Perpetuating power
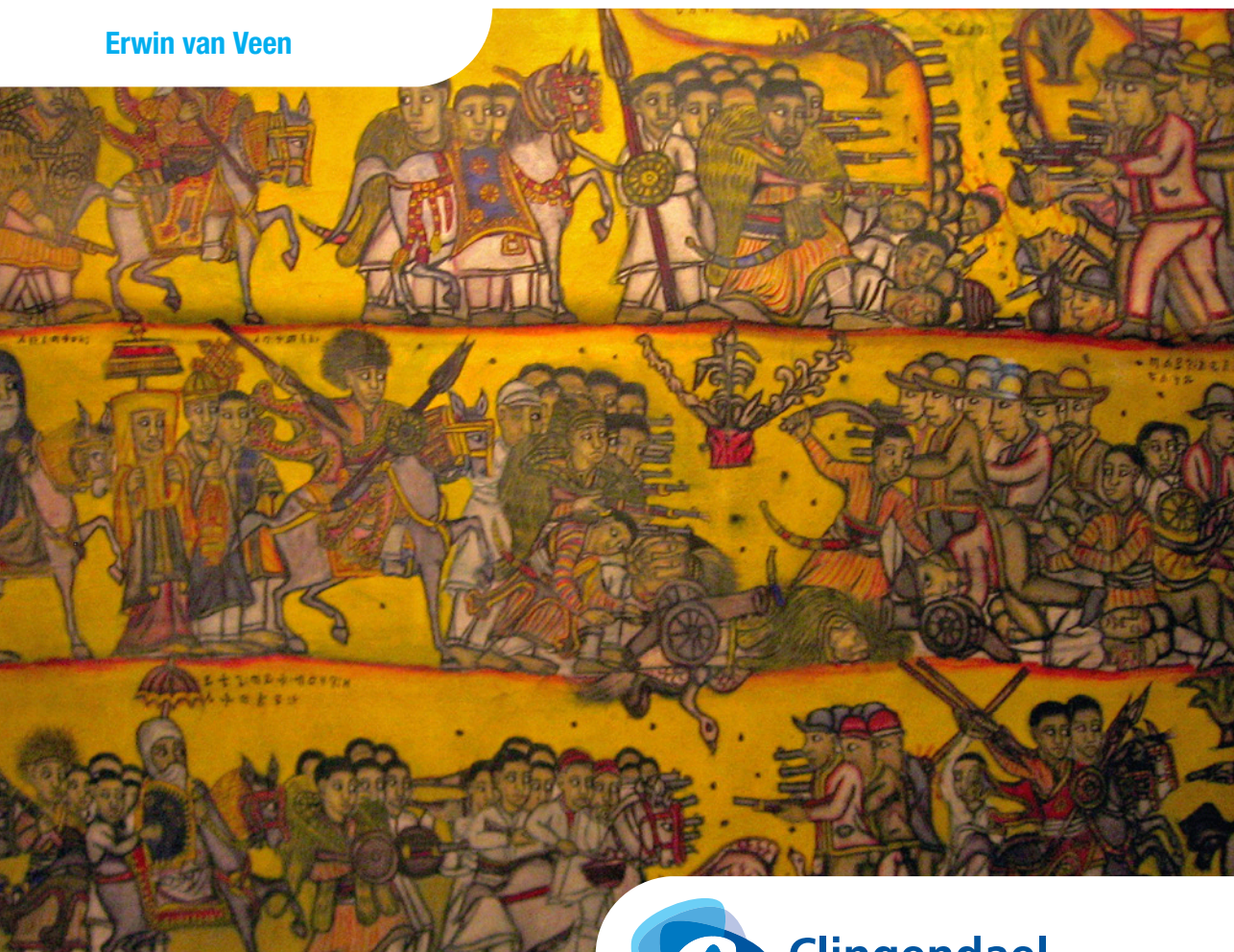
Ethiopia's political settlement
and the organization of security

Erwin van Veen

Clingendael
Netherlands Institute of International Relations

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About the author

Erwin van Veen is a senior research fellow with Clingendael's Conflict Research Unit who focuses on the power dynamics of the organization of security and justice in conflict-prone environments, conducts political-economy analysis of conflicts in the Middle East and examines how security and justice programs can be improved.

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Contents

Abstract

This report examines the evolution of Ethiopia's 'political settlement' and its implications, consequences and risks with regard to the organization and provision of security by state forces. The report's analysis leads to three key insights. First, the TPLF/EPRDF strategically controls state security forces which, given the party's quasi-monopoly on political power, often makes it difficult to distinguish instruments of the state from the party. This creates a situation in which state security forces may serve national interests but in which these interests are defined on the basis of a particular ideology and they also sustain existing power structures. Second, the combination of *de facto* centralization of authority and security with *de jure* decentralization of autonomy to Ethiopia's regions, in recognition of their social and developmental diversity, creates inconsistency in matters of security, in terms of both intent and performance. Third, the military serves both as a combat force and as a vehicle for development. This happens mainly through the vehicle of 'METEC', a military-run conglomerate. While this seems sensible from the perspective of strengthening party rule and enhancing implementation capacity for development strategies, it also increases the risk of corruption, nepotism and inefficient resource allocation.

Executive Summary

Ethiopia's foreign affairs and national security policy and strategy document states that "work carried out on the basis of studies has a better chance of bringing good results".[1] In the spirit of this encouraging statement, the present report seeks to contribute to a productive debate on the relationship between political power and security in Ethiopia in order to inform international initiatives aimed at supporting the country's development. More specifically, it examines the evolution of Ethiopia's 'political settlement' and its implications, consequences and risks with regard to the organization and provision of security by state forces. The report is part of the growing body of research on the role of elites and leadership in the politics of developmental processes, and as such it adds value to the domains of political science, development and conflict studies.

The report analyses a number of historical and contemporary factors that have influenced the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement in order to understand the broad political parameters that govern the organization of security. On this basis, it subsequently identifies and unpacks three major implications for the organization of security. The figure below provides a schematic overview of the approach and headline findings:

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1   Ministry of Information (2002), *Ethiopia's National Security and Foreign Affairs Policy and Strategy*, Addis Ababa, 2002. Accessible here: http://www.mfa.gov.et/docs/Foreign%20Policy%20English.pdf (consulted 22 February 2016).

Figure 1   Schematic overview of the report's key findings

Historical political factors	Comtemporary political factors	Implications for the organization of security
A legacy of centralization, control and coercion continues to influence styles of rule and administrative approaches	The partial transition of the TPLF/EPRDF from movement to political party creates strong leadership structures that rest in part on internal control and a lack of external transparency	The TPLF/EPRDF strategically controls state security forces, supplemented by some operational links
A legacy of exclusionary rule with ethnic undertones limits broader distribution of power and risks counter-mobilization(s)	The expectation that TPLF/EPRDF rule will continue, perpetuates a single-party monopoly	The combination of the centralization of authority and security with regional autonomy creates mixed security intent and performance due to mandate and capacity issues
The volatility and insecurity of the region requires and perpetuates securitized approaches to (political) conflict	Political power and economic interests are fused and harnessed to a national strategy of state-led economic development	The military serves both as fighting force and as vehicle for development

The picture that emerges from the analysis of factors influencing the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement shows that the TPLF/EPRDF has acquired and maintained a significant level of control over the structures, resources and instruments of the Ethiopian state during the past 25 years. The party's centralized hold on power is based to a large extent on the interlinked dynamics of generating legitimacy through output in terms of social service delivery and economic growth, using economic and security incentives to maintain loyalty to the party, and limiting meaningful political competition. As a political party, the EPRDF comprises inner and outer layers. The outermost layers have strengthened over time, align with regional (sub-state) leading groups and provide a platform that extends the party's authority and legitimacy into Ethiopia's regions. Resources are managed through a state-led economy with a key role for parastatal companies, many of which are run by party-associated individuals. These companies are harnessed to a state-led vision of economic development and poverty reduction. As robust security measures continue to be used as a common instrument of rule, political

dialogue and compromise characterize the government's policy agenda only to a limited extent. This situation has three particular implications for the organization of security:

– The EPRDF/TPLF strategically controls state security forces which, given the party's quasi-monopoly on political power, often makes it difficult to distinguish instruments of the state from the party. This creates a situation in which state security forces may serve national interests but in which these interests are defined on the basis of a particular ideology and they also sustain existing power structures. This view has been reinforced by the fact that some leading security professionals remain party-affiliated. The top ranks of the security forces also still tend to be dominated by people of an Tigrayan ethnic background.

– The combination of *de facto* centralization of authority and security with *de jure* decentralization of autonomy to Ethiopia's regions, in recognition of their social and developmental diversity, creates inconsistency in matters of security, in terms of both intent and performance. More specifically, while regions are responsible for maintaining security within their borders, they often lack the capacity to ensure it and, particularly on the issue of fighting terrorism, they face the problem that federal mandates and powers of intervention are not clearly delineated from their own. This creates a patchwork of security provision of variable quality and extent.

– The military serves both as a combat force and as a vehicle for development. As a disciplined organization, it is entrusted with running, and providing strategic advisory support for, significant business enterprises contributing to the country's development. This happens mainly through the vehicle of 'METEC', a military-run conglomerate. While this seems sensible from the perspective of strengthening party rule and enhancing implementation capacity for development strategies, it also increases the risk of corruption, nepotism and inefficient resource allocation.

As long as popular perceptions of individual prospects, economic opportunities and personal security are positive, such issues will be relatively unproblematic. However, in order to avoid a situation where demands for socio-political change outmatch the government's capability to accommodate them, two actions could be considered. In the short term, the government could find ways of creating greater transparency around security thinking, policies and operations, including opportunities for consultation, which fall short of undermining the political dominance of the TPLF/EPRDF. In the medium-to-long term, greater support for Ethiopia's regional police forces could help local security provision to respond more closely to people's security concerns; this would gradually establish a habit of dialogue, provided such a process were undertaken in a consultative as well as a capacitating fashion. As key state security organizations would remain centralized, this could be an acceptable method of experimenting with how the principles of Ethiopia's constitution can be given greater meaning in terms of regional security autonomy.

