federal military facility located in Tigray (Peters 2020) early in November. In the background, both parties, the Abiy Administration and the TPLF leaders, do not see the other as legitimate. Seeing this as a major national security threat, the Abiy administration responded with a full military offensive. However, due to the communications shutdown, news after those events is hard to verify from both the administration and TPLF side.

In the week of November 28th, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed released a statement alerting the international community that the war was over and that the military successfully took the town of Mekelle, the capital of Tigray. However, the leader of the TPLF, Debretsion Gebremicheal, claims the opposite and said that "the fighting is not over, and 'we are sure we will win'" (Leader of Tigray's forces tells Ethiopia PM to 'stop the madness').

Unfortunately, in the background of this violence has been violations against humanity during and outside of the war. Again, due to the communications shutdown it is difficult to verify news coming out of Ethiopia, however reports show refugees fleeing from the Tigray region into Sudan. These same refugees report that both sides of the conflict are committing atrocities against civilians, and that much of the killings are "based on ethnicity" and specifically in Mai Kadra witness reported that forces loyal to the TPLF were responsible for the massacres committed against non-Tigrayan laborers (Burke & Salih 2020).

III.   Through transparent, inclusive institutions:

As mentioned before, the two major actors in the recent violence emitting from Ethiopia do not see the other as legitimate which further emphasizes the importance of transparent and inclusive institutions.

With the exception of 2005, elections since the establishment of ethnic federalism has lacked the pluralization necessary for democratization. With the first elections in 1992, Ethiopia utilized the new political map that established the ethnically defined regions which was consolidated in 1995 with EPRDF as the national party. With a comprehensive five-year plan, all EPRDF candidates had similar platforms which allowed the party to dominate the political agenda and arena. Every election cycle saw the repeated patterns of harassment and intimidation of opposition parties and voters. By utilizing state resources, and withholding funds to parties, the EPRDF used the system forged for the people against them.

There was no real competition in the elections until 2005, which saw the active mobilization of the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), the Coalition for Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (COAFPD), and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD). These three all presented viable options to the Ethiopian people who

witnessed their first election with debates and competition for the citizens. While these parties gained attention and support, most still expected the EPRDF to continue their winning streak by controlling officials and incumbency benefits.

While the competing parties won some parliamentary seats, the EPRDF still won the majority and responded with harsh policies to prevent a similar outcome in upcoming elections by, throwing these parties into legal procedures to distract them from party building, restricted independent media and civil society freedom, and the consolidation between the ruling party and the government (Lyons 2010). This continued up to the most two recent elections (in 2010 and 2015) with the EPRDF winning almost 100% of the parliamentary seats as the "ruling coalition completely controls all aspects of their daily life and permits no alternative political views" (Horne 2015).

Following the appointment of the current Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the world has turned its gaze to Ethiopia for the results in the next set of elections scheduled for August 2020. Ahmed since coming into office in 2018, began his administration with various policies that sought to liberalize Ethiopia. Ranging from his policy of *Medemer* (meaning to add or loosely translated into coming together), to releasing journalists from prison, and establishing the Prosperity Party, Ahmed represented a new beginning for Ethiopia. However, citing potential dangers regarding the coronavirus, Ahmed has pushed back elections to 2021 which some parties viewed as a power grab. This was manifested in the Tigray region, who held their regional elections in September 2020 as an act of defiance against the current administration (Marks 2020). However, the Tigray elections was not the first sign of tension between this region and the current administration. It is important to note that while the TPLF continues to win seats in the

region, there is doubt on whether they actually represent the Tigray people due to the doubts around their elections.

If Dr. Abiy Ahmed continues with the initial promise, and holds elections there is hope that the election will be conducted properly and will have legitimate results. In the years of the EPRDF, it brought together the four largest ethnic groups, and gave the remaining secondary classification and treatment (Yibeltal 2019). In contrast, following the Medemer philosophy, Dr. Ahmed and the new prosperity party has promised innovative solutions to compromise, and the importance of incorporating voices that had been isolated from the political sphere.

However, given the current relationship with the TPLF, there is hesitance on whether the TPLF will accept the results of the election, and doubts surrounding whether there will be post-election peace.

IV.   Regional Agenda

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ethiopia and Eritrea ended the civil war on tense terms with the former not accepting the results of the Algiers Peace Accord which granted Badme to Eritrea. The military standoff was terminated when Dr. Ahmed signed the 2018 Peace Accord with Afeworki. Shortly after the accord was signed, the two countries reopened embassies, restored flight links, and allowed telephone calls between the two (Schemm 2018). However, a 2019 analysis into their relations recognized that not much changed between the two countries. Besides the lack of a looming military threat, the two reverted back to their norms as both leaders have their set of domestic matters to focus on. The international hope has been that by easing political tensions with the accord, it can allow for more sustainable progress on the economic front (Stigant 2019).

This is an interesting development when considering the current war with the TPLF, as they claim President Afeworki is supporting the Ethiopian military forces. According to TPLF leaders, that alignment was enough justification to carry out airstrikes into Asmara. Officials in both countries have denied Eritrea's military involvement in Ethiopia (Manek & Omer 2020), however historically there have been tense relationships between the TPLF and EPLF during the revolution against the Derg Regime.

