THE LEGAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMA OF THE ETHIOPIAN ETHNIC FEDERALISM: INTRA-REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN THE AMHARA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE

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ABSTRACT

After the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia established a democratic federal state that gave full recognition to ethnic autonomy within a unitary state. Its new Constitution created ethnic-based territorial units as a reaction to some long-standing historical conflicts. Nevertheless, the implementation of Ethiopian federalism has produced mixed effects. On the one hand, it provides all the constitutional and democratic principles to each ethnic group that had not before. In contrast, it's a socialist federation built on centralist democratic federations' virtue. It grants the right of secession for each ethnic group to create their homelands. In common with other countries where such federations were introduced, it has created new conflicts, aggravated existing conflicts, and endangered state unity. Deploying empirical and qualitative case methods, this study investigated and critically examined the causes, trends, impacts of federalism's design in Ethiopia in general and particularly in the Amhara regional state. In the end, it provides mechanisms of inter-ethnic conflicts in the Amhara regional state.

Keywords: Federalism, Intra-regional, Dilemma, Conflict, Amhara, Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

EPRDF came to power after defeating the Marxist-Leninist military junta in 1991 and established an ethnic-federal system in 1995, marking a new beginning in the country's political history and political development (Adegehe, 2009). Accordingly, Article 8 of the FDRE Constitution gives the sovereign power to "*Nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia*", rather than to Ethiopian people at large or every individual citizen, as commonly stated in the 'we the people' manifestation that applies in many modern constitutions (Aalen, 2002).

Under Article (39) of the FDRE Constitution, the sovereign power states that "*Every Nation, Nationality, and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession*". Furthermore, article 39 (3) also allows each ethnic group to have the right of self-administration and equitable representation at both the regional and federal levels of government. Besides, each ethnolinguistic group has the democratic right to endorse their unique identity to recover their values or political and economic advantage (Siraw, 2015).

Such a federal political community is set up to establish lasting peace, security, and democracy; to respond to the long-standing national question's; to promote equal rights and benefits of ethnic groups; and to respond to the challenge of ethnonational conflicts that stressed

the old Ethiopian state or to serve as a panacea for the old and emerging inter and intra-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia's future.

However, the Ethiopian ethnic federalism's constitutional principles consist of neither purely democratic nor socialist principles; instead, it is a mixed blood of the democratic and socialist federations (Constitution, 1995). hat meant it incorporates the fundamental principles of democratic federations. Still, its ethnic federal system's design and operation are derived from the socialist federation and the Marxist ideological perspective (Bahru, 2008).

As a result, the current federal arrangement of Ethiopia has generated new localized conflicts instead of solving the old problems and forces citizens to favour their identity rather than to get united (Assefa, 2009). The existing problems are reinforced undemocratic political mobilization based on ethnic group protection, and leads to discrimination based on identity and ethnicity. Thus, it has generated intra-regional ethnic conflicts and produced conflicting-induced displacement and deaths (Ibid) (Yeshiwas, 2018).

Thus, this study seeks to elaborate the methodology of the study; investigates the theoretical frameworks of federalism in managing ethnic conflicts. Then, it explores the legal and ideological dilemma of Ethiopian ethnic federalism. It also examines the causes, impacts, and the managing aspects of intra-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia and particularly in the Amhara regional state. In the end, conclusions and recommendations for prospects.

The research method of this study used both discourse analyses and qualitative case studies. The discourse analysis includes various scientific publications. The qualitative case study was collected using key informant interviews and focus group discussions/FGDs based on semi-structured and open-ended questions. Therefore, the study selects a limited number of informants strategically, whose in-depth information will offer an insight into the impacts of ethnic federalism in intra-regional ethnic conflicts and mechanisms to resolve disputes in the study region. The sample respondents were selected from the Amhara region in general and particularly, in the case study area of Chilga woreda. Thus, the sample units of the study include the leading party leaders; the opposition party leaders; Regional, Zonal, and Woreda government officials; ethnic federalism and ethnic conflict experts; social media activists; the local civilian population, and displaced persons in the case study area. Finally, figures of the House of Federation and military commands at the federal level. The discussion was made with 18 individual interviews and four FGDs (consists of 20 individuals) based upon the informants' interests. The data analysis used a narrative case study and thematic analysis conducted to analyze and interpret the data.

Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Management

Federalism is a valuable mechanism for understanding the causes of ethnic conflict, managing aspects, and the way how to accommodate diversity in multicultural states (Obi, 2019). Categorized theories of federalism into three: Legal-institutional or Legal-constitutional theory, Sociological theory of federalism, and Political/ Ideological theory of federalism.

First, the Legal-constitutional theory of federalism recognized the courts' role as an essential aspect of federalism for handling ethnic conflicts. Significantly, this type of federalism is advantageous in many respects to resolve ethnic disputes as it is practiced in the United States, Canada, and Switzerland (Auclair, 2002). Therefore, the legal-constitutional theory focuses more

on the legal and jurisdictional aspects to accommodate diversity and resolve conflicts, in which powers are divided between the federal and regional governments (Wheare, 1963).

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

Second, the Sociological theory of federalism has given more attention to the essence of social forces underlying the pressures for diversity in federations. The pivotal interactions of social forces with political organizations have given a chance to establish and create a federal political structure to maintain peace and security (Watts, 2008). However, this theory lacks clear guidelines, principles, and norms to show a demarcation line between a federal and non-federal society (Burgess, 2006). It focuses on diversity alone without distinguishing the factors that accommodate various ethnic groups' diverse interests in the existing federal system. Therefore, the sociological approach did not always lead to federalism; instead, it may create a unitary government of the U.K. and France (Tariq et al., 2018; Burgess & Pinder, 2007).

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

On the other hand, it also grants each ethnic group the right of self-administration, including secession over the cultural, linguistic, and religious matters for the federation's constituent unities. In this view, some argued that the socialist federation was assumed as a cause of conflicts. Such a federation granted the rights of secession to each ethnic group to create their homelands and governed by their ethnic political parties/elites (Raffas, 2012). Thus, ethno-cultural diversity translates into political fragmentation in a diverse society: political claims are refracted through the lens of primordial ethnic identity, and political conflict is synonymous with conflict among ethnocultural groups (Smith, 2014). The duplication of national identities within federations pushed political parties into a political conflict between the center and the regions. Therefore, ethnicities are viewed as instrumental identities, organized as means to particular ends. Following this approach, the Soviet and East European communist regimes collapsed in the 1990s (Burges, 2006).

In contrast, liberal democratic, multicultural federalism constitutionally recognized ethnic and linguistic diversity and promotes self-rule and shared-rule between the two government forms as fundamental principles. It was established based on a consociational democratic system. It also acknowledges the demand for self-determination and self-government. It stops the idea of secession without fragmenting the state into different segments. These government forms are applied in the United States, Switzerland, India, and Nigeria. Then the duality ensuing from unity

and diversity is the driving principle for polities that consider federations as institutions forging the two together (Assefa, 2009).

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

The Ethiopian Ethnic Federalism: Ideological Principles As A Governing Rule

The 1995 Ethiopian constitution is incorporated almost one-third of the constitutional provisions deal with fundamental rights and freedoms. These rights are divided into human rights and democratic rights. By and large, the FDRE constitution incorporates the first, second, and third-generation rights. In such a way, it fulfills the democratic constitutional provisions declared under the UNDHR (Ameha, 2014).

Accordingly, Article 47 (1) of the 1995 EPRDF's constitution recognizes an ethnic-based federal structure constituting two distinct entities: the federal and regional states. In addition, the Constitution acknowledges nine regional states and two city administrations. These include Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Gambela and Harari, and Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations (Adegehe, 2009). The Constitution also grants regional states to divide hierarchically into zones, Woredas, Special-woredas, and Kebeles.

However, the Ethiopian federalism is a mixed-blood combining high decentralization and centralization. In the former case, constitutionally, it allows the above democratic rights. However, empirically, the country was governed by TPLF/EPRDF Marxist-Leninist ideological principles in the latter case (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008).

First, the socialist federations have emerged in countries where Marxism-Leninism became a state ideology. Thus, the first states which adopted socialist federations were the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), Czechoslovakia, and the former Yugoslavia (Semahagn, 2014). The Constitution declared that each ethnic group had its territorial autonomy, distinct culture, language, and religion. The constituent republic preserved its sovereignty and had the right to secede from the federation.