On a final note, it should be noted that this research proved to be a difficult endeavour. This was partly because Ethiopia's political and economic model differs significantly from the framework of the liberal peacebuilding agenda. On the one hand, present-day Ethiopia is a world away from the country in 1991 that was suffering the effects of decades of civil war, droughts and poor governance. In a single generation, Ethiopia has become a fairly secure, economically fast-growing and well-regarded member of the international community. On the other hand, it has reached current levels of performance and activity by way of a more centralized and control-oriented approach. Regardless of the fact that insufficient evidence is available on the extent to which exits from fragility need to be centralized and controlled in order to 'succeed', normative views tend to dominate the framing of development processes such as those in Ethiopia. In particular, tension exists between the developmental and political realities of Ethiopia and the global political and human rights agenda. This matter is beyond the scope of the present report, but it suggests that analysis should be conducted with caution. The complex processes of political and social change in Ethiopia invite discussion, but they are ongoing and multifaceted.

Another problem was that there is only a very modest analytical base for research on security matters in Ethiopia, given the limited scholarly work and public data available. In addition, because political discourse in Ethiopia between the ruling party and the opposition is polemicized, and significant grievances exist in sections of the population, there is an absence of objective, evidence-based sources of data. This makes it difficult for research to navigate across different perceptions and experiences. It is for these reasons that interviews supporting the analysis are not attributed or referenced. Data has of course been triangulated between interviews and with existing research where possible. It is likewise for these reasons that the report should be read as an exploratory effort to stimulate discussion as well as further research.

Acknowledgement

Map of Ethiopia (2009)

Source: University of Texas (Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection).

Introduction

The development of Ethiopia is characterized by a number of paradoxes that raise both challenging and interesting questions in respect of the country's future trajectory. Its economic performance is one such paradox. While state-led growth averaged an impressive 10–11% per year over the period 2003–13,[2] Ethiopia's ranking on the Human Development Index has not moved by much, which is partly a reflection of its population growth and the difficulty of translating macro-growth into micro-gains.[3] Ethiopia's politics suggest another paradox in the form of the contrast between a progressive constitution, a discourse of respect for ethnic self-determination and the almost complete political dominance of the Ethiopean People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).[4] Ethiopia's state security forces represent a third paradox. On the one hand, many commentators have acknowledged the contribution of the Ethiopian military to regional stability through, for example, substantial peacekeeping contributions and acting as US ally in the Horn of Africa theatre of the 'global war on terror'.[5] At the same time, others argue that the concentration of political power in the hands of the EPRDF results in the use of state security forces (police and intelligence in particular) as instruments of the party to preserve the existing power structure.[6]

In the context of these paradoxes, the report examines the relationship between political power and security in Ethiopia to inform international initiatives designed to support the country's development. More specifically, it examines the evolution of Ethiopia's 'political settlement' and its implications for the organization and provision of security by state forces.[7]

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2   Wondifraw, A. et al., *Ethiopia 2015*, African Economic Outlook, AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2015.

3   United Nations Development Programme, *Accelerating Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia*, National Human Development Report, Addis Ababa, 2014. About 25 out of 100 million Ethiopians lived below the national poverty line of USD 0.60 a day in 2013.

4   For example: Abbink, J., "The Ethiopian Second Republic and the Fragile Social Contract", *Africa Spectrum*, vol. 44, no. 2., pp 3-28, 2009; Markakis, J., *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*, Woodbridge, James Currey, 2011.

5   President Obama's visit in July 2015 strongly emphasized US support for Ethiopia because of the latter's role in the region. See: The *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

6   Illustrative are: Pausewang, S., *Local Democracy and Human Security in Ethiopia, Structural Reasons for the Failure of Democratisation*, Johannesburg, SAIIA, 2004; Abbink, J., 'The Ethiopian Revolution after 40 Years (1974-2014): Plan B in Progress?', *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp 333-357, 2015.

7   In this report, state security organizations include the military, police (federal and regional) and intelligence services. See box 2 for more details.

Although imperfect, the concept of 'political settlement' offers a useful analytical lens because it focuses on the negotiation process, as well as the agreement that may result from it, between a country's various powerful groups on the division and use of power.[8] In fragile societies, coercive capacities, including state security forces, are drivers of such political settlements and at the same time instruments for maintaining and implementing them. On the one hand, powerful groups that can avail themselves of coercive capacities such as militias, factionalized security forces or even criminal elements, enjoy an advantage when competing for political power. On the other hand, when such groups reach agreement on the distribution of power, the administrative machinery of state usually plays a significant role in implementing its terms.[9] State security forces are a vital part of this equation beause of their ability to enforce the political settlement vis-à-vis those that are not included or represented.

Ethiopia reached a fairly stable political settlement, after the overthrow of its military dictatorship, in the period 1991–95, and the settlement is still in place today. This resulted in both a *de jure*, and a significant measure of *de facto*, state control over the means for violence, meaning that the use of coercive capacity as an independent variable that influences the terms of the country's political settlement has largely ceased to be relevant. There is no question about the ability of the Ethiopian state to defend itself effectively by force should the need arise and none of the groups excluded from its political settlement currently possesses adequate force to challenge it. Therefore, it is appropriate and relevant to focus on how, and to what effect, state security institutions implement the existing political settlement.

The paper is part of a larger project that analyses how political settlements – as expressions of elite interests – influence the way in which security is organized. This project is co-funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy and includes another case study (on Lebanon) and a more general synthesis paper. The present report is based on literature research and 27 semi-structured, qualitative interviews with Ethiopian individuals who have agenda-setting

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8   A political settlement is the set of (in)formal representation, control and distribution rules that guide governance and resource allocation in a particular country. It is usually based on the interests of powerful groups led by a country's elites. They negotiate the extent to which they can pursue their interests on the basis of their relative power and skill within the boundaries of what their constituencies tolerate. The settlement that is the outcome of these negotiations influences the type of institutions that can exist and the nature of their performance. See for example: Parks, T. and W. Cole, *Political settlements: Implications for International Development Policy and Practice*, Occasional paper no. 2, The Asia Foundation, 2010. For a useful overview of the issues and usefulness of the concept: Bell, C., *What we talk about when we talk about political settlements: Towards inclusive and open political settlements in an era of disillusionment*, Edinburgh, Political settlements research programme, 2015.

9   Putzel, J. and J. Di John, *Meeting the challenges of crisis states*, London, LSE, 2012.

influence on the conception and use of a nation's tangible and intangible security resources. The interviews took place in Addis Ababa in February and June 2015, with additional validation meetings conducted in March 2016.[10] Shortcomings of the interview data include limited coverage of the opposition, a lack of interviews with representatives of state security forces outside of Addis Ababa and the fact that non-state security actors were not included. In addition, the second part of the analysis relies more on the limited set of interviews than ideally would be the case. This is largely because not much is written about Ethiopia's security sector. This makes the report an explorative effort to stimulate discussion as well as further research.

As to the report's structure, Section 2 examines the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement from both a historical and a contemporary perspective, with the aim of clarifying the political parameters within which the present organization of security must be understood. Section 3 subsequently examines the implications of these parameters for the organization of security in terms of their consequences, perceptions and risks. The report's conclusion offers short reflections on the future challenges that Ethiopia's present organization and provision of security are likely to generate, and how they could be dealt with.

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10   Seven of these interviewees were political leaders (senior government officials, opposition and trade union leaders), five were opinion-makers (academics, journalists, think-tank analyst) and fifteen were senior officials across the security sector).

1   Dynamics of political power in Ethiopia: past and present

It is tempting to start an analysis of how power is organized and exercised in Ethiopia by going back to 1991, when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) overthrew the military junta ('Derg') under Mengistu Haile Mariam and brought 17 years of rebellion-cum-liberation struggle to an end. It was a watershed moment that ended a prolonged period of harsh oppression in which tens of thousands of Ethiopians disappeared, perished, fled or were imprisoned.[11] It was also the start of the period 1991–95 in which Ethiopia's current political settlement was forged between the different political parties that make up the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

However, taking 1991 as a starting point risks putting too much emphasis on contemporary factors that influence Ethiopia's political settlement, and too little on historical ones, producing an unbalanced understanding of its evolution. Indeed, a more appropriate historical marker is the reign of Menelik II (1889–1913) as it was under his rule that the Ethiopian empire was consolidated administratively and became a lasting political fixture of modern East Africa after the defeat of Italian colonial forces at the battle of Adowa (1896). It acquired more or less its present form through a series of campaigns resulting in the conquest of both the highland periphery of the Ethiopean plateau and the lowlands surrounding it.[12] Ethiopia's ability to avoid all but a very short period of direct colonial rule has enabled its rulers to chart an autonomous path of national development, which has involved dealing with friction between its diverse social forces, and experimenting with various modes of governance and the organization of security.

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11   The period of the 'Red Terror' (1977–78) stands out in particular, i.e. the violent campaign of the military junta against Ethiopia's civilian population and its various rebel-cum-liberation movements.

12   International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its Discontents*, Africa report no. 153, Brussels, ICG, 2009; Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Pankhurst, R., 'Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1961, pp 103-117. Addis Ababa became the empire's permanent capital in around 1890–91, and this stimulated administrative consolidation, central taxation and a programme of road construction.

Box 1   Contemporary Ethiopia at a glance

Population:	c. 74 million (2007 census); c. 90 million (2015 estimate)
Main cities:	Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Mekele, Nazret
Religion:	Ethiopian Orthodox (43%+), Muslim (34%+), Protestant (c. 18%) (2007 census)
Key ethnicities:	Oromia (36%+), Amhara (23%+), Somali (c. 6%), Tigray (c. 6%) (2007 census)
Urban vs. rural:	16% vs. 84% (2007 census); 20% vs. 80% (2014 estimate)
Poverty:	c. 25% of population (national poverty line)
Road network:	45,000 km of which 6,000 paved (2007)
Administration:	Federal republic
Neighbours:	Sudan (civil war), Eritrea ('no war, no peace'), Djibouti, Somalia (civil war), Kenya, South Sudan (civil war)
HDI rank:	173rd out of 187 (2014)
GDP:	USD 55 billion (current, 2014)

Sources: 2007 population census of Ethiopia's Central Statistical Agency, IMF, World Bank database, UNDP, Geohive

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An examination of Ethiopia's history since 1889 suggests a number of historical (between 1889 and 1991) and contemporary (between 1991 and 2015) factors that have influenced the evolution of the country's political settlement. Table 1 provides a brief summary of these factors, which are then analysed to generate the basic political parameters of the organization of security in Ethiopia.

