

Constitutional design options for Ethiopia

Managing ethnic divisions

Semir Yusuf



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Executive summary

Ethiopia's political landscape has long been fraught with contending nationalisms with diverse, and at times contradictory, visions for managing ethnic division. While some political forces have advocated policies that could facilitate strongly convergent politics, others have stressed the need to effectively address the country's age-old 'nationalities' question.

Some have proposed solutions that lie between the two – gravitating to one side either ideologically or policy-wise. While all political forces have raised and debated several issues on diversity management, federalism has dominated most of their discussions.

Although the Ethiopian federation is a reasonable springboard for political and academic debates, discussions on managing diversity should go beyond alternative routes to federalism. The discourse should benefit from all the options that comparative studies on managing ethnic division offer.

The three core demands of most Ethiopian political forces and communities are inclusion, moderation and cohesion

Comparative politics and comparative constitutional law offer a range of public policies to manage contending nationalisms in divided societies. These include consociationalism and centripetalism (grouped as accommodationist designs), and republicanism and liberal integrationism (grouped as integrationist mechanisms).

Each of these policy packages would have both benefits and deficiencies in effectively addressing the three core demands of most Ethiopian political forces and communities: inclusion, moderation and cohesion.

While consociationalism attempts to address the quest for inclusion, it falls short of effectively promoting moderation and cohesion, among other things. Centripetalism tends to advance moderation along certain political/ideological fault lines, but it may face challenges in addressing the ethno-nationalist quest for self-determination or even national cohesion. Integrationist schemes give insights on strengthening

national unity, but they prove inadequate in accommodating the burning question of nationalities in the country.

The challenge is to creatively find ways to combine constitutional designs to arrive at suitable public policies that respond to the complex set of individual and group demands. Such attempts should be derived carefully from international best practices, while considering local socio-political realities. Some examples are discussed in this monograph. These and other similar options should be presented for discussion among a diverse set of relevant actors before adoption.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
APP	Afar People's Party
AV	alternative vote
EDP	Ethiopian Democratic Party
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EZEMA	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice
FEP	Freedom and Equality Party
FPTP	first-past-the-post
HoF	House of Federation
HoPR	House of Peoples' Representatives
NAMA	National Movement of Amhara
OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PP	Prosperity Party
PR	proportional representation
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SLM	Sidama Liberation Movement
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SPA	sequential and proportional allocation (of portfolios)
STV	single transferable vote
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
WNM	Wolayta National Movement
WPDF	Wolayta People's Democratic Front

Introduction

Despite the political liberalisation achieved in Ethiopia in the past two years, obstacles to a smooth transition remain. One major problem is the growing polarisation among political elites. Although this polarisation is exacerbated by current political power struggles, it is undergirded by divergent intellectual traditions about the past, present and future of Ethiopia.

Literature on the ideological underpinnings of Ethiopian history and politics has long identified contradictory schools of thought that can be traced back to the student and rebel movements of post-1960 Ethiopia. These underpinnings have been identified differently by different authors – for example Ethiopian/ist nationalist versus ethnonationalist perspectives, or nation-building versus national oppression/colonial theses, or centre versus periphery perspectives.¹

Generally put, perspectives in the first category celebrate the antique, independent and glorious statehood of Ethiopia and the social cohesion of its people. Those in the second category stress the relative recency, brutality and exclusivist state formation and nation-building efforts in the country and the diversity of its people. Both inform academic and political debates, and have had enduring policy implications.

As a divided country, what options should be considered to narrow the gap between the contending nationalist blocs?

The policy aspects of these debates focus heavily on managing diversity. On the one hand, the nation-building/Ethiopianist camp advocates a more convergent set of policies aimed at maintaining Ethiopian unity. The ethnonationalist camp prioritises the realisation of ethnic self-determination. Both camps mostly start their policy recommendations from an assessment of the country's existing federal structure and its ideological foundations.²

One key area of academic/policy inquiry with profuse implications for the future of Ethiopia and its peoples is this: As a divided country, where ethnocultural divergences are 'persistent markers of political identity and bases for political

mobilization',³ what options of state reconstruction should be considered to narrow the gap between the contending nationalist blocs? What constitutional design options for Ethiopia are available, and how can they be assessed in terms of feasibility and desirability?

This monograph tries to address this question in light of dominant theoretical debates, international best practices, and the views of local political forces. In doing that, it aims to push the frontiers of public policy discussions especially among political forces in Ethiopia on the topic beyond the designs dominating the field such as federalism, and proposes fresh insights on managing division in the country.⁴

In specific terms, it first presents theoretical models from comparative politics proposed to handle ethnic division and analyses their pros and cons from an Ethiopian perspective. Second, it proposes a list of alternative constitutional design options for managing ethnic division in the country.

Ultimately, the research aspires to kick-start discussions on ill-considered (in Ethiopia) international knowledge and experience on the subject matter in ways that are relevant to the country. To achieve these objectives, the researcher has employed a qualitative methodology. Data was collected through interviews mainly with several major political parties and actors in the country. Diversity of perspectives was taken seriously in the process of selecting interlocutors.

The vast literature on constitutional design in divided societies has been carefully consulted and critically analysed

Several political parties' leaders participated in the data collection process. The parties include Afar People's Party (APP), Balderas for True Democracy, Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA), Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), Freedom and Equality Party (FEP), National Movement of Amhara (NAMA), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Prosperity Party (PP), Salsawi Woyane, Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and Wolayta People's Democratic Front (WPDF). Influential political elites outside formal party structures also took part in the process.

Members of some civil society organisations working on democratisation and peacebuilding in Ethiopia were also consulted. Finally, the vast literature on constitutional design in divided societies has been carefully consulted and critically analysed in the course of the research.

The major argument advanced in the monograph is the following: no single constitutional design option can narrow the divide among Ethiopia's diverse groups

of influential actors, because each design can only satisfy one party or bloc, and that's usually at the expense of the other parties' demands.

Therefore attempts should be made first to critically and objectively assess the pros and cons of major designs, and then to optimally blend systems as best as possible. Blended systems, however much effort has gone into their construction to make them optimal, won't resolve all differences or fully satisfy all groups, given the intractability of Ethiopia's political divergence. But they can help find the most reasonable points of intersection if done in a coherent way, and if the negotiation process leading to their adoption is inclusive and participatory.

This research is relevant for several reasons. First it can help guide discussions on core constitutional issues with concomitant regulative and constitutive contributions. As Sujit Choudhry notes, constitutions play two critical roles in divided countries. They make public decision making possible and set limits and conditions to that decision making.⁵ But more importantly, they constitute the people for whom decision making serves certain benefits. This research can help trigger fresh and balanced knowledge-based discussions on both functions of constitutions as it relates to Ethiopia as a divided country.

