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# 3

# Making and Remaking State and Nation in Ethiopia

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Although the Ethiopian state can trace its history back more than two thousand years, what is known as the modern state did not begin to come into view until the mid-1800s. The formation of the modern state contemporaneously coincided with the European "Scramble for Africa." Four successive emperors—Tewodros, Yohannes, Menelik II, and Haile Selassie I—in one way or another contributed to the consolidation of the territorial boundaries of the modern state, the creation of a national professional army, and development of a national system of bureaucratic administration.[1] At first the process of state building involved no more than conquest and subjugation of the conquered peoples, accomplished under the auspices of a monarchy that broadcasted its power from the central highlands to disparate areas of the periphery. Rather than submitting to alien authority based upon some sense of its legitimacy, subjugated peoples were brought to heel more by its raw coercive power than anything else.

Significantly, the modern state of Ethiopia began to emerge at a time when the Westphalian model of state organization was spreading throughout the world. In the process, state boundaries became fixed and accepted legally in international law. At the same time state leaders made an effort to instill in their subjects a sense of belonging collectively to a single nation based on a shared history, culture, and often language. In many places, belonging to a particular state came to be seen as simultaneously belonging to a particular *nation*. In some cases, such as modern France, this sense of identity emerged partly as a result of force and partly organically. In others, the development of a sense of common national heritage among a multiplicity of ethnic groups, such as in Italy, had to be cultivated by cultural and political leaders over a period of time.[2]

The history of the modern state of Ethiopia has been punctuated by failed attempts to develop a multiethnic unitary state in which all citizens feel a primary allegiance to the state itself rather than to their particular ethnic group. Initially, there was no clear sense of an ethnically based national identity on the part of Ethiopia's constituent groups. However, with the onset of modernization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the rise of nationalism throughout the colonized world, Ethiopia proved

not to be immune from the centripetal forces of ethnic nationalism. In fact, such forces contributed greatly to the demise of the imperial state system and to the introduction of a new system of Marxist-Leninist governance. Like the imperial regimes before it, the Marxist-Leninist regime that ruled between 1975 and 1991 failed to resolve the issue of national political integration, and efforts to deal with this problem since 1991 have consumed the new regime headed by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front. Rather than attempt to ignore or suppress ethnic nationalism, the new regime has committed itself to the celebration and promotion of Ethiopia's diverse cultures, and to equal citizenship rights for all groups and individuals. These principles are enshrined in the Constitution of 1994, which created the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.[3] The primary vehicle being used toward this end has been a form of federalism, styled as "ethnic federalism."[4]

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate critically the attempts by successive Ethiopian regimes during the modern era to consolidate the multiethnic state, while at the same time attempting to create a democratic culture in which all citizens, regardless of their ethnic affinities, feel that they willingly belong to and are citizens of the larger political entity, Ethiopia. The remainder of the chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section, employing the methodology of historical sociology, is concerned with the origins of the modern state and the attempts by the imperial regime and the Marxist-Leninist regime to construct a multiethnic, unitary state in which all ethnic groups share a common "Ethiopian" identity. The second section homes in on the effort of the current regime to use ethnic federalism as a strategy for consolidating democracy and social justice throughout the country.

## The Origins of the Modern State and the Issue of National Political Integration in Ethiopia

The core of the traditional state originally centered on the ancient city-state of Axum in what is the present-day regional state of Tigray. The Axumite kingdom, based on trade and conquest, came into focus during the sixth century B.C., flourished between the first and eighth centuries A.D., and was finally decimated in 970 A.D. by hostile neighboring groups.[5] At this time we could not speak of a centralized bureaucratic empire, but a patrimonial conquest empire, held together by force, particularistic loyalties, and trade.[6] Nevertheless, it was during the Axumite era that the inhabitants of the state began to refer to themselves as Abyssinians, and began to refer to their preeminent leader as "the King of Kings" or "Emperor."

Abyssinia maintained relatively close trading links with the Roman Empire, and this may have contributed to the adoption of Christianity as the official religion during the middle of the fourth century.[7] From this point on the Christian religion and the Geez language—the language of the

Church—became the vehicles through which Abyssinian culture was spread to conquered peoples.

From the time of the collapse of Axum in 970 until 1135, the Christian empire fell on hard times. Muslim Arabs threatened it from the north, Muslim Somalis threatened it from the southeast, and it was otherwise surrounded by hostile, largely animist neighbors who entered the region from the south. By 1135 what remained of the original state had been pushed to the south and west, but it was able to reconstitute itself, although in a seriously weakened form.

Between the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the state was able to become strong enough to venture expansion again. During this period the core was significantly reconsolidated, and the Abyssinian-Christian culture was diffused to all regions of the state. Kings from the Amhara ethnic group dominated this phase of expansion, and there was a conscious effort to bring conquered peoples firmly under the sway of the Amhara- and Christian-dominated culture. They were often forced to abandon their animist beliefs, adopt Coptic Christianity, and speak the Amharic language outside the home.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Abyssinians were again severely challenged by hostile peoples who were also expanding their domains: the Ottoman Turks, the Somalis, and the Oromo. In 1557 the Ottomans captured the Red Sea port of Massawa, and also succeeded in penetrating the fringes of the Tigray highlands. For the most part, however, they confined themselves to the coast. The Ottomans provided arms to the Afar and Somali people in the region, enabling these groups to pressure Abyssinia from the east.

Even as the Christian Abyssinians and the Muslim Somalis were engaged in protracted struggle for hegemony in the Horn of Africa, the Oromos were making inroads into the territories of both protagonists. At the height of their expansion, the Oromo occupied as much as one-third of the Abyssinian heartland. The Oromo culture mingled with the Abyssinian culture to the extent that the Oromos had a presence and influence in the royal court of the Abyssinians.[8]

Between 1769 and 1855 the Abyssinian Empire became moribund, and eventually ceased to exist in all but its name. This was a period that came to be known as the "Era of the Princes" (Zemene Mesafint), and parochialism among regional nobles reached crisis proportions.[9] Abyssinia was then only nominally a state, being ruled by fifteen different figurehead emperors during the period.

### Building the Modern Imperial State

After almost ninety years of political instability and lack of state cohesion, the end of the Zemene Mesafint began with the rise of a regional warlord, Ras (Duke) Kasa, around 1853. For the next two years, Kasa won battle

after battle, and forced the nobility that he defeated to submit to his authority. Before long it was clear that Kasa saw himself as having been ordained to reconstruct the Abyssinian state. Upon subduing the region of Tigray in 1855, Kasa had himself crowned "King of Kings" in the traditional manner, thus ending the fratricidal Zemene Mesafint in the Abyssinian core. He took the title of Emperor Tewodros II, claiming that according to one of the religious documents that forms the basis of Ethiopian myth and custom, Fikkare Iyesus (the Interpretation of Jesus), he was the righteous, just, and popular king who would come to the throne after a period of divine punishment that had been meted to the Abyssinian people for their evil deeds. It was allegedly prophesied that the king would be called Tewodros and that he would rule for forty years, restoring Abyssinia to its former unity and greatness.[10] This marked the beginning of the modern Ethiopian Empire. Tewodros was the first in a succession of four Ethiopian emperors responsible for consolidating the Ethiopian state.

### *The Reign of Tewodros II*

Tewodros instituted two primary measures designed to strengthen his imperial authority. First, he fragmented traditional administrative divisions and thus deprived many local princes and kings of their bases of power. Administrators for the reconstructed administrative units were chosen—except in rare circumstances—by the emperor himself. Most were trusted officers in his military or members of the royal family. They were responsible for collecting tithes and taxes on behalf of the sovereign and were instrumental in Tewodros's efforts to break the power of patrimonial, feudal lords. He also jailed most of his potential enemies. This facilitated the maintenance of law and order in the countryside, and buttressed the emperor's centralizing efforts.

Second, Tewodros began to create a disciplined, professional state army for the first time. He often employed Europeans and Turks who had military expertise to train his forces, and he also provided his soldiers with regular salaries, clothes, and equipment. This did much to strengthen both his empire's military and the administrative capacity of the government. Tewodros's centralization policies were continued, but not significantly improved, by Yohannes IV who succeeded him in 1872.[11]

### *The Reign of Yohannes IV*

During the reign of Yohannes, centralization in fact began to break down and some powerful provincial aristocrats began to regain their strength and semiautonomy. Most of the emperor's efforts were directed toward territorial expansion. He pushed the periphery of his domain to the west from his capital in the region of Tigray, leaving hegemony over the south to his most powerful vassal, Menelik.

Yohannes's most outstanding accomplishments were in the field of for-

eign policy.[12] Before him, Tewodros had been unsuccessful in securing diplomatic recognition from European powers that were already beginning to show interest in the Horn of Africa. Yohannes followed the course of patient diplomacy, buttressing his authority and legitimacy with a relatively strong, modernizing army that deterred reckless incursions into Abyssinia by any real or potential enemies. He entered into a peace treaty with Egypt and trade agreements with Britain. He also purchased arms from both public and private European agents.

Yohannes's diplomatic and military moves provided him with a measure of security, but he was still threatened on his western border by Sudanese Mahdists (Muslims). In 1889, Yohannes was killed in a western campaign against these antagonists. Before his death he had decreed that the throne would pass to Menelik I of Shoa.

### *The Reign of Menelik I*

As King of Shoa, Menelik had already begun to expand and consolidate the territory under his control. Between 1890 and 1906, through conquest or diplomacy, he succeeded in stretching the boundaries of Ethiopia to its present configuration. This did not include Eritrea, which at the time was a colony of Italy.

Historically, the territory now constituting the independent state of Eritrea had passed from one imperialist power to the next. In 1885 Britain controlled the Eritrean port city of Massawa, and Italy, Britain's ally, expressed interest in establishing a colony on the Red Sea. Britain decided to allow the Italians to have Eritrea as its own colony. Italy proceeded to solidify its control over the Eritrean lowlands and it became clear that Italy was not satisfied to stop with Eritrea; it also wanted to control Abyssinia itself. Previous to the death of Yohannes, Italy had concluded several treaties between 1883 and 1887 with Menelik, then king of Shoa, designed to facilitate Italy's dealing with Yohannes.

Between 1887 and 1889 the relationship between Menelik and the Italians continued to strengthen, and just seven weeks after he became emperor, Menelik concluded the Treaty of Wichale with Italy.[13] The treaty was officially described as a treaty of "perpetual peace and friendship." According to the agreement, Italy officially recognized Menelik as emperor of Abyssinia. For its part, Abyssinia ceded part of the Tigray highlands to be used as a buffer to Italy's interests in Massawa, and granted certain commercial, industrial, and judicial privileges to the Italians. The sphere of the Italian occupation and influence, however, was to be confined to a small, well-circumscribed area at the coast, which was already occupied by Italy at the time the treaty was signed. This was the nascent Italian colony of Eritrea.

Initially, the treaty seemed to have value for both signatories. Before long, however, it became apparent to Abyssinia that the Treaty of Wichale

was not in its own interests. Menelik discovered that the treaty, which had both Amharic and Italian versions, contained different language in the two versions with regard to the relationship between the signatories. The Amharic version suggested that Abyssinia had the authority to designate Italy as its political agent in international affairs. By contrast, the Italian version asserted that Abyssinia was *obliged* to go through Italy in the conduct of its foreign policy. Through duplicity, Italy had declared Abyssinia its protectorate.

This controversy resulted in a war between Italy and Abyssinia that is now widely known as the Battle of Adowa. The first skirmish in the war occurred in December 1895, and by early March of the following year, the war was over. Menelik's well-armed and numerically superior forces handed the Italians a resounding defeat. The Abyssinian victory sent shock waves throughout Europe, and caused the reigning Italian government to fall.

In October 1896, at Addis Ababa, a peace treaty was signed between the two antagonists. The Treaty of Wichale was abrogated and Italy was allowed to maintain possession of Eritrea as long as it did not penetrate the Abyssinian hinterland. Between 1896 and 1897, Menelik quickly entered into other agreements with France, Britain, and the Mahdists in an effort to ensure the sovereignty of his empire. In securing recognition from the European powers, Menelik had succeeded in accomplishing what his predecessors—and indeed many other African leaders of his time—could not. This success contributed immensely to the almost mythical image of Ethiopia as the epitome of African independence. What is generally ignored, however, is that the modern Ethiopian bureaucratic empire consolidated itself as a state at the same time that the European powers were engaged in the so-called Scramble for Africa. In the process Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity became a matter of historical record among other states in the international community. Until this time, the geographic as well as ethnic boundaries of the state were fluid and had never been rigidly defined.

In newly conquered territories the contrast between agents of the empire and local inhabitants was extremely sharp. Under Menelik, no effort was made to integrate subject peoples effectively into the expanded political system except to impose by force the culture and institutions of the dominant highlanders, the Amharas and Tigreans. For many, particularly outside of the highlands, this was an obstacle to the development of a clearly defined sense of national, Ethiopian identity among many subjects. A feudal economic system was developed in the south, with the northern representatives of the empire taking on the role of lords, and the southerners being relegated to the status of vassals or serfs.[14] The inequalities, exploitation, and discrimination visited on southerners by the empire and its repre-

sentatives sowed the seeds of ethno-regional conflict that continue to plague Ethiopia today.