Table 1   Factors influencing the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement

Historical (1889–1991)	Contemporary (1991–2015)
1. A legacy of centralization, control and coercion continues to influence styles of rule and administrative approaches	1. The partial transition of the TPLF/EPRDF from movement to political party creates strong leadership structures that rest partly on internal control and a lack of external transparency
2. A legacy of exclusionary rule with ethnic undertones limits broader distribution of power and risks counter-mobilization(s)	2. The expectation that TPLF/EPRDF rule will continue perpetuates a single-party monopoly
3. The volatility and insecurity of the region requires and perpetuates securitized approaches to (political) conflict	3. Political power and economic interests are fused and harnessed to a national strategy of state-led economic development

Historical factors (1889–1991)

The Tigrayan/Amharan polities situated on the northern side of the Ethiopean plateau form the historical core of present-day Ethiopia. Traditionally, these polities were run in authoritarian fashion, their rulers infused by religious legitimacy through the Christian Orthodox church and their wealth derived from the extraction of surplus from agricultural produce. Their societies were stratified and hierarchical, featuring both social inequality and opportunities for social mobility through successful military performance.[13] Since land was the most valuable resource in these densely populated societies, its acquisition became the key driver of the process of imperial expansion from c. 1889 to 1913.[14]

Centralization, control and coercion

A first historical factor that influences the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement is the centralization, control and coercion that characterized both the process of imperial expansion and the governance of the country afterwards. Historically, the Amhara-dominated core of the empire gradually annexed the highland periphery of the Ethiopian plateau and then its surrounding lowlands, in a classic pattern of empire-building that imposed different modes of governance on annexed territories.[15] The generally fertile and productive areas of the Ethiopian plateau were largely integrated into the empire and administered through a centralized bureaucracy that sought to maintain control and extract rents via a feudal system of land management, military mobilization and political loyalty. The local peasantry was subjected to serfdom and tied to its land by an elaborate mechanism of taxes and services, while local elites were either suppressed or co-opted into the existing feudal Amharan hierarchy, depending on the level of resistance they had offered in the process of their subjugation. In contrast, the lowland areas, which generated much less revenue, were typically administered through local elites that

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13 Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Tronvoll, K., *War and the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia: The Making of Enemies and Allies in the Horn of Africa*, Suffolk, James Currey, 2009.

14 On the importance of land: Vaughan, S. and K. Tronvoll, *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, Sida Studies no. 10, Stockholm, Sida, 2002; Markakis (2011), *op.cit.* Timewise, this process of expansion happened more or less in parallel with the European 'scramble for Africa'. The clash of these parallel developments in the form of the battle of Adowa (1896) is well described in: Pakenham, T., *The Scramble for Africa*, New York, Abacus, 1991.

15 The highland periphery of the Ethiopian plateau consists of parts of the present-day 'nations' (the Ethiopian term for federal states) of Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. The lowlands consist of the present-day nations of Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambela, as well as parts of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and Oromia. Plates 85 and 91 of the Times Atlas of the World provide an arresting visual of highland–lowland boundaries (Times Books, *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*, 14th edition, London, 2014). See also: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

served as proxies for their Amharan overlords.[16] Both modalities were underpinned by the cultural sense of superiority felt by the core Amharan/Tigrayan highland population – its leadership in particular – vis-à-vis other inhabitants of the empire.[17]

Unsurprisingly, coercion has been used extensively to establish and maintain centralized administration and political control. In the process of imperial expansion and consolidation, entire sultanates, principalities and even population groups were eliminated as need dictated. The groups that were forcibly incorporated into the Ethiopian empire are now citizens of today's Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.[18] The collective memory of violence[19] that certain groups suffered in this process has remained fresh in a number of cases, owing to the continued perception or experience of central political control and targeted use of coercion.[20]

Indirect and direct control and centralization have continued as modes of governance since Imperial Ethiopia ceased to exist in 1974. Significant aspects of this approach were reproduced in varying forms by the military junta between 1974 and 1991 and some aspects by the EPRDF between 1991 and 2015, in particular the continuation of top-down decision-making and implementation, especially in the realms of 'high politics' and security, with little scope for dissent or adaptation to local circumstances.[21] Even today, decision-making takes a 'committee-style' form, usually involving small groups of well-connected individuals who, by and large, are not representative of the population at large.[22] That said, it should be noted that this centralized approach to governance seems

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16 Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*, see also: Clapham, C., 'Ethiopean Development: The Politics of Emulation', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2006, pp 108-118.

17 Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*

18 While this is by no means dissimilar from the behaviour of Western colonizing powers during the same period, the latters' use of violence occurred largely in overseas territories away from their domestic populations. Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*; Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

19 For example, the 'red terror' under the military junta or the repression of the Ogaden and Oromo Liberation Fronts.

20 Such as electoral violence in 2005 or the recent violence associated with the government's decision to expand the city limits of Addis Ababa into the state of Oromia. See: Pausewang (2004), *op.cit.*; Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*, Abbink (2015), *op.cit.* The general trend is that the use of violence has shifted from indiscriminate application against large groups to more selective targeting of smaller groups and individuals. See also: See: Keller, J., *Identity, Citizenship and Political Conflict in Africa*, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2014.

21 On concepts and styles of rule between 1991 and 2012: Abbink, J. and T. Hagmann (eds), *Reconfiguring Ethiopia: The Politics of Authoritarian Reform*, London, Routledge, 2013.

22 Usually, there is scope for internal discussion and dissent; however, once a decision is taken there are few or no opportunities for reconsideration, adjustment based on additional (popular) input, or recourse. Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Clapham (2006), *op.cit.* For an anecdotal account of the imperial period: Kapuscinski, R., *The Emperor*, London, Penguin Books, 2006.

to have served Ethiopia's ruling elites well in terms of resisting colonization, facilitating significant surplus extraction from vast areas with diverse populations and enabling a focused mobilization of resources for economic growth today.[23]

Exclusionary rule with ethnic undertones

A second historical factor that infuences the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement is a legacy of exclusionary rule with ethnic undertones. More specifically, Ethiopia's ruling elites have largely come from two ethnic groups – Amharan and Tigrayan – which represent respectively a sizeable and a small fraction of the total population (see Box 1). While the Ethiopian empire of the past was dominated by Amharans, the contemporary Ethiopian federal state has been dominated by Tigrayans for most of the time.[24] The origins of rule by the Amharan-Tigrayan imperial core can be understood through the power dynamics of the growth of the empire. In short, rapid expansion meant that a growing diversity of populations needed to be administered and governed. Because land ownership was vital to political control and wealth, land acquired through conquest was typically allocated to elites from the core if it was sufficiently valuable, so that it could be used as a resource to perpetuate their rule. This helped create a legacy of not only central but also elite-cum-ethnic dominance over key resources, which in certain respects still prevails today.[25]

Rule by Amharan or Tigrayan groups nevertheless cannot be equated with ethnic dominance, for two reasons. First, with the exception of the period during its rebellion-cum-liberation struggle in which the TPLF was closely connected to the Tigrayan rural population, the Amharic and Tigrayan leadership in control of the Ethiopian state marginalized the rural population of their own ethnic groups just as much as lower classes of other ethnic groups. Moreover, as already noted, leaders beyond the political core typically have been incorporated to some extent into the ruling elite.[26] This has endowed central rule with greater legitimacy while at the same time creating functional channels for implementing decisions made at the political centre. The EPRDF is a good contemporary example of this dynamic (discussed below). In short, while there is an ethnic dimension to rule in Ethiopia, it is partial and somewhat diluted through measures that give a larger number of groups a stake in governance. It is nevertheless not

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23 Leslie, P., *Chapman-Andrews and the Emperor*, London, Leo Cooper Ltd, 2005.

24 Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*; Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

25 Keller, for example, argues that the persistence of strong central policy guidance, limited fiscal decentralization and variable capacity at different levels of the administration have imposed limits on the extent to which the federal model truly empowers its constituent states – meaning that power continues to reside in the TPLF/EPRDF-dominated centre. Keller (2014), *op.cit.*; Keller, E., 'Ethnic federalism, fiscal reform, development and democracy in Ethiopia', *African Journal of Political Science*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2002.

26 Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

surprising that this situation has continued to generate criticism as well as resistance from those who feel politically and economically excluded. Given the country's diversity, it is remarkable that the Ethiopian state has not just survived such centrifugal dynamics, it has also enjoyed relative stability since 2000, as well as making substantial economic progress. Nevertheless, two recent developments are making ethnicity more prominent as a future source of strife.

To start with, ethnicity was more or less inadvertently politicized by the military junta as a by-product of its large-scale repression of national movements, such as student associations and trade unions, that were considered political risks. This effectively meant that other groups that were more territorially and ethnically based became key channels of resistance. The 'profile of ethnicity' was further reinforced by the 1995 Constitution which explicitly turned Ethiopia into a federation of nine ethnic nations but, as some have argued, without a corresponding devolution of authority and resources in real terms.[27] A consequence of this situation of partial federalization is that a number of states are not yet equipped with the capacities or funds they need to deliver more than limited social services (such as housing, water and electricity) of variable quality.[28] The resulting discontent serves as a driver for identity-based mobilization, despite a generally shared sense of 'Ethiopian-ness'.

Moreover, feedback across all categories of respondents indicated a degree of disillusionment among the other political parties-cum-powerful groups incorporated in the EPRDF (the ANDM, OPDO and SEPDF) because of their limited role in the country's government compared with that enjoyed by the TPLF.[29] At the same time, elements of the population in Ethiopia's periphery are dissatisfied with the dominance of the country's core. These issues suggest that political incentives for mobilizing ethnicity as a resource in struggles for power already exist.[30]

27 Clapham (2006), *op.cit.*; Keller (2002), *op.cit.*

28 See for example: ICG (2009), *op.cit.*; Abbink, J., 'Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years', in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.* See also: Keller (2014), *op.cit.*

29 On this point, see also: Vaughan, S., 'Revolutionary democratic statebuilding: party, state and people in the EPRDF's Ethiopia', in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*

30 See for example: Hagmann, T., *Talking Peace in the Ogaden: The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, Nairobi, Rift Valley Institute, 2014; Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*; Abbink, J., 'Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years', in: Abbink and Hagman (2013), *op.cit.*

A volatile and insecure region

A third and final historical factor influencing the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement is the volatile and insecure nature of the region in which the country is situated. This both requires and perpetuates securitized approaches to (political) conflict. The origins of this volatility are too complex to discuss here in detail, but they include decades of cross-border violent activity, competing cross-border claims on resources, territory, loyalty and legitimacy, the quest for greater autonomy by some ethnic groups, the seasonal migration of the region's sizeable nomadic populations, and the illicit movement of people and goods across porous borders.[31] Given its size, location and interests, Ethiopia is at the heart of a 'regional conflict complex'.[32] It could be argued that many of the drivers of this complex have been situated outside of the country since the start of EPRDF rule in 1991. Although Ethiopia is no mere spectator or passive victim of regional insecurity, recognizing this state of affairs helps to understand the need to keep political power and state security organizations centralized and under control. Any departure from this model could unintentionally jeopardize national security.[33]
In such circumstances, the number of political dialogues Ethiopia is engaged in actually represents a positive sign of its willingness to search for peaceful resolutions to the region's troubles. It is worth noting, for example, the country's role in the Nile Basin Initiative dialogue and in the Sudanese national dialogue, and its mediation efforts in the South Sudan power struggle.