Second, perhaps more directly, the research can serve as a preliminary document to start a serious debate on possible avenues of constitutional amendment in a national dialogue setting.

Third, the research can help seek ways to narrow historical gaps between contending blocs in the country as it relates to Ethiopia's future. This can contribute greatly to conflict management, or even conflict transformation in different parts of the country. In a sense, constitutional debates are today the elephant in the room in Ethiopia – directly or indirectly feeding political violence and general political instability.

Confronting these issues with a spirit of reciprocity and based on international experiences and models is perhaps one way to transcend the different aspects of Ethiopia's persistent political quagmire. This research aims to contribute to that goal.

Finally, the research opens the debate to various avenues of diversity management tried in different contexts worldwide. This contribution is important as it extracts Ethiopia's national discussions from their narrow focus and throws them into the heart of international debate on critical comparative political matters.

The monograph proceeds as follows. First it presents the diverse positions of political groups on the current multinational federation, its ideological foundations and alternative ways, if any, of remaking it. Second is a discussion on constitutional design options for divided countries along with a critical assessment of their

implications for Ethiopian politics. Finally alternative ways of combining the constitutional designs to maximise their benefits and minimise their harms to managing ethnic division in this country are outlined.

Chapter 1

Existing perspectives on federalism in Ethiopia

Before delving into what comparative politics and comparative constitutional law can offer by way of managing ethnic divisions, we should have a rational understanding of the existing perspectives in the country about the topic. Such an understanding should then be used to inform our analysis of several institutional mechanisms discussed in the literature and of how they could be received by major Ethiopian political actors. Much of the political debate so far has focused on the multinational federal system that's been in place for nearly three decades.

The system has generated supporters, detractors and those with opinions in between. This section presents a more updated range of views of major political elites/groups on managing diversity in general and on federalism in particular than is presented in the literature.⁶ Below are six perspectives on multinational federation and the question of nationalities.⁷

It will be clear from the discussion that while the general framework of 'Ethiopianist versus ethno-nationalist' dichotomy generally remains relevant, we should also note that each school of thought has diversified internally. There are also new perspectives that straddle the two schools of thought.

The categories are only roughly indicative of the full range of current perspectives, and shouldn't be seen as rigid. They are dynamic and to an extent overlap. Moreover, the parties below that express certain views may be expected to shift some of their positions in the future as changes occur in the political environment – for example possible realignment with other political forces. Regardless of any shift in the parties' views, however, some influential groups or individuals in the country will likely continue to promote the different perspectives in the foreseeable future.

Content⁸ multinational federalists

First come those who largely support the structures of the current federation, with just slight modification. This category includes many ethnically organised parties coming from those ethnic groups that already have *killils* (regions) of their own, such as the ONLF, OLF, OFC and APP, as well as some multi-ethnic parties such as the

FEP. They believe that a democratised multinational federation not only can provide a lasting solution to the question of nationalities in the country, but can also help nurture a sense of unity among Ethiopians at large.

Multinational federalism, in this view, is a direct answer to what is seen in modern Ethiopian history as unequal ethnic relations of the past. Federalism provides opportunities for cultural revivalism, political empowerment, economic development and psychological satisfaction (i.e. upliftment of popular self-esteem). With self-esteem comes a genuine desire to stay together as a country. Hence they see themselves as working for a 'new brand of unity.'⁹

These political elites recommend few modifications to the current system to make it 'perfect'. For instance some (e.g. the ONLF) advocate a clearer position on who gets the right to self-determination.¹⁰ Without opposing the advocacy of this right by any ethnic group in the country, they propose marking a clear distinction among the rather vague categories of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

Others (e.g. the OLF) question the territorial limits of specific federal units and advance territorial claims beyond the existing borders of their *killils*.¹¹ Along similar lines, some such parties lay claim over certain cities, indicating that the existing constitutional framework doesn't clearly indicate the nature of 'special interests' to be enjoyed by some ethnic groups.

Affirmative action to reverse unequal ethnic relations are also advocated by some Afar and Somali nationalist elites. All the parties in this category reject or at least admit (in the case of the TPLF) the autocratic tendencies of the past and opt for a more democratic federation. This entails for example the separation of the ruling party's structure from that of the state.

Culminationist multinational federalists

A group of political actors and parties strongly support the foundations of the existing federation, but fault it for being structurally hamstrung before it reached its logical conclusion.¹² Political elites in, and close to, parties such as the Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM), WPDF, Wolayta National Movement (WNM) and others almost fully share the historical interpretations of the first group. They also endorse the federal project as the right move to address national oppression.

However their critique of the federal system is not limited to the 'autocratic maladministration' of the previous ruling party or the other minor modifications suggested by the 'content' federalists, but extends to what they see as its bizarre unevenness in practising self-determination.

They argue that the effort to federalise Ethiopia stopped unfairly when it reached what is today called the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR).¹³ But the quest for autonomy of different forms (including statehood) is not

limited to certain ethnic groups in the SNNPR, and is found among groups in other federal units such as the Amhara and Tigray regions as well.

The focus below is on the SNNPR because the quest for the highest form of autonomy (statehood) and the most impactful mobilisation to that end has recently been seen in that region. Today's SNNPR was created in 1995 by amalgamating five killils. The process also involved lumping together several southern parties into today's Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) to administer the new federal unit. Since then, several attempts have been made by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to make the region politically, administratively and ideationally coherent.¹⁴

The 'Ethiopianist versus ethno-nationalist' dichotomy remains relevant, but each school of thought has diversified internally

One is sending advisers to the region who in effect played the role of administrators. Another is getting involved in suppressing descent by sending federal security forces. The EPRDF core leadership took action against recalcitrant administrators through *gimgema* (evaluations) and thereby kept politics strictly in line with central or federal dicta. The federal government also interfered to alter linguistic patterns in parts of the region. In the 1990s it created an artificial language called *wagogoda*, taking pieces from four different local languages, and tried to impose it, among other things, as a medium of instruction in schools.

These apparently interventionist measures coupled with a sense of relative deprivation¹⁵ and administrative problems increased popular grievances, which manifested as a series of ethnic outbursts since 2018 with the advent of political liberalisation. Political elites in Sidama and Wolayta, and some other southern ethnicities, constantly compared their status as zones to other ethnic groups that had achieved the status of *killil*. They felt dissatisfied with what they perceived as discrimination by the system.