Menelik began the process of consolidating and modernizing imperial dominance in Abyssinia, but was unable to complete the modernization project due to his death in 1913. The task of completing the wedding between modernity and tradition was left to Emperor Haile Selassie I, who assumed the throne in 1930.

### *The Reign of Haile Selassie I*

As emperor, Haile Selassie was dedicated to continuing the centralization and modernization policies begun by Menelik. This meant the further development of a secularized, professional bureaucracy, a professional army, and an indigenous middle class, all of which were committed to modernization. Moreover, he cultivated foreign alliances that provided his regime with capital for economic development and arms for his police and military. The latter not only aided in the consolidation of national borders but also in maintaining domestic order.

Haile Selassie's plans were interrupted in 1936 when he was driven from the throne into exile by Mussolini's invading Italian army. The occupation of Ethiopia lasted for five years. Allied forces led by Great Britain eventually forced the Italians out, enabling Haile Selassie to return and to continue consolidating his power. From this moment, it was clear that the emperor was bent on establishing linkages with foreign powers, while at the same time laying the basis for Ethiopia's endorsement of a capitalist development strategy.

As early as the 1930s, Haile Selassie had begun to secularize his rule and to lessen the influence of the traditional nobility. Among his early achievements were the expansion of a modern educational system, the abolition of slavery, the construction of all-weather roads and other public works, the organization of local police forces and local administration, and the publication of newspapers in Amharinya. Perhaps the most significant early reform, and one that clearly was aimed at strengthening the position of the sovereign relative to religio-traditional classes, was the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy in 1931.[15] The constitution was the first document of its kind in Ethiopia. It lessened the role of the Church in legitimating the emperor and centralized more power in the hands of the absolute monarch. Partly as a control mechanism and partly in an effort to create a semblance of political modernization, national quasi-representative institutions were created: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Despite these reforms, the emperor continued to face considerable opposition to his innovations from provincial aristocrats. However, war with Italy intervened and the emperor was removed from the throne for five years. During this time, the Italians succeeded in significantly weakening the authority of tradition-

al Ethiopian leaders. Ironically, this created a more favorable climate for Haile Selassie's modernization efforts once he was restored to the throne in 1941.

On reassuming power, Haile Selassie introduced three major structural reforms in imperial administration. First, he established a standing national army that was completely under the control of the emperor, making regional armies and their commanders obsolete. The British provided the training for this new army. However, Haile Selassie was acutely aware that if he did not take effective countermeasures to British initiatives, Ethiopia could well become a de facto protectorate of Great Britain. This led Ethiopia to sign lend-lease agreements with the United States in the early 1950s. In 1953, a mutual defense pact was signed, guaranteeing U.S. military assistance, resulting in Ethiopia's receiving more than $200 million in military aid over a twenty-two-year period. This military aid and other such aid from Sweden, Israel, India, the Soviet Union, and other countries enabled Haile Selassie to use the national army not only to protect Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity from outside forces, but also to suppress domestic rebellions.[16] This development significantly enhanced Ethiopia's bureaucratic capacity well into the modern era.

The second major postoccupation reform involved the establishment of a new fiscal system under the Ministry of Finance. For the first time, taxes paid in a new currency were collected by salaried civil servants and forwarded directly to the national treasury. The significance of this measure was that it professionalized the national bureaucracy and, at least in theory, deprived district administrators of the right to appropriate for their own personal use certain amounts of taxes they collected. For income, bureaucrats could now rely on their monthly salaries, on rents they collected from tenants on land they held privately, and on what they could produce from land they cultivated.

Third, the provincial administration was reorganized under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. Provincial boundaries were redrawn to reduce the power of aristocrats in certain areas that had been traditionally semiautonomous administrative regions. Administrators at all levels were simply made employees of the Ministry of the Interior and were provided with support staff such as clerks and secretaries who were also paid salaries directly by the national government. To go along with these changes, many discretionary powers of local administrators were curtailed.

On the diplomatic front, Haile Selassie sought to present the image of being the ruler of a viable and cohesive multiethnic nation-state. After World War II, Ethiopia was among the first states to join the United Nations. Subsequently, it was designated the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity, and several other international and regional organizations also established offices in Addis Ababa.[17]

In addition to Haile Selassie's diplomatic moves and administrative

reforms, he attempted to use domestic policies to construct a modernizing political economy. Historically, agriculture has been the backbone of Ethiopia's economy, and initially the emperor felt that his regime was compelled to strengthen the extractive ability of the state in this area. The emperor was more concerned with increasing the tax base of the national government than with improving agricultural production techniques. Later, he decided to encourage the commercialization of agriculture and to develop a nascent industrial base.[18]

Haile Selassie's idea of modernization revolved around an educated elite—predominately from the Amhara and Tigray ethnic groups—and during his reign he emphasized education for these groups and more or less ignored the poor and culturally subordinate ethnic groups. As often as he could, Haile Selassie recruited young, educated individuals who had been exposed to Western values to fill positions of responsibility in his government. Instead of choosing members of the nobility, as had traditionally been the case, these persons were usually commoners or exceedingly loyal individuals from the nobility.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Haile Selassie's social policy was that it almost completely ignored the need to build a sense of genuine Ethiopian national identity among the majority of that country's non-Amhara or non-Tigray ethnic groups. Some individuals from non-Amhara/Tigray groups were incorporated into the ruling class, and in the process they acquired a sense of loyalty to the Crown and a sense of "Ethiopian" identity. This, however, was far from universal. Although there was an endless stream of rhetoric from the emperor and his representatives devoted to the idea of the actual existence of a united Ethiopia, there were no actual policies designed to facilitate national political integration. For the most part, the state provided the majority of the country's population with only meager social services and even fewer opportunities to improve their opportunities in life. Instead, emphasis was placed on the control and exploitation of subordinate populations.

### *Social Inequalities as an Underlying Cause of Revolution*

Throughout his reign, Haile Selassie demonstrated a strong commitment to royal absolutism, while at the same time publicly espousing modernization and economic development. Contradictions and conflict necessarily emerged from these seemingly incompatible goals. Capitalist development in Ethiopia following World War II fueled the process of modernization. This highlighted contradictions relating to the remnants of a quasi-feudalistic agricultural sector and grinding poverty throughout most of the country. Most importantly these processes and social conditions also contributed to crystallizing the sense of ethnic consciousness among many of Ethiopia's subordinate groups.

By the mid-1960s it was apparent that the progressivism of some ele-

ments of the new classes the emperor worked hard to create had come to exceed his own. Instead of buttressing him during the period of modernization, newly educated and cosmopolitan elites—many of them non-Amhara or non-Tigray—increasingly spoke out about the contradictions between the values they had and those values held by the old, feudalistic classes, between conspicuous wealth and abject poverty and inequality, between democratic rhetoric and authoritarian practice. Thus, the seeds for the 1974 revolution were sown.

Among Haile Selassie's political reforms directed at easing the modernization of autocracy, perhaps the most significant were reforms relating to the constitutional monarchy and the quasi-representative institutions that legitimized it. In 1955, in an effort to enhance his domestic authority and his international prestige, the emperor encouraged the revision of the 1931 Constitution. That constitution provided for a popularly elected representative Chamber of Deputies for the first time.[19] However, the 1955 Constitution did not provide for political parties, and the emperor reserved the right to appoint and dismiss the prime minister. As in 1931, the established nobility opposed these changes, but the emperor's will was allowed to prevail as long as the aristocracy was allowed to maintain most of its traditional privileges.

The Chamber of Deputies had the power to amend and even veto proposals made by the government, but it was several years before deputies felt confident enough to do so. However, by 1966 it was apparent that the Chamber had become more than a rubber stamp for the government. In that year, after a bitter struggle between the Ministry of Finance and the lower house, a revised tax bill was finally forwarded to the emperor for his signature.

Ironically, it was the constitutional reforms of 1955 that appeared to have contributed most to a sharpening of the contradictions between the feudalistic values held by the traditional elites and the bourgeois-democratic values held by the new classes. Between 1965 and 1974, young intellectuals and students began to question the legitimacy of feudalism and royal absolutism. What came to be characterized as the "student movement" emerged in February 1965, crystallizing in a demonstration before Parliament. While Parliament was discussing a land reform bill, the rallying cry of the students was, "Land to the Tiller."[20] Such demonstrations became common from this moment on and, in 1969, students openly distributed pamphlets attacking the emperor directly. They called for radical social, economic, and political reforms. Nevertheless, there appeared not to have been an overwhelmingly leftist orientation among them. In these demonstrations, the contradictions inherent in the remnants of the old order were clearly identifiable; all that was left was for precipitating ingredients to be added to this inherently explosive situation.

Other contradictions emerged from the emperor's socioeconomic poli-

cies. As indicated above, throughout the postwar period, Haile Selassie's socioeconomic policies were aimed at economic extraction, control, and macroeconomic development rather than at social justice and national integration. In no case was this more evident than in the policies pursued by the imperial regime outside the highland core of the country.

In all aspects of social and economic policy, Amharas, Tigrays, and elites from other ethnic groups that had been assimilated into the dominant culture were favored over the rest of society. The emperor would occasionally pay visits to dissident areas in order to give symbolic assurances to subordinate groups that he was concerned with their plight, but seldom were such visits followed by significant policy changes. The result, in most of the periphery, was deep-seated resentment of the ruling class.

The situation of Eritrea under imperial rule was illustrative. Despite widespread opposition among several segments of the Eritrean population, Ethiopia annexed Eritrea in 1962, thus incorporating the last segment of the bureaucratic empire. For a decade, Eritrea, the former Italian colony, had existed in a federation with Ethiopia, but the act of annexation meant that it was now relegated to being a mere province of the Ethiopian state.

The union between Ethiopia and Eritrea had initially been accomplished under the auspices of the United Nations, but it was seen by many Eritreans, particularly those who did not adhere to the Ethiopian Orthodox religion, as a confirmation of Ethiopia's imperialist designs on their territory. Opposition groups generally preferred their own nation-state, and resistance movements were formed even before the union was consummated. Once Eritrea was annexed in 1962, such groups stepped up their activities. Significantly, at the time Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia, it possessed more political freedoms and democratic, participatory institutions than Ethiopia. Following annexation, political parties were banned and other institutions had to be changed to conform to the Ethiopian pattern.[21]

In the Ogaden region to the southeast of the country, Somalis who had briefly been united with the other parts of the Somali nation during World War II engaged in sporadic resistance against Ethiopia after the British returned the area to Ethiopia in 1948. Effective occupation of the Ogaden by the Ethiopian government did not begin to take shape until 1954–1955.

Between 1954 and 1960, Haile Selassie made sporadic attempts to "integrate" subject Somalis into the empire. Urban administrative centers, schools, and hospitals were established to present the trappings of an effective administration and allegedly to avail Ogaden Somalis of the same opportunities available to other Ethiopians. An effort was also made to absorb Somali elites gradually into the provincial administration. Despite these efforts, resistance continued.

In 1960 former British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland each achieved independence and quickly merged, forming the Somali Republic. From this time on, Somali nationalists, particularly through the many

branches of the Somali Youth League, began to press more seriously for the creation of an independent "Greater Somalia." This movement contributed to the intensification of a Somali irredentist movement in the Ogaden.

The main impetus for militaristic irredentism in the Ogaden, however, involved the founding of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) in 1960. The aim of the WSLF was to separate the territories Somalis occupied in Ethiopia and to join these areas to the Republic of Somalia.[22]

The WSLF relied heavily on Somalia for military and logistical support until the October 1969 coup that brought Mohamed Siad Barre to power. At first, Siad Barre attempted to reverse his government's policies toward the WSLF, withdrawing military support and jailing several of its leaders. He preferred to modernize his own regular army with assistance from the Soviet Union, always keeping the goal of "Greater Somalia" clearly in sight. WSLF leaders retreated to Aden, where they maintained an office in exile and attempted to continue guerrilla struggle with support from abroad. When Aden and Addis Ababa concluded a treaty in 1976, however, the WSLF was forced to turn to Somalia once again. By this time Siad Barre was more receptive to a relationship between the WSLF and his government.

By the early 1970s, during the last days of the imperial regime in Ethiopia, Somali resistance in the Ogaden had again intensified. In 1976, the Ethiopian Revolution that overthrew the imperial system entered a "reign of terror," creating widespread political instability throughout the country as competing political groups struggled to have their voices heard at the center of government. Siad Barre decided to take advantage of Ethiopia's unrest, and in 1977 made a bold and decisive bid to wrest the Ogaden from its control.

### *Oromo Claims*

Another major issue confronted the imperial regime in Ethiopia as it attempted to modernize autocracy. The Oromo people claimed social injustice and some of their leaders asserted that their nation had a right to self-determination. The Oromo people are the largest ethnic or nationality group in Ethiopia. They account for approximately 26 million of a total population of 65 million. Oromos are disproportionately represented in the southern parts of Ethiopia and were militarily incorporated into the empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in the configuration of the present boundaries of the state.[23]

Under Haile Selassie's rule, the Ethiopian state attempted to secure Oromo fealty through developing alliances with certain Oromo leaders. The most favored among the Oromo were those who chose to become totally assimilated into the dominant culture of the Amhara, often adopting Christian names. Historically, the Wollega and Shoan Oromos were the

most receptive to this approach, but as Haile Selassie became more concerned with firming up the boundaries of the modern state and its bureaucratic authority in the periphery, other Oromo were assimilated.