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31 The Ethiopian–Somali war of 1977–78 is a high-profile example of such cross-border claims. Somalia sought to annex Ethiopia's Somali Regional State in pursuit of the 'Greater Somalia' notion. After the Somali defeat, the government of Siad Barre was overthrown and the Somali state effectively collapsed, which further complicated the situation. See for instance: Dehéz, D. and B. Gebrewold, 'When Things Fall Apart – Conflict Dynamics and an Order Besides the State in Post-collapse Somalia',:*African Security*, vol. 3, 2010, pp 1-20. On these themes, see also: Debiel, T., 'Introduction', in: Debiel, T. with A. Klein (eds), *Fragile peace: State failure, violence and development in fragile regions*, London, Zed Books, 2002. For analysis that focuses more on the positions and relations between the key states of the region (such as Egypt, Somalia and Saudi Arabia): De Waal, A., 'Africa's $700 billion problem waiting to happen', *Foreign Policy*, 17 March 2016; Barnes, C., *A wake-up call for Eritrea and Ethiopia*, Brussels, International Crisis Group, 15 June 2016.

32 A conflict complex is understood analogous to a security complex, meaning: 'a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.' Buzan, B. and O. Waever, *Regions and power: The structures of international security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

33 Indicative of this are, for example, the various reports of the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, online: https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/751/work-and-mandate/reports (accessed 12 November 2015). More pointedly, the United Nation's Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, *Report S/2011/433* of 18 July 2011, outlines a plan by Eritrean intelligence to detonate an explosive device during a 2011 African Union summit in Addis Ababa.

However, it can also be argued that the combination of Ethiopia's political culture of militarism, history of violence and its control-oriented approach to power tends to prioritize the use of force in response to regional insecurity over softer conflict resolution methods, such as negotiation and dialogue.[34] Here, one could point to Ethiopia's bilateral interventions in Somalia and its training of Somali militia along its border, which is separate from its engagement with the Somali National Army through AMISOM.[35]

The 'global war on terror' has added another layer to this conflict complex over the past 15 years, arguably with three major effects. The first is that additional, mostly US, resources have become available to countries in the region in the form of diplomatic support and funding. This has generally resulted in the regression of civil liberties and prioritized security concerns over quality-of-governance concerns.[36] The second effect is that that countries in the region, Ethiopia included, have been enabled to brand as 'terrorists' groups that have domestic grievances but do use violent methods. This branding has happened mainly through associating such groups with the transnationalism, radicalism and extreme violence of Al-Qaeda's jihad, which was the central theme of the war on terror. This makes it difficult to engage in more open and introspective reflection on the source of these groups' domestic grievances, their objectives and the nature of their underlying conflict with the state. Examples in the case of Ethiopia include the suppression of the Oromo Liberation Front, the Ogaden National

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34 Tadesse, M., 'Overcoming challenges for Security Sector Reform in the Horn of Africa', in: Le Roux, L. and Y. Kidane (eds), *Challenges to Security Sector Reform in the Horn of Africa*, (Monograph Series no. 135), Pretoria, ISS, 2007. Histories of violence and cultures of militarism echo across the region: Gebrewold, B., 'Civil Militias and Militarisation of Society in the Horn of Africa', in: Francis, D. (ed.), *Civil Militia: Africa's Intractable Security Menace?*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005.

35 The most significant being the Ethiopian military's crossing into Somalia in 2006 to oust the UIC. This, however, triggered a protracted insurgency by the UIC's youth wing, Al-Shabaab, that thrived on projecting Ethiopia as foreign occupier to justify counter-violence and radicalization. See: International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden*, Africa Report no. 207, Nairobi/Brussels, ICG, 2013; Albrecht, P., *Fragmented Peacekeeping: Regional Interests Define the African Union Mission in Somalia*, Copenhagen, Policy Brief, DIIS, 2015; Dersso, S., *The Somalia Conflict: Implications for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts*, ISS Paper no. 198, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, 2009; Civins, B., 'Ethiopia's Intervention in Somalia, 2006-2009', *Yonsei Journal of International Studies*, vol. 2, issue 2, 2010. For a brief overview of Ethiopia's various military engagements in Somalia: http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-analyse-788_fr.html (accessed 12 November 2015).

36 See for example: Kassa, W., 'Examining Some of the Raisons d'Être for the Ethiopian Anti-Terrorism Law', *Mizan Law Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2013.; Tadesse (2007), *op.cit.*

Liberation Front[37] and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, which has played a role in cutting off alternative conflict-resolution channels such as peace talks.[38] The third effect, noted by a number of interviewees, is that the 'war on terror' has increased the feeling of marginalization among some groups within Ethiopia's Muslim community. They observed that the country's security forces had recently made a number of mistakes in their dealings with this community, including interference in the elections of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and a disproportionate response to the resulting demonstrations.[39] It is often overlooked that over 30% of Ethiopians are Muslim who, to date, have mostly lived in peaceful coexistence with Ethiopia's other nations, nationalities and peoples.

In short, while regional insecurity has historically required strong centralization and control over power and security, the resulting use of force also perpetuates regional insecurity.[40] Both centralization and use of force simultaneoulsy also strengthen perceptions that historical patterns of central dominance continue, which generates both grievances and demands for change.[41]

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37 For example, the Ethiopian state brought the uprising in the region under control between 2007 and 2012 through a combination of a political 'divide and rule' approach to different Ogaden elite and opposition groups and a tough counter-insurgency campaign against the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). This has included arbitrary arrests, blockages of movement and trade, and cutting villages off from water and food supplies. Such tactics, largely applied by locally recruited paramilitary police forces, but also the Ethiopian military, proved to be effective. Hagmann (2014), *op.cit.* provides a range of supporting sources. See also: International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden*, Africa Report no. 207, Brussels/Nairobi, 2013.

38 Kagwanja, P., 'Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New security frontiers, old Strategies', *Africa Security Review*, vol. 15, no.:3, 2006, pp 72-86.

39 For example: http://www.theafricareport.com/Society-and-Culture/ethiopian-muslim-election-turns-violent.html (accessed 12 November 2015); International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia: Governing the Faithful*, Brussels/Nairobi, ICG Africa Briefing No. 117, 2016.

40 For example, Ethiopia is one of the lead contributors to the AU Mission in Somalia and has acquired a reputation as respected and engaged troop contributing nation to UN missions. Such missions generally act as a temporary conflict stabilizer. This engagement continues a longer Ethiopian track record of intermittently fielding a sizeable military presence in Somalia on the basis of national security interests, both with and without UN or AU mandate. Dehéz and Gebrewold (2010), *op.cit.*

41 On this point see: Pausewang, S., 'Ethiopia: Crisis of State, Good Governance and the Reform of the Security Sector', in: Debiel, T. with A. Klein (2002), *op.cit.*; Hagmann (2014), *op.cit.*

Historical political parameters for the organization of security

The historical factors that influence Ethiopia's political settlement point to the following broad parameters for the organization of security:

–   The historical use of centralization, control and coercion as methods of governance over a vast space with complex terrain and a diversity of peoples indicates a tradition of political use of state security organizations as instruments to project central authority.

–   A legacy of exclusionary rule with ethnic undertones suggests that partisan control over state security organizations is a long-standing characteristic of governance and a necessity for maintaining existing power and privileges.

–   A volatile and violent neighbourhood has historically required the maintenance of a strong state security apparatus to ensure Ethiopia's continued safety and to defend its interests. At the same time, this has perpetuated a securitized outlook and risks prioritizing militarized responses.

Contemporary factors (1991–2015)

Contemporary Ethiopia emerged from the rebellion-cum-liberation struggle that toppled the military junta in 1991. This event heralded a period of 25 years of unbroken EPRDF rule. It will be argued that three aspects of the nature and style of EPRDF governance have shaped the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement over this period in particular. These contemporary factors provide a more recent understanding of the country's present political situation and its implications for how security in Ethiopia is organized. Given the TPLF's historical role in shaping the EPRDF, and the number of respondents who commented on the continued influence of the TPLF within the EPRDF, the section that follows focuses primarily on the TPLF.[42]

The transition of the TPLF to political party

The first contemporary factor influencing Ethiopia's political settlement is the partial and ongoing transition of the TPLF from 'liberation movement' to political party. A brief

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42   Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*; Markakis (2011), *op.cit.* For a deeper analysis of relations between the TPLF and the other EPRDF parties: Vaughan, S., 'Revolutionary democratic statebuilding: party, state and people in the EPRDF's Ethiopia', in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.* Despite the justification offered, this approach is somewhat reductionist in the sense that the EPRDF is a coalition of parties and therefore subject to coalition dynamics and negotiations. The matter is in need of further research.

excursion into history shows that the TPLF emerged in 1975 as a military-movement-cum-party that sought to liberate Ethiopia from its military junta. The overthrow of the junta has been described as an "intellectually-led and ideology-driven revolution", and in this light the TPLF can be classified as an "integrated insurgent organization", characterized by strong central leadership, unity/cohesion and high levels of local support/compliance among the Tigrayan people.[43] These characteristics made the TPLF a formidable adversary for the military junta which, lacking the sophisticated means necessary for a comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign,[44] actually boosted the TPLF's initial strengths by resorting to indiscriminate counter-population warfare.[45] The TPLF's organizational characteristics also made it a movement/party with strong internal discipline and the ability to retain popular support.[46] Existing research offers a four-point general framework for understanding the transition of the TPLF from liberation movement to political party post-1991:[47]

The extent to which a political party structure has been developed: After 1991 the TPLF/EPDRF expanded its already formidable (though all-Tigray) party organization to achieve national scale. It has successfully developed into a national party whose structure today extends far into many Ethiopian communities. This greatly facilitates party outreach, campaigning and understanding of local needs. At the same time, however, such outreach also appears to serve the purpose of maintaining control and political alignment.[48]

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43 The first quotation is taken from Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.* Staniland differentiates between four types of insurgent organizations, namely 1) integrated, 2) vanguard, 3) parochial and 4) fragmented on the basis of two criteria: a) the extent of central control that such organizations are able to exercise (horizontal leadership ties and cohesion), and b) the extent of their local control (vertical ties of trust and support between leadership and communities). Staniland, P., *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2014.