Practically, the so-called recognition of the local autonomy in this socialist federation was a prominent Communist party's tactic to control the periphery through administrative policies that secured the party's economic and political hegemony. That was why these undemocratic relations lead to the USSR disintegration.

Similarly, EPRDF's new Constitution recognizes the current Ethiopian ethnic federal structure. Alongside, the Ethiopian federation is an ethnic groups' federation, in which the regional states' boundaries are demarcated along ethnic lines.

However, the Amhara Prosperity Party (2021) remarks that the regions did not organize by Article 47 (1) of the 1995 EPRDF's constitution. But TPLF had enacted a law to organize the regions by language and ethnicity without the spirit of the constitution in line with the socialist

ideological doctrine. Then TPLF had demarcated regional boundaries by force, offensive action, and without the willingness of the people (Abbink, 2006).

Moreover, the central government has forcefully controlled regional political autonomy that undermines the essence of regional self-administration. Since 1991, TPLF/EPRDF was the vanguard party that has won all elections, and controls the political, economic, and social activities throughout the country, like the Communist Party of the former USSR federation (Semahagn, 2014; Salih, 2017).

Second, the critical theoretical principles and features of Soviet federalism were the right to self-determination up to secession in all ethnic groups. However, virtually never allowed autonomy beyond culture and language but created divisions among the federation (Semahagn, 2014). In a similar fashion with the USSR, the unique feature of the FDRE Constitution is recognizing nations, nationalities, and peoples to have the right to self-administration up to secession, but it was designed to establish Tigray republic after TPLF exploited the countries resources (Taye, 2017).

Therefore, the secession right was purposefully designed due to the hidden secessionist agendas of the TPLF and OLF. That is why they are currently involved in armed struggle envisioned to realize the asserted aim of seceding from Ethiopia. Practically, it has also been objected to that the right of secession will stimulate a surge of nationalism, and it is inconsistent with competitive politics under federal arrangements today (Temesgen, 2019).

The third one of the constitutional features of socialist federations was the principles of democratic governance; popular sovereignty, administrative decentralization, and separations of powers. The Leninist's principle of democratic centralism and public participation was the governing principles of democratic governance and popular sovereignty (Sakwa,1998). It was established to prevent the mass of the party membership from controlling its leadership. It was also a mechanism to handle the emergence of any group contrary to the party ideology. Thus, all the party members and state bureaucrats were subordinated to the decisions of party leaders.

Similarly, the 1995 FDRE constitution recognizes unity with diversity through power decentralization to constituent unites (Girma & Getahun, 2019). Accordingly, the EPRDF government established an administrative decentralization strategy and institutional reform mixed with de-concentration and devolution (Keller, 2002). Thus, the constitutional principles of decentralization, democratization, and the rule of law become a decoration for TPLF's socialist political perspectives. Because the TPLF's governing rule was a democratic centralism principle to monitor the party members' discipline, activities, and perceptions. Outside this, it was a mechanism to control every activity in each government level of administrations and over all aspects of life in the country through the party structures (Kassaye, 2010). Moreover, the political and administrative decentralization systems remained a political agenda; instead created controversy among Ethiopian ethnic-based regions' integrity.

Fourth the socialist federation has recognized the principles of checks and balances and separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. Emperically, the process of gimgemma was designed as a noble evaluation method on the party members, government officials, and employees' and governmental activities than of checks and balances (Aalen, 2002).

In the same fashion, the Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the above democratic principles as the fundamental right, empirically, TPLF/EPRDF's evaluation (gimgemma) was a controlling mechanism. Its objective was to maintain TPLF's dominance in all EPRDF's affiliate

regional parties, regional governments, and the country's bureaucratic machines Here gimgemma was one of the monitory and controlling methods. Therefore, the rule of law and court decisions were irrelevant for TPLF/EPRDF (Semahagn, 2014).

Therefore, Ethiopian ethnic federalism's constitutional principles consist of neither purely democratic nor socialist ideological principles; rather, in principle, it is the democratic and socialist federations' mixed nature, while in practice it is a socialist federation (Daba & Mulu, 2017).