The state was represented by bureaucrats in the field, including some officials indigenous to the particular area (*balabats*) and some highlanders in service of the Crown (*neftegnyas*). These administrators viewed the majority of the Oromo as mere subjects. They were regularly the victims of corrupt bureaucrats and judges, all of whom invariably tended to be Christian northerners. In the distribution of scarce resources, Oromo needs were considered to be secondary to those of the dominant highlanders. When attempting to understand current ethnic tensions in Oromo regions, the inferior status accorded the Oromos and their culture must be considered, along with the fact that Oromo areas constituted the backbone of the Ethiopian economy. These areas were and are the main source of the country's chief export crops (coffee, oil, seeds, hides, and skins).[24]

Despite the fact that most Oromos had not enjoyed full rights as citizens of Ethiopia during the imperial era, a sense of Oromo national consciousness did not begin to surface until the mid-1960s when the Oromo self-help association, Macha-Tulama, was founded.[25] The organization, named after two of the major Oromo clans, was established in 1963 as a self-help club dedicated to promoting Oromo self-identity and improving the lot of the Oromo. Since political parties were not allowed, associations such as Macha-Tulama often took on political roles.

The organization attempted to involve Oromo in both the cities and the countryside. It was most successful in the south, Bale and Arussi in particular, where Oromos had been relegated to the status of tenants on land that was once theirs. At the height of its development, Macha-Tulama claimed as many as three hundred thousand members.[26] The leadership comprised educated Oromos who had initially accepted assimilation into the dominant culture, but rediscovering their own Oromo culture, decided to fight for a fair share of the spoils of modernization for their people.

The most prominent leader of the Macha-Tulama movement was Tadesse Biru, a former general in the Ethiopian police force and the territorial army. By late 1966 the Haile Selassie regime had become sufficiently alarmed at the growth in Macha-Tulama's popularity that it decided to arrest Tadesse Biru and other top officials of the organization. The pretext for this arrest was a bomb explosion in an Addis Ababa movie house that was attributed to Macha-Tulama. The organization was banned shortly thereafter. Tadesse Biru was brought to trial in 1968 and condemned to death, a sentence later commuted to life in prison.

Although Macha-Tulama was suppressed, Oromo nationalism did not disappear. In fact, more serious Oromo nationalist militancy emerged less than a decade later, with the founding of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1973. The OLF was dedicated to the "liberation of the entire Oromo

nation from Ethiopian Colonialism."[27] The OLF began an offensive against the Ethiopian government in Hararge Province in 1974, but sustained activities did not occur until 1976, after the collapse of the imperial regime.

### *The Demise of the Imperial State*

By the early 1970s, Ethiopian society was rife with contradictions, and the imperial regime appeared less and less capable of resolving these accumulating contradictions through its policies. The emperor until then had been able to rely on the support of significant flexible resources at his disposal (e.g., the military, the police, the Church, the bureaucracy, the educated classes, and diplomatic and military alliances) to help him survive. But this was no longer the case. The cumulative effect of the failure of Haile Selassie's polices to resolve multiple inconsistencies, which were themselves by-products of the process of modernization, could be considered the underlying cause of the 1974 revolution. Other debilitating factors, however, did not begin to come together until about 1973. During this period, two main precipitating causes manifested themselves. First, a catastrophic drought gripped large segments of Ethiopia, beginning in 1973. As a consequence, more than a hundred thousand people died of malnutrition, disease, and starvation, while the regime appeared to ignore the tragedy. By 1974, students and intellectuals had brought this problem to the attention not only of other Ethiopians but also of the world community. Second, in urban centers people suffered from unemployment, inflation, gasoline shortages, and food shortages of basic commodities; and groups such as teachers, students, taxi drivers, and industrial workers pressured the government to address their economically based grievances. The government either ignored these demands or responded meekly.

In this climate, critical contradictions evolved into open conflict. For example, the interests of old and new classes clashed in Parliament over land policy, government corruption, and democratic reform. Traditionalists attempted to block or moderate land reform proposals, and progressives pushed for more decisive policies to overcome Ethiopia's chronic underdevelopment and increasing dependence on foreign capital.

When a series of military mutinies in various regions rocked the country in February 1974, the government found itself in an untenable position. If it were to survive, a loyal military would be essential. Junior officers and enlisted men revolted not for revolutionary purposes but because of corporate grievances relating to salary and terms of service. Not only did these mutinies succeed in forcing the authorities to succumb to the soldiers' demands within a month, but these revolts also brought down the imperial regime. Ethiopia's bureaucratic empire had failed to modernize itself.

In an effort to stem growing discontent in several sectors of society, the regime made a last-ditch effort to reform national political institutions. In August 1974, yet another national constitution was proposed. This version

called for the abolition of royal absolutism, the introduction of parliamentary democracy, and the relegation of the emperor to only figurehead status. It was also proposed that there would be a separation of powers among the branches of government, universal suffrage, guaranteed civil rights, and a complete separation of church and state.

Even as the terms of the new constitution were being debated in Parliament, various groups throughout the country were becoming more and more politically emboldened. In many areas of the rural south even tenants and peasants had begun to express their concerns publicly. In some areas they began to appropriate land and other property claimed by *neftenyas* and *balabats*. They attacked the symbols of authority and the landed classes.

The military officers and enlisted men who mutinied in February 1974 also became more and more politicized as the year wore on, so much so that they were moved to preempt the enactment of the new constitution in September, only one month after its provisions were made public. Moreover, the military committee, beginning in April 1974, injected itself into matters of national public policy, albeit from behind the scenes. In September, however, the committee decided to go public and staged the coup that led to a resounding finale to the imperial regime of Haile Selassie.

Rather than being guided by an elaborate ideology, the coup makers claimed that they were motivated by a sense of patriotism. They adopted as their motto "Ethiopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia First), and they began referring to themselves as, the "Derg"—an Amharic term meaning "committee." Over the next three years, the Derg began to define its revolutionary objectives through its policy edicts. Its intention was to move away from feudalism and nascent capitalism to socialism under the leadership of the Derg itself. By 1976, the new regime declared its intentions to follow the Program for the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR) and its commitment to creating a political system and government based upon the principles of "scientific socialism."[28]

### *The Rise and Fall of the Marxist-Leninist Regime*

Upon assuming power, the first order of business for the Derg was to solve the Eritrean "problem." Some in its ranks pressed for a decisive military solution to what most Ethiopians perceived to be Eritrea's attempted secession. The PNDR was a first attempt to articulate the regime's position on this issue. This document asserted the right to self-determination of all nationalities within Ethiopia, including Eritreans.

In general, despite serious efforts at the beginning of its rule to create conditions for its widespread acceptance, the Derg was not able to convince significant segments of the population that it was legitimate or that its vision of the new society was the correct one. Its opponents included ideo-

logically (e.g., Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) and ethnically based movements (Tigray People's Liberation Front [TPLF], WSLF, OLF). However, with the assistance of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Yemen, the Derg was able to stabilize the country somewhat by late 1978 and to push the Eritrean liberation movement to the west. It was in this context that the construction of socialist institutions was begun, and by 1984 the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was inaugurated. Ironically, amidst these significant political transformations, Ethiopia was in the midst of yet another catastrophic drought and famine. The government practiced a scorched-earth policy in areas of intense rebel activity, instituting a villagization program in some parts of the country, and relocating whole communities to uninhabited or sparsely inhabited and difficult areas of the southern periphery. During this period, the regime diverted resources that would have been used for famine relief to military purposes, and relied upon the largess of the international community for humanitarian assistance.[29]

In early 1987, the new constitution, a hybrid that resembled the Soviet and Romanian Marxist-Leninist constitutions, was submitted to the populace for their consideration. There was a referendum on the document, which was officially said to have received 82 percent approval from 96 percent of those eligible to vote. The constitution established the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE), with an 835-member national assembly that gave strong powers to the president. Once the assembly was elected and held its first session in September 1987, one of the main pieces of enabling legislation had to do with the administrative reorganization of the country. In an effort to defuse nationalist discontent, the assembly created twenty-four administrative regions and five so-called autonomous regions.

Despite this gesture of regional reorganization, the response of most nationalist movements fighting the Mengistu regime was threefold and swift. They rejected the PDRE initiative, increased their military activities, and began to cooperate among themselves. Between 1987 and 1990 both the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the TPLF scored major victories over the Ethiopian National Army and came to control vast amounts of contested terrain in their respective regions. On its part, the TPLF organized a coalition of forces opposed to the regime. This coalition came to be known as the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), comprised of a TPLF core and other ethnically based groups.

The late 1980s also coincided with a decision by the Soviet Union to reform itself and to withdraw its economic and military support for the Mengistu regime. Having become desperate, Mengistu in 1989 declared a state of emergency and engaged in a rapid buildup of the national army. The beginning of the end for the Marxist regime—and also a sign of the state's collapse—was an abortive coup in May 1989, while Mengistu was on a state visit to East Germany in search of military aid. The army—which

had expanded to more than six hundred thousand—began to implode. Whole military units defected, taking their arms and equipment with them to join opposition forces. Over the next two years, the TPLF and its umbrella organization, the EPRDF, came to control all of Tigray and large segments of Wollo, Gondar, and Shoa provinces. In Eritrea, the EPLF took over all but the major towns of Asmara, Massawa, and Assab. By 1990 the rapidly declining military position of the Ethiopian forces on both the Eritrean and home fronts and the loss of political will on the part of Mengistu himself had overtaken U.S. attempts to broker a peace between Ethiopia and the EPLF and Italian efforts to do the same with the TPLF.[30]

Even as plans were being made for an all-parties peace conference in London, the EPRDF tightened its encirclement of Addis Ababa, and the EPLF overran Ethiopian garrisons at Massawa and closed in on the Eritrean capital, Asmara. Finally, on 21 May 1991, the Mengistu regime finally fell and he went into exile. Over the next week, law and order throughout the country broke down and soldiers of the Ethiopian army defected in droves. One garrison after another on the road to the capital fell as the rebels advanced. By the end of the month, the EPRDF had assumed power and was in the process of filling the vacuum left by the fallen Marxist regime.

## Ethnic Federalism, Development, and Democracy

A primary challenge facing any new regime is to restore state effectiveness while being guided by competent, politically committed leaders, working systematically to establish legitimacy and develop trust among society's disparate groups. The EPRDF at first tried to present the public image that it had the political will to address many of Ethiopia's past problems, including ethnically based discontent. Within a few weeks it had established a transitional government. A national conference was convened in July 1991 in an attempt by the EPRDF to secure widespread acceptance. It resulted in the signing of a transitional charter by representatives of some thirty-one political movements, the creation of a Council of Representatives with eighty-seven members, and the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. The EPRDF had the largest single bloc in the council with thirty-two seats, and the OLF, until its withdrawal from the government in late June 1992, was the second largest, with twelve seats.

The charter declared that the transitional period was to last no more than two and a half years. The council was charged with organizing a commission to draw up a draft constitution. The draft constitution was first submitted for public discussion 1994 and then voted into effect by a constituent assembly.

### *Ethnic Politics in the Context of Administrative Reform*

In 1992, the EPRDF government organized the first multiparty elections in Ethiopian history. These elections were for local and regional offices dur-

ing the period of transition to a multiparty democracy. In the days leading up to these elections in June, ethnic tensions ran high. Although ethnic parties had been included in the broad-based governing coalition, there were fears among groups such as the Oromo, Amhara, and Somali, that these elections would not be free and fair, and that the elections would simply provide a cover for the rule of the Tigray minority through the EPRDF. Days before the elections, major parties including the OLF, the Ethiopian Democratic Action Group, the Gideo People's Democratic Organization, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, and the All Amhara People's Organization announced that they would not participate in the process. At the same time, the armed wing of the OLF left camps to which they had been confined in the lead-up to the elections, and engaged in low-intensity warfare against the forces of the EPRDF. Because they refused to lay down their arms, the OLF was barred from participating in electoral politics.

In 1993, the EPRDF issued a proclamation relating to the registration of political parties. In order to operate freely and to engage in activities normally associated with political parties (e.g., organizing, campaigning, holding rallies, etc.), political organizations had to be registered. The only groups that were barred were those who attempted to pursue their objectives through the use of arms, and those that behaved irresponsibly and fomented conflict, hatred, racism, religious intolerance, etc.[31] In addition, the former Marxist ruling party, the WPE, was specifically excluded.

By the end of 1993, the governing coalition had narrowed considerably. In April of that year, the transitional government ousted five political groups (who called themselves the Southern Coalition) from the Council of Representatives for the endorsement of a resolution sponsored by opposition groups meeting in Paris, calling for dissolution of the council. Consequently, the membership of the council was reduced to the representatives of the EPRDF and the ethnic-based parties it had created. Organized opposition inside the country by this time was generally repressed. Major ethnically based parties were completely shut out of the pact that now formed the transitional government or were forced out over the first two years of the transition.[32]

In December 1993, the government allowed a "peace and reconciliation conference," organized by internal as well as exiled opposition groups, to take place. But some who returned from abroad to participate were arrested and government agents harassed participants. Moreover, the transitional government itself boycotted the conference, demonstrating that there was still a wide chasm between the EPRDF and opposition leadership. What was also made clear by this conference was that the opposition was badly fragmented along ethnic lines. Only the urban-based Ethiopian National Democratic Party and the Joint Political Forum were not organized along ethnic lines.