They also imagined what a realised *killil* (regional) status could have achieved for them economically, politically and culturally.¹⁶ They say a mere zonal status in a geographically enormous *killil* would give them few economic benefits from the federal government compared to what they could have achieved with *killil* status.

Some also argue that their remoteness from and paucity of representation in the locus of power at the SNNPR level significantly reduces the accountability of the administration regarding their needs and demands. Politically, they cite their long and 'glorious' history as semi-independent kingdoms giving them the right

to full self-administration, which they believe isn't in any way similar to a rather 'demeaning' zonal status.

Finally, regarding culture, they believe that even having come a long way in this area since 1991, they could have done better as *killils* than zones. The development of local languages and cultures could have been accelerated with better finance from the federal government had they been *killils*.¹⁷

Therefore their agenda is to challenge the federal project to encompass the southern region as well. They say their aim isn't to weaken the state or the federal government, but to press it to be 'true' to its foundational principle: that all nations, nationalities and peoples have the right to self-determination. But they also suggest putting in place clear criteria for granting statehood rights to ethnic groups so that there could be a limit to such demands in the future.

Pro-containment multinational federalists

Some other parties, mainly represented by the ruling Prosperity Party (PP), officially endorse the federal system as it is now. Their position on the national oppression thesis,¹⁸ unswervingly promulgated by the PP's precursor the EPRDF, is a bit less coherent and is toned down. Several elements in the PP were for long active proponents of the thesis, and prefer not to replace it with other competing discourses. Some have joined the party after endorsing more critical perspectives about it, especially those who once advocated or flirted with Amhara nationalism.¹⁹

Most importantly, the president of the party, who is also Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, believes that national oppression is a historical reality.²⁰ But at the same time he believes that the ethnic agenda has recently peaked, resulting in fear of not only the thinning of collective economic and political schemas but also of the possibility of 'endless [mutual?] extermination.'²¹

The general thrust of the ruling party is to contain
ethnonationalist agitations without denying the legality
of their question

Internal incoherence notwithstanding, the party as a whole at least opts for the tempering of the oppression discourse, and tends to emphasise the present and future of the country, stressing working on integrative rather than 'divisive' narratives and projects.

While it vies to maintain the federal system, the party also actively promotes socio-political convergence in the country. This is mostly reflected in its reluctance to accept the new self-administration demands of many groups in the SNNPR. Abiy

has publicly exhorted people to discard the demand and instead to focus on such apparently integrative issues and approaches as economic viability, administrative feasibility and political stability.

In most of their private consultations with the ‘culminationist federalists’, party officials have urged them to drop or tone down their agenda of self-determination at least for now. According to culminationist activists,²² Abiy has tried hard to convince them of the need to wait until a holistic approach is developed to solve autonomist questions in the south.

One option hinted at in the discussions was to divide today’s SNNPR into only a few kilills, which entails merging some groups with others into single federal units. Party officials believe that Ethiopia today needs more work towards convergence than divergence. While the ethnic-friendly policies of the recent past are not wrong from a political or moral point of view, the little attention given to Ethiopiawinet, or national unity, is. Hence officials believe that the practical worth and implications of current ethnonationalist voices in general, and in the south in particular, should be assessed in light of this pressing need.

The general thrust of the ruling party therefore is to contain ethnonationalist agitations as much as possible without denying the legality of their question. The officially endorsed principle is federalism, but the approach is largely containment, intending to promote ‘synergy’ both at the regional and national levels.

Critical multinational federalists

On the side of the critics of the multinational federal project, among the most vocal ones since 2018 are the Amhara nationalists, especially those in or associated with the NAMA. During interviews, NAMA leaders advanced two apparently paradoxical positions.²³ They reject the national oppression thesis, but at the same time accept the overall structure (with major modifications) of a multinational federation as it exists now.

The general Amhara nationalist position on the national question is rejectionist, but the details are more complex. According to a prominent leader in the NAMA, there is a slight difference in the leadership on the worth and veracity of the question of nationalities.²⁴

While many don’t even accept the argument that there was ethnic-based oppression in the past, few don’t see earlier calls for ethnic empowerment as totally unacceptable. Regardless of their views on the nationalities question as a matter of principle, all agree that, in the words of a NAMA leader, ‘the question has degenerated in practice over the years into an anti-Amhara rhetoric.’²⁵ And this has had negative repercussions on the psychology, livelihood, power balance and very existence of the Amhara people, he says. Hence NAMA members and all those

affiliated with the party regard the underlying discourse of the EPRDF's political project quite unfavourably.

This didn't lead them to reject the federal system, however. With some modifications made to it, they're not only willing to live with it, but regard it as a conducive political arrangement for advancing the Amhara cause. As a movement trying to extract Amharannet (Amhara nationalism) from Ethiopianism, NAMA leaders believe its search for a legitimate homeland for the Amhara and its acceptance of similar homelands for other ethnic groups is logical.

However the federal project of the Amhara nationalists requires some major changes to the existing arrangement. For example they need borders to be redrawn in accordance with their conception of historical Amhara territories. They demand that Amhara minorities in other regions are given full rights to self-determination (within existing killils) and proportional representation in regional councils. They also advocate some measures to strengthen Ethiopian unity and citizenship rights by, for example, basing the foundations of the constitutionally guaranteed rights on individual citizens, not ethnic groups.

Pragmatic national federalists²⁶

Many parties anchored in pan-Ethiopianism have over the years developed critical opinions about 'national oppression'. Some believe there's some truth in claiming cultural domination of certain groups in the past. But they deny that that domination was a function of deliberate state policy, or was of phenomenal magnitude, as claimed by many ethnonationalists.²⁷

It could have been a natural result of nation building, for example, and was blown out of proportion for political purposes. Moreover, the response to that (perceived) domination, they argue, was directly influenced not just by local conditions but also by international Marxist ideas and movements. Decades of ethnonationalist struggles, coupled with a post-1991 ethnic-friendly state project, according to these political elites, has weakened national unity by encouraging ethnic-based fragmentation in the country.

Ethiopian nationalists' distaste for the current federal arrangement is a logical offshoot of their rejection of the ERPFD's historical interpretations. For many of them, the legal-political framework that underlies the federation doesn't give individual citizens sovereignty, doesn't protect minority rights (within federal units), and risks national disintegration.

