HISTORY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The creeping fashion of ethnicism in the modern Ethiopian politics: Its creation, process, and consequences

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Abstract: Ethiopia is located at 3° and 14.8° latitude 33° and 48° longitude in the Eastern part of Africa that commonly refers as the Horn of Africa, bordering Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, and the Sudan Republic. After the country’s current constitution was declared in 1995, the country followed the ethnic-based federalism path. Primarily, this research aims to study when and how ethnic-based political activities started in the country’s modern political history. Furthermore, the expansion and consequences of ethnicized politics in the country will be addressed in this research. Primary sources like interviews with eyewitnesses, official reports from different organizations, and others were used in this research. Apart from primary sources, secondary sources mainly researched books used. In this country, ethnic-based political activities functioned for half a century and several achievements were scored as a result of this system. On the other side, the total of several pitfalls including mismanagement of ethnic diversity, the ethnic-based political activities transformed ethnic tensions into ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, on one hand, or the other, ethnic-based political activities kidnapped the democratization processes of the country.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENTS
Ethiopia used ethnic-based federalism after its constitution in 1995. On one hand, dividing member states of the republic ethnically bring development for the people. However, from then on identity/ethnic tension and conflicts were common in the republic. The civil war that started in early November 2021 is one of the consequences of ethnic-based federalism. Even if the central government stated that it was just “Enforcements of Law”, the destructiveness of the conflict witnessed that it was not only “Enforcements of Law” but rather more than it. The commander of the central government army is the 2019 Noble Peace Prize winner Abye Ahmed Ali, which gives the civil war more international attention. This paper will discuss how ethnic identity came to be the unifying ideology in Ethiopian politics. By giving detailed insight for readers on the creation, expansion, consequences, and finally resolution mechanisms for the ethnic-related problems of the country.
1. Introduction

In present-day Ethiopia, several ethnic groups existed with a long coexistence history. Primary and secondary sources witnessed the long coexistence history of the people. Gada (Feyisa, 1998), for several centuries, existed an indigenous democratic system. Burial sites like inAxum (Mordechai, 1980) and Tiya (Soheed, 2007). Rock-hewn churches and monasteries like Lalibela and Debr Damo (Marilyn, 1995). Different types of conflict resolution mechanisms of several ethnic groups are the ultimate evidence of the coexistence history. Furthermore, those ethnic groups implemented several types of state formation in those centuries.

Between the end of “Zemen Metsfnet” ca. 1855 and the delimitation of the modern Ethiopian boundaries in ca. 1900, two major types of polities were exercised. On one hand, three powerful emperors consecutively administrated more than one ethnic group. On the other hand, there were autonomous chiefdoms, kingdoms either based on a single ethnic group or in more existed. However, the growing power of Emperor Menilik II swallowed their sovereignty and formed a unitary state (Guluma, 1996; Kofi Darkwah, 1975). The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the consolidation of the political power of the unitary state and inversely to the former autonomies’ polities. After the unitary state consolidates its power, few individuals dominated the highest political power of the modern state. Nevertheless, it is illogical to generalize the unifying tool or ideology of all the economic and political elites of the newly formed state were ethnicity or language; rather it was a flip-flop. The highest governmental posts were held by individuals from different ethnic groups. Until the 1970s, both the ruling group and the opposing camp did not start ethnic-based political activities.

Terms like ethnic group, nation, nationalities, and peoples are some that have not one internationally accepted definition. As the objectives of this research did not include analyzing the concepts, I will use the description of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution of 1995. The FDRE constitution stated as follows:

A “Nation, Nationality or People” for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory.

2. The process of ethnicism in Ethiopian politics from the 1970s to 1991

The modern politics of Ethiopia started during the highest stage of the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) of the late 1960s and the early 1970s. In the heart of the then ESM, economic inequalities and maladministration took the strongest reasons for opposition to the emperor’s administration (Bahru, 2014; Fekre Selassie, 2014; Michael, 1979). Worldwide independence movements against colonialism and the human rights movements in Northern America advanced the ESM, which became the nucleus for the first modern political parties in the country (Biruk, 2019). After the unsuccessful Coup of 1960, the opposition led by the militant students reached its peak in the February Revolution of 1974 and finalized its first episode when the Derg replaced the Emperor in September 1974 by creating Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC).

The coming of new political ideologies with their several thoughts is one of the strongest reasons that made the end of the 1960s and early 1970s beginning of the Ethiopian modern politics. Socialism and communism came to be introduced and expanded in this era with thoughts like Leninism, Maoism, and the like. As ESM was dominated by socialist and communist thought, the questions of nationalities in the then Yugoslavia and United Socialist Soviet Republic were not new for ESM. Even if organizing through ethnic identity for armed struggles against the emperors’
administrations started before the popular article by Walelegn Mekonen entitled “The question of nationalities”, the article revolutionized the role of ethnic identity in the politics of the country.