Elections for a constituent assembly to approve a new democratic constitution took place in 1994. All registered political parties were entitled to participate, and indeed, thirty-nine did. However, the outcome could have been predicted. Member organizations of the EPRDF won 484 of 547 seats. The EPRDF had the advantage of incumbency and a wealth of resources at its disposal, including patronage with which it could co-opt opposition leaders. Currently, the EPRDF and affiliated parties hold 518 seats in the 547-seat federal assembly. EPRDF and affiliated parties also hold all regional parliaments by large majorities, except in the capital, Addis Ababa, where opposition parties hold about 30 percent of the regional council.

Clearly what has emerged in Ethiopia is a type of what Alfred Stepan has termed a "putting together" federation[33] that is based upon the ruling EPRDF working through ethnically based elites and parties that are beholden to it.[34] Although authority is constitutionally devolved to subnational governments, this devolution is only apparent at the regional, zonal, and, in some cases, *woreda* (district) levels. Under most circumstances, subregional authorities have power and authority to make autonomous policy decisions only when this involves using non-federal resources. Given the heavy emphasis on following central directions, one could even argue that what Ethiopian federalism resembles is more a case of the deconcentration of authority rather than devolution of authority.

### *Foundations of Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia*

Even before the passage of the federal constitution, the EPRDF utilized selected proclamations and the transitional charter to create a new system of governance that was federal in form and based on a commitment to ethnically based self-determination. Perhaps the two most important provisions of the transitional charter in this regard were Articles II and XIII. Article II asserted the right of all Ethiopian nationalities to self-determination, the preservation of the national identities of each group, and the right of each nationality to govern its own affairs within the context of a federated Ethiopia. Article XIII stated that "there shall be a law establishing local and regional councils defined on the basis of nationality." These provisions represented a dramatic departure from the policies of previous regimes regarding the right of various ethnic groups to self-determination. The new policy quickly prompted protests among Ethiopian nationalists both at home and abroad who violently opposed what they saw as the balkanization of Ethiopia. Despite this, the EPRDF regime showed its determination to follow through on the administrative reorganization of the country along ethno-regional lines. This policy commitment was formalized with the enactment of the Federal Constitution of 1994.

Even as the constitution was in the final stages of being drafted, the EPRDF issued a major policy statement outlining its political views and policy objectives in regional reforms.[35] It declared its intention to imple-

ment a plan to devolve power from the center to states and local governments. This was billed as a form of "devolved federalism" without extensive subnational control over technical policies, laws, regulations, and taxes. This contrasts with the "coming together" type of federalism resulting from bargaining and negotiating among states that seek to voluntarily join in some type of federal arrangement. In such cases, each state surrenders a certain amount of its sovereignty, power, and authority to the center for the good of the collective. However, when it finally took shape, Ethiopia's federal system was clearly of the "holding together" variety, having been imposed from the top, and it quickly transformed into a "putting together" federal exercise, where there are federal features, but little or no liberal democracy.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the fact that although the constitution states that regional states may prepare their own constitutions, decide their own official language, develop their own administrative systems, establish separate police forces, and collect certain taxes, again the initiative for these arrangements came more from the center than from the constituent states.

Article 39 of the constitution, "The Rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples," declares that "every nation, nationality and people shall have the unrestricted right to self-determination up to secession." This action can be taken when at least two-thirds of the legislature of the nation, nationality, or people concerned vote to do so, and when the action is ratified in a statewide referendum three years later. Before secession can in fact occur, however, there are constitutional provisions for review by the Constitutional Court and the Council of the Federation, a national political and deliberative body with 108 elected representatives from all states. Article 39 also gives nations, nationalities, or peoples the right to speak, write, promote, and develop their own languages.

The constitution further proclaims the establishment of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, consisting of nine states. Five of these states (Afar, Amhara, Harari, Oromia, Somalia, and Tigray) are dominated by a single ethnic group, and four—Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP)—are multiethnic states, without one dominant ethnic group. In the multiethnic regional states, although each group uses its own language on a day-to-day basis, Amharic is the working language. In the others, the working language is the language of the predominant group in the state.

The objectives of the EPRDF seemed noble. They claimed to want to reduce the ethnic tensions and conflicts that had dominated the modern history of Ethiopia; to forthrightly tackle social and economic problems in such a way that all ethnic groups were treated as equals; to build a democratic society; and to construct effective, efficient, and incorrupt systems of governance.[36] To do this, a new social compact for the polity was needed.

However, rather than such a compact being negotiated among elites representing the major groups in society, or emerging in an organic manner, it was imposed from above. What has evolved is an asymmetrical form of federalism that is "hypercentralized."

## The Practice of Ethnic Federalism and Revenue Sharing in Ethiopia

Some outside observers see the Ethiopian experiment with "ethnic federalism" as "bold and thoughtful."[37] By the standards of public administration, this would seem to be the case. However, there is a political dimension that most outside observers such as the World Bank and other international development agencies seem to ignore or simply downplay. Ethnic federalism has *not* resulted in a widespread consensus in the general population of Ethiopia. There are some in the public at large—particularly among the Amhara and some others—who see themselves as Ethiopians first and members of an ethnic group second, and who contend that by definition a development strategy involving ethnic federalism is fatally flawed. This is the predominant view of citizens who feel that such a strategy will ultimately result in the demise of a unitary Ethiopian state.[38] Some scholars question this approach because they claim it is likely to lead to more rather than less ethnic-based conflict.[39] This sentiment was clearly evidenced among some participants in a national conference called by the government that involved academics from institutions of higher learning throughout the country. The *Ethiopian Herald* reported that "some conference participants . . . said that as . . . Article 39 does not encourage unity or tolerance among the people it should be *rubbed out*. They vehemently condemned the existence of the Article in the constitution saying that it can be the major cause of some opposition parties to raise the issue of secession."[40]

Despite such concerns, the EPRDF government forged ahead with its plans, justifying this approach based on the fact that its first priority was the removal of social inequalities founded upon ethnicity. In 1995, one of the government's chief ideologues, citing the historic failure of previous Ethiopian governments to address the problem of ethnic disharmony, stated, "We must find a solution which is beneficial to the Ethiopian people today, therefore, history will not provide the answer."[41] Prime Minister Meles Zinawe recently reinforced this point when he asserted that the EPRDF government was "resolved to empower and promote democratic principles by giving affirmative actions [*sic*] to historically disadvantaged groups and relatively backward states."[42]

*Hybrid federalism.* The experiment currently under way is indeed hybrid federalism with many features that are characteristically Ethiopian. In structural terms, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia resembles federal states in most parts of the world. As mentioned above, it consists of

nine regional states, and two special cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. In addition, Ethiopia is made up of 66 administrative zones (provinces), 550 *woredas* (districts), and six special districts. Each of the four levels of government has more or less the same structures, with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The regional state bureaucracy carries out the day-to-day operations of government.

*State versus federal powers.* Regional state powers include the implementation of state constitutions as well as social (e.g., language policy, education policy) and economic development policies and plans; the policing function; the administration of land and natural resources according to federal law; taxation in such areas as personal income (except for federal, state, and international employees); certain producer and manufacture taxes; and certain joint taxes with the federal government.

Although most taxing powers rest with the federal government, most of the expenditure obligations of government in this federal system are the responsibility of regional states, zones, and *woredas*. The central government has rather narrow responsibilities. It is responsible for collecting most taxes, including import and export taxes; setting national economic and social policies; and establishing national standards in areas such as commerce and trade, finance, and transportation. Also, like central governments in all federal states, it is responsible for the conduct of foreign policy, ensuring national defense, monetary policy, and setting policy relating to interregional state transportation and commerce.

Despite the fact that the constitution gives a great deal of power and administrative authority to regional states, the overwhelming amount of political power in this system rests with the central government. As a result, Ethiopia in practice operates more like a unitary state, with regional states closely following the policy lead of the center, mainly as represented in the EPRDF's Five Year Program, rather than asserting their policy independence. This system has been described as a form of "cooperative federalism," characterized by a policy consensus between the federal and state governments in most sectors. What is revealed here is the manner in which the EPRDF government has systematically neutralized political opposition; political elites and party cadres who support it have been placed in positions of power and authority at the regional level. At the same time, the central government has set up a devolved system of administration, ostensibly in an effort to bring government closer to the people and to create an environment conducive to peoples' empowerment.

In poor and deeply divided countries such as Ethiopia, administrative devolution under the best of circumstances would be risky business. Poverty and weak, uncoordinated administrative institutions have generally proven to be anathema to the successful implementation of devolved federalism. Such an approach has the tendency to limit population movement

between and among regional states; it could lead to demands for secession from the federal state; it could limit the ability of the central government to take an effective lead in the development of the country; and it is likely to inhibit the development of an open and free market that integrates all parts of the country.

For devolved ethnic federalism to work, there should at the very least be a widespread sense in the general population of national unity, and a sense that ethnically based federalism, rooted in the principles of administrative devolution, is appropriate to the development of the country. Moreover, there should be the administrative and financial capacity to implement such a strategy effectively. However, at the time the strategy of devolved ethnic federalism was embarked upon, there was a consensus only among a narrow circle of elites within or close to the EPRDF that this strategy was desirable.

In structural terms, what is the driving mechanism of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia? Does this policy achieve what it is meant to achieve in structural terms? In terms of their effectiveness and appropriateness, how are various levels of government perceived by the agents who are supposed to implement federalist policies as well as by the general population these policies are meant to affect? We turn our attention to these questions in the next two subsections.

## Federalism and Revenue Sharing: The Engine of Devolved Governance

The engine of Ethiopia's devolved federalism is a hybrid system of revenue sharing that includes block grants through which the central government shares with regional states tax and other revenues it is able to generate.[43]

### *The Causes and Consequences of Fiscal Imbalance*

The dominance of the Ethiopian federal government in revenue generation has resulted in state governments' relying extensively on transfers from the central government to meet their obligations. Ideally, a federal arrangement would be characterized by a fiscal balance whereby regional governments would have taxing powers sufficient for them to meet their service delivery and governance obligations. However, in Ethiopia this has not been the case. In fact, present-day Ethiopia has been characterized by vertical imbalances, with mismatches between their expenditure responsibilities and their revenue-generating capacities. For example, in the 1993–1994 fiscal year, out of a total expenditure of Birr 3,145 million[44] by the regions, only Birr 807 million (26 percent) was generated by the states; the rest was in the form of grants and subsidies from the central government. These numbers highlight the fact that between 80 percent and 90 percent of all revenue is controlled by the federal government. Moreover, the expenditure patterns of the states are centrally monitored, and thus controlled.

The World Bank has estimated that in 1994–1996 the regional states collected only 15 percent of the total national revenues. By 1996–1997 that figure had risen by 2 percent.[45] This change does not represent a significant erosion of the dominance of the federal government in revenue generation, and only serves to highlight the relative weaknesses of regional states in such matters.

### *Revenue Sharing and the Reduction of Regional State Inequalities*

Acknowledging the significant disparity in terms of levels of economic development, the widespread poverty and inequality throughout the country, and differences in the revenue-generating capacities of the states, the federal government of Ethiopia has turned to a form of revenue sharing as a way of implementing an equity-based development strategy. Taxes are collected at the center and then devolved to the regions according to a formula that has a significant equity component.

Ethiopia's approach to revenue sharing involves the provision of "budgetary subsidies" or block grants from the center to the states. Grants are determined according to a formula. The share of the budget subsidy that is accorded each region is based on such objective factors as the region's population share, its relative level of development, and its relative projected revenue-generation capacity.

### *Conditionalities and Block Grants to Regional States*

In principle, block grants to states come with no strings attached. In developed countries revenue sharing generally involves tax sharing. But in developing countries it often takes the form of block grants to regions, based on needs, and intended to compensate for the differences in regional resource endowments and levels of economic development. Regions under such circumstances theoretically have the power and authority to identify the policy preferences of their constituents, to formulate their own development plans, and to make decisions about the allocation of their own budgets between sectors as well as between capital and recurrent expenditures. However, as mentioned above, state spending decisions most often are heavily influenced by priorities set nationally in the EPRDF Five Year Program. In other words, officials at the regional state and zone levels, who are generally party loyalists, structure the choices at the *woreda* and sub-*woreda* levels so that they conform to centrally determined priorities.

### *Making Spending Decisions at the Regional State Level*

While there generally has been a policy consensus between states and the federal government, there have been occasions when intraregional conflicts have emerged over how to allocate the revenues received from the center. For instance, the World Bank reported that in the Amhara region there was an incident recently where zonal preferences did not match regional prefer-

ences. One zone wanted to allocate its entire budget to roads, at the expense of such important activities as improving educational infrastructure and instruction, health care, and agricultural programs. Another wanted to use its entire budget to construct a sports stadium. However, each zone was persuaded to change its plans and to follow guidelines set at the federal and regional levels "for a more balanced approach to development."[46] Such incidents show that there are limits to autonomous decisionmaking on the part of lower levels of administration, especially when they stray too far outside nationally and regionally determined priorities. This is especially true at the *woreda* level. Rather than popular participation being enhanced at that level, it is constrained by the heavy hand of the center and its representatives at the state and zonal levels.