To preserve an appropriate and safe space for individual and minority rights, and also to secure national unity, they propose an alternative form of federation that considers administrative feasibility, economic viability, historical and geographic affinity, topographic features, and population size, in addition to ethnic identity.²⁸

Nonetheless, some of these politicians advocate a pragmatic implementation of their propositions. For both key EZEMA and EDP leaders, for example, an immediate application of a non-ethnic federation may not be feasible in today's Ethiopia. According to them, over two decades of experimenting with 'ethnic' federation has solidified ethnic identities and has made the federation a hard physical and psychological reality.

In the view of an EDP leader, the ethnonationalists have in fact won the five-decade struggle and have made their rhetoric the dominant narrative in the country.²⁹ Hence for these politicians, although effectively recarving federal boundaries isn't impossible, pragmatism dictates learning to live with the status quo for now, alongside a clear plan of laying the groundwork for possible future changes.

Principled national federalists

Among the Ethiopianists, some differ slightly from the above category in their position on the practicality of significantly altering the current federation. They see some existing fault lines within ethnic categories that could facilitate the immediate reordering of the federal system.

Political elites such as those in the Balderas for True Democracy party believe that at least three of the largest killils today have ethnic groups with deep-seated internal fragmentation.³⁰ The Oromo, Amhara and Somali have in them regional or clan-based differences that would make their separation into different killils as much politically pragmatic as it is morally sound. Informants believe that the Somalis, for instance, are divided along clan lines whereby non-Ogadenis may not mind, or even push for, a killil of their own, if they were given the chance to genuinely express their views.

The aim of these political parties is thus to implement the wishes of the people as they see it, and bar nationalists of all sorts from 'stealing away', misrepresenting and imposing their wills on ordinary people. For such pan-Ethiopianists, the ideological foundation of the current federation is unacceptable, and the federation that comes along with it as a package can and should be reinvented into a 'hybrid' form (as they accept ethnicity as one criterion for drawing borders) when they come to power.

The above differing expositions on ethnic diversity management reveal the complexity of perspectives on contemporary Ethiopian politics in general. The perspectives project diverse and at times contradictory recommendations for Ethiopia, but all are heavily anchored in the federal project, either supporting it, or rejecting it, or blending elements from both positions.

Political forces have at different times pushed for various solutions beyond the federal system to what they see as core problems in the country. However much of the political debate on and specific solutions to ethnic management have largely

been situated within the discourse of federalism. Given that it is a dominant existing reality on the ground, it is reasonable to use the current system as a springboard.

However there are limitations to this ‘federal fixation’ among many groups for the past few decades. First, it ignores several other successful designs that states elsewhere in the world have used to manage diversity. For these states, the debates over unity and diversity have been informed not just by alternative routes to federalism, but also by applying other constitutional design packages.

Second, and closely related to this, the long-standing debate on federalism also ignores useful *specific* mechanisms other than pathways to carving out federal units and their mode of administration and their socio-economic and political implications. Experiments in other divided countries have included a coordinated deployment of other institutions such as electoral systems and government type to manage ethnic division. In Ethiopia, discussions on such institutions within the ambit of ethnic diversity management have for much of the past three decades remained insufficient.

Political debates and specific solutions to ethnic management have largely been situated within the discourse of federalism

Third, over-fixation on the federal arrangement has stalled the debate on unity and diversity and deprived it of dynamism and negotiability. By considering other general designs and specific mechanisms, we can extend the domain of the discussions and hopefully facilitate a more fruitful outcome based on reciprocity.

Hence it is high time that Ethiopian political parties, activists, policymakers and academics consider the full range of options the country can have in tackling its problem of contending nationalisms. It is still imperative – and inevitable – to seriously think about the nature, future and pros and cons of the current federal arrangement. There is no shying away from that as it has been an exceedingly impactful institution in contemporary Ethiopian politics.

Moreover, the discussion on federalism in Ethiopia is not totally divorced from the themes of the other institutional packages proposed in the literature. This means that even when we debate the other designs, we will surely end up dealing with some elements of the federal debate as well, and vice versa. However federalism should be relegated to one among, or a part of, other more comprehensive institutional designs suggested for countries with ethnic division.

Chapter 2

Constitutional designs for divided societies: implications for Ethiopia

The discussion below presents diverse packages of institutional designs to regulate contentious ethnonationalist agendas. The discussion involves specific designs within the two broad categories of public policies – accommodation and integration – that are deemed relevant to Ethiopia. The section includes an outline of the major debates around each design, followed by a brief critical examination of their implications for Ethiopia, and possible reactions to them by major political groups. The section illustrates the major advantages and disadvantages of putting in place each public policy in the country.

Accommodation and integration

Scholars of comparative politics and comparative constitutional law have long observed causal connections between specific institutional/constitutional designs and democratic stability in divided countries. But more than the positive analyses, these scholars have taken the normative implications of their research even more seriously. They have proposed diverse sets of constitutional designs that can help achieve both stability and justice in the countries in question. John McGarry et al summarise these designs into two broad categories: integration and accommodation.³¹

Integration advocates a single ‘public identity coterminous with the state’s territory.’³² The authors elaborate:

[Integration] commends a common and functional single public house, a tower bloc with uniform apartments. It makes no formal commendation on how private apartments should be maintained or decorated. Integrationists primarily seek the equality of individual citizens before the law and within public institutions. With the sole exception of the state’s citizenship, they are against the public institutional recognition of group identities, but they accept collective diversity in private realms. They see integration as the key to progressive politics, political stability, public unity, and the transcendence of group-based chauvinism. They are very much against the marriage of any

communal identity with state policy. They value politics of ideas and disavow identity-based parties.³³

Accommodation, by contrast, ‘commends a legally flexible condominium complex, one that respects historic hybrids, add-ons, multiple architects, and contrarian interior designers, and makes no effort to achieve uniformity in the mansion ensemble.’³⁴ Accommodation promotes:

... dual or multiple public identities and its proponents advocate equality with institutional respect for differences. Political prudence and morality require adaptation, adjustment, and consideration of the special interests, needs, and fears of groups so that they may regard the state in question as fit for them. Where divisions are enduring, integration is unfair and likely to fail.³⁵

Under both integration and accommodation, there are several specific constitutional designs. The former includes republicanism, liberal integrationism and socialist integrationism, while the latter includes consociationalism, centripetalism, multinational federation and multiculturalism.

In the following sections, republicanism will be considered alongside liberal integrationism from the integration category due to their prominence in and relevance to the Ethiopian political landscape. From accommodation, consociationalism and centripetalism will be examined, while multiculturalism will be left out for its resonance with liberal policies. Multinational federation will be incorporated into the broader discussion of consociationalism. First comes accommodation, then integration.

