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ABSTRACT

After the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia established a democratic federal state that gave full recognition to ethnic autonomy within a unitary state. Its new Constitution created ethnic-based territorial units as a reaction to some long-standing historical conflicts. Thus, it provides all the constitutional and democratic principles to each ethnic group that had not before. However, it's a socialist federation that grants the right of secession for each ethnic group. In common with other countries where such federations were introduced, it has created new inter-regional conflicts, aggravated existing conflicts, and endangered state unity.

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Ethnic Federalism and Inter-Regional Conflicts in Ethiopia. The Case of the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional States

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ABSTRACT

After the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia established a democratic federal state that gave full recognition to ethnic autonomy within a unitary state. Its new Constitution created ethnic-based territorial units as a reaction to some long-standing historical conflicts. Thus, it provides all the constitutional and democratic principles to each ethnic group that had not before. However, it's a socialist federation that grants the right of secession for each ethnic group. In common with other countries where such federations were introduced, it has created new inter-regional conflicts, aggravated existing conflicts, and endangered state unity. Thus, following this federal experiment, Ethiopia has faced enormous challenges. Therefore, through deploying empirical and qualitative case methods, this study investigated and critically examined the causes, trends, impacts of federalism's design in Ethiopia in general and particularly in the Amhara regional state. In the end, it provides mechanisms of inter-ethnic conflicts.

Keywords: multicultural–federalism; interregional; conflict; EPRDF; ethiopia.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The period 1991 was when the Soviet Union federation and the Derg Socialist regime failed internationally and domestically. However, following this dead Marxist-Leninist socialist ideological perspective, EPRDF took power in

Ethiopia (Adejumobi, 2007:138). Subsequently, TPLF/EPRDF established the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia/ FDRE's Constitution in 1995 (Abebaw, 2013:22). Alongside, the Ethiopian federation is an ethnic groups' federation, in which the regional states' boundaries are demarcated along ethnic lines (Zemelak, 2014:93). Accordingly, Article 8 of the FDRE Constitution gives the sovereign power to "nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia (Aalen, 2002:54-55).

Under Article (39) of the FDRE Constitution, the sovereign power states that "Every Nation, Nationality, and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession". This right is recognized to maintain unity in diversity in such a way through the respect for ethnic diversity along with Ethiopian national identity (Alexander, 2019:18-19). Furthermore, article 39 (3) also allows each ethnic group to have the right of self-administration and equitable representation at both the regional and federal levels of government (Siraw, 2015:50).

Such a federal political community is set up to establish lasting peace, security, and democracy; to respond to the long-standing national question's; to promote equal rights and benefits of ethnic groups; and to respond to the challenge of ethnonational conflicts that stressed the old Ethiopian state or to serve as a panacea for the old and emerging inter and intra-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia's future (Tsegaye, 2010b:53).

However, the Ethiopian federal arrangement has generated new localized conflicts instead of solving the old problems. It forces citizens to

favour their identity rather than get united (Assefa, 2009:19). The existing difficulties reinforce undemocratic political mobilization based on ethnic group protection, leading to discrimination based on identity and ethnicity. Thus, it has generated inter-regional ethnic conflicts and produced conflicting-induced displacement and deaths. In doing so, the implication of such behaviors has led to the politics of intolerance and fear, the politics of resentment and the politics of hate as seen in today's Ethiopia (Asnake, 2009:6).

This study seeks to investigate the theoretical frameworks of federalism in managing ethnic conflicts. Then, it described the causes and impacts of federalism on inter-regional disputes in the country. Next, it critically examined the causes, consequences, and managing aspects of inter-ethnic conflicts in the Amhara regional state. In the end, conclusions and recommendations for prospects.

The research method of this study used both discourse analyses and qualitative case studies. The discourse analysis includes various scientific publications (research papers and articles) and books. The qualitative case study was collected using key informant interviews and focus group discussions/FGDs based on semi-structured and open-ended questions. Therefore, the study will select a limited number of informants strategically, whose in-depth information will offer an insight into the impacts of ethnic federalism in inter-regional ethnic conflicts and mechanisms to resolve disputes in the study region. The sample respondents were selected from the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions local civilian population, government and party officials. The discussion was made with 23 individual interviews and Six FGDs based upon the informants' interests—the data analysis used a narrative case study and thematic analysis conducted to analyze and interpret the data.

II. FEDERALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS MANAGEMENT

Federalism is a valuable mechanism for understanding the causes of ethnic conflict,

managing aspects, and the way how to accommodate diversity in multicultural states (Obi, 2019:17). Accordingly, Olumide (2017:66) categorized theories of federalism into three: Legal-institutional or Legal-constitutional theory, Sociological theory of federalism, and Political/Ideological theory of federalism.

First, the Legal-constitutional theory of federalism recognized the courts' role as an essential aspect of federalism for handling ethnic conflicts. Significantly, this type of federalism is advantageous in many respects to resolve ethnic disputes as it is practiced in the United States, Canada, and Switzerland (Obi, 2019:17; Auclair, 2005:3). Therefore, the legal-constitutional theory focuses more on the legal and jurisdictional aspects to accommodate diversity and resolve conflicts, in which powers are divided between the federal and regional governments (Wheare, 1963:10).

Others argued that judicial federalism had attracted less close attention. For example, the United States Supreme Court has been actively engaged in adjudicating federalism disputes during various American history periods. Still, today, it has been suggested that the primary determinants of the federal balance lie in the political process and that courts play the role of enforcing constitutional baselines (Tariq, Khan, and Rizwan, 2018:403).

Second, the Sociological theory of federalism has given more attention to the essence of social forces underlying the pressures for diversity in federations. The pivotal interactions of social forces with political organizations have given a chance to establish and create a federal political structure to maintain peace and security (Watts, 2008:21). However, this theory lacks clear guidelines, principles, and norms to show a demarcation line between a federal and non-federal society (Burgess, 2006:142-44). It focuses on diversity alone without distinguishing the factors that accommodate various ethnic groups' diverse interests in the existing federal system. Therefore, the sociological approach did not always lead to federalism; instead, it may

create a unitary government of the U.K. and France (Tariq, Khan and Rizwan, 2018:406).

