Pressing quest on the feasibility of Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement
Welehawerya Gebrekrstos

Abstract: “Comrades Combat” to the rootless aftermath! This paper was set out aiming at figure out the major debates on the feasibility of the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement alongside its implementation procedures immediately Abiy Ahmed hold the ultimate political power in Ethiopia. To address the stated objective, data were gathered via in-depth interview with foreign relation experts in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and respected Diplomats who are branded on the political dynamics of the Horn of Africa. Besides, potential documents were analyzed to enrich the data. Subsequently, qualitative data analysis which operated QDA-miner was used to sort out the segments of the major codes. Thus, the major findings of the study are presented thematically: memorial sand-based relation; procedural asymmetry of thought; and the beyond bilateral actors are the core. The flashback memory of Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) and Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) was a factor to stirring the new rapprochement. Local communities’ contrary assertion of initiation to the agreement is bridling the swift relation. Equally, incompatible legacies and blurred nature of political economy which have practiced by the two states has ignited the concern. On the other hand, the weak roles of regional organization, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to exercising its mandates in the region; the geo-political importance of the region for the powerful states; the dynamic shifting of the powerful states’ interest on the region and their actively involvement on. Blending them, the forward looking of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

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Welehawerya Gebrekrstos is a lecturer at Woldia University, Ethiopia, in the department of English Language and Literature since 2011. He has an MA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); MA degree in Peace and conflict studies; and PhD in TEFL. He has concerns on the baseless and fruitless hostilities in the history of Ethiopia and Eritrea, and is highly interested in conducting research regarding the peace and stability of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the communities in the Horn of Africa in general. Coming up with valuable findings and disseminating back to the community in bring harmonize interaction among and within is the core intention to him. It is because the region is vulnerable to protracted messes due to political leaders run to stabilize their positions but none of them delighted to their peoples.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
There is a common statement about politics which said “politics is a dirty game.” And I said yes to reaffirm it, but who should wash the dirty part to be clean, because human could not survive outside political participations? It is we, the fore agent of the political system. Especially, those of political figures have double responsibility to heal the society from such hasty irrational fear. Asserting this premise, contravene pundits have been forwarded on the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement carried out since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has hold the ultimate political power of Ethiopia. So, being aware of political dynamism could make ordinary people to feel anxiety on. To make remedy on, academic elites have responsibilities dealing and coming up with balanced positions. This paper is to analyze the possible scenarios and disseminate them to the wider society.

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has recognized internally and by the international community as well for paving way to synergize the region. However, speculations are presupposing that some odd political entities would be emerged. And in turn stirring the political practices in Ethiopia is not taken too lightly moving to influence the region’s peace and stability unless due care is given.

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1. Introduction

Fortunately or unfortunately, it has prompted 124 years of today; the battle of Adwa has resulted with a divided rope stretched in the waist of the former Ethiopia. Sporadic thinking about, but the chronic Ethiopia strained to bifurcate into two autonomous entities. Sooner or later, such project had created new political entity called Eritrea in the most north. In attempt to revive the former being, the twined communities with some cumulative cultural values have experienced two aborted fantasy, and one in suspense attempts still. The first attempt was traced back to the 1960s when Emperor Haileslassie I dictated the annexation of Eritrea after half a century's under colony. When the Emperor landed in Asmara returning from exile, many residents had marched in the avenues of Asmara to welcome the Emperor. The people had hung pieces of palm; danced over the roads dressing their customary clothes in which all imparted making hope of cohesion and solidarity. Unfortunately, due to conspiracy mentality of the central government and some groups were dissatisfied with the Emperor’s order, the hope was aborted hence. It then has converted into threat.

The second anecdote people in Asmara, especially mothers hanged up pieces of palms and waved marching the main roads was to welcome Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, after Eritrea declared its full independent in the early 1990. The people of Eritrea were believed in the principle of the right of colonized people to self-determination; and acknowledged the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (EPRDF) was blessing for them. Like the previous or else in more adverse instance, the aspiration of solidarity was dried up. The honeymoon relation between Meles and Isaias, and the positive neighborhood between Ethiopia and Eritrea did not go beyond seven years yet. It had dampered the spirits of people more adversely instead.