Constitutional designs and their relevance to Ethiopia

Accommodation 1: Consociational democracy

Consociationalism as a form of democracy springs from the proposition that ‘it may be difficult but it is not impossible to achieve and maintain stable democratic government in a plural society.’³⁶ This was a response to those who hold pessimistic views about the possibility of stability and democracy in such societies.

The defining character of this system is ‘government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy.’³⁷ For consociationalists, ethno-pluralism is not a necessary curse that brings about perpetual instability or ethnocentric domination. It can rather be turned into a stable democracy through power-sharing arrangements.

Consociational democracy ideally involves four elements according to its most prominent advocate.³⁸ First comes grand coalition, which refers to the ‘coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society.’³⁹ This is

meant to ensure the inclusion of all, major or otherwise important elites or groups – whatever the case might be – from each segment of society.

Second is proportional representation, which takes proportionality as ‘the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds.’⁴⁰ In terms of an electoral system, Arend Lijphart advocated proportional representation (PR) which again helps incorporate inclusion and fairness into the system.

Third, Lijphart proposed segmental autonomy, which refers to an extended form of autonomy for communal groups to manage their internal affairs. This could take the form of territorialised autonomy (which could often mean multinational federation) or non-territorialised autonomy (such as cultural autonomy short of the right to political self-determination).

Finally there’s mutual veto – a mechanism meant to protect the interests of groups (especially minorities) from being trespassed by others under all circumstances. This mostly works in the form of establishing the rule of concurrent majority to amend critical existing legal frameworks. While some scholars still consider all four components equally important and stress their mutually reinforcing quality, others regard only a few as the core elements of consociationalism. Lijphart himself progressively earmarked power sharing and group autonomy as the most important elements, the other two preferably playing auxiliary roles.⁴¹

Consociational democracy

Over the decades, scholars have cited numerous countries to have featured all or some elements of the consociational arrangement. The classical examples were Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Frequently mentioned contemporary cases include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Lebanon and Northern Ireland.

Decades of experimenting with consociational power sharing showed mixed results. On the positive side, Pippa Norris tested the impact of consociational arrangements on patterns of democratisation in both ethnically divided and other societies.⁴² She analysed patterns of regime change for three decades after 1970 in 191 contemporary states. The cumulative results of her study ‘reinforce and confirm the advantages of power-sharing institutions’ for ‘democratic constitutional settlements.’⁴³

On the question of stability, Helga Binningsbø arrived at the same positive conclusion.⁴⁴ Based on a quantitative study that covers 125 post-conflict societies, she concluded that ‘in particular, grand coalition and segmental autonomy reduce the risk of resumed conflict.’⁴⁵

Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie broadened the scope of the concept of power sharing by including, apart from political and territorial power sharing, military and economic dimensions.⁴⁶ They concluded, after analysing 38 cases of civil war resolved through negotiations involving some form of power sharing, that ‘the more the dimensions of power sharing among former combatants specified in a peace agreement, the higher the likelihood of the durability of the peace.’⁴⁷

Some qualitative studies, however, revealed negative results. For one thing, consociationalism is found to work against peace and stability as ethnicity gets more entrenched, and ethnic extremists get rewarded for their confrontational behaviour.⁴⁸ For another, the system is precarious and prone to be abused by the whims of group leaders who may use it for their own personal or other ends through violent means.⁴⁹ Such tactics may include buying time for further preparation of wars⁵⁰ or forging alliances for crushing enemies.

Also important here is the creation of a security dilemma among the contenders for power whereby the concern for safety breeds the urge to maintain or build a military force that undercuts the transition to peace and stability.⁵¹ The creation of security concerns may also set in motion the production of an endless cycle of violence as many would-be parties demand inclusion.⁵²

There is also the lack of commitment to the power-sharing deal by those who think their goals can be achieved through bullets.⁵³ The territorial aspect of power-sharing design would also lead to the creation of secessionist demands that may grow into an armed struggle for ‘liberation’.⁵⁴ Andreas Mehler argues that elite accommodation can’t bring about peace until the people are empowered and included in decision-making.⁵⁵ This last point specifically raises the more general and classic criticism of consociationalism that it is inherently anti-democratic.⁵⁶

Relevance to Ethiopia

Although aspects of consociational arrangements are not new in Ethiopian politics, we don’t yet have a clear and practical template to gauge its effects. The EPRDF persistently tried to create a consociational image out of the system it presided over for 28 years.

Several factors point to a consociational arrangement of political power in principle:

- First the party’s rhetorical penchant for some kind of intra-party (within the EPRDF) and inter-party (before 1995) ethnic power sharing.
- Second, the rule of proportionality in the representation of ethnic groups in the House of Federation (HoF) and the reservation for minority ethnic groups of some specific seats in the House of Peoples’ Representatives (HoPR).⁵⁷
- Third, the thoroughly ethnic-based/multinational federation (‘segmental autonomy’ in the words of consociationists) which supposedly grants its constituent units not

only the right to administer themselves (and with veto powers), but also to secede from the state itself.

When seen from the angle of state practice, however, many of these ‘accommodationist’ aspects of the political system were repeatedly neutralised by the integrationist moves of the regime or state. The ‘grand coalition’ within the EPRDF, first, didn’t bring together contenders or equals but reflected an entrenched hierarchy of power within the ruling party. Similarly, the coalition that the EPRDF struck with other parties in the early 1990s clearly favoured the EPRDF, and it didn’t last more than two years.

Although aspects of consociationalism are not new in Ethiopian politics, we don’t have a practical template to gauge its effect

Proportionality in the HoF (and to an even lesser extent in the HoPR) didn’t necessarily empower independent ethnic representatives but loyalist cadres close to the party in power. And, most importantly, the Ethiopian federal arrangement ‘operated very much like a centralized, unitary state, with most power residing at the political center.’⁵⁸

And, much like the previous regimes, as John Markakis notes, ‘The elite in the center continue[d] to rule; the elite in the periphery continue[d] to administer. Federalism does not entail equitable sharing of power and did not end the historical hegemony of the center. This remains the structural fault that continues to destabilize the nation state-building project.’⁵⁹ Therefore it would be difficult to pass judgement on the full implications of all elements of a consociational arrangement based solely on an analysis of the mode of rule put in place in Ethiopia in the past few decades.

It would be worthwhile to ask at this point what impact a genuine consociational arrangement could have in Ethiopia. How would it affect the country’s divided politics now and in the future?⁶⁰ The answer to this question could be mixed. Such an arrangement seems to be a viable way out of some critical aspects of the country’s political quagmire.