44 Following Staniland's (2014), *op.cit.* views on this matter, a comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign would have simultaneously targeted the TPLF's leadership through military means while also weakening its popular support base through mostly non-military means (such as social programmes).

45 Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*

46 See for example: Vaughan, in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*

47 The framework is derived from: De Zeeuw, J. (ed.), *From soldiers to politicians: Transforming rebel movements after civil war*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008.

48 For example, the large TPLF/EPRDF recruitment drive in the wake of the 2005 elections was primarily an effort to shore up the party's support base. Various accounts suggest, however, that this was not an entirely voluntary process. Although it was not necessarily the case that direct pressure was used to get households to affiliate themselves with the party, in a poor society like rural Ethiopia, when party membership gives access to particular services and preferential treatment, such as greater security of land tenure, cheaper/better access to fertilizer and better administrative treatment, does create indirect pressure. See: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Vaughan, in: Abbink and Hagman (2013), *op.cit.* Yet, according to the 1995 Constitution, all Ethiopians are already entitled to such services on the basis of their citizenship (see e.g. articles 25 (right to equality) and 41 (economic, social and cultural rights).

The degree to which military structures have been dissolved: According to some observers, the TPLF's military structures were not really disbanded after 1991, but rather they replaced the army of the junta to be reincarnated as the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF).[49] A complex process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration followed, a feat that had to be repeated once more after the 1999 war with Eritrea. In short, the TPLF's military structures and forces were in in a constant state of transition for at least the first decade after the overthrow of the junta. An army in the modern sense started to emerge in the early 2000s and is still in the process of professionalization and transformation in terms of the representativeness of its composition.[50]

The extent to which decision-making has been internally democratized: Despite the adoption of a federal governance model and a new constitution (1995), efforts to increase internal democratization of EPRDF decision-making since 1991 have been limited. Some reports and a number of interviews actually suggest increased centralization of power and a growing dominance of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi within the party after its restructuring in 2001, following the resolution of the divergence within the TPLF that had appeared on the conclusion of the Ethiopian–Eritrean war.[51] According to a number of interviewees, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's dominance appears to have persisted until his death in 2012, after which the TPLF's internal cohesion weakened, with several factions emerging.

The level to which a political/civilian strategy has been developed: The TPLF has been partially successful in replacing its military philosophy and securitized approach to governance as liberation movement with more civilian, pro-development strategies. The forward-looking policies that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and his inner circles crafted in areas like agriculture, education and foreign and security affairs stand out, in a positive way. Such policies explain much of the party's enduring support from (parts of) the Ethiopian population. However, their implementation has not been uncontested.

On the basis of this 'transition framework' it can be observed that the TPLF espoused a clear vision for governance and development in Ethiopia after 1991 while retaining a closed hierarchical culture, firm internal control, and control over key security levers.

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49 For example: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

50 For an interesting analysis of the historical development of the Ethiopian army and some of its current challenges: Gebrehiwot Berhe, M., 'The Ethiopian Post-Transition SSR Experience: Building a National Army from a Revolutionary Democratic Army', February 2016, unpublished.

51 In essence, parts of the TPLF favoured continuing the successful Ethiopian offensive, which in all likelihood would have led to the conquest of Eritrea, while others favoured restraint and a cessation of the military advance. The latter faction prevailed. For instance: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

This vision has been driven forward with determination and varying degrees of success, but without much transparency or public accountability.[52]

The above notwithstanding, the new 'People's Forum' that Prime Minister Hailemariam's (who succeeded Meles Zenawi in 2012) has convened, arguably represents a positive step towards enhanced transparency. This Forum has gathered together leaders of sectors such as health, transport and construction throughout 2015 and 2016 with the aim of getting senior policy-makers to listen and hear from sectoral leaders about the impact of government policies on the functioning of their particular sector. Although feedback obtained through interviews suggests that the government has shown commitment to follow-up meetings and policy amendments in some areas, the programme is still new and will need to be monitored. A Forum dedicated to discussing more sensitive issues such as security, justice and human rights has yet to be formed.[53]

TPLF/EPRDF dominance of the Ethiopian state

A second contemporary factor influencing Ethiopia's current political settlement can be captured succinctly: the continuous dominance of the Ethiopian state by the TPLF/EPRDF since 1991. This has by and large created a monopoly of power that has excluded political competition and makes the government difficult to distinguish from the party, with the consequence that the state becomes partly an instrument of the party. A political opposition exists, but remains powerless. Opposition leaders have been subjected to abuse and their parties prevented from operating as such through an array of restricting laws and regulations.[54]

Some analysts portray a model of concentric circles, with the TLPF at the core of power and dominating the EPRDF coalition, followed by a second ring, composed of the ANMD, OPDO and SEPDF, which act as more junior partners of the EPDRF,[55] and a third ring made up of EPRDF satellite parties, such as the Afar People's Democratic Organization and Beni Shangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Party. The second and third

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52   For example: Abbink (2009), *op.cit.*; Abbink (2015), *op.cit.*

53   The existing 'justice sector cluster' involves government departments only and has the objective of promoting a more 'joined-up' government discussion on justice-related issues.

54   For example: Gebrewold (2005), *op.cit.*; Abbink and Hagman (2013), *op.cit.*; Bach, J-N., 'Élections sans démocratisation dans la corne de l'Afrique: Ethiopie, Kenya, Djibouti, Soudan', in: Ferras, P. (ed.), *La corne de l'Afrique, Évolutions politiques et sécuritaires (tome 1)*, e-book: Observatoire de la corne de l'Afrique, 2015.

55   Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*; ICG (2009), *op.cit.* The ANMD, OPDO and SEPDF were partially created by the TPLF through the recruitment of prisoners of war from Amhara, Oromia and South Ethiopia and by making them the nucleus of party cadres that were then sent back to their home areas and coached by the TPLF.

rings are said to enhance ethnic representation and government authority, but to enjoy a decreasing measure of status, representation and influence in how Ethiopia is ruled.[56]

Reality is more complex than a model of conveniently 'layered' influence, as some of these layers overlap and some connections will be more prominent than others, but it does suggest that a number of historical patterns of co-optation continue to operate. Some interviewees suggested that the dynamics of co-operation and dominance have become less TPLF-directed and more competitive (within the EPRDF, that is) since the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012, with the result that TPLF's historically mentored satellite parties are developing a more assertive stance of their own.

A statist approach to economic governance with mixed methods

A final contemporary factor that influences Ethiopia's political settlement is the fusion of political power and economic interests in a governance model in which both state and economy are led by the party 'for the people' through the state. The Ethiopian approach to its economy is not unique, and is modelled on that of countries such as China, South Korea (under its dictatorship) and Singapore, which mixes statist, planning and quasi-liberal features that are welded together in a long-term, state-led effort to stimulate economic growth and development out of poverty.[57] A number of analysts argue that a significant feature of this model is that resources and rents are centralized in the

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56 Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Vaughan, in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*; Tronvoll (2009), *op.cit.*. For a more in-depth analysis of such EPRDF allies: Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*; see also: Kefale, in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*

57 Statist elements include direct government control over key sectors of the economy, as well as a prominent economic role for party-established endowment funds, parastatal companies and the military. Planning elements include multi-year year development plans to stimulate growth through major infrastructure initiatives (such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) and by organizing the economy in accordance with ideological concepts. Quasi-liberal elements include large land leases to multinational companies. For illustrations of these different aspects of Ethiopia's economic management: see: Verhoeven, H., 'Africa's Next Hegemon: Behind Ethiopia's Power Plays', *Foreign Affairs*, April 2015; Lefort, R., *The great Ethiopian land-grab: feudalism, Leninism, neo-liberalism… plus ça change*, openDemocracy, December 2011, online: https://www.opendemocracy.net/ren%c3%a9-lefort/great-ethiopian-land-grab-feudalism-leninism-neo-liberalism-plus-%c3%a7-change; Davison, W., 'Ethiopian Military-Run Company Seeks More Foreign Partners', Bloomberg, February 2013, online: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-02-18/ethiopian-military-run-corporation-seeks-more-foreign-partners (both accessed 31 August 2016).

hands of either business leaders with political connections, or senior party officials themselves.[58]

On the positive side, such continuity of rule and effort has created regulatory stability, enabled long-term investment and generated a productive version of patrimonialism in which rents appear to be used largely for developmental purposes.[59] This approach has been instrumental in stabilizing poverty, increasing education and maintaining high overall growth rates.[60] On the negative side, the fusion of political power and economic interests gives the country's leading figures privileged access to resources that can also be used to further the interests of selected constituencies[61] and/or their own.[62] This exacerbates existing tension between those included in and those excluded from present governance arrangements. As the former seek to maintain the status quo, the latter push for change.[63]

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58 See: Jones, W., R. de Oliveira and H. Verhoeven, *Africa's illiberal state-builders*, Working Paper Series no. 89, Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, 2013. For example, Azeb Mesfin, the wife of Meles Zenawi, became CEO of EFFORT (an endowment fund for Tigray) in 2011, only to be removed from this position in 2013 shortly after her husband's demise. Her appointment as CEO coincided with her entry into the TPLF's executive committee, a position she has, however, managed to retain. See: Africa Intelligence, *The rise and rise of Azeb Mesfin*, Ethiopia business circles, no. 1320,12 November 2011, online: http://www.africaintelligence. com/ION/business-circles/2015/10/15/the-rise-and-rise-of-azeb-mesfin,94354134-GRA (accessed 18 November 2015).