Fortunately but uncertainty to conclude, something unusual has happened in 2018 on the political juncture of Ethiopia and Eritrea. For the third time thus, the Eritreans and the Ethiopians had marched over the avenues of respective capital hoping the rapprochement would bring sustainable peace in between. On 8 July 2018, the residents of Asmara welcome the resilience man, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (hereafter Prime Minister Abiy) hanging the pieces of palms, and waving flowers on the main roads. Likewise, the Ethiopians welcomed president Isaias warmly when he had visited Addis Ababa after 20 years of darkly parting. So, such incidents ignited me to conduct a study on, would the present hallowed initiation be repeated what had had done to wilt the hanged palms and broke the hearts of communities, or endeavor to downhill the peace breeze as Prime Minister Abiy has promised? This paper was, therefore, intended to look into the features and procedures, and the overall feasibility of the rapprochement. To this end, the following research questions are addressed:

- Who could be the legitimated practitioners of the rapprochement to meet its objectives?
- Could the new bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea be feasible?
- Why some pundits are suspecting on the effective implementation of the rapprochement while other trusting it?
2. Core argument of the study
Currently, contradictive arguments are forwarding by pundits on the viability of the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement undertaken lately, and its implications as well. Some claim on the historic incident dawn to the twined communities and the entire region. For the two states are the most influential in the Horn of Africa, the protracted instability would permanently resolved.

On other hand, others are blaming the rapprochement, for it lacked some presuppositions. As a result, they are speculating it would end up with vicious mess future. Appreciating the warmed debate, I argue that the Ethio-Eritrea rapprochement would face challenges to touch the ground easily, but could saw dawn if handled wisely.

3. Research approach and strategies
In view of the issue under study and the research questions devised to be answered, qualitative research approach was preferred. Unlike the conventionalized positivism view, the present paper has mainly relied on meaning-generation in textual form than numerical values of records. With this podium, McNabb (2010, p. 129) attests that the term qualitative research is used to inform a set of non-statistical inquiry, and is a process used to gather data about a certain social phenomena and political cultures. Thus, the two relevant strategies of qualitative research approach were used for this research project are the discourse analysis and interpretive. Considering the theoretical suggestions to realize the qualitative research approach, I employed discourse analysis technique to identify speech acts uttered or documented, explore the situation they are articulated in, illuminated and then interpreted bits of data. Interpretive technique on the other hand was employed to figure out how people interpret the speeches and action carried out; and to give meaning of incidents and speeches as far as the researcher go through. With this concept, Bryman (1988, p. 105) claimed that the qualitative approach focuses on the explanation of events, processes and contextual meaning. This research work, therefore, is intended to employ qualitative approach with multiple specific strategies, for the research questions are feasible for.

4. Sources of data and gathering procedures
The data for the present study were obtained from various participants, believing they have relevant information and experiences about the issue under study. Despite information about current political reform in Ethiopia and Ethio-Eritrea relation could be obtained from any layman; I cramped my sources to the FDRE’s ministry of foreign affairs (the department for the HOA), and scholars who are experts and experienced on the HOA’s politics were selected as participants of the study. In addition, pertinent documents produced and disseminated by different stokes (governmental and nongovernmental, or private companies) were also employed to be sources of data for the study. For the reason that those sources could reflect voices of various doctrines, I thoroughly triangulated and analyzed them so as to attain the research’s objective.

5. Techniques of data analysis
Accomplishing the data collection tasks, data analysis was carried out at various levels of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) cited in Walliman (2011, p. 131) suggested that there are concurrent flows of actions to analyze qualitative data. Thus, the data obtained via the employed instruments, i.e. in-depth interview with key informants and documents analyses (electronic and printed Medias) would be transcribed. This means, reducing the bulky raw data into workable segments (codes). Coding the raw data was made considering the basic research questions of the study. Next, I ensue to looking for patterns (categories) of information, and finally themes are established. This is done because thematic analysis is recommended for qualitative approach because it enables us to look into patterns of meaning. Moreover, the worldview of the study is interpretivism; thematic analysis fit with so. The constructed codes and themes are analyzed integrating with relevant theoretical underpins. The raw data are categorized either in quotation manner or summarize them. Finally, the data are interpreted so as to construct meaningful findings. Doing so, I employed appropriate qualitative data analysis techniques to process the
data. There are several techniques for analyzing qualitative data. QDA-miner software and QDA manual are used for this study.