A grand coalition of sorts⁶¹ could be a reasonable answer to addressing the appetite among politically influential contending elites for wielding power at the centre. It could also be construed, in contrast to the critics of consociationalism, by many in the ethnically mobilised section of the population as a mechanism of empowering marginalised ethnic groups through genuine representation.

In a country charged with politicised ethnicity, as Donald Horowitz puts it, political power is not always a route towards something materially rewarding; power could be an end in and of itself.⁶² Major elites belonging to the content, culminationist and critical federalist groups⁶³ have long reiterated their indignation over what they see (saw) as political marginalisation of their groups during the reigns of different regimes. Oromo nationalists and their supporters have often lamented what they regard as the systematic marginalisation of the Oromo from key levers of power at the hands of successive regimes.

When Oromo elites were at all brought up to power, nationalists believe, it was done in ways that promoted the interests of the non-Oromo power wielder, relegating the Oromo to a mere instrument of statecraft. Or else it was because the Oromo pool of statesmen was aligned in thought and interest with their non-Oromo bosses, at times working against the interests of the Oromo masses. Either way, genuine Oromo interests weren't adequately reflected in state policymaking and the implementation process.

Grand coalition could be construed as a mechanism
of empowering marginalised ethnic groups through
genuine representation

The Amhara nationalists are similarly aggrieved over what they see as their erasure from the EPRDF's political machine for almost three decades. The accusation starts with the creation of the country's constitution in 1995, which they believe excludes their interests and views. The political machinery has ever since then been seen as anti-Amhara. Its ideological basis, national oppression, is inherently against Amhara interests, and they believe the practice, which amounts to the multifarious persecution of the Amhara, proves that. The nationalists have added that the TPLF used an Amhara party – the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) – to drive home its anti-Amhara policies.

Tigrayan nationalists have expressed their grievances of marginalisation twice: before 1991 and after 2018. The rhetoric that created the TPLF in 1974 and informed its struggle all through the Ethiopian Civil War until 1991 was Tigrayan political marginalisation and economic dispossession at the hands of an Amhara ruling class.

After 1991, according to the TPLF, that oppression was overturned. With the shift of power in the EPRDF away from the TPLF in 2018, another round of discourse based on victimhood began. Many Tigrayan nationalists now claim that their co-ethnics in positions of power have been targeted by the new regime, and have been thrown out of power at the federal level.

Somali, Afari, Gumuz, Gambella, Wolayta, Sidama and many other ethnic nationalists have at different times raised similar issues of political marginalisation. They have juggled between the injustices of the remote past (since the formation of the modern Ethiopian state in the 20th century to 1991) and the recent one (post-1991) to stress the issue.

The allegations of marginalisation that each nationalist group presents should be critically dissected and analysed. That is beyond the scope of this monograph. What concerns us here is that the perception is paramount among nationalist circles, and they have mobilised their respective constituencies along that line.

Regardless of the veracity of their claims, effectively addressing the quest for representation at the helm of power is necessary for ethnic satisfaction, and therefore national stability. It can also simply be seen as morally justifiable. Finally, power sharing at the centre can also address whatever quest for power the nationalist elites themselves harbour.

Proportional representation at different levels can address these concerns regarding marginalisation. But it also serves other core demands of specific ethnic groups or their elites. One is the protection of minority rights in different regions or kilils.

Amhara nationalists repeatedly voice their concern about their co-ethnics in other regions who they claim are disenfranchised and disempowered. These actors call for proportional representation either in the form of specified seats in regional councils or by instituting a proportional electoral system that could bring about more fairness in the representation process.⁶⁴

The proportional electoral system is explicitly endorsed in the political programmes of many opposition parties for various reasons. Proportional representation in the federal civil service is also a core demand of Oromo elites, although it isn't often put forward. Many political actors from different ethnic groups have long pushed for more proportional representation in the national army, which they see as controlled by specific ethnic groups.

Segmental autonomy for ethnic or cultural groups is a quintessential demand of all ethnonationalist groups (i.e. multinational federalists) in Ethiopia. All political elites from ethnically organised parties interviewed for this research, as indicated earlier, take the multinational federation as the core principle guiding most of their actions.

Moreover, while territorialised ethnicity is rejected – either in principle or in practice – by most Ethiopianist forces, many don't object to non-territorialised cultural autonomy. They believe, for instance, that ethnic groups should have the right to educate their children in their mother tongue and freely exercise their cultures without outside intervention.

Some even advocate ethnic-based organisation of administration at the kebele (ward) level. According to one party leader, federal units should be carved out non-ethnically, but ethnic self-administration should be practised at the local level.⁶⁵

But consociationalism could be criticised from different angles, from the standpoints of stability, legitimacy and feasibility. For one, consociationalism could freeze ethnic identities, with all its apparent untoward consequences.

In the eyes of many Ethiopianist (i.e. national federalist) forces, all ethnic grand coalition, pre-determined ethnic proportional allocation of power, and ethnic territorial autonomy could be dismissed as mechanisms that perpetuate ethnic division at a time when transcendence is required. The perpetuation of ethnic politics in any form has been criticised for thinning Ethiopian unity, and that has been seen to have opened up all possibilities for ethnic violence and even a looming disintegration.⁶⁶

The consociational scheme could also be criticised for possibly undermining meritocracy by fixing ethnic criteria for the allocation of public positions. Given the deep-seated differences of opinion on historical, political and economic issues in the country, such an arrangement can also lead to a deadlock inside the grand coalition that is meant to rule the country.

Ethiopianists' argument that by giving all rights to nations and nationalities, individuals and their rights have been largely erased from the political system is applicable here.⁶⁷ With the sharing of power among ethnic groups/parties, the system consistently reproduces incentives for the further ethnicisation of politics and the fading of individuals. Further, what a true *grand* coalition in Ethiopia would look like, given the country's 80-plus ethnic groups, is open to question.

The consociational scheme could also undermine meritocracy by fixing ethnic criteria for the allocation of public positions

Finally, as seen earlier, the critique that rule by an elite cartel disempowers the people and reduces the quality of democracy – compared to other non-elitist forms of democracy – can be critically relevant to Ethiopia, as seen below.

Supporters of elements in the consociational principle, however, would worry less about the possible negative impacts of the arrangement. This is based on certain assumptions about Ethiopia and the arrangement itself.

First comes the probable impact of consociational accommodation on ethnic fragmentation. In divided societies such as Ethiopia, consociations can have apparently contradictory outcomes: they can coalesce elites across ethnic

boundaries (i.e. into a grand coalition) precisely by freezing those boundaries. This is a mechanism by which ethnonationalists are given a guaranteed share of power, veto rights and self-administration in exchange for their willingness to work together to preserve the unity of the country.