As far as identity was concerned, it is possible to group the newly formed political groups into two. Political groups like the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM), Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP), and the likes were multi-ethnic groups and gave small consideration to identity as an organizing principle. While Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Tigre People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF), and the likes gave high emphasis to ethnic identity and used ethnic identity as the primary organizing principle. To some extent, organizing through ethnic identity may indicate the development of the political consciousness of the groups to fight for the rights of those ethnic groups.

2.1. Political parties that used ideology as the primary unifying principle

Albeit EPRP declared its program in August 1975, the initial steps that led to the birth of the party were earlier than the February uprising of Ethiopia (Yohannes, 1991). From abroad, the Algiers Group led by Brhanmeskel Reda and from home, several study groups including Abyot led by Getachew Maru formed the nucleus of the party. As its name indicated, EPRP was one of the multi-nationalist political parties that declared its existence after the revolution. Until the party’s existence in the central politics of the country came to shrink in 1977, it had a great influence on the socio-politics of the country. The party is remembered for its policies like “Provisional Peoples Government now” and “urban-armed struggle”.

AESM declared its program in April 1976, but the seeds of the party existed before the revolution (Yohannes, 1991). Haile Feda and Negde Gobze were some of the top officials of the party (Amare, 2018). “Critical Support” to Derg was one of the moves of AESM that created a political alliance between Derg and AESM. As with EPRP, AESM was a multi-nationalist and socialist party of the time. Before the then military government removed the multi-ethnic political parties from the arena, they bring several advancements to the politics of the country (Merera, 2006). Behind most of the great moves of the military government, there were the ideas of two political parties, including the nationalization of rural and urban land proclamists and others.

Internal conflicting ideas, the idea of urban struggle, and other related issues clothed the final chapter of EPRP’s strength in Ethiopian politics. AESMs’ idea of “Critical Support” was the greatest card that supports Derg, the beneficiary of the idea decided the fate of the idea’s initiator. Derg sweeps away AESM. Here, it does not mean that the above-mentioned ideas were the only reasons for the downfall of EPRP and AESM, their internal problem was also influential. Hiwot Tefera (2012), a former member of EPRP, describes her thoughts on the failures of the then-popular political parties as follows:

EPRP, Meison [AESM], Woz League and Malerid fell one by one like ‘Autumn leaves’. They swore by Marx but were unable to sort out their trivial differences and work together. Their behavior and action caused bedlam in their respective organizations. In the process, they helped the Derg feast upon their corpses and have power all to itself. They paid the ultimate price for their intolerance, rigidity and miscalculation.

In a country like Ethiopia, characterized by a junior western model of political activities, under-development, and ethnic diversities—identities may last longer than ideas in politics. Identities like in religion and ethnicity could be alive for years than ideas like “Peoples Provisional Government” and “Critical Support”. In the process of creating new ideas, paradoxical ideas could generate and led to failures. Yesterday’s best idea could perish today. Today’s holiest perspective of a group; tomorrow, it might be considered the evilest perspective by the same group. Here, it does not mean that identities are eternal in Ethiopian politics they may perish too. However, identities last long than ideas in the politics of Ethiopia.
2.2. Political parties that used identity as the primary unifying principle

When the multi-ethnic political groups lost their ground in the politics of the country, the armed mono-ethnic political party’s time to shine came. By its nature, ethnic identity connected individuals of the same ethnic group, and the primary process of recruiting members became easy for the ethnic-based political groups. When the central government mulish character added with neglecting an equal share of power, those groups became more popular without decisive propaganda. The moves of the government to solve the clashes with mono-ethnic groups “solutions from the gun mouth” convey massive support for the mono-ethnic groups.

TPLF was one of the fronts that used identity as a primary organizing element. Youngsters in Tigray province formed it in February 1975. As its name indicated, this front represented Tigre, one of the ethnic groups of the country. “They framed their struggle within the Leninist rhetoric of self-determination up to and including secession that had become the creed of the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Zwede, 1991).” This front had used both protracted and guerrilla warfare tactics against the government. Even though this front was established in February of 1975, the government started to feel the hardest punch of the front after the mid of 1980s (Gebru, 2009; John, 1997). TPLF allied with other identity-based fronts and formed Ethiopian People’s Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF); however, the tiger share of EPDRF was controlled by TPLF (Berhe, 2008; Theodore, 1999). It would be more realistic and practical speaking to mention TPLF than EPDRF in the narration of the country’s history. The battles of Shire, Mekelle, Debretabor, which the Front won; demoralized the central government army badly and on the other side boosted the Front. May 1991 marked the end of the armed struggle; victory was with TPLF and led to the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia.