The last theory of federalism is the Political/Ideological theory. Now a day, it has become a solution to a political problem. Hence, it is significant to recognize political motives as a critical instrument to solve federal political systems (Ibid.2018:407). In the first place, such federations exist in Marxist and non-Marxist liberal democratic states (Burges, 2006:144). In Marxist/socialist states, federations established upon ethnic-based territorial arrangement known as multi-ethnic/multi-national federalism. It recognized all the democratic rights and the constitutional principles of separations of powers and the rule of law (Sakwa, 1998:107-117). But it was superficial; actually, there was no formal separation of powers between the three government branches. Real political and policy decisions are made at the party and central government level networks (Ibid. 1998:107-117).

On the other hand, it also grants each ethnic group the right of self-administration, including secession over the cultural, linguistic, and religious matters for the federation's constituent unities (Horowitz, 1985: 601-652). In this view, some argued that the socialist federation was assumed as a cause of conflicts. Such a federation granted the rights of secession to each ethnic group to create their homelands and governed by their ethnic political parties/elites (Yonas, 2013:26-27; Raffas, 2012:144). Thus, ethno-cultural diversity translates into political fragmentation in a diverse society: political claims are refracted through the lens of primordial ethnic identity, and political conflict is synonymous with conflict among ethnocultural groups (Smith, 1995:9). The duplication of national identities within federations pushed political parties into a political conflict between the center and the regions. Therefore, ethnicities are viewed as instrumental identities, organized as means to particular ends (Mohammadzadeh, 2016:159; Roeder, 2009:209). Following this approach, the Soviet and East European communist regimes collapsed in the 1990s (Burges, 2006:144).

In contrast, liberal democratic, multicultural federalism constitutionally recognized ethnic and linguistic diversity and promotes self-rule and shared-rule between the two government forms as fundamental principles (McGarry and O'Leary 2007:180-211). It was established based on a consociational democratic system. It also acknowledges the demand for self-determination and self-government. It stops the idea of secession without fragmenting the state into different segments (Choudhry and Hume, 2010:366). These government forms are applied in the United States, Switzerland, India, and Nigeria (Simon, 2009:245). Then the duality ensuing from unity and diversity is the driving principle for polities that consider federations as institutions forging the two together (Assefa, 2009:118).

Moreover, Kymlicka (2006:97) elucidates that a federation should be arranged upon consociational democratic federalism and mixed-based boundary demarcation to compete with multicultural interests and resolve ethnic conflicts. It accommodates the diverse interests of ethnic groups and the nation-building process. It involves introducing in successful states such as Switzerland. Every citizen defines themselves as Swiss first and expresses their ethnic group as a secondary group identity. The post-Soviet Russia and India are moving towards this form, too (Juhász, 2005:247). Below the study discussed the Ethiopian ethnic federalism's role in managing inter-regional conflicts in the study region.

III. THE DESIGN OF ETHIOPIA'S ETHNIC FEDERALISM: ACCURACIES AND UNCERTAINTIES

After EPRDF came to power in 1991, it established a new FDRE Constitution in 1995. Then the Constitution adopted ethnic-based state formation based on ethno-territorial units and grants for each ethnic group to have the right of self-determination, including secession (Salih, 2018:19; Temesgen 2019:18). The establishment of this ethnic-based federalism design and Constitution was a reaction to the long-standing national question and strong centralized Ethiopia's monarchical governments in the past. As a response, it established a highly

decentralized federal state and ethnic identity as an organizing principle of the state (Semahegn, 2012:170; Vaughan, 2003:169-170). Hence, EPRDF seemed moral enough to treat all ethnic groups as equals; build a democratic society; and construct effective, efficient, and uncorrupt governance systems (Keller, 2002:32).

In contrast, others see the unlimited rights to self-determination and secession as a sign of disintegration for Ethiopia's multi-ethnic society, who have lived together for three millennia (Abebaw, 2013:22). Emetically the NNPs have not sovereign power, the minority groups' rights are not protected, and the Constitution does not allow veto power for the minority representatives within or across political parties. Thus, Ethiopian ethnic federalism's constitutional problem promotes TPLF/EPRDF to follow the undemocratic party's ideological principles and act beyond the Constitution recognized as the land law (Siraw, 2015:52).

Legese expressed that the ethnic federalism by itself divided Ethiopian society through granting constitutional authors for the NNPs of Ethiopia and not we the people of Ethiopia, whereas the U.S. and Germany federal Constitutions that authorize the sovereign power for undivided society, like 'We the People of the United States and the 'German People'. In this circumstance, the socialist federations were trying for a short period but ended when the USSR federations expired (2015:445-46).

Moreover, the 1995 FDRE Constitution makes the nine regions that constitute the federal state based on ethnic groups' territorial autonomy to resolve the old and emerging conflicts (Asnake, 2009:66). This regional arrangement more or less links with the primordial and instrumentalism approach of ethnic groups. Henceforward, both the primordial and instrumentalism aspect of ethnicity has become a cause for current Ethiopia's ethnic group conflicts (Alemu, 2018:43; Aalen, 2006:247; Asnake, 2010:616).

Alexander (2019:18-19) expressed this constitutional classification of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' into nine

regional states and divided Ethiopians along ethnic lines by facilitating their divisions instead of maintaining their unity. Even the so-called regional ethnic-based boundary demarcations are not fixed somewhat changed across time. Such "ethnic boundary transformation might take different forms like expansion, contraction, fragmentation, elevation, and dissolution" (Alemu, 2018:44).

Since the formation of ethnic federalism's design, Ethiopia's most challenging aspects of the conflict are the emergence of new localized ethnic identity conflicts involving several ethnically constituted regions, unlike the previous contests (Gebremichael, 2011:34; Abbink, 2006:26). Therefore, Ethiopia's ethnic federalism design and implementation is a problematic, ineffective, breakable, and terrifying experiment that introduces a big challenge for the country's unity (Alem, 2004:91).

Second, proponents argue that Ethiopian ethnic federalism has recognized the separation of powers between the federal and regional governments. Marginalized minority ethnic groups have veto power and are empirically endowed with the right of representation at both the federal and regional levels (Aklilu, 2006:92; Alexander, 2019:18). They emphasized establishing ethnic-based federal arrangements as a novel decision that would reduce intra and inter-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia (Asnake, 2010:618; Alexander, 2019:18).

Empirically, it is a socialist-oriented centralized system that boycotting the balance between self-rule and shared-rule coupled with the politicization of tribal identity results in ethnic conflicts (Alexander, 2019:17). Moreover, ethnonational federalism promotes the uniqueness of a particular ethnic group to have the right to self-rule in their homeland, which worsens public clashes into clashes of tribalism (Siraw, 2015:50).