### *Interregional Imbalances*

In addition to the fiscal imbalance that exists between the center and the regional states, there are also imbalances between and among regions themselves. For instance, the city of Addis Ababa finances almost all its public spending from revenues that it generates independently. In fact, Addis Ababa accounts for an average of 34 percent of the revenues raised by all states. The state that collects the next largest percentage of revenues is Oromia (28 percent), followed by the Amhara Regional State (12 percent), and the SNNPR State (11 percent). The lowest collections tend to be in Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Harari, and Afar. (See Table 3.1.)

It is interesting to note that of all the tax revenues individual states are able to generate on their own, in Gambella, one of the poorest states, most of the state's revenues collected come from personal income tax paid primarily by government employees. Another interesting statistic is in the category of sales tax on goods—Tigray and Afar (another extremely poor state) far outpace other states in terms of the percentage of their revenues collected in this category. This is in large measure due to taxes levied by state governments against public and private enterprises doing business in those regions. The regions of Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella are barely able to finance 10 percent of their public expenditures on their own.

### *The Limits of Revenue Sharing as a Strategy for Democracy and Development*

The heavy reliance of regional states on the federal government for fiscal resources is only part of the story. Despite an admirable development strategy centered on the principle of revenue sharing, regional states tend not to be able to exercise independent authority. There are a number of reasons for this including the following:

*The reality of an underdeveloped private sector, and a lack of access to credit for this sector.* In most regions except for Amhara, Addis Ababa, Tigray, and

**Table 3.1 Regional Revenue Indicators, 1994/95–1997/98**

| | Total | Tigray | Afar | Amhara | Oromia | Somali | Benesh. -Gamuz | SNNP | Gambel. | Harari | Addis Ababa | Dire Dawa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Share of Total State Revenues | 100.00 | 6.98 | 0.91 | 12.12 | 27.51 | 4.07 | 0.48 | 11.02 | 0.48 | 0.60 | 34.16 | 1.67 |
| Per Capita Revenue/GDP | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.36 | 0.21 |
| 1994 Population (millions) | 52.64 | 3.14 | 1.11 | 13.83 | 18.73 | 2.32 | 0.46 | 10.38 | 0.18 | 0.13 | 2.11 | 0.25 |
| Share of 1996/97 State Totals | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Personal Income Tax | | 15 | 26 | 19 | 12 | 11 | 31 | 17 | 47 | 19 | 13 | 12 |
| Business Profit Tax | | 13 | 14 | 8 | 28 | 78 | 2 | 19 | 2 | 44 | 16 | 41 |
| Agricultural Income & Land Fees | | 10 | 0 | 33 | 25 | 0 | 12 | 25 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Ag. Income Tax | | 4 | 0 | 16 | 13 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rural Land Use Fee | | 6 | 0 | 16 | 12 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sales Tax on Goods | | 32 | 39 | 4 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 15 |
| Service Sales Tax | | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Urban Land Lease Fee | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| Gov't Sale of Goods & Services | | 5 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 15 | 7 | 21 | 0 | 5 | 9 |
| Stamp Sales & Duty | | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 5 |
| Charges & Fees | | 10 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| All Others | | 9 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 6 | 34 | 13 | 20 | 10 | 33 | 6 |

*Source:* World Bank, *Ethiopia: Review of Public Financies,* vol. 2. Report No. 18369-ET, 30 December 1999, 45.
*Note:* The share of state revenue is the average for the period 1993/94 through 1996/97.

Oromia, this sector is either at a very low level of development or no development.[47] Moreover, given the heavy reliance of regional states on revenues emanating from the center, there is a disincentive for private capital to invest locally.

*The shortage of administrative capacity, particularly in the poorest regions.*[48] There is a significant regional difference in the availability of skilled administrative and technical staff, and this is a major constraint on their autonomous development. This is a natural consequence of attempting to implement a federalist system under conditions of abject poverty and underdevelopment. Decentralization comes at a high price. It involves the duplication of institutions and functions in a hierarchical pattern from top to bottom. In order to meet staff needs, regional bureaucracies must either employ individuals who may not be qualified for the positions they hold, or force skilled bureaucrats to underutilize their talents. This problem is particularly acute in the poorest regions.

The practice of "pooling" is used in an effort to address shortages in qualified administrative manpower at the regional state and particularly the *woreda* level. That is, the sharing of individuals with needed administrative skills among various offices in different branches of government or in different policy sectors. This works in some cases, but in areas of the judiciary and legislative branches of government it is problematic.[49]

The record shows that while popular participation at the regional level has improved, including citizens' ability to determine how public funds are spent and what services are given priority, there has not been an equivalent improvement in the efficiency of administration. In most regions basic public services such as drinking water, sanitation, education, public health, and public works are generally unavailable or available only on a limited basis.

A second approach to dealing with the problem of low levels of administrative capacity at the regional level has involved the federal government's providing state governments with training and technical assistance for capacity building. This support, however, has been quite modest in relation to the amount of public fiscal resources the states have been asked to distribute. The absorptive capacity of shared revenues by such regions as Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul-Gumuz is quite low, and this serves as a drag on regional development. States are required to give their recurrent needs the highest priority, followed by ongoing noncapital projects. New investment projects are given the lowest priority. The poorest regions most often are only able to address their recurrent needs.

*Problems with breaking in the system of ethnic federalism.* Besides the limited availability of sufficient numbers of trained and skilled civil servants at the regional level and below, a problem also exists with the fact that devolved federalism is new, and regional and local administrators and politicians do

have a great deal of discretion to set their own rules in dealing with constituents. In some cases this has led to serious excesses in administration. For example, although the constitution guarantees citizen freedom of assembly, this right is not always adhered to by local administration. The U.S. State Department's 1999 Human Rights Report cited a January 1999 case in which the Coalition of Ethiopian Opposition Political Organizations held a rally in Addis Ababa to announce its political agenda, but its organizers claimed that they were hindered in carrying out their plans because local authorities did not approve a permit for the rally until a day before.[50]

*Pitfalls of donor dependence.* Regional states, in addition to being heavily reliant on grants from the federal government, tend also to be dependent on donor assistance. Neither situation has proved anywhere to be conducive to the achievement of autonomous development on the part of states. In the case of Ethiopia, the practice has been for states to attempt to cut their dependence on donor assistance even before they can reduce their reliance on block grants from the center. In part this is due to a sense of nationalism that is encouraged by the EPRDF, and in part due to the fact that state administrators know that there is no value added with donor assistance. Assistance provided by donors is distributed and tightly controlled by the federal government. It is subtracted from the amount that would otherwise be allocated through the revenue-sharing scheme. Moreover, the strings attached and stringent reporting requirements of many donor-driven projects make them less desirable to state administrators.

*Official corruption.* A final negative aspect of devolved federalism in Ethiopia, particularly given the nascent stage of its regional and subregional bureaucracy, is official corruption.[51] As in the past, the EPRDF regime promotes the use of *gim gama* (self-criticism) sessions for bureaucrats as a way of addressing charges of corruption. However, in recent years this method has proven to be grossly inadequate in addressing the problem of official corruption.

In May 2001 the EPRDF government established the Federal Anti-Corruption Commission, and within six weeks twenty-four businessmen, bankers, and government officials had been arrested on charges of corruption. They included two former TPLF ministers who were accused of anti-democratic sentiments. Most of the corruption charges had to do with the sale of government-owned businesses and the provision of loans by the national bank without adequate security.

Significantly, this anticorruption campaign was launched at the same time that the TPLF and other EPRDF-affiliated parties engaged in purges of their leadership as well as all levels of government. Differences had begun to emerge in the TPLF leadership as early as 1996 over governance and ideological issues, but these differences did not become evident publicly

until during the border war with Eritrea (1998–2000). In March 2001, twelve members of the TPLF Central Committee walked out of one of its meetings. Hard-line Tigray nationalists had felt that the war with Eritrea should have been prosecuted further and that the TPLF should not abandon its Marxist orientations in favor of liberal democracy and capitalism. The so-called "splinter group" was arrested, and a six-month debate within the TPLF and EPRDF leadership ensued, finally resulting in the neutralization of the splinter group and the affirmation of EPRDF's leadership under Meles Zinawe. At its Fourth Party Congress, the EPRDF called for "renewal," and reaffirmed the democratic values in the constitution.[52] Subsequently, there were significant changes at all levels of government. Many who lost their positions after the onset of the renewal were alleged to be supporters of the splinter group or their allies within EPRDF-affiliated parties (e.g., the Amhara National Democratic Movement, the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization, Southern Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Front), or implicated in electoral irregularities in 2000 and 2001. The Final Report of the EPRDF Congress proclaimed that capacity building at all levels of governance and in party activities would be fundamental to the tasks of renewal and rehabilitation.

What is clear is that despite pledges by the EPRDF to build and improve administrative capacity and policy effectiveness, the continuing lack of good governance at various levels of Ethiopia's government could well continue to undercut any efforts to tackle serious problems such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination. At the same time, if the majority of people have favorable opinions of the efforts being made by those who govern only have responsibility for implementing policy, this might be an indication of support for the regime and its development strategy. How satisfied is the population at large that various levels of government are meeting their security needs? How satisfied are members of various ethnic communities that the government's policies uphold their equal rights as citizens?

## Public Perceptions of the Adequacy of Service Delivery, Identity, and Citizenship

*The data and methods.* In addition to various primary and secondary sources, the data in this study come from (1) public documents; (2) personal, open-ended, and nonstructured interviews with government officials at the national and regional levels, and with private citizens throughout the country; and (3) a purposively selected survey sample of 277 respondents in the regional states of Oromia, SNNPR (Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional State), Tigray, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. The data were gathered over a two-year period between 2001 and 2003. The statistical data are analyzed via cross-tabulation and regression analysis.

*The voice of the people: cross-regional comparisons.* Among the main objectives of the survey sampling exercise was to gauge public opinion regarding citizens' evaluation of the adequacy of government service provision involving the central government as well as the *woreda*. It was assumed that the information we received would allow some insight as to the effectiveness of the policy of administrative devolution. The devolution of administrative authority down to the *woreda* level is very recent, and it could be that the populace do not quite understand implications of this change, or they might not perceive that level of authority to have clearly established its role in the provision of social services. The social services that were inquired about were policing, health care, education, road maintenance and development, the courts, the provision of safe water, and food security. Let us now turn our attention to the data as it relates to the provision of services by these seven categories.

### *Central Government Service Delivery*

In terms of the opinion of citizens of the adequacy of the delivery of social services by the central government, while controlling for the region in which they reside, the data clearly indicate that the citizens of the Tigray state are consistently more satisfied than citizens of other regional states with the performance of the government in delivering the social services about which we inquired. (See Table 3.2.)

However, like the citizens of other regions, those from Tigray were least satisfied with the performance of the court system and with the provision of food security. Fifty-six percent of the Tigray respondents were either somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the central government in the delivery of services in these categories. These same respondents seemed particularly satisfied with progress being made by the central government in the areas of formal education, police services, and the provision of safe water. Table 3.2 further indicates that respondents from Oromia state were the least satisfied across the board with central government service provision, followed by respondents from Amhara state. In no category was the Oromo level of satisfaction more than 11 percent. The highest levels of dissatisfaction among the Oromo were in the areas of health care delivery (98 percent) and road development and maintenance (100 percent). It is interesting to note that in the multiethnic states of Benishangul-Gumuz and SNNPR, the safe water and food security categories revealed the highest level of dissatisfaction. Furthermore, among the respondents from SNNPR state only one in four was satisfied with the court services available to them.

In addition to controlling for the region of residence, the study also controlled for the nationality of the respondents. (See Table 3.3.)