EPLF, which administrated Eritrea after 1991 and led the secession in 1995, could state as another front that formed based on identity in the third quarter of the twentieth century. EPLF represented more than one ethnic group; it would be more realistic to state that it represented one “nation”. It represented the Eritrean nation, with the existence of ethnic groups like Afar, Tigre, Tigrinya, Bilen, Saho, and others (Martin, 2016). In other terms, EPLF on one side and TPLF on the other side formed on the bases of identity, but while the former represented more than one ethnic group and made the identity basement a little bit macro level than the TPLF who represented a single ethnic group. The greatest victory of EPLF first at Nakfa and then at Afa bet, Massawa, paved the road to total victory and controlled the capital city Asmara in May 1991 (Paul, 2001).

The basic difference between both types of political groups was concerning membership. Political parties like EPRP, AESM, Revolutionary Flame (RF), and others used ideas as the primary unifying element in their party’s membership criteria. In other terms, the above-mentioned groups used ideas like political ideology, the interpretation of the country’s situation, the role of the soldiers in the country’s administration, and other ideas as the primary element in recruiting members. Individuals who supported the idea of the formation of the “Provisional Peoples Government” used to be either members or sympathizers of the EPRP. Individuals who believed that the military government needs “critical support” became either members or sympathizers of AESM. The same was true for other political parties like Woz League, Ethiopian Communist Party, and others. On the other side political parties, fronts, or groups like OLF, EPLF, TPLF, and others used identity as their primary parameters to recruit members. EPLF demanded Eritrean identity primarily to recruit its members; the ideology, interpretations of the country’s situations, the role of the soldiers in the country’s administration, and others came second. Ayalew Yemam: who was an active participant of ESM in the early 1970s, wrote about what he saw in military camps of the Eritrean Liberation Front in 1975 concerning membership

… in the evening hours, I heard a talk that some Ethiopians were being expelled from the organization because of their nationality…. The organizational program of ELF states that no person of foreign origin can participate in the liberation front. Most of the young people, who were trained for six months like the rest of their Eritrean brothers and sisters, were from
Ethiopian fathers and Eritrean mothers. Thus, the organization would not accept children from Ethiopian fathers.

Ethnic identity in the mono-ethnic groups of the time goes deep. OLF, TPLF, and other fronts were also done the same as EPLF concerning the primary organizing principle.

The basic strategic difference between the political party that used ideology as a primary unifying principle and the political group that used identity as a primary unifying principle was a matter of sequence. The groups that used identity advocated that if every ethnic group fought for its “freedom” and achieved it, it would create a free democratic multi-ethnic state. On the other side, the other group believed that fighting together for the entire ethnic group and achieving it would grant freedom to every ethnic group. Technically speaking the one group says that “let’s work for the entire pizza and in its process, every single slice of the pizza will get its freedom”, while the other groups claimed, “Every single slice must fight for their freedom and in its final stage the entire pizza will grant freedom”. Finally, in May 1991 TPLF controlled the capital city of the country, EPLF also controlled the Eritrean province capital in the same year and marked the end of decades of civil war.

Bahru Zewde put one remark concerning ethno-nationalist in his book entitled *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855–1991* which was published in 1991, i.e. the same year that the ethno-nationalist forces control the politics of the country. He stated that

The collapse of the multi-ethnic opposition to the Darg in 1976 – 1977 brought ethno-nationalist opposition to the forefront. The elites of the oppressed and marginalized nationalities vigorously pushed the ethno-nationalist agenda both as an effective recipe of mobilization and as a sure guarantee of what they considered to be their legitimate share of scarce resources. Yet, the ethno-nationalist opposition had its own inherent tensions – tensions that were to come to the fore after victory in 1991.

3. The process of ethnicism in Ethiopian politics after 1991

Ethnicizing the politics of Ethiopia grew in the 1970s and 1980s and became an adult when firstly those ethnic-based military fronts won the war in 1991. Finally, when the states of the republic were divided ethnically, it became full-grown, passes the trench of the politics, and came to dictate the socio-economic activities of the country. As TPLF was the influential Front of EPDRF during the early days of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, it has choices on the table that change the course of the country’s politics. The type of federalism that the country could follow and the future coming nature of political parties were some of the prominent choices that the Front had. It had the choices of territorial-based or ethnic-based federalism, continuing the mono-ethnic political party, or forming the multi-ethnic political party system. For its reasons, TPLF has chosen to continue the mono-ethnic political party’s existence and divide the states of the republic through identity.