This line of argument has its supporters in Ethiopia. Numerous ethnonationalists in the content and culminationist categories would put genuine self-administration as a condition to be able to appreciate the philosophical and practical worth of Ethiopia. As an ONLF leader put it, 'the pro-unity camp, due to its excessive focus on unity and its negligence of ethnic rights, makes us abhor the very idea of unity.'⁶⁸ An OLF leader agrees, and stresses that a 'unified and autonomous Oromo population will be an asset to build a strong Ethiopia.'⁶⁹

Following these perspectives, then, one may argue that a 'thick' Ethiopian unity is unachievable at any rate, and hence it would be more feasible to accept ethnic politics to get at a thinner national cohesion. Moreover, to address the same concern of ethnic freezing and also of the suppression of individual, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic identities at the political level, consociationalists have made a clear distinction between corporate and liberal consociationalism.⁷⁰

Corporate consociationalism prescribes allocation of power shares on the basis of pre-determined (ethnic) groups, whereas liberal consociationalism avoids any pre-determination and allots power shares based on vote shares by 'self-determined' groups. In the Ethiopian case, one way of avoiding top-down ethnicisation of politics would be to ensure equality of opportunity to all kinds of parties – ethnic, non-ethnic, multi-ethnic – so they compete freely for votes, and then share power proportionally according to election results.

'Self-determination' thus provides dynamism to the system (in contrast to ethnic fixation). It enhances systemic possibilities to reward non-ethnic groups and their agendas to the extent of their mobilising capacity at the grassroots level. 'This ability to self-identify,' as Allison McCulloch and John McGarry put it, 'could potentially encourage the growth of trans- or even non-ethnic parties over time.'⁷¹

Whatever our opinions about these responses by (would-be) consociationalists, two important challenges remain. First, the degree to which the grand coalition – however it is constituted – can indeed be internally cohesive enough to smoothly run office is open to question. Pro-consociationalist forces in Ethiopia need to address this question especially in light of the dire need for internal stability and cohesion in any government ruling the country in times of political uncertainty, as it is today.⁷²

Fresh in our memories are the grim experiences of the recent past when members of the same ruling party, the EPRDF, disagreed on ideological and programmatic grounds, among others, with grave repercussions. They not only failed to chart

a national peace plan to stabilise the country, but also intensified the existing divisions. They partly reproduced the ethnic division from below, and added an element of fragmentation to it.

If parties that once belonged to the same coalition can suffer from acute ‘political immobilism’, and worse, generate or reproduce divisions in society, how can parties with no history of working together and with an antagonistic relationship for decades be expected to run a smoothly functioning government?

Another concern would be the low quality of democracy that consociationalism is accused of embodying. Given the wide agreement that elites form the bedrock of politics in this system (‘rule by elite cartels’), how can the already elitist politics in Ethiopia turn its genuine attention to the people under consociational institutions? From the point of ethnic division, this question is very important.

As we will see below, politicians usually choose to see many of their contenders as extremist in their approach to politics, and many of them frequently emphasise their ‘trust’ in the people rather than elites to secure peace in the country. They therefore call for politics that empowers the people. If the population at large is indeed a bastion of moderation and democracy as indicated by these politicians, then the question remains: how can we make sure politics directly reflects the will of the people at large within a system that favours elites?

Can liberal consociationalism address this mismatch between realising popular sovereignty and practising elitist democracy? Or, more generally, can extended power sharing, as indicated elsewhere, by ensuring fair ethnic representation at the top level, help realise the immediate will of many people, and hence moderate politics overall?

Accommodation 2: Centripetal democracy

Centripetalism is perhaps the strongest challenge to consociationalism. Centripetal democracy bases all its recommendations on the drive to ‘make moderation pay.’⁷³ Horowitz, the major figure in this tradition, accuses consociationalism of not having an in-built mechanism to encourage cooperation among opposing leaders. Instead, with policies that incentivise focused group mobilisation (to stand out in the group and share power), Lijphart’s model rewards extremism. The alternative, then, is building incentive structures that encourage trans-ethnic cooperation.⁷⁴

Centripetalism rests on certain mechanisms that are meant to lead towards ethnic moderation. The first is vote pooling, mainly – but not necessarily – represented by the alternative vote (AV) electoral system. In this system, ‘voters rank in order of preference. If no candidate is successful after first preferences have been counted, the bottom candidate is dropped from the ballot, and votes cast for that candidate distributed according to the second preferences.’⁷⁵

The process continues until a majority is achieved. The aim is to encourage parties to seek support from ethnic groups outside their own in order to secure enough votes through second preferences. The effort to appeal to other ethnic groups inadvertently facilitates ethnic moderation.

Second, the vote pooling scheme is expected to lead towards moderate inter-ethnic coalitions. According to Horowitz, contrary to 'coalitions of convenience' that form after elections to govern, 'coalitions of commitment' emerge before elections and are informed by shared visions and agendas.⁷⁶ The first type of coalition, associated by Horowitz with consociationalism, involves extremist parties with little common agendas. They are thus less likely to last long compared to coalitions of commitment that are more capable of securing political stability in divided societies.

The centripetalist alternative to consociationalism is building incentive structures that encourage trans-ethnic cooperation

The third mechanism is a presidential system with distribution requirements for electing the president. Centripetalists recommend that the office of the president is occupied by a person who is required to get their votes not only from their ethnic group, but also from certain others. The percentage of required votes from other regions or ethnicities would be determined by law.

The net effect of the candidate's attempt to appeal to different ethnic groups would have a moderating effect on the person's agenda. Once elected, as a rational actor who seeks re-election, the president can only continue to reach out to those who voted for him, thereby giving moderation the chance to be the most reasonable game in town.

Finally, centripetalists also advocate federalism but they believe in the value of national federations rather than multinational ones. They prefer the carving out of federal unit boundaries in ways that divide populous ethnic groups into several units, and thereby temper ethnic appeals and facilitate national unity. Overall, in the 'incentives approach', as Horowitz's model is known:

... in direct opposition to consociational recommendations, centripetalists maintain that the best way to manage democracy in divided societies is not to replicate existing ethnic divisions in the legislature and other representative organs, but rather to de-politicise ethnicity by putting in place institutional incentives for cross-ethnic voting to encourage a degree of accommodation between rival groups.⁷⁷

Centripetalism

The literature on centripetalism has discussed Australia, Estonia, Fiji, Northern Ireland, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka for adopting AV and single transferable vote (STV) electoral systems. Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria are examined for experimenting with presidential elections with distribution requirements.