59 Vaughan, S. and M. Gebremichael, *Rethinking business and politics in Ethiopia: The role of EFFORT, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray*, Research Report no. 2, London, Overseas Development Institute, Africa Power and Politics Programme, 2011; Jones et al. (2013), *op.cit.* On the notion of 'developmental patrimonialism': Booth, D., *Development as a collective action problem: Addressing the real challenges of African governance*, London, Overseas Development Institute, Africa Power and Politics Programme, 2012.

60 Lenhardt, A. et al., *One foot on the ground, one foot in the air: Ethiopia's delivery on an ambitious development agenda*, London, ODI Development Progress and ECDPM, 2015.

61 It is remarkable, for example, that Tigray is the only region in Ethiopia that scores well above the national average on the Human Development Index: UNDP (2014), *op.cit.* (see in particular the map on page 31). Jones, de Oliveira and Verhoeven (2013), *op.cit.* also suggest that economic growth has been concentrated in the core of the former Ethiopian empire (Amhara and Tigray), leading to rising inequalities between the core and the country's rural periphery.

62 Corruption is reported to be growing in volume and salience as it extends beyond small-scale individual self-enrichment to acquire larger proportions. Especially land acquisition, (non)payment of tax and government procurement have been mentioned. See: Vaughan and Gebremichael (2011), *op.cit.*; Lefort (2011), *op.cit.*

63 For example, the Oromo constitute over 30% of Ethiopia's population but have little influence. See also Box 1.

The point here is not to discuss whether this approach to economic governance is efficient or sustainable, but to underline the fact that Ethiopia's leading groups use economic resources and rents to create output legitimacy. The approach is akin to that taken by China and some of the Gulf states, and the EPRDF/TPLF's popular political support is in part dependent on its ability to raise standards of living and to provide a growing range of economic opportunities to its citizens. At the same time, the party also uses the ability to withhold such opportunities as a tool of control, in part to limit and discourage its citizens from political engagement.

Contemporary political parameters for the organization of security

These contemporary factors that influence Ethiopia's political settlement point to the following broad parameters for the organization of security:

– The partial transition from liberation movement to political party indicate that security principles, policies and initiatives still lack transparency and are set by a small group of insiders whose background is one of military struggle and strong party loyalties.

– The conflation of government – and to some extent the state – with the party indicates that instruments of state, such as security institutions, are used in pursuit of partisan objectives. While these may be developmentally oriented and positive for the country, they also reflect and maintain existing structures of power and authority, and can be used for less benign purposes.

– The fusion of political power and economic interests in a mixed approach to economic governance and development compounds the challenge of effective control and inclusive oversight over security institutions, the army in particular, since these organizations serve political and security as well as economic purposes.

2   The nature and organization of state security in Ethiopia

The picture that emerges from the previous section is one of TPLF/EPRDF control over the structures, resources and instruments of the Ethiopian state that have been acquired and maintained over the past 25 years. The party continues to enjoy an undisputed hold over national political power and has used its position in part to advance state-led development efforts.

This situation also presents challenges for Ethiopia's state security organizations. Box 2 below provides a brief overview of the Ethiopia's main state security organizations as understood in this report. The section itself focuses on analysing key implications of this situation for the organization of security.

Box 2   Ethiopia's main state security organizations

For the purpose of this paper, 'state security organizations' include the military, police (federal and state), and the intelligence services.

The *Ethiopian National Defence Force* is about 140,000 personnel strong (army and air force) and maintained at the estimated cost of 0.8% of GDP (2015). It has a reputation for quality and effectiveness despite its limited means. It is also among the top four contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions (Somalia, Abyei and South Sudan) (2015). Finally, it has been accused of past human rights violations during operations in Somalia and Ogaden. Its legal basis is article 51 of the Constitution.

The *Ethiopian Federal Police* force was created in 1995 to maintain law and order at the federal level (including riot control) and to investigate organized crime. It estimates its own size at around 30,000 personnel. The federal police force comes under the Federal Police Commission that reports to the Ministry of Federal Affairs (until recently the Ministry of Justice). Its legal basis is article 51 of the Constitution.

Ethiopia's State Police Forces (regional police) maintain law and order in Ethiopia's consituent states. While their numbers, structure and even uniforms may vary, they each report to a Regional Police Commission that works loosely together with the Federal Police Commission. The federal police can intervene in regions by invitation of the state police. However, Oromia Regional State and in particular the city of Addis Ababa have seen uncoordinated police interventions. Petty corruption is especially a problem at the level of state police (traffic bribes and bribes to avoid arrest). The state police forces' legal basis is article 52 subsection 2 of the Constitution.

The *Ethiopian National Intelligence and Security Service* was established in 1995 and currently enjoys ministerial status, reporting directly to the Prime Minister. It is tasked with gathering information necessary to protect national security. Its surveillance capacities have been used both to prevent terrorist attacks, such as those by Al-Shabaab, and to suppress domestic dissent.

Sources: SIPRI, United Nations Peacekeeping online, Real Clear Defense, Plummer, J. (ed.), *Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia: Perceptions, Realities, and the Way Forward for Key Sectors*, Washington DC, The World Bank, 2012, Hagmann (2014), *op.cit.*, All Africa online, the Guardian, NISS

The relationship between the TPLF/EPRDF and state security forces

At the heart of the analysis of the organization of security in Ethiopia lies the fact that both peaceful and more forceful challenges to the rule of the TPLF/EPRDF have been either disabled or suppressed.[64] According to a substantial number of interviewees (including some policy-makers and security officials), one consequence is that it has become difficult to distinguish the government from the party, and the security services are easily perceived as partisan executive agencies. This is mostly because the national interest continues to be defined and decided on the basis of a particular ideology and set of individual/group interests that brooks no competition and allows little public debate. In addition to the party's more strategic control over the security forces, the research also identified several practical examples of how such control manifests itself in operational terms.

One aspect in this regard, as pointed out by a significant number of interviewees, is that a number of top-level command positions across the security forces are held by individuals who are both members of the security forces and influential in the party.

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64   See for example Gebrewold (2005), *op.cit.*; Hagman (2014), *op.cit.*; Abbink and Hagman (2013), *op.cit.*

This creates overlap between political and security responsibilities as well as informal lines of accountability. Several interviewees (including some on the side of the government) indicated that in a number of cases party affiliation and personalized relations prevail over professional loyalties and institutionalized relations.[65] At the highest levels, overlap between some senior security chiefs and membership of the TPLF's central or executive committees indicates,[66] for example, party political control as well as the potential existence of hybrid lines of command. Such overlap reinforces existing perceptions of the utilization of security forces for partisan political purposes, or even of the securitization of political decisions.

Interviews also indicated a broadly shared perception that the top ranks of the security forces remain dominated by party members of Tigrayan origin. For example, although the authors were unable to obtain hard data from the Ethiopian National Defence Forces on their staffing, feedback suggested that Tigrayans currently make up approximately 15% of their overall strength.[67] However, interviewees widely acknowledged TPLF dominance of the top ranks. The question is how this situation should be interpreted. If one recalls the replacement of the military junta's army with the TPLF's armed forces in 1991 and the two massive demobilization exercises that took place between 1991 and 2001, today's Ethiopian National Defence Forces feature a significant level of ethnic diversity in their lower and middle ranks.[68] Given Ethiopia's limited resources and the uneven development of its regions, this can be seen as an achievement. However, with some interviewees clearly taking the view that the 15 years following the Ethiopian–Eritrean war should have been long enough to ensure rough proportionality of representation at all levels, Tigrayan dominance at the top does appear to be reflective of the interests of the party.

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65 See also: Gebrehiwot Berhe (2016), *op.cit.*

66 For the composition of the TPLF executive committee: http://tigray.net/25-in-the-news/politics/510-abay-woldu-elected-tplf-chairperson.html (accessed 18 November 2015).

67 The only quantitative data that could be found in the public domain were from the opposition groups 'Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia' and 'Ginbot7', both of which are based outside of Ethiopia. Ginbot7 advocates the armed overthrow of the Ethiopian government. Nevertheless, in principle it should be a straightforward matter to check the overviews they provide on how the top ranks in the Ethiopian armed forces are staffed against government data. See: http://www.solidaritymovement.org/downloads/140731-leaders-key-institutions-in-Ethiopia.pdf, http://ayyaantuu.com/horn-of-africa-news/ethiopia/six-percent-of-ethiopian-ethinic-tigre-tplf-dominate-army-officers/ and http://www.ginbot7.org/2014/10/07/tplfs-minority-ethnic-monopoly-of-the-armed-forces-in-ethiopia-a-revisit-after-four-years/ (all accessed 18 November 2015). See also: Hagmann (2014), *op.cit.*

68 Given the lack of publicly avalable data on forces' composition in terms of ethnicity at various levels of seniority, it is difficult to produce more reliable findings. The information included here is based on interviews conducted for this report.

Many of the interviews also suggested that this situation of party political control over the security forces contributes to a loss of popular confidence in both the intent and the ability of these forces to provide security on an impartial and entitlement-oriented basis. While some writers have argued that co-opting local leaders and groups, ensuring a degree of executive influence on the judiciary and using the party apparatus at different administrative levels to influence loyalty and behaviour are the more commonly used tools for ensuring political compliance,[69] a significant number of interviewees saw Ethiopia's security institutions as 'guardians' of TPLF/EPRDF political dominance. Reinforcing this perception are regular instances of security forces arresting leaders of the opposition, restricting opposition political activity and silencing unfavourable reporting.[70] The 2005 elections remain a landmark in this regard and continue to influence international and opposition interpretative frames.[71]

In addition, a number of interviewees highlighted two further consequences of security forces maintaining party political control, both of which relate to the risk of their servicemen and women using their party affiliation for other ends. The first is that Ethiopian security forces at times prioritize their operational performance in response to threats to public order (including interests of the party) over respect for individual and collective rights. Documented human rights violations indicate that while some of these incidents were followed up by a public inquiry, others were not.[72] A number of interviews also suggested that members of the state security organizations are rarely prosecuted for committing such violations when these can be interpreted as acting against political unrest or threat. This situation of 'selective impunity' is compounded by the state of Ethiopia's state judiciary which, although less plagued by favouritism and petty corruption than that of many other African countries, has a number of problems that it needs to address in order to ensure fair recourse to justice, such as a lack of pre-trial

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69 For a more in-depth analysis of such strategies and tools for maintaining party control see: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*; Abbink and Hagman (2013), *op.cit.* (on the use of co-optation), Hammergren, L., 'Justice Sector Corruption in Ethiopia', in: Plummer, J. (ed.), *Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia: Perceptions, Realities, and the Way Forward for Key Sectors*, Washington DC, The World Bank, 2012; Fiseha, A., 'Separation of powers and its implications for the judiciary in Ethiopia', in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.* (use of judiciary), Jones, De Oliveira and Verhoeven (2013), *op.cit.*; Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.* (nature of political competition), Markakis (2011), *op.cit.* (use of party apparatus).