It was true that during the fighting for freedom that took more than a decade, an ethnic-based policy was fruitful. However what about in the process of democratization and development? The ultimate questions are the following: Is it possible to use a similar gun for totally unrelated targets? Do the grassroots of the people have advanced consciousness to work for their ethnically divided state and the republic at the same time? In a country with the existence of underdevelopment, diversity, and less modernization, dose ethnicizing the politics could create farm conditions for ethnic extremism or not?

3.1. Ethnicism under the structures of the states

In 1995, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia’s constitution declared that the country’s administrations were divided into nine states. The primary element that was used to form the states of the republic was ethnicity or identity. In addition to the states of the republic, zones of the states, Wordas of the zones, and Kebeles of the Wordas were also divided ethnically. People
with unrelated geographical settlements, different ways of life, and other prominent differences are grouped as one state. Those states of the republic were the following:

1. The State of Tigray
2. The State of Afar
3. The State of Amhara
4. The State of Oromia
5. The State of Somalia
6. The State of Benishangul Gumuz
7. The State of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples
8. The State of Gambella Peoples
9. The State of Hararri Peoples

Under the state of Tigray, ethnic groups like Kunama, Erab, Raya, and others exist, but the ethnic group called Tigrea dominated the state accounting for more than 70% of the state population. The State of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples was the most diverse in terms of ethnic group composition, out of 81 ethnic groups in the country 56 ethnic groups exist in this state. Unlike the State of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples, the states of Afar and Somalia were less diverse in ethnic group composition. Inequalities in different parameters were also the other characteristics of the newly formed regional states of the republic. Some states of the republic were small in territory and population. More than half of the country’s population came from two states, i.e. the Sates of Amhara and Oromia. Some states were poor in their skilled manpower, infrastructures, and other parameters than the rest of the states.

In the early days of the formation of the states of the republic, “which ethnic group should be a state of the republic” or “which ethnic groups should be together in a single state” were some of the prominent issues that rose disagreement. For one ethnic group, either being a member state of the republic alone or being with other ethnic groups in a state creates fundamental socio-economic and political differences. In the existence of several ethnic groups in a single state, the political power and economic advantages were shared by all ethnic groups, which challenged the fast economic and political power consolidation for a single ethnic group. On the other hand, in a less ethnically diversified state, preserving the identity and developing the culture of that ethnic group will be easier with all political and economic strength.

Due to the above-stated situation, political elites of several ethnic groups struggled for their ethnic group detachment from other ethnic groups and led their ethnic group one step up on the division of power. Furthermore, the structures of the states forced elites of several ethnic groups to make analyses under the perspective of ethnicity; for individual advantages, the wellbeing of their ethnic group, and other related issues. In the past years, the demand for administration detachment from other ethnic groups was rampant and became a threat to the expected integration as a nation.

### 3.2. Ethnicism under the constitution

On August 21 of 1995, the FDRE constitution came into effect. With 11 chapters and 106 articles, the FDRE constitution promised human and democratic rights. The ratification process was more inclusive, representatives from several ethnic groups of the country participated besides international organization assistance. The constitution answered the question of ethnic groups like self-administration and the likes that were one of the burning issues starting from ESM (Merera, 2006).

In the other epoch, the detachment process of the ethnic groups used to become a burning issue. From time to time, the expected necessary integration process of diverse ethnic groups is used to replace by the process of detachment. In the modern world, the process of integration of
diverse groups in a nation needs years. Like social acts, the acts under the legal framework have a great role to determine the diverse group integration in a single nation or not. Here, it is unexpected for a single constitution to bring all the necessary integration levels for diverse groups in a single nation; but, at least, it should not have to be the means for detachment.

Even if the constitution gives the right to living in any part of the republic, the applicability of this right was in question. No matter how many years one lives or was born in that state, if that individual ethnic background was from another state, that individual will never treat equally with natives of the state. The legal procedures excluded that individual from several benefits, like if the individual were not from the local ethnic group and unable to communicate through the local language, that individual will never get governmental jobs even if he/she fulfilled the professional requirements to that post. As far as excluding the newcomers created more benefits, extremely ethnicized tactics planned by lower officials of the government came to exist. Structurally designed techniques of the individuals to the newcomers became violent from theoretical exclusion. It is separating individuals from their religion, and the custom of their ethnic group by making them rude and violent. Due to several reasons like those stated above and others, individuals came to focus only on their ethnic group.

People became obsessed to focus only on their state in the expenses of the country. A new generation came to evolve that loved their state and give their lives to it at the expense of the republic. People that concerned for their country became hard to find. The new generation came to worship their state; nearly forgetting the country flag, national anthem, and other elements that bond all the ethnic groups of the republic. When the constitution gives one hidden power to the states added to the above-stated situation, the federal government’s power became weekend and the regional states’ power reversely developed.