Lastly, advocates argued that the Ethiopian federal Constitution adopted principles of democracy such as competitive elections and multi-party systems. It recognizes ethnic-based

party politics adopted to respond to the past unitary state by recognizing freedom political participation among different ethnic groups (EPRDF, 2017:3-27; Bekalu, 2017:52-54).

Nevertheless, several multicultural federations' constitutions outlaw discrimination based on ethnic lines and rigorously ban ethnic-based political party structure (Alemante, 2003:73). For example, the Switzerland and Canada multi-linguistic federations discard establishment of ethnic-based political parties because the ethnic-based political arrangement resulted in political mobilization (Alexander, 2019:19). In African countries, such as "Uganda and Eritrea, tribal or religious parties are discouraged. The Ghanaian Constitution, Article 55 (4), prohibits tribal or ethnic-based political parties. It clearly states 'Every political party shall have a national character, and membership shall not be based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional divisions'" (Ibid.2019:19).

In principle, Ethiopian federalism recognizes competitive elections and multi-party systems. Notably it was a socialist TPLF/EPRDF one-party system that controlled every aspect of the government levels. Though it is detrimental to ethnic peace, national unity, and ethnic diversity, it ostensibly encourages ethnonationalism and deteriorating Ethiopian nationalism (Alemu, 2018:43). This ethnic-based party or TPLF's divide and rule strategy has weakened the united opposition against the government at the center; instead, "Ethiopian ethnic parties are rivals with each other" (Legese, 2015:465). Therefore, in "Ethiopia a multi-party democracy operating as a restricted dominant one-party state controlled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), since 1991" (Salih, 2007:677).

Hence, over the past decade, the country has faced several ethnic violence and anti-government protests. Nevertheless, both the federal and regional governments did not manage those flaring conflicts due to this reason; in the end, EPRDF was distorted. In such views, the existing ethnic federal political system will disintegrate the country (Abrham, 2019:47-50).

3.1 *Ethnic Federalism's Design: Inter-regional Conflicts in Ethiopia*

Since the Ethiopian political process is organized along with ethnicity, the relationship between ethnicity and conflict in describing the inter-regional conflicts has trapped scholars' attention on federalism and conflict management (Legesse, 2015:466). Because it has transformed the old national conflicts into newborn subnational and local-level conflicts, such disputes emanate out of the ethnic-federal arrangement and ethnic party organization (Bekalu, 2017:52-55; Dagnachew, 2018:75).

One of the root causes of Ethiopian inter-regional ethnic conflict is the ethnic-federal model that recognizes ethnic-based administrative structures and ethnic-based boundary lines, which create disagreements between inter-regional states (Temesgen, 2019:19). Furthermore, the boundary demarcation between regional states based on ethnic lines has uninterruptedly intensified disputes between ethnic groups that have transformed into disputes between regional states (Ibid.2019:20).

Among others, such ethno-boundary inter-regional ethnic conflicts have been witnessed between the Oromia and Somali regional states (Borana vs. Gerri); in the Afar and Somali regional states (between Afar vs. Issa); in the Oromia and the SNNPR States between (Guji vs. Gedeo and Guji vs. Burji; and the Oromo-Amhara conflict (Abdusalam, 2018:42; Dagnachew, 2018:75; Abraham, 2019:42). It has become a common challenge between the Amhara and Tigray over welkayit, Oromo, and the Somali ethnic groups; Oromo and Harari, Amhara and Tigray; Oromo and Southern nations (Wondwosen and Záhorský, 2008:21-22).

The second category of inter-regional ethnic conflict is derived from ethnic-based party structure, identity politics, and ethnic autonomous issues. The constitutional recognition of self-determinism, including the right to secession itself, can invite conflicts (Bekalu, 2017:53). The ethnopolitical arrangement was purposefully designed due to the influence of the TPLF and OLF. That is why

the OLF and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) are currently involved in armed struggle envisioned to realize the asserted aim of seceding from Ethiopia (Alemante, 2003:84; Temesgen, 2019:19).

Noticeably, evidence shows that "in ethnically polarized countries, ethnic group loyalty induces citizens to vote for their ethnic party, increasing ethnic grievance and the probability of civil war." Moreover, where ethnic differences are politicized, and the bargaining process is dysfunctional, the recognition of self-administration intensifies ethnic manipulation. It then leads to secession, like the former socialist federations. The same is true that currently the TPLF and OLF have been trying for secession (Alexander, 2019:18).

The third category of inter-regional conflicts is the nexus between ethnonational identity and pan-Ethiopian national identity conflict. From ancient history to 1991, Ethiopians had a common national identity. Even the essential requirement to get the central resources was an 'All- Ethiopian' identity. It implies that Ethiopians had had a more robust common identity under the idea of Ethiopian citizenship. That was why; this common identity was granted for Ethiopian existence. It had also become the only country in the African continent that was not colonized by foreign powers (Temesgen, 2019:23).

However, after EPRDF came to power in 1991, Ethiopian politics fluctuated between the pan Ethiopian and ethnic identity forces. Then the 1995 constitutional establishment of ethnic federal structure shifted the common Ethiopian identity to a distinct ethnic identity. This ethnic identity politics have created conflicts and animosity among Ethiopians. Hence, in all regional states, the ethnic minorities who live outside their state of origin have no right to political representation, live, work, and be internally displaced (Ibid. 2019:23).

For example, in BGRS, 'non-indigenous peoples live entirely in some specified kebele or woreda or zonal administration. Particularly, in Bambasi, Kamashi, Bullen, Pawi, and Wombera woredas,

most residents are from the Amhara ethnic group. Thus, these Woredas were dominated by the Amharas' non-indigenous peoples, which are informally referred to as the 'Amhara woreda.' Though they have a territorially reliant settlement, they are not politically empowered and do not act as citizens of the region (Gizachew, 2019:196-7; Sara, 2021:3).

These have been raised due to the lack of all-embracing and inclusive pan-national identity and the establishment of ethnic-based boundary lines that exclude people based on their identity. The non-titular ethnic groups who live in different regions outside their ethnic groups' region act as the second citizen and exclude in socioeconomic and political participation (Temesgen, 2019:19).