In such circumstances, this Tigrean favoured and monopolized political, economic, financial, military security, and administration policies annoyed other ethnic groups. Notably, the two dominant ethnic groups of Amhara and Oromo manipulated into violent widespread protests and uprisings against the TPLF's single-party rule in the last three years. Then the uprisings led by the two ethnic groups elites' coalition had ended the TPLF's 30 years hegemonic power in 2018 (Mohamed, 2018).

Intra-regional conflicts in Ethiopian federalism: The main agenda of the EPRDF in articulating ethnic-based federal structure was to address ethnic conflicts in the country but followed the formation of ethnic federalism; several intra-ethnic conflicts have been aggravated in the country.

The first causes of the post-1991 intra-regional ethnic conflicts have been associated with the design of ethnic federal structure. The new Ethiopian ethnic-federal arrangement changes the existing non-ethnic internal boundary into ethno-territorial lines, leading to claims and counterclaims of territory and competition over shared resources (Dagnachew, 2018). Thus, for example, in the last two decades, intra-regional power-sharing and boundary conflicts have repeatedly exposed between the Gamo and Welayita; Amhara and Kemant; the Silte-Gurage conflict; the Wagagoda conflict; the Sheko-Megengir conflict; the Anuak-Nuer conflict, and the Berta-Gumuz conflict.

The project of Ethiopian ethnic federalism and ethnic regionalization arrangement has dramatically converted the relations between the titular (regional majorities) and the non-titular (regional or settler minorities) groups from a peaceful coexistence into inter-ethnic conflicts (Siraw, 2015). Such intra-regional conflicts have been violent and more widespread in multi-ethnic regions, SNNPR, Gambela, Oromiya, and Benishangul-Gumuz. These verify the impact of ethno-federalism on the generation and transformation of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia (Adegehe, 2009).

The other sort of intra-regional ethnic conflict is related to recognizing ethnic-based party, which promotes instability through the entrenchment of ethnic difference (Nikodimos, 2004). In Ethiopian ethnic federalism, due to the absence of democratic political participation and election, conflicts, violations, and lead ethnicity as instruments of the ethnic party fuel conflicts caused by the lopsided allocation of political and economic powers. Thus, over ten violent intra-ethnic clashes have occurred since 1991 due to the controversy over ethnic identity and primordial memory in Gambella (Nuer *vs.* Anuak); in Benishangul-Gumuz (Berta *vs.* Gumuz), and SNNPRS (Sidama *vs.* Wolaita) (Temesgen, 2019; Lavers, 2018; Alexander, 2019).

Moreover, intra-regional conflicts have also emerged on various issues, including the claim of distinct ethnic identity, self-rule at regional and sub-regional levels, the demand to control regional and local powers, resources, and opportunities ethno-nationalist secessionist struggle (Temesgen, 2019). According to the 2007 census, more than 3.2 million Amhara's ethnic groups are live in the Oromia regional state. Thus, there have been frequent intra-ethnic

identity conflicts between the Oromos and minority Amharas' who live in the Bedeno, Arba Gugu, and Gara Muleta (Assefa, 2017). The Majang "*An intra-unit minority divided over three regional states (Oromia, SNNPRS, Gambella) – have been thus calling for greater Majang local government and have caused major political instability*". Such conflicts have derived from the ODP local political elites through manipulating identity-based differences (Assefa, 2017).

The last category of intra-regional conflicts is the nexus between the Ethiopian national identity and ethnonational identity. Almost all Ethiopian regions' ethnic groups assume the Amhara ethnic group historically has oppressed other ethnic groups for centuries and Ethiopian identity. Due to this inclinable myth, ethnic cleansing against the Amhara has been increasing at an alarming rate in the Oromia, SNNPR, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions). The Ethiopian identity politics by itself creates some ethnic groups not to live equally with other ethnic groups. This tendency creates identity distinction among ethnic groups who live in the same regional states. For example, in Benishangul-Gumuz Region as 'indigenous and non-indigenous; in SNNPs' Region as 'native and non-native'; in Gambella and Harari Regions as 'owner and non-owner the Oromia Region' peoples of the region and non-regional peoples' (Gizachew, 2019).