Another vital regional relationship is that with Somalia. During the Scramble for Africa, the European countries split greater Somalia into five regions and gave Menelik the region of Ogaden (Elmi and Barise 2010). The Somalia point continued into Emperor Haile Selassie's regime, as he aimed to weaken the state by creating terminal disorder in Somalia. This trend was heighted under Haile Mariam who added a military component to the foreign policy agenda. The Derg regime began backing up armed resistance groups against the Siad Barre regime stationed in Ethiopia (Mohamed 2018). While tensions and covert involvement in both countries remained high after Haile Mariam, it was during this regime that Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977 in the Ogaden War. At this point in history, Somalia had an advanced military than Ethiopia and politically was more stable. What began as a Somali military offensive war, ended as a military victory for Ethiopia with the support of the Soviets and Cubans. In the last two months of the war, when Somali forces were fading, the sudden international assistance shifted the balance of forces on the battlefield (Tareke 2000).

Historically, while the Ethiopian-Somalian relationship has always been tense, recently both countries have taken measures to improve relations and increase stability within East Africa. After the Peace Accord was signed in 2018 between Eritrea, and Ethiopia, the two sparked a relationship with Somalia in January 2020. The three established a Joint Plan of Action

to consolidate peace, ensure stability and security, with the end goal of promoting economic and social development in the region (Makori 2020). These goals were visualized by established a new regional block, the Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC). As mentioned previously in this paper, there is already an abundance of regional organizations throughout the continent which adds a layer of complexity for this trio. While it too soon to predict the efficiency of this organization, and all three countries have different economic and political conditions, HoAC provides an opportunity for Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia to counter the Kenyan dominated Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

V.   Poverty Rates and Regional Relations

Another measure of domestic success is the countries poverty rates. A 2018 analysis in Ethiopia's economy demonstrates how the country has made progress towards decreasing poverty. Between 2004 and 2017, economic growth averaged 10.5%, with real per capita GDP doubling to $81 million by 2016. With the expansion of social services in education, health, water, sanitation and infrastructure over the past decade and a half, Ethiopia has also experienced similar increasing growth rates with capita income and domestic savings (Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty).

The World Bank Group's 2020 Poverty Assessment demonstrates how this economic growth has continued. However, the group's assessment noted how the poverty reduction was stronger in the urban areas, but weak in rural areas which still depend on the agricultural sector for work and financial compensation (Teshome 2020). This report was published before the severe locust situation plaguing East African countries, which has negatively damaged farmers ability to utilize their land thus threatening food supply. Over the past 18 months, experts have noted a prolonged wet season, which ushered the locust outbreak who follow periods of heavy

rainfall that triggers vegetation in normally dry climates. With the rising consequences of climate change, researchers believe these locust outbreaks will only increase in frequency and intensity (A Plague of Locusts Has Descended on East Africa 2020).

While the rain brought the locusts into Ethiopia, it also brought national pride as the rain filled the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) before the expected fill date. This dam is located in the Beninshangul-Gumuz region about 40 kilometers from Sudan (The Grand Renaissance Dam- Ethiopia's Greatest Risk). The idea of this specific Dam originated in 2011 under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of the EPRDF. This was in response to Ethiopia having not utilized the Nile's Waters as equitably as the country believed to be fair. As the Nile is a shared river of ten riparian states, many were concerned with Ethiopia's intention with this body of water. Specifically, Egypt and Sudan voiced their concerns as much of their civilization depends and is built around the river. Initially, the central government did not release information or answer the regions concerns over water supply and continued building the dam. This issue came back to the international arena under Dr. Abiy Ahmed who stated that unilaterally, the country will fill the dam regardless of an agreement being signed or not.

According to a report by the International Hydropower Association, the GERD is expected to produce 6,450 megawatts of electricity once fully installed. Past the employment necessary to build the dam, Ethiopia planned to have this project provide electricity to their citizens and continue economic growth by selling excess electricity to neighboring countries. In response to the worries over cutting off water supply, since the prime purpose of the Gerd is hydroelectricity, Ethiopian officials have reaffirmed the Riparian states that the water will continue to flow downstream once the reservoir has been filled (Mbaku 2020). However due to the unilateral lens in which Ethiopia is viewing this project, many in the region worry of the

country's true intentions with the Dam and its true consequences for those dependent on the Nile River.

While events are currently unfolding in Ethiopia that will determine its ability to be classified a regional power, the country is sitting at a crucial point. At this current moment, Ethiopia can either move into further democratic deepening or fall back into democratic erosion. In terms of poverty reduction, it is clear that past economic policies and expansion of social services has set Ethiopia on a path of continued economic growth, especially if the GERD project's revenue manifested as expected. Another point that requires close research is the relationship between the TPLF and administration once communications are back, and news can be verified. It is also crucial to separate the regional parties from the citizens, as historically there has been discontent with the TPLF, but that should not always extend to discontent with the broader Tigrayan civilians.

However, the most important factor is the influence and legacy of the current Ahmed administration. Similar to the EPRDF after the Red Terror, Dr. Abiy Ahmed has the potential to turn Ethiopia into a democratic example within the Horn of Africa, and the continent as a whole. For this to be done, it is crucial that Ahmed learns from the mistakes of his predecessors, and to acknowledge where the country historically has gone wrong, and how it can become better.

Ranging from Empress Yohannes, up until Prime Minister Zenawi, leaders have neglected the voice of the many in favor for the few. If his relationships with Eritrea and Somalia are a reflection of his ability to bridge historical gaps, Ahmed's policy of *Medemer* might be able to bridge the gaps that have plagued Ethiopia since its formations and allow this and following generations to witness peace in their lifetime.

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