Particularly, till recently, the Amhara ethnic group emphasized an Ethiopian identity than an Amhara identity. The Amhara ethnic group has a common ancestry, territory, religion, and shared experience, except the language, but has no common claims to common ancestry. Instead, the Amhara people identified themselves by regional cleavage identities; Gondere, Gojjame, Shewe, and Wollo (Tegege, 1998:120-21). However, the Amhara ethnic identity has disturbingly developed because of discrimination and harassment from other ethnic groups. Such identity clashes have been creating violent ethnic conflict among groups and deaths (Dagnachew, 2018:73).

Since the introduction of ethnic federalism has impacted Ethiopians' lives, Ethiopia has become a land of conflicts and animosity. Mainly, since 2017 up to now, Most of the attacks have focused on ethnic cleansing directed against the minority ethnic groups of (Amhara), especially those who live in the Oromia and Benshangul-Gumuz regions. Besides this ethnic cleansing, there has been the total burned down of hotels, schools, business centers, and residential homes of the Amhara's ethnic group (Abduselam, 2018:42; Nikodimos 2004:58).

In light of the absence of a legal conflict resolution mechanism, inter-regional conflicts are synonymous and become an endless Ethiopian

ethnic-federal system (Abrham, 2019:48). Most multicultural federations have constitutional dispute settlement organs between the federal government and any of the regional states. For example, the federal constitutions of Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa have clear dispute settlement organs, like Supreme Court, High Court, and Constitutional Court, respectively, to resolve differences between the federal government and the regional states (Habtamu and Zelalem, 2019:1388).

However, in the Ethiopian case, the power to interpret the Constitution and conflict management is given to the HoF. Nevertheless, in practice, the division of power is artificial, imperfect, a generalized skeletal thing. The key powers reside on political executives (Nikodimos, 2004:17-27).

In light of such problems, most scholars highlighted that the government should avoid constitutional discrimination based on ethnicity and ban ethnic politics or parties from resolving ethnic conflicts. Instead, Ethiopia should establish an effective consociational democratic and geographic federation system. It also should develop the idea of equal and common citizenship that certifies the coexistence between these divided societies, uniting each other for their mutual well-being, and reducing ethnic conflicts (Siraw, 2015:53, Alemante, 2003:73).

3.2 Ethnic Federalism's Design and Inter-regional Conflicts: Case Study of the Metekel Zone

Following the 1991 ethnic-federal arrangement, the Amhara region was established as per the 1995 ANRS Constitution. Accordingly, the territorial boundaries of the Amhara region are bounded with the Tigray Region in the North, the Afar Region in the East, the Oromiya Region in the South, and the Benshangul-Gumuz Region in the West (Article 2 of the 2001 ANRS constitution). Nevertheless, before the EPRDF government came to the throne in 1991, the Amhara territorial administrative included the Wolkayte and Humera areas under Begemder provinces in the North and the current Metekel Zone the Benshangul-Gumuz Region under

Gojjam provinces in the west¹. Since Ethiopia introduced ethnic federalism in 1991, the Benishangul-Gumuz region has been established along the Blue Nile margins. However, it was organized by taking parts of the Amhara and Oromia territorial places previously administered as part of the Gojjam and Wellaga provinces (cited in Gebremichael, 2011:173).

The pre-Gojjam province of Metekel Awraja has now become one zone of the current Benishangul-Gumuz region. It has been the land of diverse linguistic groups for an extended period, including the Amhara, Agew, Shinasha, and Gumuz ethnic groups. These communities have long lived peacefully and bonded by solid socioeconomic activities than the rest of the current Benishangul-Gumuz region's inhabitants².

Thus, the relationship between the Amhara and the Benishangul-Gumuz region worsened after adopting the 1995 FDRE constitution³. Given this, the cooperative and inter-ethnic relationship between the two people has shifted into inter-regional hostility. Therefore, one of the causes of the conflict between the Benishangul-Gumuz and the Amhara region is structural. That is the constitutional-driven principles of the Ethiopian ethnic-federal design⁴. Thus, its design is copied from the socialist non-democratic, and ethnolinguistic federalism leading to the slaughter among Ethiopians. It promotes ethnic groups to work only for their benefit at the expense of others. This has formed the confusing foundation of federalism that has led us to conflict⁵.

The means and ends of the Constitution that we follow are rooted in the tyrant and exploitation

¹ Personal Interview: Head of the Amhara Prosperity party, 10 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

² Personal Interview: Chief Administrator of the Awi special zone, 27 June 2021, Kosober city Administration.

³ Personal Interview: A Journalist and Activist who displaced from B-G region, 13 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

⁴ Personal Interview: Head of the Awi Special Zone prosperity party office, 27 June 2021, Kosober city Administration.

⁵ Personal Interview: Chief speaker of the Amhara regional council and Member of the House of Federation, 15 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

nature. The substance on which it was built is a revolutionary democracy. Thus, the main problem is the idea of the Constitution and federalism, which is shaped as the goal of separation rather than solidarity. When the Constitution and the federal government were organized for the first time in Ethiopia were orchestrated on the Marxist-Leninist idea of TPLF⁶.

Article 39 is a politician's penitentiaries, a corrupting issue; a compromised constitution in the absence of honesty. That is why it has damaged good relations between Amhara and other people. On the other extreme, the right to self-determination up to secession will lead the country into disintegration in the former Soviet Union's case (cited in Abduselam 2018:41).

The document of the Constitution, generally its thoughts are inclined to anti-Amhara precipitations. And the foundation is hatred, the transgressor and the wrongdoer, the oppressor and the oppressed. Before the 1995 constitutional formulation, one ethnicity perceived the other nation as his jewelry. The previously-established conflicts were not based on ethnic lines but were between regional leadership due to power rivalry. However, the current racial and public conflicts came from this secession list constitutional document⁷.

For example, the revised Constitution of the Benishangul-Gumuz region Article 2(1) states that the region's founders and indigenous ethnic groups are the '*Gumuz, Shinash, Mao, Berta, and Komo.*' It grants sovereign power to these ethnic groups in a region. At the same time, it isolated Amhara, Agew, and Oromo⁸. They were residents in an area for an extended period. They made up 60 percent of the total population of a region. Therefore, outside the five ethnic groups who are recognized as the owner of the region, the other majority population become stateless. Because of this ignorance, the people of Amhara and Agew

have been displaced and massacred in the Metekel zone⁹.

That was why all death and life were lost in the last three years between the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz ethnicities. Because people who have lost their identity are more likely to turn into barbarians, we are more likely to do so. And the Western countries were not paved when all Amhara was slaughtered and killed in the Benishangul-Gumuz region because it had the agenda of destroying Amhara ethnic groups, not just the bandanas, but also involve the hands of the whites¹⁰.