In 2002, the South-west Oromia political elites had distinguished the Amharas' ethnic groups from others, in which the Amharas' were exploiter and still the promoter of Ethiopian identity through deteriorating ethnic identity. Due to this reason, conflicts had arisen and evicted a large number of Amharas' from the Oromia to the Amhara region, and still, they did not return to the Oromia region (Assefa, 2017).

Mainly, Kemante's identity issue and the claim of local self-government are controversial. The Kemant ethnic identity emerged from Amhara ethnic groups with similar psychological make-up, language, and culture with the Amhara ethnic group identity. Such identity clashes have been creating violent ethnic conflict among ethnic groups. Then it results for ethnic cleansing, there has been the total burned down of hotels, schools, business centers, and residential homes of the Kimant and Amhara ethnic groups.

In light of the absence of a legal conflict resolution mechanism, intra-regional conflicts are synonymous and become an endless Ethiopian ethnic-federal system. Most multicultural federations have constitutional dispute settlement organs, like Supreme Court, High Court, and Constitutional Court between the federal government and any of the regional states. However, in the Ethiopian case, the power to interpret the Constitution and conflict management is given to the HoF. Nevertheless, in practice, the division of power is artificial, imperfect, a generalized skeletal thing. The key powers reside on political executives.

In light of such problems, most scholars highlighted that the government should avoid ethnic politics from resolving ethnic conflicts. Instead, Ethiopia should establish an effective consociational democratic federation system with mixed boundary lines. It also should develop the idea of equal and common citizenship that certifies the coexistence between these divided societies, uniting each other for their mutual well-being, and reducing ethnic conflicts (Siraw, 2015).

The Ethiopian federal system and Intra-regional conflicts between the Amhara-Kimant ethnic groups: The case study of Chillga Woreda: The Amhara region is one of the nine regions in Ethiopia. It has the second largest population and consists of more than five ethnic groups. It includes the Agaw/Awi, Oromo, Agaw/Himtaghna, Argobba, Kemant, and other ethnic groups. The Amhara and the Kimant people have no difference in language, faith, culture, and tradition; instead, they live together for centuries and marry each other.

The Kimant people have long been living in the North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region. Notably, they dispersedly inhabit Chilga woreda, Lay Armachiho Woreda, and the Town of Gondar together with the Amhara people. Mainly, they live peacefully and cooperatively for an extended period. Therefore, it is difficult to separate between the Amhara and Kimant ethnic groups.

However, following the Marxist-Leninist oriented 1995 constitution, article 39 (3) allows each ethnic group to have the right of self-administration and equitable representation at both the regional and federal levels of government. Hence, after the coming of the 1995 FDRE Constitution, the Kimant is said to have a language that does not speak its distinct language. In practice, it is not expressed within the family or in society, and thus, a new identity has emerged out of the same community.

In such circumstances, a distinct Kimant identity that separated from the Amhara people and the question of the Kemant people has become a contentious issue in Ethiopian politics since the advent of ethnic federalism. Therefore, the problem that is now happening between two people emerges after the Constitution and ethnic Federalism were adopted. In the first place, the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of TPLF, the design of federalism, and the constitutional right of secession clause and ethnic boundary line have become the heart of the conflicts between Amhara and Kimant people.

Moreover, though the design of federalism and the Constitution recognized those rights to resolve conflicts among ethnic groups, this system has been guided by TPLF socialist dogma and produced new disputes. Since the constitutional rights vary depending on TPLF's interest than constitutional principles. For example, it recognized a self-administration power to Argobba ethnic groups with Nine Kebeles, but not for Kimants, more than 70 Kebeles in the same region.

Thus, the conflict between the Amhara and the Kimant community is constitutional impracticability. That is, it started during the 2007 people census. However, during the Derg regime's people census, the Kimant accounted for nearly 169 a thousand and was recognized as separate entities. In the 1995 first people censuses of EPRDF, the Kimant community accounted for 172 thousand. But the 2007 census calculated that no Kimant's ethnic identity differed from the Amhara identity and then registered them as other people. Then, the Kimants identity conflict becomes worsen. The principal causes of this conflict deny the constitutional rights unconstitutionally by the federal government that did not respond to its identity questions in its initial period. In due course, they assume themselves as marginalized and simpleminded and then have trouble with the Amhara brothers. In such a way, following the 2007 census, a study recognized that they had a different psychological make-up, beliefs, and more than 10 thousand people who spoke the Kimantgna languages that differed them from the Amhara.