Tigrayan respondents again tended to be the most satisfied with services being provided by the central government, particularly regarding police

**Table 3.2 Satisfaction with Central Government Services by Region**

| Region | Degree of Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction | Police % | Health Care % | Education % | Roads % | Court % | Water % | Food % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Most Satisfied | 14 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 29 | 10 | 19 | 22 | 5 | 16 | 2 |
| Addis Ababa | Satisfied | 10 | 18 | 19 | 8 | 7 | 24 | 4 |
| | Less Satisfied | 35 | 27 | 21 | 22 | 27 | 24 | 15 |
| | Dissatisfied | 12 | 45 | 38 | 43 | 61 | 31 | 79 |
| | Most Satisfied | 9 | 4 | 37 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| | More Satisfied | 23 | 19 | 22 | 30 | 11 | 21 | 11 |
| Tigray | Satisfied | 51 | 44 | 28 | 25 | 32 | 52 | 30 |
| | Less Satisfied | 6 | 17 | 6 | 21 | 21 | 12 | 25 |
| | Dissatisfied | 11 | 17 | 7 | 17 | 36 | 12 | 32 |
| | Most Satisfied | 2 | 2 | 33 | 11 | 0 | 21 | 6 |
| | More Satisfied | 19 | 54 | 40 | 41 | 23 | 53 | 6 |
| Amhara | Satisfied | 14 | 9 | 5 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| | Less Satisfied | 14 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | Dissatisfied | 51 | 33 | 19 | 27 | 69 | 17 | 85 |
| | Most Satisfied | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Oromia | Satisfied | 6 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| | Less Satisfied | 17 | 23 | 28 | 4 | 13 | 23 | 7 |
| | Dissatisfied | 75 | 75 | 62 | 96 | 83 | 69 | 88 |
| | Most Satisfied | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 18 | 14 | 20 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 9 |
| SNNPR | Satisfied | 32 | 20 | 29 | 31 | 14 | 21 | 9 |
| | Less Satisfied | 26 | 31 | 26 | 37 | 38 | 32 | 9 |
| | Dissatisfied | 21 | 34 | 23 | 14 | 38 | 21 | 74 |
| | Most Satisfied | 29 | 7 | 22 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| | More Satisfied | 17 | 30 | 7 | 22 | 22 | 7 | 12 |
| Beneshengul-Gamuz | Satisfied | 33 | 30 | 30 | 37 | 26 | 19 | 12 |
| | Less Satisfied | 0 | 7 | 15 | 4 | 13 | 22 | 8 |
| | Dissatisfied | 21 | 26 | 26 | 33 | 30 | 48 | 60 |
| Total | Most Satisfied | 22(9%) | 5(2%) | 44(17%) | 14(5%) | 3(1%) | 20(8%) | 6(2%) |
| Satisfied/ | More Satisfied | 44(18%) | 53(20%) | 47(19%) | 55(21%) | 22(10%) | 51(20%) | 16(6%) |
| Dissatisfied | Satisfied | 60(24%) | 53(20%) | 48(19%) | 45(18%) | 32(14%) | 57(22%) | 26(10%) |
| Numbers | Less Satisfied | 43(17%) | 47(18%) | 40(16%) | 40(16%) | 44(20%) | 47(18%) | 29(12%) |
| (percents) | Dissatisfied | 82(33%) | 101(39%) | 74(29%) | 102(40%) | 122(55%) | 82(32%) | 173(69%) |
| Total number of respondents | | 251 | 259 | 253 | 256 | 223 | 257 | 250 |

services, health care, education, the provision of safe water, and road maintenance and development. However, more than half of the Tigrayan respondents were somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the courts as well as with the provision of food security. On the one hand the favorable ratings could well be related to the fact that the central government, which is domi-

**Table 3.3 Satisfaction with Central Government Services by Nationality**

| Region | Degree of Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction | Police % | Health Care % | Education % | Roads % | Court % | Water % | Food % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Most Satisfied | 5 | 0 | 23 | 9 | 0 | 12 | 4 |
| | More Satisfied | 22 | 33 | 23 | 31 | 16 | 35 | 5 |
| Amhara | Satisfied | 18 | 20 | 14 | 12 | 5 | 16 | 1 |
| | Less Satisfied | 24 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 21 | 12 | 4 |
| | Dissatisfied | 32 | 39 | 28 | 33 | 58 | 25 | 87 |
| | Most Satisfied | 13 | 5 | 31 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 1 |
| | More Satisfied | 25 | 24 | 29 | 34 | 10 | 20 | 11 |
| Tigrayan | Satisfied | 43 | 37 | 26 | 23 | 29 | 48 | 30 |
| | Less Satisfied | 10 | 18 | 5 | 20 | 24 | 12 | 23 |
| | Dissatisfied | 10 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 36 | 13 | 34 |
| | Most Satisfied | 9 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 9 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Oromo | Satisfied | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 7 |
| | Less Satisfied | 16 | 23 | 28 | 7 | 13 | 24 | 8 |
| | Dissatisfied | 56 | 57 | 51 | 74 | 70 | 57 | 80 |
| | Most Satisfied | 8 | 0 | 8 | 15 | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 8 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Sidama | Satisfied | 42 | 15 | 46 | 38 | 27 | 25 | 15 |
| | Less Satisfied | 17 | 46 | 23 | 46 | 27 | 33 | 15 |
| | Dissatisfied | 25 | 23 | 8 | 0 | 45 | 25 | 62 |
| | Most Satisfied | 33 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| | More Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Berta | Satisfied | 33 | 33 | 50 | 50 | 33 | 17 | 17 |
| | Less Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| | Dissatisfied | 33 | 50 | 17 | 33 | 33 | 50 | 50 |
| | Most Satisfied | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 13 | 7 |
| Other | More Satisfied | 25 | 13 | 20 | 27 | 13 | 20 | 7 |
| Southern | Satisfied | 38 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 7 | 20 | 0 |
| Nationalities | Less Satisfied | 19 | 38 | 40 | 33 | 33 | 40 | 27 |
| | Dissatisfied | 13 | 31 | 20 | 20 | 40 | 7 | 60 |
| | Most Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | More Satisfied | 17 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 0 |
| | Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 17 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Less Satisfied | 33 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 0 |
| | Dissatisfied | 50 | 71 | 68 | 71 | 86 | 57 | 100 |
| Total | Most Satisfied | 22(9%) | 5(2%) | 44(18%) | 14(6%) | 3(1%) | 20(8%) | 6(2%) |
| Satisfied/ | More Satisfied | 44(18%) | 53(21%) | 45(18%) | 55(22%) | 22(10%) | 49(19%) | 16(7%) |
| Dissatisfied | Satisfied | 60(24%) | 53(21%) | 48(19%) | 44(17%) | 32(14%) | 57(23%) | 26(11%) |
| Numbers | Less Satisfied | 43(17%) | 47(18%) | 40(16%) | 40(16%) | 44(20%) | 47(19%) | 29(12%) |
| (percents) | Dissatisfied | 79(32%) | 97(38%) | 72(29%) | 100(40%) | 120(54%) | 80(32%) | 169(69%) |
| Total number of respondents | | 248 | 255 | 249 | 253 | 221 | 253 | 246 |

nated by the TPLF, has made a special effort to make up for the historically woefully inadequate provision of social services in Tigray. At the same time, as mentioned above, the court system, especially at the local levels, is characterized by many undereducated judges, limited operational resources, and overloaded court dockets. The findings regarding food security are not surprising given Ethiopia's frequent problem with drought and famine in Tigray and other parts of the country.

Significantly, the Amhara and Oromo respondents generally tended to be critical of the central government's service delivery efforts. The highest levels of satisfaction with central government service delivery among the Amhara respondents were in the education and safe water categories. However, 91 percent of these respondents were unhappy about the central government's ability to provide for food security, and only 21 percent were somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the court services. By contrast, the Oromo respondents tended to across the board be dissatisfied with the central government's provision of services. The range of Oromo dissatisfaction was from a low of 72 percent in the area of police services to highs of between 78 percent and 89 percent in the areas of health care, education, roads, courts, water, and food security. Moreover, only 12 percent of the Oromo were either somewhat satisfied or satisfied with their food security plight; none were very satisfied. How are we to understand the attitudes of respondents from Ethiopia's two largest ethnic groups? The Amhara tend to feel that the EPRDF government's ethnic federalism policy undermines the unity of the Ethiopian nation, and that their group is the object of particular marginalization by the regime. Many Oromos are torn between wanting to exercise their right to self-determination and separating Oromia from the Ethiopian state, or sticking with it, but demanding their equal-citizenship rights. In either case, the level of popular disaffection comes through in these data. The Sidama are the largest nationality group in the SNNPR state, where there are more than forty distinct nationalities, and the Berta hold a similar position in Benishangul-Gumuz. Local conditions seem to have influenced the responses we got from respondents in those states. Sidama respondents were most concerned with health care, the court system, and food security issues. The Berta respondents of Benishangul-Gumuz were generally supportive of the central government's service delivery effort, particularly in the education sector (84 percent), but they registered some dissatisfaction with the government's delivery of services in the court system (50 percent), the provision of safe water (67 percent), and food security (67 percent).

### *Government Service Delivery*

The pattern of respondent's satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels with service delivery by the central government carried over to the *woreda* level (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4 Satisfaction with Woreda Services by Region**

| Region | Degree of Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction | Police % | Health Care % | Education % | Roads % | Court % | Water % | Food % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Most Satisfied | 18 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 19 | 3 |
| | More Satisfied | 16 | 7 | 18 | 9 | 3 | 19 | 8 |
| Addis Ababa | Satisfied | 27 | 14 | 18 | 13 | 3 | 21 | 12 |
| | Less Satisfied | 22 | 27 | 18 | 22 | 28 | 19 | 5 |
| | Dissatisfied | 18 | 52 | 44 | 54 | 67 | 23 | 72 |
| | Most Satisfied | 4 | 6 | 19 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| | More Satisfied | 26 | 29 | 19 | 20 | 13 | 15 | 8 |
| Tigray | Satisfied | 49 | 31 | 38 | 34 | 21 | 48 | 27 |
| | Less Satisfied | 11 | 19 | 17 | 26 | 28 | 17 | 33 |
| | Dissatisfied | 9 | 15 | 8 | 18 | 36 | 13 | 31 |
| | Most Satisfied | 2 | 0 | 21 | 17 | 0 | 20 | 2 |
| | More Satisfied | 15 | 58 | 51 | 52 | 17 | 56 | 13 |
| Amhara | Satisfied | 22 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| | Less Satisfied | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 9 |
| | Dissatisfied | 54 | 33 | 18 | 19 | 65 | 18 | 76 |
| | Most Satisfied | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Oromia | Satisfied | 8 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| | Less Satisfied | 10 | 17 | 23 | 0 | 9 | 23 | 12 |
| | Dissatisfied | 80 | 81 | 69 | 98 | 89 | 71 | 81 |
| | Most Satisfied | 14 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 18 | 3 |
| | More Satisfied | 14 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| SNNPR | Satisfied | 24 | 26 | 38 | 38 | 23 | 30 | 6 |
| | Less Satisfied | 24 | 35 | 24 | 35 | 20 | 30 | 13 |
| | Dissatisfied | 24 | 26 | 21 | 15 | 50 | 21 | 69 |
| | Most Satisfied | 32 | 8 | 19 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 8 |
| | More Satisfied | 16 | 20 | 15 | 15 | 18 | 8 | 0 |
| Beneshengul- | Satisfied | 24 | 20 | 38 | 27 | 23 | 8 | 24 |
| Gamuz | Less Satisfied | 4 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| | Dissatisfied | 24 | 32 | 27 | 46 | 36 | 75 | 64 |
| Total | Most Satisfied | 24(10%) | 6(12%) | 27(11%) | 15(6%) | 5(2%) | 27(11%) | 6(3%) |
| Satisfied/ | More Satisfied | 35(15%) | 51(21%) | 45(18%) | 42(17%) | 16(8%) | 45(18%) | 16(7%) |
| Dissatisfied | Satisfied | 64(27%) | 40(16%) | 58(24%) | 47(19%) | 26(13%) | 49(20%) | 29(12%) |
| Numbers | Less Satisfied | 32(13%) | 48(20%) | 37(15%) | 36(15%) | 37(18%) | 40(16%) | 32(14%) |
| (percents) | Dissatisfied | 86(36%) | 101(41%) | 78(32%) | 106(43%) | 121(59%) | 84(34%) | 150(64%) |
| Total number of respondents | | 241 | 246 | 245 | 246 | 205 | 245 | 233 |

Again the strongest endorsements of the service provision efforts of their *woredas* came from respondents in Tigray state, followed by relatively moderate endorsements from the two multiethnic states in the study, SNNPR and Benishangul-Gumuz. Among these two sets of respondents, those from SNNPR seemed more prone to express dissatisfaction than their

counterparts from Benishangul-Gumuz. Again, the most disaffected region seems to be Oromia. In no category of service provided by the *woreda* did respondents in Oromia express any level of satisfaction above 8 percent; on the other hand, in five of the seven categories of service (police services, health care, road development and maintenance, the court system, and food security) the dissatisfaction score was between 90 percent and 98 percent. Significantly, respondents from Amhara state were generally satisfied with the provision of social services by their *woreda*. In that state, the areas of most dissatisfaction were the *woreda's* role in the provision of police services (61 percent), the courts (74 percent), and food security (85 percent).

What is most striking about regional differences in respondents' perception of the adequacy of service delivery by their respective *woredas* is the high levels of dissatisfaction among the residents of the capital, Addis Ababa, particularly in the areas of health care (79 percent), education (62 percent), roads (76 percent), the courts (95 percent), and food security (77 percent). One would have expected that because Addis Ababa is the most well-endowed state in terms of its administrative personnel, technical expertise, and independent sources of revenue, its administration would be in a better position to secure the approval of its citizens. However, this seems not necessarily the case. Even if most services in the city are better than in most other regions, generally residents feel they could be much better.

When we consider the nationality of the respondents along with their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with *woreda* government service delivery, the patterns reported above continue to hold (see Table 3.5).

The support Tigrayan respondents give their *woredas* in the area of the provision of social services is generally high, except in the areas of food security and the court system, where the level of dissatisfaction is 62 percent and 66 percent respectively. Among the Amhara, respondents expressed limited satisfaction only with the provision of police services, formal education, and the provision of safe water. But these respondents were most dissatisfied with the court services (78 percent) and food security (82 percent) provided by their *woredas*.