The Gumuz community cannot hire non-indigenous workers without the region's consent because of the constitutional orientation. They only thought that their country was not Ethiopia but the Benishangul Gumuz region. Thus, they didn't need to work outside their region. The Amhara community has a desire and political interest to work everywhere knap of the country. However, the Gumuz are saying that we are not coming to your region to work, and we don't need you (Amhara) to go and work. This is their attitude towards the Amhara people¹¹.

Then the regional boundary demarcation has also become the cause of conflict between the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. From the beginning, the political philosophy of the Ethiopian ethnic federation was organized from a socialist bloc that recognized ethnic-based boundary demarcation as the only way to defend the rights of ethnic groups¹². Accordingly, Article 46 (2) of the FDRE constitution states that regional boundary lines are determined by language, geographic proximity, identity, and community willingness. However, in practice, it is based solely on language, which is why it is the primary cause of conflict. Mainly, the source of

⁹ Supra note 3, p 11

¹⁰ Supra note 7, p 12

¹¹ Focus Group Discussion: Gumuz Ethnic groups in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region-Mandurah District-28 June 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

¹² Personal Interview: Head of Prosperity Party of the Benishangul-Gumuz region, 12 August 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

⁶ Supra note 1, p 11

⁷ Personal Interview: The All Ethiopian Unity Organization/AEUO Polite Bureau member, 04 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

⁸ Personal Interview: Head of Prosperity party office of the Chagne City Administration, 28 June 2021, Chagne City Administration.

our differences is TPLF's ethnic boundary demarcation¹³.

Nevertheless, the Ethiopian regional boundary demarcation was established before the adoption of the 1995 FDRE constitution. It was organized during forming regional government structure by the national, regional transitional governments proclamation no, 7/1992. It recognized the nation's nationality and the people to have the right to self-determination, including secession. In such a view, first, a transitional government is not elected by the people; instead, it was made by the TPLF. The second is that many people did not discuss the regional boundary structure. The Marxist picture of TPLF forcefully demarcated it after it had won the power of the armed conflict and came to power in 1991. Since the armed struggle, TPLF has hosted the Amhara ethnic group as an enemy, with a fiery furnace everywhere. Then after it controlled the country's political authority, the government's authority deteriorated, harassed, isolated the Amhara ethnic group in each region. That is why, currently, the Amhara has been displaced and killed by Gumuz militants in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, the Metekel zone. Besides, Yalelet expressed that the Benishangul Gumuz region's Constitution was designed by Dr. Barnabas, a Tigray native and a senior adviser of TPLF. This individual was made the region's Constitution alone, planning to base the great Tigray republic. Because before the region's Constitution was amended in 2002, the Benishangul-Gumuz region was thought to be demarcated with the Tigray in the Northwestern part. This means that the Amhara region (West Gondor, Quara, and Metema) areas were mapped to be part of the Tigray region and used as a direct link to the Benishangul-Gumuz region be taken as one cause of the conflict between two people until the 2002¹⁴.

Thus, the ethnic-federal boundary demarcation that made the Metekel zone into the Benishangul-Gumuz region became a conflict source between the two people. This, TPLF's handlined boundary

¹³ Personal Interview: The security adviser of the Prime Minister, 14 June 2021, Addis Ababa.

¹⁴ Supra note 1, p 11

creates territorial and identity claim issues that result from the existing conflicts¹⁵.

For the past 29 years, TPLF has overseen the region's natural resources and graces, including the political wreaths of the area. For the past two years, the region's top leadership has left us sharing their thoughts with various media about what TPLF made in part. Of course, one of the most critical regions of TPLF was the Benishangul-Gumuz region, which has been focused on achieving its plundering needs. And also, to marginalize the original Amhara residents in the Metekel zone, the area still became a cause of conflict. Moreover, since 2010, racial and color-based massacred, mass murders, and displacements continued to flourish, worse than in the past years¹⁶.

Furthermore, any conflicts have structural roots and state sponsorship associated with weak ethnic-based regional shield and federal structure. Because the boundary makes the Amhara subordination and the dominance of Shinasha and Gumuz¹⁷, others argue that the boundary is not entirely prudent of language since it is different from the southern region. Nonetheless, the border of Amhara was deliberately designed to destroy and besieged Amhara by TPLF's conspiracy. When the TPLF arose, their propaganda was shaped on the very dew of the Amhara, and this is how the Constitution was inscribed. Thus, the boundary is designed to disperse and weaken Amhara, which was generally intended to destroy Amhara when the system was adopted¹⁸.

At the beginning of boundary demarcation, the people of Amhara expressed their feelings, like I am Amhara, there is no need to be hauled into the Benishangul-Gumuz. However, TPLF has persuasively used it for its long-term dream of

¹⁵ Personal Interview: Lecturer of federalism at Addis Ababa University, 14 June 2021, Addis Ababa.

¹⁶ Supra note 3, p 11

¹⁷ Focus Group Discussion: The Agew IDPs from the Benshangul-Gumuz Region- Metekel zone and a section of society that took refuge in the Awe Zon-Guangua District, 26 June 2021, Chagne city Administration.

¹⁸ Personal Interview: The former chairman and the current central committee of NaMA, 06 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

territorial expansion and secession. In addition, the Constitution of the Benishangul-Gumuz made five ethnic groups as a region's owners. However, the second-largest number of people in a region-Amhara is not politically involved, is not represented by local government or territory, rather kidnapped, isolated. So the roots of this are the bounds of the embroidered ethno-territorial boundary lines¹⁹.

Accordingly, the Shinasha Ethnic group informants in Mandurah District expressed that the boundary demarcation could create a conducive environment for a conflict between Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states. This means a tribe or ethnicity could group itself in a particular area. The other tribes also did as such. At a country level, an ethnic-based boundary structure is resulting in displacement and mass atrocities of citizens. The Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz conflict is one of them. Ethnic-based border demarcation has created a sense of selfishness²⁰. Pragmatically, the Ethiopian border demarcation is almost cancer for the People of Amhara because the people of Amhara are being ensnared from all the areas where they have lived for centuries. For example, since the introduction of ethno-territorial lines, in Oromia, South, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, thousands of Amharas' have been isolated and displaced. They are still dying and being displaced²¹.