6. Data presentation and discussion

Gathering the raw data from various angles in various forms, they are analyzed sorting into some segments, and then discussed to impart the major interpretations. The major points obtained out are presented as follow.

6.1. Opened the curtail: political reform in Ethiopia

The year, 2016 had come to Ethiopia with strange or else dawn political paradigm. Ethiopia has been propelling by the political tensions from that time on. In due course, strange popular uprisings, social violence, and mutiny were noticed and escalated at upsetting rates. These socials turmoil were followed by dramatic political and leadership change. Let alone limited in Ethiopia, it has converted the protracted politically awkward relation with Eritrea.

The hub reasons and operational techniques of the comprehensive reform carried out in Ethiopia could be viewed from various angles. Scholars are arguing on the major causes to the new wind blow in Ethiopia. It could be vested at the spectacular change carried out within the EPRDF’s scheme, or due to the interventions of the external actors. To this argument, Chalachew (2011, pp. 15–16), claimed that the weakness of the domestic political practices as well as the presence and inflicting roles of the external actors take the lion share. Likewise, Meressa (2011, p. 32) explained that the new political assortment in Ethiopia is stemmed from three typical directions: the repulsion nature of the domestic politics in Ethiopia; the uncertain nature of the regional situations, and the dynamics world order political swifts.

Domestically for example, the coalition parties with in the EPRDF party have not played their mandates cordially and candidly in the past few years. Rather they have served as pseudo coalition parties. Might it be the government structure or the personal engagement of government officials, tensed maladministration practices were manifested. Rather they have preferred to accuse to one another. To this claim, KI4\textsuperscript{1} asserted that the coalition parties of the EPRDF have not exercised their term of offices in their autonomous regional states apparently. Such situations have been manifested since the last four years. Likewise, the opposition political parties operated inside and outside Ethiopia have contributed significant roles to bring new political spheres. To show the weakness of the EPRDF that opened breaks to the opposition factions, KI3 attempted to analogue with “the hyena would enter via the fence where the dog has penetrated.” This implies the spurious based internal political relations among coalition parties within the EPRDF; and the exhaustive accusation of the EPRDF with the opponent political factions or vice versa has geared to stir the normal functions of the legitimated government.

As a result, the weak and discouraging interactions among internal political actors had opened space for external powers those who are obsessed to maintain their interests in Ethiopia’s mess. Thus, the political reform contemporarily carried out in Ethiopia is a complementary of weak EPRDF coalition parties, the conspiracy of the opposition parties, and the interventions of external actors like great and super powers in this context. Supporting this heated argument, the rapprochement was sudden and unexpected, and indeed it took the world by surprise because it came about without the involvement of external mediators. Surprisingly, Redie come with contradictive statements. Referring to ex-prime minister H/Maria Desalegn’s interview, Bereketeb (2019, p. 29) substantiated his argument as:

\textit{What Abiy Ahmed had offered to Eritrea was no different from what he and his predecessors had offered, and which Eritrea had consistently rejected. He went on to say that the difference was that the times had changed.}
So, no matter pundits forwarded their own views, I personally say that the political dynamics in Ethiopia had never freed from external interventions. And this portrayed the inevitable judgment of external presence to the recent change too. However, no outside force would be freely entertaining the political yards of Ethiopia unless internal tissues were involved actively.

6.2. Encouraging and pitfall factors to undertake the rapprochement

The deadlock relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea for two decades has been a means of uncertainty to the two states’ security, political stability, social solidarity, and economic integrations. All these notable results of the historic hideous relation in turn ignited me to raise question whether the recent rapprochement would attain successfully or not. So, the sub-sections presented below are to present thoroughly the opportunities and deterring factors for the relationship.

6.2.1. Encouraging factors

It is obvious that the Ethio-Eritrean peace dialogue would be a dawn of hope to the local communities, the states, and governments, regional and global communities at large. Initiated by Prime Minister Abiy, the bilateral relation and the regional synergy are accompanied by various encouraging actors or incidents. The most notable encouraging incidents pressing the rapprochement are discussed hereunder.