Moreover, the Amhara regional government does not recognize Kimant's identity by the country's Constitution. That is, once it was created as the starting point for nation nationality, at the time, especially in the 2007 census when the kimants were accounted as others, they were asked to accounted as Kimant, but there was no answer. From this situation, they assumed they would mobilize their ethnicity based on who they were and arrange themselves to have their Woreda/ district, including 42 Kebeles. But no one did not answer their questions, and then the problem was exacerbated. However, after the conflict highlighting, the regional government and the HoF were allowed to have their special woreda based on their first question, but the Kimant were not accepted. Instead, they claimed a zonal status that includes 126 Kebelles. As a result, conflict is still present among the two ethnic groups. In the beginning, if the government were

allowed when they asked their self-administration question, we wouldn't get into all this trouble. But now their question is wide-ding, and the region has been intensifying with intra-ethnic conflict. Therefore, the primary source of this problem is the regional government and the federal Constitution, and the 2007 census. That is why the community has faced different issues, like property destruction, death, carnage, and displacement within the same ethnic groups and the same region.

The Kimant informants of Chilga Woreda articulated that it is not easy to think that language and religious differences exist between the two people because they lived together in peace and solid societal solidarity. The quest of the Kimant community is self-rule and self-administration. Mainly the search for restructuring nationality administration. However, it is still not implemented due to the rejection of the regional government. So the problem is not either the people of Kimant or the Amhara; instead, it is the regional governmen.

In such a situation, although Kimant's question did not meet the legitimacy criteria, the regional government responded to resolve the people's request in 67 Kebeles and three districts. Even the regional government responded to establish an independent administration, and it was proclaimed. But they did not accept because their hidden mission is different from their questions.

For this reason, the Amhara residents of Chilga Woreda expressed that the Kimant asked a question of identity. They asked for a self-administration power without any different linguistic and ethnic identity from the Amhara. As a result, the regional government, despite its ups and downs, responded appropriately. But they did not accept it because their desire is TPLF's interest to destroy Amhara from Gondar and form the Tigrayan republic. In doing so, now we are in trouble.

Other non-Amhara ethnic groups who live in the Amhara region though they are a minority, have earned the right to govern independently in the state constitution so that their political participation can flourish. For example, the Awi, Wag, Oromo, and later the special district of the Algona ethnic groups recognized a self-rule and self-administration status. Also, they have shared rules in the regional state administration. Similarly, Kimant ethnic group has been identified to have such rights, but exceptionally they rejected such rights.

Moreover, the ANRS council established "*The Kimant National-Administration Establishment and Organization Proclamation No. 255/2018*" to have an autonomous self-governance level in its local area. However, the Kimant committees do not accept the issues of self-governance in accordance due to the proclamation.

The contention between the Kimant people and the regional governments is not the issue of recognition. Since the ANRS council has already established a distinct self-governance proclamation, the problem is the number of Kebeles. Hence, the problem is the federal Constitution that recognizes divisions inside unity. Therefore, the ethnopolitics and Article 39 of the Constitution have created intra-ethnic conflicts between the Kimant and Amhara communities.

Moreover, the Ethiopian ethnic federalism's design is a problem that underpinned diversity and exacerbated conflicts by masquerading the unknown issues. For example, before ethnic federalism, it was difficult to distinguish the Amhara, Kimant, and Agew ethnic groups. Almost 95 percent of these people had a shared history, culture, and values. However, since this federalism was shaped and become a governing rule through widening differences, it has eroded our unity and pushed us into thrift.

The second factor of conflict is the design of Ethiopian federalism that recognized under article 46(2) of the FDRE constitution an ethnic-based boundary delimitation to establish ownership entitlements. Its thought and breathing lungs are the language itself instead of personality and Humanity. The Kimant and the Amhara conflicts have also been associated with territorial and Kebele numbers than identity.