“Reserved power” is one of the controversial elements that advanced the power of the state from time to time and inversely to the republic. Article 51 of the constitution allocated the highest power to the federal government, but the power was limited. On the other hand, the constitution put the power and functions of the states in article 52 sub-article 2. However, unlike the common superiority of the federal government over states, article 52 sub-article 1 stated, “All powers not given expressly to the Federal Government alone, or concurrently to the Federal Government and the States are reserved to the States”. In other terms, in the existence of situations not stated in the constitution, the states will have the highest authority. In one way or another, giving the republics reserve power to the states led the states to be stronger than the republic from time to time. When the above-stated constitutional gap i.e. reserved power met with the inequalities of the state, it led to some states using the reserved power more effectively than other states. This advanced the state-level detachments of the ethnic group into republic-level detachments of the states. When the structures of the states that forced individuals to make most of their analyses ethnically and crated threat to the expected integration as a nation added with unnecessary ethnic concentration oddity of the constitution, the republic came to suffer from etched ethnic tensions.

3.3. Ethnicism under political parties

In the first years of EPDRF in the office, its contributions to the rising number of ethnic-based political parties were great (Sarah, 1994). The front has consisted of four political groups, which include TPLF, Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO), and Southern Ethiopia People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The four members of EPDRF originated from four states known for their strong sphere of influence in the economy and politics of the republic. The absence of political parties from the remaining five states of the republic in the coalition of EPDRF created concern about the legitimacy of the Front as the ruling party. To fill this gap EPDRF “created” and/or “affiliated with” five parties in the remaining five states of the republic (Jon & Mesfin, 2018). Those parties were the Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP), Somali People’s Democratic
Party (SPDP), Gambello People’s Democratic Party (GPDP), and Benishangul Gumuz People’s Democratic Unity Front (BGPDUF), and Harari National League (HNL).

All members of the EPDRF and “EPDRF affiliated” parties in one way or another clothed their membership for individuals from other than their ethnic group. Technically speaking, the probability of OPDO having members from other ethnic groups than Oromo is fictional. By following the footsteps of EPDRF’s member parties, several political parties emerged based on ethnicity in the politics of the republic. On the other side, several weak multi-ethnic political parties joined the political arena of the republic. Either by the weakness of the opposing political parties or by the influences of the ruling coalition, both types of oppositional parties were trounced by EPDRF in the first two national elections.

After the elimination of the popular parties that originated from the ESM, i.e. AESM and EPRP; the attentiveness of the youngster in the politics of the country, mainly from the urban centers, were demolished for decades. However, during the third national election of the republic, one of the multi-ethnic coalitions, i.e. Coalition for Union and Democracy (CUD) came, and the decades lost political attentiveness of youngsters in the major cities of the country upraised again. Even if the existence of both CUD in the political arena and the political attentiveness of youngsters in the urban centers were short-lived, its lessons for the political parties and peoples of the republic were paramount. Albeit in the case of the third national election, the first and the last two elections of the republic were dominated by both EPDRF as a ruling coalition and ethnic-based political parties in the camp of the oppositional parties.

Starting from the aftermath of the fifth national election of the republic, ethnic-based political parties outnumbered multi-ethnic parties. When EPDRF dissolved and change its nature to a multi-ethnic political party by the name of Prosperity Party in 2018; out of 109 political parties registered by the Ethiopian National Election board, 76 of them were organized through ethnicity. Nearly, all ethnic groups of the country had at least one political party by its name. Ethnic tensions, which seeds came up after the ethnicized structures of the states and were advanced by the constitution, got all the prefaces to create ethnic-related conflicts after ethnicized political parties conquered the political arena of the republic with all their drawbacks.

3.4. Ethnicism under economical activities
After the structures of the states and the constitution shaped the politics to breathe through ethnicity and prefaces to create ethnic tensions, the economic activities of the republic shifted its priority operating system from scientific system to ethnic affiliation. The financial institutions like banks prioritized ethnic identity over the profitability of the project to grant giant loans to their customers. Sharing financial companies with ethnic boundary banners in their hand found, like Oromia Cooperation Bank, Oromia International Bank, Debubu Global bank, Amhara Bank, and the likes. It used to hire its employees from their ethnic group, furthermore, most of its branch offices were in the area of a specific ethnic group.