6.2.1.1. Desire of the local community to renew the social solidarity. Fortunately, it was a prolonged desire of the community in Ethiopia and Eritrea to restore the normal political relation and political normalization. By and large, the people around the conflictual areas were and are passionate thinking about the positive relation apparently. To meet their ambitions, many tracks had been made by various public diplomats and individuals. To mention few, the Ethiopian singers like Jack Gosaye (Fiameta); and an Eritrean like Resom G/Gergis (Ta-abay Nefarit) have sung the future hopes of the peoples. Likewise, responsible elites and social responsible individuals were engaged to do their best. Yisaq Yoseph (Eritrean refugee in Ethiopia), Medhany Tadesse (prof.), Dawit G/ Egziabher, Girma W/Giorgis (former president of the FDRE), and others have attempted more.

At community level, it was an ambivalence to break a law and entertaining social interaction in the “no peace no war period.” The more recent incident, as K2 has responded reveals “the opening of the border via “Zalambessa” in the Ethiopian new year of 2011 was not permissive by the Eritrean president; the pressure from the people and Prime Minister Abiy’s endorsement made it true yet.” Moreover, the community in Ethiopia has welcomed the Eritrean refugees as their relatives. The Eritreans also have considered Ethiopia as their second home. Even after the diplomatic deal is commenced, more than 390 Eritrean refugees are entered to Ethiopia daily (the European Union report cited in Shimels 2011, p. 13). This implies how the communities are empathy one another apart from the political elites.

6.2.1.2. Abiy’s progressive political thought and decisive actions. To terminating the war and aggressive relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Algiers’ peace accord was conducted on December 2000. However, no leader or organization was stamina to restore the normal relation before the war had broke. But Prime Minister Abiy did it in courage. The implementation of the Algiers’ agreement, the decisions of the border commission was taken as signpost to normalize the relationship with Eritrea. Moreover, it created a platform for political discussing to the animosity between brotherly related people for the past twenty years. To this end, one of the top politicians in EPRDF, Getachew as cited by Shimels (2011, p. 15), affirmed that the special skill and audacity of Abiy to break such a barren situation made Prime Minister Abiy man of action. I also believe that the action that the Prime Minister has taken was an opportunity to stirring the stagnant hostile back-to-back relation.

Side by side to attempt the normal relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, what Prime Minister Abiy has done at the beginning was introducing inclusive and participatory political platform in the country. Almost all political prison was released and every political faction inside or outside the
country are allowed to join their country’s politics freely. As a result, no Ethiopian political faction would have a propensity to live in Eritrea or anywhere in the world for political blameworthy. Hosting many political factions in Eritrea was one of the exacerbating factors for the rough relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In turn, this would reduce the degree of Eritrea as a securitized actor to Ethiopia subsequently. By implication, it would also play its role to denounce the political tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Doing this, Abiy has awarded praises from internal and external communities.

Nevertheless, what Abiy and his government is immature in is on those forces that are lost power because of the changes are determined to create a desperate resistance. These could found in every ethnic group and various parts of the country. They would attempt to abort the change by provoking and exploiting interethnic cleavages. What Bereketeab (2019, p. 35) supposed the potential challenge to the progressive Abiy’s project is disarming the OLF combatants who have returned from Eritrea which still are the hot potato for the Oromo democratic party (ODP) later called “prosperity party.”

6.2.2. Potential and practical deters
Let alone the encouraging factors, some potential barriers could be counted regarding the new political reform and diplomatic dialogue. Thus, there are different parts which could play obstructive roles in the successful implementation of the relation which are mentioned here under.

6.2.2.1. Isaias’s political behaviour. Isaias considered himself “the natural leader of the region” (De Waal, 2015, p. 14). Moreover, he is well known for his ambivalence political behavior. As Facuiama as cited in Shimels (2011), such personality is known as “Megalothymia” disease (I am the natural leader of the region; special recognition should be given to me). Though Abiy’s call has penetrated and obliged Isaias for diplomatic dialogue, no one is confident to conclude the rapprochement could easily maintain. Analyzing the paradoxical speeches he made by far verified the suspicion. “Let Abiy be our leader; Abiy would do what I will say to do so.” This shows how Isaias is ready to agitate the region, not to secure normal relation. And he said “the new relation is a transitional for Eritrea; we lost nothing and if there are, we will compensate soon.” Though he did not explained clearly, these expressions can be interpreted from two perspectives. First, he is waiting to get conducive environment to compensate what he has missed. The second is it could serve to bring sustainable change. In the same vein, Gedamu (2018) attested as “Isaias never wanted the border open, but Prime Minister Abiy had pressure put on him; in the end, he opened it for his image, not for the people. This implies Isaias is not ready to confess his previous faults. Likewise, the unconditional opening and closing the borders could substantiate the president’s being in two minded.