In such views, Bereket states that the very concept of ethnicity is related to some essential features, like a common language, cultural trait, shared history, and last but not least, inhabiting the same geographic space. Thus, in a multinational setting, it needs to be imperative to delineate boundaries along ethnic divides. Otherwise, dividing one part of a community and making an appendage to another ethnic group would entail contradiction and conflict among the neighboring ethnic groups.

However, these constitutional principles were impractical; instead, EPRDF's ideology, policies, programs, and projects were applicable. Thus, it creates a new ethnic identity and divides the same society into different segments in the country. In such a ways, the displaced Amhara informants from Chilga Woreda expressed that ethno-boundary demarcation has only created a conducive environment for TPLF than the general community. Means the cause of conflict between the Kimant and Amhara is not only an identity issue. The Kimant community does not have any interest in having such territorial and Kebele numbers. However, TPLF's territorial expansion interest has pushed Kimant's committee against the Amhara people or the two twine societies in culture, history, and language.

Moreover, Ayelgn expressed that this ethnonational political arrangement and ethno-boundary lines have put pressure on a society that has lived together for centuries and has been plunged into an ethnic conflict that hadn't never happened in history among them. Therefore, the territorial expansion interests of TPLF and Kimants by the Amhara region create an inevitable ethnic conflict. Overall, ethnic boundaries and ethnic conflicts are deeply intertwined. For example, the main goal of the Kimants self-administration claim is also the land issue, which is to do what the land of Metema to TPLF and Sudan in the hands of it. Thus, the Kimants agenda is not only for self-administration but also by taking the two kebeles of Metema to merge with the Tigray region. Therefore, the leading actor of the conflict of the Kimant group is the TPLF and its alliance with the Kimant committee and Kimant Democratic Party. Similarly, the issue of contestation between the Kimant and Amhara people is territorial, which is the two kebele issues that connect with Sudan and Tigray region than identity recognition.

The third cause of the conflict between Amhara and the Kimant ethnic groups is the constitutional recognition of identity politics. The TPLF, to equalize the small Tigray ethno-region with the other majority ethnic-regional states, creates the FDRE constitution that is in line with ethnic identity politics to control Ethiopia through dividing rule. From this perspective, the Kimant extremist forces, ethnic parties, and political elites mobilized their ethnic groups based on an identity that crucified and contradicted the Kimant and Amhara people (Mengie, 2015).

For this reason, others more argued that the problem is a lack of love that came later, not from the past. And that's why we can eat each other as a society. TPLF has made the right of secession for its hidden agenda of secession. I understand that placing it as an alternative right in more than 85% of an uneducated society creates a problem with our unity. That is why ethnic political parties have contributed to the existing conflicts because the parties use this agenda as a choice to meet their interests.

Moreover, ethnic political activists, like Kimant Democratic Party/ KDP and Agew Shengo, work hand in hand and with both the outside and the inner enemy to make things worse. For example, the chairman of the KDP discussed and made statements from a collection of federalist powers in the Tigray region. The other causes of the conflict are the leadership of the Kimant and the Amhara group, an informal organization such as Fano.

Similarly, the Kimnat informants from Chilga Woreda highlighted that the cause of the conflict is multidimensional. On the side of the government, it was reluctant to answer the question of the Kimant community. On both sides, some elites manipulated society's demand and promoted mob justice for all the problems between them. The conflict actors are the Kimant Democratic Party, coordinators of the Kimant committee, armed rebel forces, the Amhara Fano, the TPLF, Sudan, and Egypt. Individuals who claim to be advocators of Kimant people are muggers and community leaders.

On the other hand, others argued that the party's principle for any action guides the political leaders. If the parties are weak and narrow, their leadership will fail and be slender. So all the current leaders emanated from TPLF/EPRDF ethnopolitics. Thus, the race-based party is the root of its racial heritage, so any party that can be organized in such a way, their memorial mindset cannot be human beings except race. Therefore, national parties are better for the country's unity and peace than ethnic parties.

The last cause of the conflict is the Nexus between the Ethiopian Identity and Ethno-national Identity. For example, the federation is the nation's Constitution and nationality that promotes ethnonational rather than Ethiopian identity. Thus, in the past, the kimant identity was Ethiopianism as the same as the Amhara. However, following this ethno-federal Constitution, they have been confronted along with we and them identity issues.