The other cause of the problem is ethnic parties that emanate from the origin of the Constitution. Thus, it is generally made up of highlighting differences rather than unity because the primary source of racial parties is the Constitution, so these ethnic political parties are causing significant problems on communities' way of life²². Thus, all the ethnic parties were hatched by the TPLF that they were intended to destroy

¹⁹ Personal Interview: The law adviser of the Amhara Regional Council chief speaker, 04 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

²⁰ Focus Group Discussion: The Shinasha Ethnic groups in the Benshangul-Gumuz Region- Mandurah District, 18 June 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

²¹ Personal Interview: The head of the Peace and Security Department of the Amhara Leadership Academy, 28 June 2021, Bahir Dar.

²² Personal Interview: Chairman of Boro Democratic Party /BDP, 14 August 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

Ethiopia, and these are the primary sources of conflict in our country. They do not have any role rather than destroying Ethiopia through aggravating ethnic disputes²³.

Following this conflict-prone strategy, over 100 ethnic-based political parties have existed in Ethiopia and become the source of all these problems by depriving one ethnic group of the other. So they have created an incarcerable crisis and turmoil in the country. It is evident from the TPLF-junta that racial-based political organization ultimately leads to its failure and then trying to destroy the country as it happened today²⁴.

As a result, the political party organized based on TPLF's falsely tying rhetoric, they draw the Amhara as an oppressive tyrant's circle. This unjust and oppressed TPLF bombast has led the Benishagnul-Gumuz People Democratic Unity Front /BGPDUF and the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement / BPLM to attack directly or indirectly Amhara people who live in the Benishangul-Gumuz region-Metekel Zone. On the other hand, the ethnic party is an organization or a movement for ethnonational interests or supremacy instead of national unity and state sovereignty. Thus, it leads to the current violent conflict in the Metekel zone between the Amhara and Gumuz people²⁵.

Moreover, these TPLF/EPRDF anti-Amhara policies could create a conducive environment for Ethiopian ethnic-based political parties in aggravating ethnic conflicts. These are the Benishangul North West Ethiopia People Democratic Unity Party /BNWEPDUP and other ethnic parties. Through manipulating their ethnic group, they have been killed and displaced Amhara from the Metekel zone. Even when the Amhara people have become party membership in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, they impact

²³ Personal Interview: Deputy president of the Amhara Regional State and the head of Peace and Security Bureau, 02 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

²⁴ Personal Interview: Deputy chief of the Ethiopian National Armed Force, 16 June 2021, Addis Ababa.

²⁵ Personal Interview: Head of Peace and Security department of Awi Special Zone Administration, 27 June 2021, Kosober city Administration.

resigning their work, punishing, and cutting their salary²⁶.

Thus, ethnic parties aggravate conflicts among ethnic groups by inflaming wounds rather than competing and winning races. Generally, the ethnic parties' policy agenda is focused on the past and old history. They have no choice; their agenda is to talk about the past miscalculated TPLF's oppressor and oppressed rhetoric. Thus, they are not ideological oriented, but Benzenes' for ethnic conflicts²⁷.

Since 2010 ethnic conflicts have been aggravating between the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz people in the Metekel zone. First, the insurgent groups and the Benishangul-Gumuz zonal and district administrators supported by the TPLF have killed, displaced, and murdered the Amhara natives in the Metekel zone. Second, the TPLF keeps public support in a region by forming opposition political parties and supporting budgets with agendas inviting conflicts. Such as the Gumuz People's Democratic Movement (GPDM) and the Boro-Shinasha Democratic Party (BDP). This TPLF's anti-human and development agenda has contributed significantly to the region's instability, especially for the Metekel zone²⁸. In such a view, the system is anti-Amhara, and all conflicts are focused on the Amhara. Therefore, all disputes are not natural-natured but artificial or TPLF. Then we become in trouble by exaggerating the differences²⁹.

After TPLF withdrawal from the P.P. party, its principal agenda has oriented dehumanizing the Amhara people from the Benishangul-Gumuz through its hostile propaganda. It says that for the past 28 years, federal democratic ceremonies have created the blessings that have given you all the existing freedoms and rights. But the Prosperity party is a unitary state, and they have been called you as a slave. They have blurred your identity

and marginalized your political, social, and economic benefits. Moreover, P. P. is a category of the ruler of Amhara who sold you and asked you to understand that these are your enemies for the same age. The planting of prosperity is a work that has divided the Metekel zone into the Amara region. To make sure that Amharas' are your enemies as old as they are. But we advocate the bail of the nation nationality if TPLF alive you will be live, if TPLF fails you also will fail, for survival you must incorporate with us and struggle together with our enemies. And by giving them agendas like that, the tasks of persuading their community to hate, displace and kill the Amhara and Agew people, so as they have been done as it is³⁰. Hence, in the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states, the leading causes of conflict are the ethnic or racial political parties, such as TPLF and OLF. All ethnic parties are naturally problematic because their Manifesto is similar but not united due to the sake of their benefits and political power³¹.

Above all, as the starting point, any party founded on ethnic sentiment is challenging. A political party established based on Ethiopianism works to bring peace and security for all communities because it does not work for one nation and maintains an Ethiopian identity. However, a party based on ethnic identity has created ethnic conflicts because they are not working in the interest of all Ethiopian people, but only for their ethnicity. That is, through breaking up Ethiopian identity, they are promoting ethnic identity³².

On the other hand, one of the founders of EPRDF argued that it would be incorrect to search the wrongs on this or that type of political organization. As organizational forms, all the packaging material for any political conflict. Hence, rather than exploring the ills of one society on the organizational form, it would be more appropriate to look into the political contents of both organizational structures. Thus, leaving aside

²⁶ FGDs, Supra note 20, p 15

²⁷ Personal Interview: The chairman of Amhara Democratic Peoples Movement/ ADPM, 18 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

²⁸ Supra note 3, p 11

²⁹ Personal Interview: A journalist and activist, 12 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

³⁰ Personal Interview: Deputy mayor of the Chagne City Administration, 28 June 2021, Chagne City Administration.

³¹ Personal Interview: The central committee of Ethiopian Citizen for Social Justice Party/ EZMA, and chief coordinator of the Bahir Dar Electoral district, 19 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

³² Supra note 12, p 12

the context and giving much and underserving weight to organizational forms would only reflect worshipping the same organizational structure³³.