Apart from the profitable organization, non-profitable organizations that aimed to create a bitter world for the needy people started to organize based on ethnicity. Gurage lemat mahaber (Gurage Development Association), Amhara lemat mahaber (Amhara Development Association), Tigray lemat mahaber (Tigray Development Association). These and other related NGOs should prioritize the need for assistance than ethnic affiliations; however, they prioritized ethnicity. Ethnic conflicts, which got all the necessary prefaces after the drawbacks of the ethnicized structures of the states, constitution, and political parties; became ready to make any whack in the republic after the economic activities functioned ethnically.

3.5. Ethnicism under the social media
During this time, social media became influential in most aspects of humankind. As social media are fast to transfer information and connect people without physical vicinity, they became suitable
means to transfer any ideas from one corner of the world to another. Like the rest of the world, social media showed its both sides for Ethiopians. It benefited the republic in several ways in research, education, health, and other sectors. Albeit its benefits, it also gave hard punches.

Individuals understand that their personal economic and political advantages rest on their ethnic group’s political strengths. Political elites or ethnic entrepreneurs worked extremely to grant their ethnic group one step up in the government structures, starting from Kebele to the state of the republic. To get a good sum of support from their ethnic group members for their grand plan, the political elites needed the development of the “political consciousness of the grassroots”. Nowadays, the greatest path that connected the political elites with the grassroots to create all the necessary “political consciousness” was via social media. It was in this stage that, like government structures, political parties, economical activities, and the likes, social media with hundreds of thousands of followers breathe through ethnic affiliation. As giving logical justification and systematic analyses need more effort and creating “resentment” bring “political attentiveness” easily, most of those politically related posts on social media were more of resentment. Francis Fukuyama describes the power of resentment as follows:

In a wide variety of cases, a political leaders has mobilized followers around the perception that the group’s dignity had been affronted, disparaged, or otherwise disregarded. This resentment engenders demands for public recognition of the dignity of the group in question. A humiliated group seeking restitution of its dignity carries far more emotional weight than people simply pursuing their economic advantage.

In the case of Ethiopia, the shorts and safest way of creating resentment is through history. The history of the country during the period of Emperor Menilik II had several interpretations by historians.7 The existence of paradoxical perspectives by historians in the reconstruction of the country’s history gives fertile ground for those political elites to create resentment on social media. The anonymous nature of most of the administrators of the social media pages made the situation bad to worse. Ethnic conflicts that had a stronghold and the catalyst role in the political conflicts of the republic changed to both ethnic extremism problems and means of political conflicts after the social media was dominated by the unnecessary ethnic considerations.

4. Consequences
Ethnicism, by the safeguarding of its holy father TPLF, functioned in the legal structures of the republic for more than two decades. As every system has its success and failures with different degrees, several achievements are scored due to this system. Relatively to their near past, ethnic groups were granted more full equality than in the past; furthermore, they got fertile ground for the advancement of their culture. One of the greatest questions, i.e. the question of self-administration also answered to some degree. Infrastructural developments, in the roads and health sectors, were great. Primary education expanded nearly in all peripheries of the republic; even if the concern of quality rose, secondary and tertiary education expanded with good coverage. The republic held five national elections, which was a good move for a beginner of the multi-party system for the first time; nonetheless, the expected development of the democratic culture of the political arena did not show progress from one election to the next.

As stated above, it is a very horrific judgment to omit the positive impacts that the ethnicisation of politics brought to the republic. On the other side, starting from the formation of this system problems and conflicts were happening in the country, most importantly, ethnic-related problems and conflicts. To grasp the exact negative consequences, I will discuss the problems by dividing them into physical and psychological consequences.

4.1. Physical consequences
Within the small period, the fashion of ethnicism that the government accepted for politics expanded its boundaries and controlled the socio-economic activities of the country. It was exactly
in this stage that fashion became the catalyst in the political conflicts of the republic, later its role as a catalyst to the opposition transformed into a fundamental reason for the conflicts. The theoretical consequences that forced individuals and ethnic groups to focus only on themselves make an impact on the republic when the act of implementation started. Political elites for the seek of their ethnic group and individuals for themselves, started the act, the act that could also be the beginning of the ending for the existence of a republic too.