70 For example: Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*; Hagman (2014), *op.cit.*; Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia Country Summary', *World Report 2015: Events of 2014*, 2015, online: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/ethiopia (accessed 9 November 2015).

71 See for example: Abbink, J., 'Discomfiture of Democracy? The 2005 Election Crisis in Ethiopia and its Aftermath', *African Affairs*, 105/419, pp 173-199, 2006; Yibeltal, K., *Ethiopia: Policing Ethiopia – the Force vs. Service Dilemma*, 2015, online: http://allafrica.com/stories/201508051502.html (accessed 9 November 2015).

72 For example: ICG (2013), *op.cit.*; Hagman (2014), *op.cit.*; HRW (2015), *op.cit.*

access to a lawyer, non-recognition of the principle of the presumption of innocence, and executive influence (in politically charged cases in particular).[73]

The second issue is corruption. Interviewees across the spectrum opined that corruption does occur throughout the Ethiopian security forces, particularly in the military and the police, but that it is largely of an individual nature. They did not see it as institutionalized or systemic and considered its extent to be relatively modest. Only a small subset of interviewees perceived corruption to be increasing. This view is supported by a large mixed-methods study published by the World Bank in 2012, which suggests that the levels of corruption not only in the security forces but in a broad range of sectors in Ethiopia are relatively low when compared with similar contexts, albeit with significant variation across sectors.[74]

Finally, the interviews identified two imminent challenges to the TPLF/EPRDF's ability to continue organizing security on the basis of the principle of party control. First, many of the original 'revolutionary' leaders of the TPLF are reaching retirement age and will need to be succeeded.[75] The challenge here consists of ensuring that a new generation of leaders balances continuity with change. Many interviewees suggested that the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has resulted in a number of older TPLF leaders stepping up to play a key role in safeguarding his vision and policy legacy that may inhibit necessary changes in both policies and staffing. Second, the post-1991 emphasis on Ethiopia's ethnic diversity is at odds with any over-representation of particular groups in any part of the federal administration (perceived or real) – but especially in the country's security forces. A sustained discourse of valuing ethnic diversity, when this is still not reflected in appointments, policies and initiatives requires effective communication on progress being made, to avoid pushing dissatisfied groups towards unrest.

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73 Hammergren, in: Plummer (2012), *op.cit.*; Fiseha, in: Abbink and Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*

74 Applying a sector approach, the World Bank assesses corruption as low in basic service sectors, medium in 'old sectors' (like mining, construction and land), and high in 'new sectors' (such as telecoms and pharmaceuticals). Applying a value chain approach, it identifies most instances of corruption in the procurement and delivery phases of the policy cycle rather than in its policy-making, regulatory or planning phases. Plummer (2012), *op.cit.* However, it should be noted that the quality of data used for this study was relatively poor. Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index ranks Ethiopia 110th out of 176 countries (rank 176 is the most corrupt): Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index*, Berlin, TI, 2014.

75 For a fascinating glimpse into the effort to renew the EPRDF's leadership through a staged succession plan ('Metekatat') by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi: http://hornaffairs.com/en/2013/02/20/ethiopia-eprdf-transition-confusion/ and http://hornaffairs.com/en/2013/04/05/ethiopia-eprdf-leadership-organs-election/ (both accessed 18 November 2015).

Centralization vs. diversity creates uneven security intent and performance

The organization and provision of security in Ethiopia are caught in a paradox that is well expressed by the contrast between a politically dominant, Marxist-oriented party and a federal constitution that not only recognizes socio-ethnic diversity, but also gives Ethiopia's regional states appreciable powers to govern and provide security.[76] The former points to centralized direction-setting and party-political control whereas the latter points to local autonomy and the federal government serving in a function of last resort. The interviews suggested that, on balance, this results in a patchwork of security provision in terms of its quantity and quality that radiates out from Ethiopia's core, serves to preserve the present political order, limits *de facto* regional security autonomy and is lacking in mechanisms for enabling citizens' security concerns to be reflected in state security policy and operations. In short, it appears that the balance tilts towards central dominance, but given Ethiopia's incredible diversity it is not clear that this is a sustainable position. A few points that emerged from the interviews stood out in particular and are briefly analysed below.

To start with, a number of interviews indicated that the policies, methods of operation, budgets and interventions of Ethiopia's state security forces are managed from the centre in a top-down fashion and less-than-public manner. Some security policies have been perceived to be rolled out across the country, when further reflection, consultation or adjustment to local realities would have been useful.[77] This approach creates a substantial risk of 'policy misfit' – in short, a situation in which the stated intent of a policy is significantly at odds with its popular perception and/or experience.

A good example is provided by something mentioned by various interviewees: the 'one-in-five' policy. This term dates back to the military junta's rule during which it referred to an intrusive policy of surveillance based on intelligence gathered from informers in one out of every five households. This generated a legacy of distrust that persists today. More recently, the term referred to the TPLF/EPRDF's 2005 post-election aim of having one in every five households being party-affiliated. Currently, it refers to an effort to promote better management and more dialogue at all levels of the public sector by engaging households directly in development issues. While a number of interviewees saw this as positive, some opined that the initiative has outgrown the government's

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76 For a deeper analysis of the totalitarian aspects of Marxism and Leninism: Ryan, A., *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*, London, Penguin, 2013. Note that the Marxist/Leninist views on leadership, 'democratic centralism' and the permissiveness of using coercion as a means towards greater ends are not dissimilar from the fundamental tenets of rule by empire. See also: Clapham (2006), *op.cit.*

77 Also on this point: Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*

capacity to guide and control it, resulting in local administrators (ab)using the 'one-in-five' network and the information this (can) generate(s) to increase or maintain their power. In contrast, other interviewees largely continued to consider 'one-in-five' as an effort to establish 'deeper control' over their daily lives, and to perceive many of the 'one-in-five' households as party-affiliated. Such suspicion is understandable, given Ethiopia's history of centralized rule supported by powerful law enforcement agencies, selective law enforcement and poor treatment of suspects. It suggests that either the way the policy is implemented ought to be adjusted, or more time and effort needs to be spent on bridging the perception gaps.[78]

A second part of the problem is that Ethiopia's states have primary responsibility for the provision of regional security within their boundaries, but are not necessarily capable of providing it and/or face sporadic/regular (depending on the region) intervention from the centre. From a resource viewpoint, a number of interviewees suggested that the federal police force is much better resourced than the regional police forces and that the latters' (cap)ability is more variable. It tends to be lower especially in Ethiopia's periphery (e.g. Somali state, Afar and Beni Shangul) compared with the country's highland core. This situation results in a recurrent need in the states for intervention by federal forces for capacity reasons alone. While an argument can be made that the ability to provide such support is helpful and constitutes a strength, differences in levels of competence, professionalism and experience between federal and regional forces will remain if primacy of the latter is not respected and resource allocation not improved. Addressing human rights violations in regional states also requires greater attention to the professional development of the forces that operate there.[79]

At the same time, however, many interviewees also pointed to the gap that exists between the legal and policy frameworks that regulate the organization and delivery of security across the country, and reality. Regional police have primacy and federal police or military forces intervene only at the invitation of the regional government. However, federal forces, as well as the armed forces, were said to intervene in situations that are legally beyond their remit or jurisdiction. A number of interviewees furthermore opined that these interventions tended to happen when regional forces were unable to deal with certain issues owing to a lack of operational clarity in their mandates, insufficient resources or when (conflicting) political interests of sufficient import were at stake. An important aspect of such central 'interference' in regional security provision

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78 ICG (2009), *op.cit.*; Vaughan, S., 'Revolutionary democratic state-building: party, state and people in the EPRDF's Ethiopia'; R. Emmenegger, S. Keno and T. Hagmann, 'Decentralization to the household: Expansion and limits of state power in rural Oromiya', both in: Abbink, J. and T. Hagmann (2013), *op.cit.*

79 Consider also, for example, the general reporting on Ethiopia by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International; Smith, L., *Political Violence and Democratic Uncertainty in Ethiopia*, Special report no. 192, Washington DC, United States Institute for Peace, 2007.

is the fact that the federal police are responsible for fighting terrorism, the 2009 anti-terrorism law has a broad remit and it has been used to silence unfavourable reporting and political opposition.[80] This development has been analysed by several organizations including Reporters without Borders, Human Rights Watch and a number of UN bodies.[81] A recent example of the rhetoric this can involve is the government's labelling of the protesters in Oromia who demonstrated against its intended expansion of the city limits of Addis Ababa as "linked to terror groups".[82] It creates a situation in which the federal police and armed forces have a broad licence to intervene across the country – in keeping with the letter of the law but perhaps not so much the spirit.

In this unavoidably fragmented mix that results from the friction between the centralization of power and regional autonomy, a key flaw is the failure to consult with the Ethiopian people on what they see as their security priorities. A number of interviewees indicated that there is little space and ability for critical thinking at local levels of government. The absence of space for political dialogue beyond the confines of party doctrine and government policy, combined with the party's penetration of the lowest levels of the administration, means there are few mechanisms to ensure that Ethiopia's diverse inhabitants can express their perceptions of and concerns about security issues and that their voices will be heard. This creates the risk that important regional and local security concerns are not adequately addressed.[83] The current absence of feedback loops to translate people's security concerns into security policy and operations is also at odds with the Constitutions' clear affirmation of support for Ethiopia's regional diversity.

The military as fighting force and vehicle for development

Many interviewees pointed to the sustained trajectory of professionalization that the Ethiopian military has gone through, focusing on human resources, education and

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80   Kassa, W., 'Examining Some of the Raisons d'Être for the Ethiopian Anti-Terrorism Law', *Mizan Law Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2013. See also: Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), *op.cit.*; Smith (2007), *op.cit.*; Hagmann (2014), *op.cit.*

81   As far as the United Nations is concerned see for instance: http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11793&LangID=E (2012) http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15056&LangID=E (2014) (both accessed 9 November 2015).