In contrast, both the national and ethnic opposition party leaders argued that the ethnic parties are sources of conflict in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the Amhara Democratic Peoples Movement chairman expressed that our party always says ethnic parties are sources of conflict. If so, the researcher asked him, why was your party organized in line with ethnic-based than a pan-Ethiopian party? For this reason, he responded that the people of Amhara had been affected, killed, and persecuted, being they are reflecting the Ethiopian identity than their Amhara ethnic identity. Therefore, to save the people of Amhara who live everywhere, the only alternative route is organized by ethnic groups. That is why we established ADPM though we are not interested in it. However, if there is to be an actual order, the constitutional arrangement of the ethnic party should be destroyed and replaced by the National Parties. If so, our interests are inexpensive. But if the Constitution is not changed, we want our people to be organized and mobilized in line with the Amhara nationalism³⁴.

Moreover, the former chairman of NaMA remarks that the Pan Ethiopian organization is unknown to the Constitution. Therefore, it is impossible to manage a leap from Ethiopianism, so we managed NaMA in the name of the Amhara ethnic group. As Amhara, we tried to work in the sense of Ethiopian identity but were not accepted and seen as wrong by others; that's what we organized in this way. By the way, all this ethnic animosity and ethnic parties drive from the Constitution because its design has brought a problem. If the Constitution bans the ethnic party system, we have no problem changing our party³⁵.

Others argued that both party organizations are benefit-oriented than to serve the people. For example, the Ethiopian national-based parties, such as EZMA and AEUO, have no political

differences but are not united for political power and benefit. In our country, the establishment of a political party is an alternative to employment opportunities³⁶.

Over the past decades, ethnic parties have become the principal problem diversifying between the Amhara and the Oromo; Amhara and Tigray; and the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. Therefore, instead of ethnic parties, if only national parties were organized; it was possible to build a better country; because when the ethnic parties are organized, their primary objective is to meet the interests of their ethnic group only at the expense of the other ethnic groups³⁷.

The last cause of the conflict is the nexus between Ethiopian and ethnic identity. Ethiopia is a country of many nations and nationalities. So that there are many identities, many beliefs, and more than 80 different ethnolinguistic societies. We have common identities (values and beliefs) and unique identities (values and beliefs). However, after introducing ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, the standard denominations are blurred instead of strengthening the commons values because of its particular attention to ethnic identities³⁸.

Therefore, the relationship between Ethiopianism/Ethiopian national identities and ethnic, national identities has become paradoxical. Some of them are shown to give Ethiopia first/ Ethiopian citizenship 100% in a competitive way and provide for idioms, such as the language, religion, municipality, birthplace, etc. 0 /zero%. Others give 100% to ethnonationalism and 0 /zero to Ethiopian nationalism or Ethiopian citizenship. Yet, these are two extreme manifestations of who they are. In contrast, as shown in Switzerland, Canada, and India's growing federal systems, there is no zero-sum link between the broad state nationalism and narrower ethnonationalism. In other words, one is not seen giving zero%, another 100%. However, Ethiopia's federal system did not

³³ Personal Interview: One of the former EPRDF's executive committee member, 17 July 2021, Bahir Dar.

³⁴ Supra note 27, p 16

³⁵ Supra note 18, p 15

³⁶ Supra note 31, p 17

³⁷ Supra note 22, p 15

³⁸ Personal Interview: Head of Peace and Security Bureau of Benishangul-Gumuz region, 11 August 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

maintain the two nationalism; instead, it promoted narrower ethnonationalism and deteriorated the broad Ethiopian nationalism³⁹. Regarding the issue of the two regions [Amhara and Benshangul-Gumuz], the division of the ethnonational and Ethiopian national identity complicates the conflict that led to an ending and insoluble violations, massacres, and displacement⁴⁰.

In the Amhara region, aFor example, an Ethiopian living in the Benishangul-Gumuz region is not considered a citizen except the five ethnic groups. Because, according to article 39, sub-article 3 of the Constitution's protocol is defiance and limited to provide a balance of representation and right of citizenship. For example, in a city where 95 percent of the Agew, and Amhara people reside, in are not represented. However, it is controlled by the minority of titular groups, namely Shinasha and Gumuz⁴¹. Similarly, more than 90 percent of residents of the Pawi woreda were the Amhara ethnic group; that was why it was a special woreda. But in 2002, the Benishangul-Gumuz region improved its Constitution and patience and included the Pawi woreda with its sphere of administration. Following this, others have no rights, no good proxies, raising the question of survival. The indigenous Amharas' have been marginalized, abused, executed, and displaced from a region⁴². For these problems, the cadres are the principal actors in the kidnapping. For example, the deputy president of the Benishangul-Gumuz region had a hand in displacing the Amharas; that is why the federal government arrested him⁴³.

Il nations are equally benefiting and receiving services. And when we come to Benishangul, we are also being denied the right to live, let alone

³⁹ Supra note 19, p 11

⁴⁰ Personal Interview: Deputy administrator of the Metekel Zone of the Benshangul-Gumuz Region, 03 August 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

⁴¹ Focus Group Discussion: Amhara Ethnic groups resides in Mandurah District-27 June 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

⁴² Focus Group Discussion: Amhara IDPs from the Benshangul-Gumuz Region-Metekel zone, Guangua District, 26 June 2021, Chagne city Administration.

⁴³ Supra note 18, p 15

equal service between immigrants and non-immigrants; we have not been suitable to live through farming. After graduating, even our brothers have been denied the right to live and work in government institutions. We don't have equal service. If the Gumuz accidentally crashed by car, they would chase and kill the Amhara, who was found to have been involved in a car accident. When they claim the issue for the government, they don't protect them at all. There is an excellent protection for them only if we are even in numbers in the Benshangul- Gumuz. Even when we are organized to defend ourselves, they tell us to go to the region where we came from⁴⁴.

Thus, ethnic federalism in Ethiopia promotes all ethnic groups to build their sub-government and plant their form. It also enhances not to respect the universal rights and interests of other ethnic groups rather than their subordinates. Hence, this ideology is a paradox from Ethiopianism because ethnic federalism has resulted in tangible murders, displaces, and deaths, as shown in Benishangul-Gumuz, Welega, and other areas in the country⁴⁵. Others argued that though Ethiopianism can be utterly blurred, the Amhara still reflects the Ethiopian sentiments and identities⁴⁶.