Nowadays, we are witnessing people who wish for the disintegration of Ethiopia if the ethnic group to which they belong is not beneficial. These did not care for ethnic belongingness before the application of the current ethnic federalism, which in fact, they do not know about it. Having thousand years of history, the Ethiopian people lived in harmony and peace for centuries. However, this federalism has been carving for differences, which is an embarrassment for our unity and sense of national identity. Because of this orientation, people feel humiliated by their history and lose a typical hero (Ogunnoiki, 2017).

Therefore, TPLF has built an ethnic group of state ownership by demolishing the common Ethiopian state values. That is why it organized all structures based on ethnicity and dignity rather than Ethiopian national pride. If not for identity recognition, Kimant and Amahara would not be in such a situation (Raffas, 2012).

Overall, this intra-regional conflicts between the Amhara and Kimant people resulted in various socio-economic and political failures in the region. Among others, the negative influences of the competition are the displacement of citizens, the loss of property; the loss of the body; the sacrifice of human life; and the community's social life insecurity.

In such a ways, the Amhara residents expressed that we have lost our peace. Our social life has been cut short. In doing so, this results in good lives being lost. Large numbers of people have been displaced, the property has been looted, burned, and psychologically it makes the people unstable. Then, if the government solves the problem, we want to settle back. Then the Ethiopian identity is not only blurred, but also it has left a little bite to disappear. In turn, ethnic identity is strengthened.

In connection with destruction, the ANRS (2017) supervision report documented that various conflicts and turmoil in our region took place from November/2015-August/2016 have caused widespread damage to the lives and bodies of citizens in the north Gondar zones- Chillga Woreda (Table 1).

Table-1 DAMAGE AND CRISIS CAUSED BY CONFLICT OVER KIMANT'S QUESTION OF WHO IS AND HOW TO SELF - ADMINISTRATION FROM NOVEMBER-AUGUST/2016							
No		Kimant	Amhara	Agew	Tigre	Oromo	Security force	Total
1	Death	60	131	8	7	1	235	416
2	Disabled	51	234	26			94	409
3	Displacement	10496			3139			
4	Propertydistraction	The total distraction of Property per birr			A Wasted Property		Estimated financial support	
		56,147,518.55			15,354,992.63		40,792,525.92	

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

CONCLUSION

The 1995 FDRE constitution recognized all the fundamental human and democratic rights and organized the Ethiopian diverse ethnic groups into nine regions along ethno-territorial unites through granting the right of self-determination, including secession.

However, the applicability of these constitutional principles and rights remained in the paper; instead, TPLF/EPRDF Marxist-Leninist centralized political system was the governing rule in all affairs of the state. In the past, there was peaceful coexistence between the Amhara and Kimant people in the Gondar areas. Since Ethiopia's constitutional adoption, there have been intra-regional violent conflicts between the two people that eroded the past peaceful coexistence in the people's history. First, the Ethiopian federal design is choked by TPLF socialist philosophy. That recognized ethnic boundary lines in line with this dead model of Marxist-Leninist perspective. Surprisingly, our planet's only State that recognizes the right to secession in its Constitution is the Ethiopian ethnic federal system since 1995. Therefore, this principle creates animosity between the Amhara and Kimant people; they cause hatred, distrust, and harm the people who have lived together peacefully for centuries.

Second, the Constitution does not emphasize the unity of the people, rother it is under-sensitive on Ethiopianism and promoting differences. Moreover, though the federal Constitution recognizes autonomous self-administration rights for Ethiopian ethnic groups, those principles are different when it comes to actions in regional states. That is why the Kimant people have confronted with Amhara brothers. Because of this, we all are being racist and disclosing our ethnic identity than Ethiopian citizenship.

Third, Ethiopian ethnic federalism is shaped based on ethnic fundamentalism, ethno-political elites to protect their own political and economic interests while aggravating intra-

regional conflicts in a country. Therefore, the ethnic parties like TPLF, ADP, and others have created differences between the Amhara and Kimant people; they cause hatred, distrust, and harm the people who have lived together peacefully for centuries. Therefore, to maintain the communities' universal interest and regulate inter and intra-regional conflicts, the consociational democratic federalism, and mixed boundary demarcation must exist.

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