82   Al-Jazeera, 22 February 2016, online: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/ethiopia-accused-bloody-crackdown-protesters-160222061910090.html (accessed 25 February 2016). Another example is the government's moves against the Friday protests and the Ethiopian Muslim Arbitration Committee that led to a number of convictions on the grounds of attempted terrorism in 2012, following government interference with the Mejlis selection (the religious body leading Ethiopia's Muslims). See: International Crisis Group, *Ethiopia: Governing the Faithful*, Africa Briefing no. 117, Brussels/Nairobi, ICG, 2016.

83   See also on this point: Markakis (2011), *op.cit.*

operational capability. Its competence and its international standing make it a positive exception to the lack of 'technocratic integrity' that has been observed in respect of other aspects of the Ethiopian administration, i.e. the prevalent lack of alignment betweeen bureaucratic capability and bureaucratic autonomy that is required for effective policy implementation.[84] Moreover, in the development of the fighting capacity of its military forces, Ethiopia has paid significant attention to the problem of resources. In short, given the country's other developmental challenges, funds are scarce and while the military is essential, it is not typically a productive asset. The 2002 national security policy articulated two responses to this challenge. First, it stipulated a focus on human resources rather than material resources in the development of the armed forces. Second, it sought to relate defence capability requirements to the national economy.[85]

These policy responses depart from the trend in the wider region to 'build up' military spending/equipment regardless of high levels of poverty. They also suggest a sizeable economic and developmental role for the military. The level of political control discussed earlier, in combination with the noted fusion of political and economic interests, also makes it strategically sensible to give the military a stake in the Ethiopian economy. The resulting business advantages and monopoly rents that accrue to it help create long-term stability.[86] At the same time, though, such rents, tolerance of a certain lack of accountability and a measure of economic inefficiency also carry costs.[87] The balance between these two aspects unfortunately cannot be gauged with the present level of publicly available data.

The main vehicle through which military involvement in the economy takes shape is the Ethiopian Metals & Engineering Corporation (METEC), a parastatal business conglomerate run by the military. It is reported to have a stake in about a dozen

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84   Vaughan and Gebremichael (2011), *op.cit.*.; see also: Norbrook, N., *Ethiopia*, The Africa Report no. 40, 2012, online: http://www.alfredobini.com/sites/default/files/The_Africa_Report.pdf (accessed 6 November 2015).

85   Ministry of Information (2002), Ethiopia's National Security and Foreign Affairs Policy and Strategy, Addis Abeba, 2002. Accessible here: http://www.mfa.gov.et/docs/Foreign%20Policy%20English.pdf (consulted 22 February 2016); also: Gebrehiwot Berhe (2016), *op.cit.*

86   On this point: Giustozzi, A., *Double-Edged Swords: Armies, Elite Bargaining and State-Building*, Crisis States Working Papers Series, no. 2, London, London School of Economics, 2011. Prime Minister Meles makes this motive explicit here: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-02-18/ethiopian-military-run-corporation-seeks-more-foreign-partners (accessed 5 November 2015).

87   It is a topic of debate to what extent economic efficiency should be gauged against liberal market-economy assumptions of perfect competition that seem hardly applicable in fragile contexts, or against a more realistic benchmark that reflects Ethiopia's current level of economic development and its associated challenges. For the general argument: Chang, H-J, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, London, Anthem Press, 2003; in respect of Ethiopia: Oqubay, A., *Made in Africa: Industrial Policy in Ethiopia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015.

industries and several dozen companies.[88] The company was developed in a previous incarnation during the military junta's rule for the purpose of manufacturing munitions to ensure that the regime could sustain a supply-based military advantage. Some respondents suggested that the organization has grown extensively since its establishment in 2010 (data to verify this could not be obtained) because it is both an organized and a loyal 'force' with a history of business operations and because it enjoys preferential political access and business advantages. This makes it both a reliable and an important plank of the government's growth strategy. Interviewees also underscored how METEC has mentored and developed a number of small to medium-sized enterprises to support the development of a more competitive domestic manufacturing sector. Some interviewees stated that even some foreign direct investors supporting the manufacturing sector were required to partner with METEC to ensure continuity with existing growth plans and to retain its economic position.

While this model works no differently from that of several other socialist post-communist states, the combination of EPRDF/TPLF control over the military, military influence over economic resources, and low public accountability regarding the management of such resources raises questions about the extent to which METEC serves as a vehicle for the enrichment of the party or leading party members.[89] The difficulty of providing any answers to these questions, given the absence of data and access, points to the need for better analysis and more transparency if national development is to be advanced credibly.[90] In addition, many interviewees drew attention to the risky combination of METEC's growing activity, capital and project portfolios and an apparent trend of (retired) security leaders moving into business while maintaining good political connections that can secure preferential treatment.[91] Even when general intentions

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88 See for example: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-02-18/ethiopian-military-run-corporation-seeks-more-foreign-partners (accessed 6 November 2015).

89 The Ethiopian auditor-general has consistently reported significant irregularities and waste in government expenditure, including in the Ministry of Defence. Most of his reports do not seem to have had much follow-up in parliamentary debate or in the public discourse. Consider: http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/index.php/news-headlines/item/3598-audit-report-shows-no-improvement-in-public-finance-administration (accessed 5 November 2015). See also for instance: http://www.ethiopianreview.com/index/46150 or http://ethiopiaobservatory.com/2013/09/28/cherchez-la-femme-its-metec-again-in-90-million-tractor-deal/ (both accessed 6 November 2015).

90 Interestingly, similar questions were raised in respect of the several endowment funds that were established by the Ethiopian government. Research into the Tigrayan endowment fund (EFFORT) has so far not found any "credible evidence that individual party members have been enriche". Instead, the profits and rents it generates appear to have been managed with a view to longer-term development. Vaughan and Gebremichael (2011), *op.cit.*

91 This is also common practice in countries like the US and the UK, with serious risks of corruption and nepotism as well. See for example: Feinstein, A., *The shadow world: Inside the global arms trade*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 2011.

remain firmly developmental, this creates a risk of perceived abuse of position, poor allocation of funds and/or poor implementation of agreed programmes/projects. A final risk lies in the phenomenon of 'crowding out' that can happen when private sector investment by parastatals such as METEC, backed by government expenditure, reduces credit available for private entrepreneurship. While this risk is not limited to METEC, and private sector development so far represents only a limited feature of Ethiopia's economic growth model, future diversification plans for METEC should be considered in this light as well.[92]

In short, an increasingly competent and trusted military is and will be used to stimulate economic growth. This serves the interests of Ethiopia's leadership on a number of fronts, including delivering its long-term economic vision of Ethiopia, maintaining the loyalty of the leadership of a key security organization and generating rents that can be used for a variety of purposes. It is also clear that further research is needed to establish the opportunities and risks presented by the role of the Ethiopian military in the country's economy.

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92 Both the availability of risk capital and the level of risk acceptance are factors that influence Ethiopia's score on the Global Entrepreneurship Index. See: https://thegedi.org/global-entrepreneurship-and-development-index/ (accessed 11 July 2016).

Conclusion

The preceding analysis has shed some light on a number of historic and contemporary factors that influence the evolution of Ethiopia's political settlement, which in turn carries implications for how state security institutions are organized and operate. What transpires is that the country's political settlement has been stable since 1991, in contrast to much of the region surrounding it. In part this has been the case because of the continued dominance of the TPLF/EPRDF in the form of single-party rule and in part because of its effective monopolization of the use of force. The former has enabled both a prioritized and a resource-empowered development strategy that has achieved a number of successes, faces appreciable challenges and has resulted in the closure of most space for meaningful political competition for ideas, power and votes. This 'closure' has helped keep Ethiopia largely safe from the many threats that emanate from its volatile neighbours and it has enabled the TPLF/EPRDF to maintain party political control over the Ethiopian state.

Although it is both too early and inappropriate for this research to offer any thoughts on how these issues add up, the report can point to future security problems that this approach of political-economic governance is likely to face. These problems result less from the existing quasi-monopoly on political power and security in itself, but rather from two of its implications that introduce long-term unpredictability. First, there are no guarantees that the present concentration of power and authority will continue to be largely harnessed for the purpose of national economic development. Second, there seem to be few mechanisms that the Ethiopian population can be confident will at least roughly align the party's priorities and ideas with those of key social groups and the population in general. As every development strategy is inevitably contested, since such processes are not cost-free in terms of their impact and nor can they be all-inclusive, this situation could create perceptions and grievances that struggle to find peaceful expression in a meaningful way. In turn, this might ultimately push individuals, groups or segments of society into unrest and violence.

In the short term, it seems essential to provide greater transparency around security thinking, policies and operations that should not, however, undermine the political dominance of the TPLF/EPRDF. To be meaningful, transparency will have to transcend merely technical – or worse, ideological – justifications for actions already decided, and include space for consultations that allows for adjustment and change, however modest. The purpose would be to balance, on the one side, greater accommodation of popular concerns by state security forces and improved relations between security forces and citizens with, on the other side, greater public understanding of the trade-offs involved

in providing security with limited means in an insecure region and within present political parameters. Specific actions could include making good data on security policies and initiatives publicly available, providing more transparency on succession planning in the security forces, and engaging in more meaningful public consultation on security-related matters. Extension of the People's Forum into the area of security could be a possible starting point.

In the medium-to-long term, strengthening the ability of Ethiopia's regions to assure security within their borders on the basis of sound policies, functional doctrines and adequate capabilities could be a way to increase connectivity between state police forces and the Ethiopian population, as well as to increase the responsiveness and improve the reputation of these organizations. The Ethiopian Constitution offers a clear compass in respect of the principles and spirit of regional security provision that could help chart an acceptable path between maintaining the present level of centralization and control on the one hand, and giving more meaning to the idea of subsidiarity on the other. If done in consultative fashion, it might also be a low-profile method of establishing a practice and habit of local and community dialogue in a sensitive issue area. As the army, federal police and intelligence are centralized, support for regional police forces and the change that might result from it, should not unduly threaten party control over the means of coercion nor risk creating vulnerabilities vis-à-vis Ethiopia's neighbours.

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