Moreover, in the last 30 years, the laws established after EPRDF entered Addis Ababa highlighted differences by distorting the long period of Ethiopian nationalism and values that had bonded the Ethiopian unity. For example, the boundary is demarcated onto ethnic lines; the car number plate has been separated on the ethnic border; the individual citizenship identity is planted in the ethnic fence; the name of ethnicity has identified the bank, and the flag is placed on ethnic lines. Thus, these bountiful ones have become a negative identity that separates one another from another. Therefore, all things are racially motivated, so humanity and individuality have been lost⁴⁷. Hence, since the coming of this

⁴⁴ Focus Group Discussion: Agew Ethnic groups resides in the Benshangul-Gumuz Region-Mandurah District-27 June 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

⁴⁵ Supra note 3, p 11

⁴⁶ Supra note 31, p 17

⁴⁷ Supra note 24, p 16

federal system, ethnic and racial patterns have been serving as the principal legs for movements and breathing longs for all Ethiopians⁴⁸.

Therefore, the impacts that happened in Metekel are devastative because of this tribal political structure. As evidence, political representation, political participation, and other rights are limited to the non-titular groups⁴⁹. Moreover, in the area where the Amhara and other people live, like the Benishangul-Gumuz region, there are complaints that they are not equally used in their language, learning, developing their culture, health, and other social services⁵⁰. Second, this system of federalism is more focused on ethnic identity than national identity. Thus, it has blurred Ethiopian identity because it is federalism fenced by an ethnolinguistic identity. Accordingly, it has diminished a national love and bloused the common Ethiopian sense of identity⁵¹.

The other negative impact of the competition has deprived citizens of their right to live. They are being displaced from the leers they live in, and they are being subjected to the most devastating of their lives⁵². Over 70 thousand Amharas and Agew people have been displaced from the Metekel zone at the end of 2020 and early 2021. Now they take refuge in the Awi Zone-Guangua woreda⁵³. There are the deep-rooted problems of inequality, maladministration, and inequitable access to resources in the area. Fake information and rumors on social media; Due to lack of education, the people of Gumuz ethnic were being exploited and displaced by the crisis forces, the competition of dominance over the region, etc⁵⁴.

The last impacts of the conflict are killings and life distraction. A "wave of genocidal massacres has swept Metekel in the Benishangul-Gumuz

region of Ethiopia, creating a humanitarian catastrophe that has left hundreds of thousands displaced, thousands killed and injured and many more left destitute with their homes and livelihoods burned to ashes" (Sara,2021:3). For example, from 2010 to February 2013, in Metekel zone in various districts and Kebeles, over 1535 Amhara and Agew ethnicity have been massacred and exposed for mass genocide by the deadly gangs of Gumuz trained TPLF⁵⁵.

Overall, the problem that is now happening in our country is due to the absence of a conflict resolution mechanism. Though the House of Federation, under Article 62 of the Constitution, is empowered to resolve the regional states' problems and assumed to be a principal institution, it is a toothless dog and has no solution to the problem⁵⁶. The only explanations for the existing conflicts are federalism, ethnic parties, and Article 39 of the Constitution. Then consociational democratic federalism that underpins geography must be applied⁵⁷.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Federalism has often been preferred as a conflict management tool in multi-ethnic ethnic, linguistic, religious, and historical societies. It also ensures equality, autonomy, and security by providing self-rule for each community to protect and nurture its identity. It can also strengthen community cooperation in its shared visions. However, federalism can only operate as conflict management in different societies if it can provide a structural and political answer that puts a joint government, a democratically binding one.

Taking these facts, after the military regime was overthrown in 1991, the EPRDF came up with total equality through the new Constitution and ethnic federal system in 1995. It aimed to maintain unity and diversity and resolve conflicts. However, this ethnolinguistic and ethnic-based boundary line became a source of conflicts in

⁴⁸ Supra note 31, p 17

⁴⁹ FGDs, Supra note 44, p 20

⁵⁰ Personal Interview notes: Head of the peace and security office of Chagne City Administration, 28 June 2021, Chagne City Administration;

⁵¹ Personal Interview: Head of Peace and Security Department of Metekel zone of the Benshangul-Gumuz Region-, 08 August 2021, Gilgelebeles city Administration.

⁵² Supra note 19, p 15

⁵³ Supra note 23, p 16

⁵⁴ Supra note 50, p 21

⁵⁵ Supra note 3, p 11

⁵⁶ Supra note 38, p 19

⁵⁷ Supra note (13, p,13 ; 31, p 17; 21, P,16; 7, p,12; and 21, p,15)

Ethiopia, particularly between the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz Regions. First, the Ethiopian federal Constitution was framed similarly to the ex-Soviet socialist federation that grants a self-administration, including secession rights, to its constituent units. Accordingly, the cause the conflict between the Amhara and the Benishangul-Gumuz regions is the Constitution's design and article 39. This article has brought a new political interest among the two people in the Metekel zone. Because the Benishangul-Gumuz Constitution grants a sovereign power for only the five ethnic groups, while the other ethnic groups are considered second citizens, that is why the Amhara ethnicity has always been marginalized, displaced, and killed.

Second, the boundaries have become a significant cause of problems in Ethiopia. For example, the Amhara, Agew, Gumuz, Oromo, and Tigray are integrated and mixed; they cannot separate one another. However, these diverse people being surrounded by ethnic-boundary lines has exacerbated the problems. It escalates and flares up the conflict to a more significant extent in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. Recently, the regional conflicts deepened into more intra-ethnic battles, increasing the tension as the motif changes into a greater border expansion level.

The third factor of the conflict is the slight thought of ethnic identity. There was only Ethiopian nationalism and no racial discrimination. However, now, different ethnic groups can reflect their ethnic identity than Ethiopian identity. Thus, the Amhara people (Ethiopianism) is marginalized from socioeconomic and political aspects in the Benishangul region, Metekel Zone.

The other factor is ethno-political parties. As ethnic federalism is shaped by ethnic fundamentalism, political gamblers protect their own political and economic interests while swearing to live together in a region. However, they cause hatred, distrust, and harm to the Amhara people, who have lived together peacefully for centuries in BGNRS. To make matters worse, these factors have dehumanized the Amhara people who live in the Benishangul

region-Metekel Zone. Hence, they are displaced, assassinated, and brutally killed, being they are non-indigenous residents. Therefore, to resolve Ethiopia's current multiple problems, this study recommended that Ethiopia's government establish a consociational democratic federal system with mixed boundary demarcation and a non-ethnic, non-tribal, multi-party democracy as applied in Switzerland and India.

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