The special police that all states of the republic had become one of the greatest fairs for the peace of the republic. These forces being fully militarized and changing their nature from the police force to the military competed with the Ethiopian National Defense Force. These military wings, unlike the common concepts of federalism, their sympathy for their states with all the differences and problems could open the final door for the devastating ethnic conflicts

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, due to their origin being from other states, several thousand people were banished from the area where they lived for several years and accumulated wealth. The October 2019 report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated the situation of the country as follows:

Ethiopia faces significant internal displacement. In 2018, Ethiopia recorded the third highest number of new displacements worldwide, with 3,191,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). A significant portion of these displacements are conflict-induced, largely related to ethnic and border-based disputes. Old tensions such as the contestation of the Oromia-Somali regional border which first flared up in 2017 continue to persist, while new conflicts have also emerged.¹⁰

In the September 2020 report of IOM, 1.8 million people were internally displaced. “The primary cause of the displacement: conflict, which has resulted in 1,233,557 IDPs [internally displaced persons]. The second highest cause: drought, which displaced 351,062 IDPs, followed by seasonal floods (displacing 104,696 IDPs) and flash floods (50,093).”¹¹ Due to several reasons like the absence of reliable media, the absence of strong nationwide native humanitarian organizations, and most importantly the demand of the government to cover the killings and massacres: the exact number of humans lost by the ethnic conflicts in the republic became mysterious.

During the final stage of this research was conducted, the “war” or “military operation to the enforcement of the law” broke out between the Tigray Regional State and the Federal Government counting its 400 days. This “war” witnessed how far the ethnicism of politics goes in the country. Let alone while the military confrontation is still active, even during the aftermath it, would be difficult to get the exact consequences. Furthermore, the “war” needs to study alone as its nature of sophistication. However, the worldwide media revealed the hidden savagery behind the “war”.

4.2. Psychological consequences
Unlike the physical consequences, psychological consequences used to become rampant in the largest cities of the country. Starting from micro levels, like in day-to-day activities of the people, to decades-old friendships affected. Colleagues for years in the same organization started to suspect each other. Individuals who worked outside of their ethnic group administration area were treated as a stranger and neglected from most of the benefits that belonged to him/her. Moving to their ethnic group administration area and finding a job became the greatest achievement that an individual could achieve in his life in the current Ethiopian situation.¹²

The psychological consequence even goes to marriage. In the last century’s history of the country, political marriages were common. Apart from the political elites of the time, marriages used to arrange by neighborhood ethnic groups. Furthermore, the recent social history of the communities witnessed the common trend of marriages from different ethnic groups. This trend was more common in urban centers and geographically bordered ethnic groups of the country.
However, in the last decades, things used to change dramatically. Decades ago, formed marriages used to end due to ethnic background differences. The following quote taken from the interview shows the exact situation on the ground.

Our love story started when we were at Jimma Teaching College in 1995. I was born in Mahale Meda in the then Shewa Provence from Amhara ethnic group. Bogale [her husband] was born in Metu city in the then Illububur province from an Oromo ethnic group members’ family. After our graduation, our love relationship ended up in marriage. Our wedding ceremony was unique; it was in Mahale Meda and Metu. My parents and relatives welcomed our union with great happiness; this was also the feelings of my husband’s family. Even Lord blessed our union with three baby boys.

Things used to change after 2015, our boys were in their teenage. Oromo and Amhara ethnic conflicts become rampant in our city. What is sure of it is that Bogale still loves me and so do I. However, in June 2018 our love story ended, and divorce becomes our fate. I spend the nearly the last three decades in Metu city. feel like I belong to Metu than my birthplace. I spend the last two years in a real dilemma either to leave Metu or not. However, the situation was getting worse. After two years of dilemma, I left Metu in June 2020. I left my friends, colleagues, and neighbors; our relationship of nearly three decades ended up in deep love. What makes my life bad is that, here in my birthplace, my children used to treat me as a foreigner. I don’t think that our problem will solve in easy ways. It will be going to cost more than what we lost.

The above-stated badly ended marriage was one of the several divorced marriages due to ethnic extremisms in the republic. I raise its impact on the marriage for a good understanding of how the ethnic extremisms reached, but it was not only limited to marriage. In one way or another, all the social life of the people of the republic was affected by it.

5. Conclusion
The year 1991 marked the victory of those ethnic-based groups mainly through military confrontation with the then government. Furthermore, the year 1991 marked the success of ethnicism in the politics of the country and also took it one step-up when the new government implemented ethnic (identity)-based federalism in the country by formulating the new constitution in 1995. As every system has its success and failure to a different degree, ethnicism functioned in the country for more than two decades, and several achievements were scored due to this system. However, starting from its formation, problems were obvious in the country. Apart from this, in the past few years, the problems, protests, unrest, and the like affected every division in the country. By creating ethnic tensions and conflicts, the system kidnapped the promising democratization process of the country. As the very existence of the republic is in danger, the country must ban the role of ethnicity in the politics of the country. According to the research, two types of recommendations could solve the problems that came after the ethnicization of the country’s politics, i.e. short-term solutions and long-term solutions.