Again, the highest level of dissatisfaction occurred among our Oromo respondents, who across the board tended to be dissatisfied with the effort of their *woredas* to deliver social services. Consistently, more than 70 percent in each category were either somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied. The highest levels of Oromo dissatisfaction with *woreda* service delivery were in the health care (88 percent), road development and maintenance (85 percent), court services (90 percent), safe water (88 percent), and food security (88 percent) categories.

Among the Sidama and Berta respondents, the results were mixed. The Sidama were most satisfied with police services (72 percent), and education (77 percent), and least satisfied by far with food security (88 percent). The

**Table 3.5 Satisfaction with Woreda Services by Nationality**

| Region | Degree of Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction | Police % | Health Care % | Education % | Roads % | Court % | Water % | Food % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Most Satisfied | 12 | 1 | 18 | 12 | 2 | 17 | 3 |
| | More Satisfied | 13 | 35 | 29 | 27 | 8 | 36 | 9 |
| Amhara | Satisfied | 24 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 6 |
| | Less Satisfied | 13 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 9 | 9 |
| | Dissatisfied | 38 | 42 | 30 | 38 | 63 | 27 | 73 |
| | Most Satisfied | 7 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| | More Satisfied | 30 | 29 | 24 | 23 | 13 | 20 | 10 |
| Tigrayan | Satisfied | 42 | 29 | 32 | 30 | 19 | 46 | 27 |
| | Less Satisfied | 12 | 24 | 17 | 28 | 29 | 14 | 31 |
| | Dissatisfied | 10 | 14 | 12 | 19 | 37 | 14 | 31 |
| | Most Satisfied | 9 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 6 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Oromo | Satisfied | 14 | 6 | 13 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 11 |
| | Less Satisfied | 11 | 22 | 21 | 2 | 8 | 22 | 9 |
| | Dissatisfied | 61 | 66 | 55 | 83 | 82 | 66 | 79 |
| | Most Satisfied | 18 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| | More Satisfied | 18 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Sidama | Satisfied | 36 | 38 | 65 | 53 | 44 | 44 | 6 |
| | Less Satisfied | 18 | 38 | 18 | 29 | 13 | 25 | 13 |
| | Dissatisfied | 9 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 44 | 25 | 75 |
| | Most Satisfied | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| | More Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Berta | Satisfied | 20 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| | Less Satisfied | 20 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dissatisfied | 40 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 40 | 80 | 60 |
| | Most Satisfied | 7 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 40 | 7 |
| Other | More Satisfied | 7 | 13 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 14 |
| Southern | Satisfied | 40 | 20 | 33 | 40 | 0 | 13 | 7 |
| Nationalities | Less Satisfied | 20 | 33 | 27 | 33 | 50 | 40 | 14 |
| | Dissatisfied | 27 | 33 | 27 | 20 | 36 | 7 | 57 |
| | Most Satisfied | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 25 | 20 |
| Other | More Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Satisfied | 20 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 20 |
| | Less Satisfied | 40 | 20 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| | Dissatisfied | 20 | 60 | 40 | 40 | 80 | 25 | 60 |
| Total | Most Satisfied | 24(10%) | 6(2%) | 27(11%) | 15(6%) | 5(2%) | 27(11%) | 6(3%) |
| Satisfied/ | More Satisfied | 35(15%) | 51(21%) | 43(18%) | 40(17%) | 16(8%) | 43(18%) | 16(7%) |
| Dissatisfied | Satisfied | 64(27%) | 40(16%) | 58(24%) | 47(19%) | 26(13%) | 49(20%) | 29(13%) |
| Numbers | Less Satisfied | 32(13%) | 48(20%) | 37(15%) | 36(15%) | 37(18%) | 40(16%) | 32(14%) |
| (percents) | Dissatisfied | 83(35%) | 101(41%) | 76(32%) | 104(43%) | 118(58%) | 82(34%) | 143(63%) |
| Total number of respondents | | 238 | 242 | 241 | 242 | 202 | 241 | 226 |

Berta respondents were too few in number to permit a reasonable assessment of their opinions.

### *Identity and Citizenship*

The central government in deeply divided societies such as Ethiopia has a special role to play in engendering a sense of national identity and commitment on the part of the country's disparate nationality groups. Frances Deng et al. suggest that this would require the following:

> Defining national identity to be equitably accommodating to all the contending groups; developing principles of constitutionalism or constitutive management of power that creatively and flexibly balance the dynamics of diversity in unity to promote national consensus and collective purpose; designing a system of distribution or allocation of economic opportunities and resources that is particularly sensitive to the needs of minorities and disadvantaged groups and induces them to see unity as a source of security and enrichment and not of subjugation and deprivation; and through all these measures to challenge every group to recognize that it has a distinctive contribution to make to the process of nation building.[53]

To what extent do the respondents in this study have a sense of their identification with their particular group that is stronger than their sense of Ethiopian identity? To what extent do the respondents, based upon their nationality group identity, assess the efforts of the central government to address this issue?

In order to get at respondents' sense of the performance of the central government in promoting a widespread sense of a common Ethiopian identity, and their relative affinity to their particular nationality group as opposed to the Ethiopian nation as a whole, they were asked four questions:

- Do you feel that the interests of the Ethiopian people as a whole are more important than the interests of particular nationality groups? (Table 3.6A)
- Is it more important that a certain nationality group have the right to determine its own future rather than the country as a whole to have a sense of common purpose and unity? (Table 3.6B)
- In your opinion, does the central government of Ethiopia represent the interests of most of the people of Ethiopia? (Table 3.6C)
- How effective has the central government been in trying to solve problems among the different people of the country? (Table 3.6D)

As is indicated by Table 3.6, among the four largest sets of respondents by their nationality the Oromo respondents were the most likely to feel that the interests of particular nationality groups were more important than that

**Table 3.6A Opinions About National Identity, Group Relations, and National Unity**

Do you agree/disagree that the interests of the Ethiopian people as a whole are more important than the interests of particular nationality groups?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 53 | 27 | 9 | 11 | 81 |
| Tigrayan | 28 | 47 | 20 | 5 | 60 |
| Oromo | 26 | 18 | 33 | 23 | 61 |
| Sidama | 74 | 4 | 4 | 17 | 23 |
| Berta | 0 | 20 | 60 | 20 | 5 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 89 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 18 |
| Other | 50 | 0 | 17 | 33 | 6 |
| Total Number of respondents | 112 | 64 | 45 | 33 | 254 |

**Table 3.6B Opinions About National Identity, Group Relations, and National Unity**

Is it more important that a certain nationality has the right to determine its future rather than the nation to have a sense of common purpose and unity?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 12 | 13 | 39 | 36 | 69 |
| Tigrayan | 22 | 38 | 29 | 10 | 58 |
| Oromo | 54 | 22 | 14 | 11 | 65 |
| Sidama | 29 | 8 | 8 | 54 | 24 |
| Berta | 40 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 22 | 6 | 6 | 67 | 18 |
| Other | 17 | 0 | 50 | 33 | 6 |
| Total Number of respondents | 70 | 51 | 59 | 65 | 245 |

of the Ethiopian community as a whole, but only by a slight margin (56 percent). Three in every four Tigrayans place the interest of Ethiopia as a whole ahead of that of any nationality group. Among the Amharas and Sidamas the percentage that apparently had a strong affinity toward the Ethiopian nation was much higher, 80 percent and 78 percent respectively. This finding seems to confirm the observation made above that there is no national consensus in the general population of Ethiopia that ethnic federalism is a desirable strategy for the country. However, this does not mean that

**Table 3.6C Opinions About National Identity, Group Relations, and National Unity**

Do you agree that the central government of Ethiopia represents the interests of most of the people of Ethiopia?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 8 | 20 | 14 | 58 | 71 |
| Tigrayan | 16 | 46 | 30 | 9 | 57 |
| Oromo | 9 | 6 | 21 | 64 | 66 |
| Sidama | 22 | 26 | 4 | 48 | 23 |
| Berta | 40 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 0 | 19 | 6 | 75 | 16 |
| Other | 20 | 0 | 40 | 40 | 5 |
| Total Number of respondents | 29 | 56 | 45 | 113 | 243 |

**Table 3.6D Opinions About National Identity, Group Relations, and National Unity**

How effective has the central government been in trying to solve problems among the different people of the country?

| Nationality | % Very Effective | % Somewhat Effective | % Somewhat Ineffective | % Very Ineffective | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 4 | 24 | 30 | 42 | 74 |
| Tigrayan | 25 | 47 | 19 | 8 | 59 |
| Oromo | 10 | 10 | 16 | 64 | 69 |
| Sidama | 36 | 9 | 18 | 36 | 22 |
| Berta | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 4 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 31 | 13 | 13 | 44 | 16 |
| Other | 0 | 14 | 43 | 29 | 7 |
| Total Number of respondents | 39 | 59 | 54 | 98 | 251 |

the national identity of individual groups is unimportant to them. Further credence to this observation can be seen in the responses to the question about whether it is most important for nationality groups to have the right to self-determination or more important for Ethiopia to remain a unified multinational community. Among the Amhara respondents, 75 percent put Ethiopian unity first, and 62 percent of the Sidama felt the same. Interestingly, however, 60 percent of the Tigrayan respondents, and 76 percent of the Oromos, put the rights of nationality groups to determine their

own futures ahead of maintaining Ethiopian national unity. This seems to suggest that nationality groups for the most part will give ethnic federalism a chance for now, but they will continue to hold out their preference for ethnic self-determination.

How do respondents from various ethnic groups feel about the central government's efforts to build an Ethiopian national community? More than half of all respondents (65 percent) were of the opinion that the central government was not doing an adequate job in representing the interests of all Ethiopian people. As might be expected, the highest level of disapproval was among the Oromo (85 percent), followed by the Amhara (72 percent) and Sidama respondents (52 percent). Also as might be expected, Tigrayan respondents (62 percent) were most satisfied with the central government's efforts to promote national unity.

Tigrayan respondents were most likely to agree that the central government has been very effective or somewhat effective in trying to solve problems among different people in the country (72 percent). However, only 45 percent of the Sidama, 28 percent of the Amhara, and 20 percent of the Oromo respondents held similar opinions. This is a clear indication that the Tigray-dominated central government still has a ways to go before its building a multiethnic federal state meets with widespread acceptance.

These findings notwithstanding, how do the respondents from the different nationality groups feel about their own self-identity, the importance of passing on this identity to their children, and their relationship with other nationality groups? This is another way of getting at the issue of citizenship and citizenship rights within the context of Ethiopian federalism.

Most respondents felt a strong affinity to their particular national group, but this sentiment was strongest by far among Tigrayan respondents (see Table 3.7A). Ninety-three percent of respondents from this group said they felt proud to be Tigrayan, and 92 percent of the Oromo respondents felt the same about their group identity. This compares to 80 percent of the Amhara respondents, who said they were proud to be Amhara. However, only 46 percent among Sidama respondents expressed great pride in belonging to their nationality group.

When asked whether they would want their children to have a strong sense of identification with their nationality group, 83 percent of all respondents said yes, but the strongest views in this regard came from the Tigrayan respondents (92 percent) and the Oromo respondents (86 percent). Seventy-seven percent of the Amhara respondents and 82 percent of the Sidama respondents said that they would like their children to have a sense of identity with their nationality group. (See Table 3.7B.) This trend is not surprising—the Amhara culture forms the basis of Ethiopian identity, and the Sidama were historically the object of intense policies of acculturation. The Oromo and Tigrayans, on the other hand, generally resisted wholesale adoption of an Ethiopian national identity.