Thus, all these accounts are likely to hamper to establish persistence normal relationship. Again, the core reason is, the attempt to political restore between Ethiopia and Eritrea would be fasten if president Isaias cure from his inherently conspired political behaviour. It is because interest and decisions from the Ethiopian side would not enough to bring sustainable peace.

6.2.2.2. The TPLF’s reluctant to accompany the reform. The TPLF, which is assumed administer Ethiopia for 27 years as the dominant partner in the ruling coalition, would openly challenge the reform; the rapprochement subsequently. But, Abiy’s government has decided to create political platform, there are implicit and explicitly cornered the TPLF and its policy as cursed and hindering factors. To mention some of the indicators that the TPLF elites feel breached on are: when the prime minister said “the vernacular politics (in USA when discussing with diasporas); the greed hyena (-runtime); TPLF could not represent the people of Tigray politically.” All these discourses have created fertile ground to the TPLF politics at the lean of heel to revive again. The stimulant discursive speeches by the prime minister enable the TPLF elites to reply consequentiality response.
Some counter attacks have witnessed by the TPLF; the deputy president of Tigray region told a public gathering in Mekelle, capital city of the region, on 28 July 2018 (Tigray TV on that day) articulated “we either respect each other or disintegrate.” This implies how the political paradigm is under restlessness to determine the future. In relation to this claim, Gudina interviewed with addis zemen (2011**) asserted that the major challenge to prime minister Abiy could not be the people of Ethiopia, but the coalition parties of EPRDF. Taking the 3 C model, the TPLF holds the second “C” which is the continuity. Let alone continuity, but become a challenge to the reform. Moreover, Bereketeab (2019, p. 26) added that the reform intended to attain was considered hampering by the TPLF, Prime Minister Abiy knew that unless the conflict with Eritrea was resolved. He inferred unless the TPLF is circled, the reforms in Ethiopia would be aborted. With those hideous relations internally, I subsume that it is unrealistic to conduct plausible reconciliation between two states. My likely suggestion, however, is reciprocal to Redie claim; assuring the internal cohesion and then move to the neighboring partners. Thus, unless the protracted furious politics between the federal government and TPLF is resolved, it would be less real with the relation with Eritrea.

6.2.2.3. Cornering the TPLF from the rapprochement process. Hasting with change, the new leaders are inevitable facing with unexpected challenges. Currently, there are grayed political and diplomatic relations dominantly pervasive alongside the bilateral relationship with Eritrea. Initially, the EPLF was politically antagonistic with the TPLF, not with the Ethiopian people or with the new top Ethiopian leaders. So, there is a fuzzy perception if the reconciliation has analyzed the major actors of the previous contradictions ahead. Obviously, the previous repulsive relations were due to incoherent interactions between the TPLF and the EPLF leaders. This implies there is a doubt if the relationship is feasible unless the potential actors are analyzed and involved to the new relation. However, no significant problems have been recorded with the ordinary peoples or the new leaders of Ethiopia. But, president Isaias denied discussing with the TPLF leaders; he aspires to revenge the TPLF, saying “Woyane game over.” Thus, would the rapprochement be feasible cornering out the major actor to the protracted hostile relation? Or was rapprochement has conducted as Abdulkader and Hirt (2018, p. 31) to weaken the TPLF, the common foe of president Isaias and Prime Minister Abiy?

From the theoretical and practical angles, the proxy regional administration to Eritrea like the Tigray and Afar regional states did not actively involved in the reconciliation as it was expected to do so. As mentioned by Tigray (2010*) the nearby regional administrations need to involve actively in the restoration process. Contrasting to Medhanye’s claim, KII argued that the foreign policy affairs and sovereignty of the state is determined by the federal government, the ministry of foreign affairs in particular. The mandate of the regional states is to operationalize tasks (Ibid). Aggregating the arguments, the proximal administration could realize the normalization accord than the federal government alone.