5.1. Short-term solutions
The door that was opened by the ethnic-politics, after all the progress and changes of its nature created ethnic extremisms and affected the republic decisively. To control the problem, the very first move should be through a change in the door that became the means of the problem. As the root of the ethnic politics passed the trenches of the politics and controlled the socio-economic life of the people, it will be impossible to remove the ethnic politics from the republic in a day even if they with a decree to abolishment it. Concerning governmental bodies with the collaboration of political parties, civil organizations and others must clear the path for political parties to come up with ideas multi-ethnic ideas in the heart of their political party. If the ruling front made the move firstly, the probability of opposing parties changing into multi-ethnic political nature could be great.

Articles 104 and 105 of the constitution deal with the amendments of the constitution; showing that through time, things may change and amendments of the constitution will be another choice
for the republic. Amendments of the constitution concerning settling the burning issues of the detachments of the ethnic groups were needed. Financial institutions, aiding organizations that either directly or indirectly operated by targeting a single ethnic group need to revisit their policies and actions. The central government needs to investigate to minimize systematic segregation and take legal action to reduce it. Social media needs a well-structured legal framework, and the concerning body under the government office needs to control the hate speech and ethnic conflicting ideas. Relatively, the above-stated solutions could solve the problems in a short period.

5.2. Long-term solutions
In the process of solving the problem, understanding the very nature of the problem could be the first great move towards the solution. In this case, for the problems that are happening concerning ethnic extremisms, one should have to understand the ethnic groups’ nature. Their history, culture, and conflict resolution mechanisms need to be studied and advanced with the current world trends. One should give high attention to the development of the cultures of the ethnic groups. As the government gives high attention to modernization and technology, the traditions of the ethnic groups needed the same. Furthermore, the historiography of the country needs a new consensus; here the role of the government could be great.

Work highly in the expansion of quality education in the country, and create the communities who will be ready to believe logical justified ideas could solve problems. All the concerning bodies must work hard in letting open the door of interaction to all ethnic groups of the republic. Authorizing the education policy and other optional policies of the republic to create multilingual students will be valuable. Make Zones in every state, to direct members of the republic will solve several problems including unnecessary ethnic concentration. Furthermore, in the political sphere, organizing by ethnicity to any form of organization must ban. Educated elites should cooperate with the politicians to formulate political parties with optional ideas for the citizens than stacking solely to identity.

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Acronyms
All Ethiopian Socialist Movement – AESM, Coalition for Union and Democracy – CUD, Eritrean People’s Liberation Front – EPLF, Ethiopian People’s Democratic Revolutionary Front – EPRDF, Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party – ERP, Ethiopian Student Movement – ESM, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia – FDRE, Internal Displaced People – IDP, Oromo Liberation Front – OLF, Oromo People’s Democratic Organization – OPDO, Peoples Provisional Government – PPG, Provisional Military Administrative Council – PMAC, Tigray Peoples Liberation Front – TPLF

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Notes
1. On 14 December 1960, while Emperor Haile Selassie was an official visit to Brazil. At home, the coup was started by the leaders of the Imperial Bodyguard, one of the army division of the country. The architects of the coup stated that the backwardness of the country, mainly in politics and economy were their primary motive to plan and conduct the coup. Due to several reasons, on 17 December the forces that support the emperor had control the situation and marked the termination of the coup. However, the attempted coup became the background for opposition to ESM until the revolution.
2. The world “Derg” is a Geez word that means a committee. Due to the power vacuum after the 1974 February Revolution: noncommissioned officers set a committee or Derg, acted like a negotiator between the demands of the revolution and the emperor’s administration, finally kidnap the revolution and bring seventeen years of tyranny in the country.
3. Before this period the politics of the country was accelerated with traditional means of driving thoughts, however, after this period the modern political thoughts were introduced.
4. The chain of division of power in the republic from top to bottom looks like Republic—States—Zones—Wards—Kebeles. In some cases Special Zone, Wards or Kebele formed due to various reasons.
5. Documents about guideline of the basic requirements that must be fulfilled by the political parties that registered in National Election Board of Ethiopia, https://www.nebe.org.et/pdf/Board-Compliance-Review%20-Regional-Parties.pdf and https://www.nebe.org.et/pdf/Board-Compliance-Review-National-Parties.pdf
6. Interview with two employees of a bank that founded in the bases of ethnic group.
7. Emperor Menelik II military expedition ca. 1880s, towards independent peoples is and probably will be very debatable issue for historians. There are mainly two perspectives concerning Menelik’s military expedition to those peoples. These are “reunification or unification” and “colonization”. Those historians whom supporter of “reunification or unification” justified that the Emperor reunified the country after it was dispersed into different autonomous provinces in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The historians under the second perspective “colonization” justified the similarities of the Emperor’s expedition to the independent people and the Europe colonial experience to the independent African countries were similar.

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