**Table 3.7A Nationality, Identity, Citizenship, and Group Relations**

Do you agree/disagree with the statement that you are proud to be a member of your nationality group?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 70 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 71 |
| Tigrayan | 60 | 33 | 7 | 0 | 58 |
| Oromo | 72 | 19 | 4 | 4 | 67 |
| Sidama | 32 | 14 | 5 | 50 | 22 |
| Berta | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 62 | 15 | 8 | 15 | 13 |
| Other | 60 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 5 |
| Total number of respondents | 157 | 45 | 16 | 24 | 242 |

**Table 3.7B Nationality, Identity, Citizenship, and Group Relations**

Do you agree/disagree that you would want your children to think of themselves as having a close affinity to your nationality group?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 67 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 69 |
| Tigrayan | 59 | 33 | 7 | 2 | 58 |
| Oromo | 65 | 21 | 6 | 8 | 63 |
| Sidama | 29 | 53 | 6 | 12 | 17 |
| Berta | 83 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 6 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 25 | 42 | 8 | 25 | 12 |
| Other | 60 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total number of respondents | 137 | 55 | 18 | 20 | 230 |

Despite Sidama response to the foregoing question, surprisingly, three out of every four Sidama respondents said that they felt a stronger affinity to their nationality group than to other Ethiopians. This compares to 65 percent among Amhara, 87 percent among Tigrayan, and 70 percent among Oromo respondents. (See Table 3.7C.) In response to the question, "Do you agree/disagree that all people born in this country, regardless of nationality, should be treated equally?" 98 percent of all respondents agreed. In fact, 98 percent of the Amhara, 98 percent of the Tigrayan, 95 percent of the Sidama, and 99 percent of the Oromo respondents agreed with this state-

**Table 3.7C Nationality, Identity, Citizenship, and Group Relations**

Do you agree/disagree that you feel stronger ties to your nationality group than to other Ethiopians?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 59 | 6 | 16 | 19 | 68 |
| Tigrayan | 47 | 40 | 7 | 7 | 45 |
| Oromo | 55 | 15 | 25 | 5 | 65 |
| Sidama | 74 | 4 | 4 | 17 | 23 |
| Berta | 33 | 0 | 17 | 50 | 6 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 31 | 8 | 23 | 38 | 13 |
| Other | 0 | 40 | 60 | 0 | 5 |
| Total number of respondents | 120 | 36 | 38 | 31 | 225 |

**Table 3.7D Nationality, Identity, Citizenship, and Group Relations**

Do you agree/disagree that all people born in this country, regardless of nationality, should be treated equally?

| Nationality | % Strongly Agree | % Agree | % Disagree | % Strongly Disagree | Total number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amhara | 96 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 82 |
| Tigrayan | 87 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 61 |
| Oromo | 97 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 58 |
| Sidama | 91 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 23 |
| Berta | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Other Southern Nationalities | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| Other | 60 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total number of respondents | 235 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 252 |

ment. (See Table 3.7D.) What is most remarkable about these findings taken as a whole is that even though nationality groups have a clear sense of their ethnic identity, they also have a clear sense that they are Ethiopians. They feel strongly that any person born in Ethiopia has citizenship rights that are equal to those of any other person from any other nationality group. If one takes a long-term view of the implications of these findings, it would be reasonable to expect that with political stability and economic growth, the sense of having a common Ethiopian identity along with one's own ethnic identity will become institutionalized. Paul Collier and associates have

presented empirical evidence that there is a close relationship between economic development, political stability, development, and democracy. Social conflicts such as civil wars and various forms of cultural conflict retard development; at the same time, development retards war.[54]

## Conclusion: A Balance Sheet

Ethiopia is presently involved in attempting to implement what is officially billed as a form of ethnic federalism. Typically, federal systems emerge organically as political entities that must coexist, and they decide to organize themselves into a system of self-rule and shared rule. In Ethiopia, however, this approach has been dictated from above. This experiment initially started off looking like what Alfred Stepan has termed a "holding together" federation: decisions were taken by ethnic elites to create subnational states from a unitary state. But it has now evolved into a form of "putting together" federation, as the federal government and ruling party have created new states but staffed them with party cadre and personalities loyal to the ruling group. This practice is in contrast with the method for choosing regional state representatives, which involves local elections.[55]

The government claims that this approach is best for achieving democratic consolidation in this multiethnic polity. A central element in the process of consolidation is a system of devolved administration giving state, *woreda*, and zonal authorities the major roles in making decisions relating to socioeconomic development and the building of democratic institutions. This study has found, however, that decisionmaking at subnational levels of governance is constrained by the EPRDF Five Year Development Program, which does not permit much deviation from the dictates of the center.

Revenues collected at the center are shared with regional states, but most of these resources are used to cover the salaries of state, zonal, *woreda*, and local officials, and other recurrent expenses. Most states, because of the lack of resources, are not able to engage in new capital projects. Moreover, there is in most cases a severe lack of skilled administrative capacity below the national and state levels, and this too serves as a drag on democracy and development.

In reality, what is billed as a unique form of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia operates very much like a centralized, unitary state, with most power residing at the center. While official rhetoric proclaims that ethnic communities are now empowered and free to exercise their right to self-determination, Ethiopia is characterized by limited autonomous decisionmaking below the regional state level, and a great deal of central control and orchestration. As a consequence, while some institutional forms associated with consolidated democracies such as political parties and periodic multiparty elections with universal suffrage may exist, this is more of a "pseudodemocracy" than anything else.[56]

Ethiopia possesses a highly centralized form of federalism, with the "power of the purse" giving the federal government enormous power and control over policymaking at the subnational levels. The choice of a federal system as well as the policies and programs that undergird such a system were political decisions, primarily to enhance the controlling hand of the central government. What is unique about Ethiopia in contrast to other federal systems in the world today is the emphasis it places on organizing most states along ethnic lines.

Despite the efforts of the EPRDF government to exercise central control over politics while at the same time presenting the public image of being committed to power sharing with Ethiopia's various ethnic communities, by the summer of 2002 it was clear that some adjustments in the form of the federal system would have to be made. National discussions led to a second round of administrative devolution, this time down to the *woreda* level. Also, the EPRDF government announced that it would address its shortcomings in governance with a program of "renewal." This would demand the empowerment of the people and further popular participation according to democratic principles. It remains to be seen, however, whether the EPRDF will in the future be able to continue to pursue what it terms "ethnic federalism" as an approach to addressing the claims of various ethnic groups. Resource constraints would present formidable obstacles to the effective and realistic implementation of such an approach. The heavy coercive hand of the central government will continue for the foreseeable future to be a fact of everyday life in Ethiopia.

The results of the survey research make it clear that the EPRDF government is making some headway in engendering a sense of Ethiopian identity that either transcends or coexists with a clear sense of ethnic identity among the country's various nationality groups. Respondents identified some of the shortcomings in the efforts of both the central government and *woreda* governments in the delivery of vital social services. Their views sometimes were shaped by the regional state they resided in, but in other cases, their nationality affiliation was the most determinative. The most satisfaction with the delivery of social services tended to be found among the Tigrayan respondents, and the least among the Amhara and Oromo respondents. However, these views varied according to the type of social services being discussed. For example, respondents, no matter what their ethnic affiliation, tended to identify the court system and food security as the most unsatisfactory aspects of both central and *woreda* government service delivery.

Interestingly, although virtually all respondents, regardless of their nationality group, had pride in their national identity, they generally did not see a contradiction between their group identity and their identity as Ethiopian citizens. Moreover, most felt that any individuals born in Ethiopia, no matter what their nationality group, had equal rights as Ethiopian citizens. What all this seems to indicate is that continued

progress toward the structural transformation of Ethiopian society and administrative reform will be necessary for the EPRDF regime to ultimately achieve its objectives through its policy of ethnic federalism. This, no doubt, will be a lengthy, halting, and arduous journey.

## Notes

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1. Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

2. See Chapter 1 of this volume, "Borders, States, and Nationalism," by Ricardo René Larémont.

3. See *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.* Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (8 December 1994).

4. In some ways the public commitment of the regime of the EPRDF could be considered nothing more than a fiction, since in practice not all states are ethnically homogenous. Four of the nine regional states (Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Harar, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region states) are comprised of several different ethnic groups.

5. See Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 70–71.

6. S. N. Eisenstadt notes that, historically and analytically, empires are states that belong somewhere between what we might classify, for lack of better terms, "premodern" and "modern" political systems. Historically, a monarch whose claims to authority and legitimacy were established by sacred traditions governed most empires. However, there was also a conscious attempt on the part of emperors of bureaucratic empires to secularize certain aspects of their authority (e.g., Ottoman, Roman, Persian, Ethiopian Empires). Those bureaucratic empires that survived into the mid to late twentieth century faced similar challenges of modernization: They each attempted to cope in similar ways—centralizing and modernizing their bureaucracies and militaries, developing stable and reliable military alliances, reducing the power of traditional elements, and strengthening the hand of secular authorities vis-à-vis religious actors and institutions. See S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), especially 140–191.

7. See Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270–1527* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 21–68.

8. See A. H. M. Jones and E. Monroe, *A History of Abyssinia* (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 118–119.

9. See M. Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes* (London: Longman, 1968).

10. See Levine, *Greater Ethiopia*, 157.

11. Tewodros, who had taken some representatives of Queen Victoria of England as hostages for two years, committed suicide rather than surrender to an invading military force intended to liberate the hostages.

12. See Zewde Gabre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

13. Sven Rubenson, *Wichale XVII* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Haile Selassie University Press, 1964).

14. See Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia*, 50–64.

15. See Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 34–35.

16. See John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, and U.S. Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Institute of Foreign Policy Analysis, 1977).

17. See Haile Selassie I, *The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Selassie I: My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, 1892–1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

18. See John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (London: Spokesman, 1978), 55.

19. Peter Schwab, *Decision-Making in Ethiopia: A Study of the Political Process* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), 89–140.

20. See Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), 456; Randi R. Balsvik, *Haile Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952–1977* (East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University Press, 1985).

21. See Ruth Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941–1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

22. See Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedmann, 1975), 215–216.

23. See Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: Free Press, 1973); Asafa Jalata, "The Cultural Roots of Oromo Nationalism," in *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, ed. A. Jalata (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998); Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

24. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia*, 161.

25. See Mohammed Hassen, "The Macha-Tulama Association and the Development of Oromo Nationalism," in *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, ed. A. Jalata (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998), 183–221.

26. Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedmann, 1975), 225–226.

27. "Oromia Speaks: An Interview with a Member of the Central Committee of the Oromo Liberation Front," *Horn of Africa* 3 (1980): 24.

28. A noncapitalist approach to development was supposed to be dictated by the fact that African states had not matured as capitalist systems but instead were characterized by "medieval survivals." This was said to make conditions in countries such as Ethiopia different from the conditions that gave rise to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Logistically, then, it was assumed that the general theory and practice of socialist transformation had to be adapted to the specific conditions of Ethiopia. This was justified on the basis that Lenin himself had come out categorically against overemphasis on technical-economic prerequisites as well as against rigid, deterministic political preconditions for socialist revolution. The fact that Ethiopia's leaders exhibited a "socialist orientation" was deemed enough reason for the Soviets to consider embracing them as clients. See Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia*, 197–198, and A. S. Shin, *National Democratic Revolutions: Some Questions of Theory and Practice* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982).

29. See Edmond J. Keller, "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 30, no. 4 (1992): 609–624.

30. See Edmond J. Keller, "Remaking the Ethiopian State," in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, ed. I. W. Zartman (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995).

31. See The Political Parties Registration Proclamation, No. 46 of 1993, *Negarit Gazeta* (Addis Ababa, 15 April 1993); and Sandra Fullerton Joireman, "Opposition Politics and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: We Will All Go Down Together," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 3 (1997): 397–398.

32. Keller, "Remaking the Ethiopian State," 136–137.

33. A "putting together federation" is orchestrated from above by a ruling group and is characterized by some form of coercion. This contrasts with what Stepan calls "coming together" and "holding together" federations. Coming together federations emerge when sovereign states agree to join together in a federal arrangement. Holding together federations are the outgrowth of a consensual parliamentary decision to preserve a unitary state by creating a multiethnic federal system. This involves compromises among ethnic elites and is most often done to avoid or manage divisive ethnic, regional, or other types of group conflict within a polity.

34. See Alfred Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 320–323.

35. Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *The System of Regional Administration in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1994).

36. Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front, "EPRDF's Five-Year Program of Development, Peace and Democracy" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, August 2000).

37. See World Bank, *Ethiopia: Regionalization Study,* Report No. 18898-ET (February 1999), 1.

38. See Worku Aberra, "Tribalism Rules in Ethiopia," *New African* (September 1993); Paul Brietzke, "Ethiopia's 'Leap into the Dark': Federalism and Self-Determination in the New Constitution," *Journal of African Law* 40 (1995); and Merere Gudina, "The New Directions of Ethiopian Politics," in *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Ethiopia 94,* eds. Harold G. Marcus and Grover Hudson (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994).

39. See Walle Engedayehu, "Ethiopia: Democracy and the Politics of Ethnicity," *Africa Today* 40, no. 2 (1993): 29–30.

40. *Ethiopian Herald,* "Sound Discussion for National Consensus," 4 August 2002.

41. Quoted in Kjetil Tronvoll and Oyvind Aadland, "The Process of Democratization in Ethiopia: An Expression of Popular Participation or Political Resistance," *Human Rights Report No. 5* (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, 1995), 47.

42. See "Forum Discusses Decentralization Affirmative Actions," *Ethiopian Herald,* 6 August 2002.

43. *Negaret Gazeta of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 33/1992: A Proclamation to Define the Sharing of Revenue Between the Central Government and the National/Regional Self-governments,* no. 7 (20 October 1992), 25.

44. One (1) $US is equivalent to Birr 8.2.

45. World Bank, *Ethiopia: Review of Public Finances Volume One,* Report No. 18369-ET (30 December 1998), 42.

46. World Bank, *Ethiopia: Regionalization Study,* 7.

47. See John Young, "Development and Change in Post-Revolutionary Tigray," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 1 (1997): 83.

48. See Tegegne Gebre Egziabher, "The Influences of Decentralization on Some Aspects of Local and Regional Development Planning in Ethiopia," *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review* 14, no. 1 (January 1998): 41; and John M.

Cohen and Stephen B. Peterson, *Administrative Decentralization: Strategies for Developing Countries* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1999), 136–137.

49. Personal interviews conducted with government administrators by James Polhemnus and Lissane Yohannes, October 2002, in Tigray and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional State.

50. U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia* (25 February 2000), 18.

51. See John Young, "Along Ethiopia's Western Frontier: Gambella and Beneshengul in Transition," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999).

52. *EPRDF Fourth Congress Report* [Non-official Translation by USAID/ Ethiopia] Addis Ababa (August 2001).

53. Francis M. Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1966), 214.

54. See Paul Collier, V. L. Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Anke Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol, and Nicholas Sambanis, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003).

55. Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics.*

56. See Larry Diamond, "Prospects for Democratic Development in Africa," *Hoover Institution Essays in Public Policy, No. 7* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, Hoover Institution, 1997).