Though Prime Minister Abiy is on truck to synergize the region, and to some extent he is succeed. The question however is how he is confident to achieve the rapprochement lining out the TPLF, a vantage coalition of his party. Doing so, it is seminal of political conspiracy has been carried out by singling out the TPLF. The consequence according to Gebru (2019), decreeing the TPLF as common enemy to the federal government and to Isaias by implication is marginalizing the people of Tigray.

For the TPLF elites, however, it do favor mobilize the people and address their propaganda of TPLF which was at the edge of the cliff. Meanwhile, it is likely to induce that the rapprochement process could not be visible marginalizing the bridge agents. Mohammed (2018) and Medhanye (2018), maintained that the rapprochement seems cursory over political games than devising mechanisms on how the Algiers peace agreement will be implemented; and finally, to bring persistent peace.

6.2.2.4. The questions for transparency. The EPLF’s relation with TPLF has traced back to 1960s. The historical relation between EPLF and TPLF, therefore, had resulted in the hideous relation for
the last couple of decades. The political culture which is expected from the rapprochement seems to be full of blur consequence. The former EPRDF’s commander in chief for Air Force, Abebe, interviewed with “Walta TV” (14 November 2018) attested that though the relation is encouraging, it lacks to prioritize institutional development. Likewise, Gaim (2019) expressed his feeling glad with the initiation; he suggested his objection on the lack of inclusive and participatory of those who are directly affected by the relation. Devising a practical model was required to a certain extent. As a result, secret peace deal and closing the borders unconditionally is one means to feel people suspicious on the relation. For example, in December 2018, the “Zalambessa” and “Rama,” and on April, 2019, the “Humora” and “Bure” borders are suddenly closed respectively. In all those actions, the Ethiopian government has no awareness; it was merely by the wills of the Eritrean government. This shows how the relation lacked institutional transparency, accountability, and participatory. Every actions seem are accomplished by the interest of president Isaias, not by the states’ institutions.

However, Debretson intervied with Tigray (2019) asserted that the sudden closing of the “Zalambessa” and “Rama” borders was to establish formal institutions. The leaders’ level peace deal was to help to improve the general political situation between the two states and among the Horn of Africa in general. However, due to the historical nature of the conflict, Ethiopia and Eritrea would face numerous obstacles in the process that must be overcome ahead. The likely constraints to the project are trade, currency, resources utilization, and so on. Nevertheless, the leaders of both Ethiopia and Eritrea merely gave and still are giving much attention to border issue in which alone could bring nothing to the best relation. To this assertion, De Waal (2015, p. 29) claimed that the social and political scientists prefer to study institutions and regularities, rather than individuals, transactions and contingencies. The puzzling aspect of the delimitation decision of the border commission was its reluctance to clearly point out the location of the village of conflict (Kalewengel, 2008, p. 81). Likewise, the puzzling relation of Abiy and Isaias would lead to the uncertainty of the persistence relation.

The fundamental concern of most scholars on the relation is it lacked being institutionalized. As Getachew’s view cited by Shimels (2011, p. 15) confirmed that the hidden and more of personal relation ignited concern at large. He added, no higher official in Ethiopia even the foreign minister know little about the detail of the agreements undertook both in Asmara and Jeddah. With such furious politics, how we could imagine the relation is carrying out following the normative procedures?

6.2.2.5. Incompatible states’ policy and political philosophy of leaders. Many international communities’ surprising that “the forwarding looking Abiy and the backward looking Isaias have coming together.” Primarily, the Eritrean government after independence was to dominate the region and exploiting the resources around (Asrat, 2008). Eritrea’s policy was training insurgents to destabilize the region and snatch resources from other sovereign states. Moreover, it was known for exporting actors of devastation than for common development (Ibid).

The big picture of the EPLF’s foreign policy in the post-independence was to ensure economic prosperity using military hegemony (Medhanye, 2010). Medhanye added, the Eritrean government has engaged in “military implicitly policy.” What the historical accounts of the two states’ revealed is they lacked trajectory points for normal relations. In this respect, the third article of Jeddah “the countries will develop Joint Investment Projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones” is difficult to implement. To this concern, though he insinuated some options, Berekeetab (2019, p. 38) reflected some Eritreans are expressing the fear that Eritrea might be swallowed up by the neighbouring economic and demographic giant. Eritrea may end up as a dumping ground for Ethiopian products, which could well hamper its economic recovery.

Let alone the states’ policy, though the two leaders have announced the political fraternity they made to the mass, they have different personal outlooks toward foreign policy. With regard to this concept, De Waal (2015, p. 31) claimed that if we are to develop a framework for analyzing political
skill, the best place to start is with the concepts and judgements of the politicians themselves, and especially those who have a proven record of success. As the leaders are mandated to govern two sovereign states with different policies and aspire differently to attain goals, Abiy and Isaias are characterized differently. As explained by K15, Personally Abiy is engaging to bring radical transition in the areas of politics, economics, and diplomatic inside the country and to the region. In addition, Abiy is hoped to allow the political platform makes him differ from Isaias.

In short, Abiy is considered as a “forward looking” leader. On the contrary, Isaias is inherited with a totalitarian and oppressive personality for every activity and sectors in Eritrea. Not only to oppress the internal stakes, his sentiment is also to use the present political stir in the region to attain the intention of creating great Eritrea by snatching piece of land from Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Sudan (Tsehaye, 2011, p. 3). Isaias in general is a “backward looking” leader. So, how it could be possible to address the rapprochement effectively with divergent personality of leaders?

Moreover, Bereketeab (2019, p. 38) seemed to worry ambiguous about the nature of the assertions such as “we are one people” or “the border has no meaning,” and by phrases such as “integration and unity,” “reconciliation,” etc. Most of the time, these have different meanings for Eritreans and Ethiopians. These expressions need clarity because they may have different understandings for different people and contexts. When Isaias has interviewed on ERiTv (2018), he articulated “we lost nothing in the past two decades; if there are, we will compensate all soon.” He seems to compensate what he has lost in the previous than strive for good bilateral relation. This incompatibility would certain to be exposed into other confrontations. To such situation, K15 asserted as: “the two countries have formulated relations with divergent intentions. For example, the post-referendum was a leaders’ interest, not on the basis of independent states’ relationships.” So, speculated that the contemporary relation would repeat the past scenario.

7. Conclusion and Implications
The protracted deadlock political relationship between the ever kinship communities (the Ethiopian and the Eritrean) was continued as a riddle for a couple of decades. No one has ever thought of such stretched repulsive interfaces would have been kept on. Rather it was merely to attain the political contempt of the two comrades (Meles Zenawi, the former head of state of Ethiopia and Isaias Afeworki who is the Eritrean president). Later, it has leaked to the mass and a destructive war was undertaken in May 2000. Subsequently, they attempted to treat each other as forefront enemy for two decades. Suffering from yearning experience however, a new air has commenced blowing since June 2018, soon Abiy Ahmed become the Premier of Ethiopia. The new anecdote has become a riddle to many regarding the spring force even higher political elites in both sides. Let alone pundits’ speculations, the political dawn has come with contravene premises and future scenarios. The core sources of future insecurity for the political restoration in general are: Isaias’s political behaviour “Megalothyria” mentality; the TPLF’s reluctant to accompany the reform in Ethiopia; sentiments of the Federal Government of Ethiopia to cornering the TPLF from the rapprochement process though TPLF is the core agent to occur the hazed situation; the question of transparency for the pre and post rapprochement; and the incompatible states’ policy and political philosophy of the two leaders (Abiy and Isaias).

Let alone appreciating the initiation taken by Abiy Ahmed and his Eritrean colleague, it still is clouding lose sleep regarding what would happen in the near future between the two political entities (communities), and even beyond unless wise monitoring is carried out. Much has not noticed to do from both sides, instead are striving to externalize the curse, but hasting to own the blessed fruits. With these jeopardized realities on ground, would not it press quest on “what is next of the rapprochement”? Eventually, this article would initiate academicians to spend further time to bring
sustainable peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Politicians need to aware that the two people have no fundamental problems in between; but they have been serving as instruments instead.

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Note
1. KI = stands for the key informants of the study. They could be either from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia or those who have profound experiences on the political culture of the HOA.

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