Decades of experimenting with centripetalist institutions, which are rarer than consociational ones,⁷⁸ produced mixed results. Scholars studied whether the recommended institutions help get moderates elected, and if so, whether their election leads to political stability.

In a study that considered 24 elections under centripetal rules, only seven produced victory for moderates.⁷⁹ Eleven others resulted in extremist victory. Out of the seven cases of election giving rise to moderate incumbents, only three led to political stability. All the 11 elections that brought forth extremists were followed by political instability. 'Overall, while centripetal rules have had some success at electing moderates, such moderation has not, for the most part, translated into more political stability.'⁸⁰

The efficacy of centripetal mechanisms to achieve stated objectives has been questioned from different perspectives.⁸¹ First, vote pooling can result in trans-ethnic cooperation only where several ethnic groups exist in a heterogeneous ethnic constituency. In cases where the number and degree of ethnic dispersion is low, ethnic elites prefer to cling to their co-ethnics as much as possible and win elections. Moreover, elite dispensation towards moderation can be achieved only when there is a large moderation-seeking electorate, which is hard to come by in post-conflict societies.

Further, consociationalists believe it would be naive for ethnically mobilised communities to settle with the indirect form of representation that centripetalism can offer. Especially in communities that have just emerged from conflict, people tend to settle for nothing less than representation by someone of their own, rather than from another group that claims to entertain their interests. In addition, rather than facilitating political stability, centripetalism may set the stage for civil unrest in many countries. For example ethnic extremists who have been left out of political representation through majoritarian legislative and executive election processes could resort to violent methods of getting their voices heard.

Thus, by just focusing on rewarding moderates, the system opens possibilities of overall instability by those it neglects. Finally, presidentialism in divided societies

is dismissed by some scholars as counter-productive, leading at times to authoritarianism, and at other times to political chaos, or both.

Centripetalists accept some of these critiques, and this has helped them refine some of their initial arguments. For example, having admitted that ethnic heterogeneity is a condition for successful vote pooling, Benjamin Reilly contends that vote pooling could work better in Asia than in Africa where colonial and apartheid systems segregated ethnic communities. He believes that the existence of 'a moderate sentiment' among the electorate is a condition for the system to work well.⁸² Horowitz also admits the importance of heterogeneity in this case, and recommends redrawing electoral maps to achieve larger, more heterogeneous and multimember constituencies that make vote pooling a possibility.⁸³

Other scholars propose alternative pathways to vote pooling in countries with ethnically concentrated regions leading to homogenous electoral constituencies. Matthijs Bogaards proposed, mainly based on the 1971 Ugandan electoral law, what he called 'constituency pooling' whereby, according to one variant, candidates simultaneously contest in more electoral districts located in regions other than their own. The candidate with a total plurality or majority of votes represents their own electoral district in Parliament.⁸⁴ The process is believed to incentivise moderation not within a given electoral constituency, but across constituencies dominated by different ethnic groups.

By just focusing on rewarding moderates,
centripetalism opens possibilities of overall instability
by those it neglects

Horowitz acknowledged that it could be difficult to kick-start his approach. He seemed to agree that ethnic groups in conflict zones may not accept representation by others considered their antagonists. He also realised that many ethnic elites may not support this model as it opens up their fields to inter-ethnic competition. This is not the case in consociations where ethnic groups are 'insulated' from external political campaigns.

However, many supporters of the incentives approach do believe that 'once up and running', it 'produces more stable politics because there is a greater likelihood of ethnic moderation.'⁸⁵

Relevance to Ethiopia

Although centripetal democracy hasn't yet been presented as a package in Ethiopia, some of its elements could be welcomed by different political parties. Most importantly, its preference for creating ethnically heterogeneous federal or

different units from single ethnic groups is already promoted by many Ethiopianist parties in the pragmatic and principled national federalist camps.

As mentioned elsewhere, the EDP, EZEMA, Balderas and many other Ethiopianist-leaning parties have consistently repudiated the existing ethnically engineered federal system for its centrifugal effects. They have instead proposed a federation where non-ethnic elements are given due consideration. The effect of such an arrangement, they argue, could help tone down the ethnic appeal and facilitate pan-Ethiopian convergence.

A few have advocated ethnic-based organisation of administration at the local (kebele/woreda) level. But the overall non-ethnically carved-out federal unit in which the kebeles are located will ultimately serve as the major locus of power and arbiter of collective political identification for the kebeles in that killil.

Presidential-type governments and preferential voting systems are less vigorously promoted, if at all, by parties in Ethiopia. Presidentialism is advocated by a group of parties, some for stability reasons, and some to promote unity, although how this should be done is vague. The parties don't seem to have come up with an elaborate distribution rule governing executive election. Mechanisms of vote pooling are even less considered.

Centripetalism, however, will surely meet with stiff resistance by a host of other political groups in the country. Most ethnically organised groups hold strong convictions that allowing the splitting of 'their' ethnic federal units after they've reached the current stage of self-administration is political regression.⁸⁶ This conviction is based on two assumptions: first, that Ethiopia's modern political history has positively progressed from a unitary imperial feudal state to a unitary socialist regime to a multinationally federated (however nominal) one.

The first subjected nations to class and national oppression in cultural and political terms. The second liberated them from class oppression and eased the subjugation on cultural fronts while oppressing them politically. The third recognised political self-determination in theory, although in practice this was dismal. The final goal now, therefore, they believe, should be to press for genuine and democratic self-administration. Anything that hinders the realisation of this final stage in the struggle, never mind reverses it, is anathema to the emancipatory vision held for generations, they contend.

Second, these groups believe that all this allegedly positive progression of history is achieved primarily due to the sacrifice made by what they see as 'nations and nationalities'. The numerous civilian and armed ethnic opposition movements that rocked Ethiopia from 1960 to now were meant to liberate the respective ethnic groups from subjugation. Hence, they argue, tampering with federal units would be

a 'disservice to the generations of people that were laid to rest to bring about the current structure that upholds self-administration.'⁸⁷

These forces will also passionately reject Horowitz's penchant for strong, more centralised federations. The push by most ethnically organised parties is for a genuinely decentralised federation with extended autonomy rights at least for their respective communities.

The major criticism of the EPRDF was precisely that it was too centralised, and hence not genuine in practice. Many ethnic forces have again strongly criticised the current government for its pro-containment inclinations which, in their eyes, can be demonstrated by the dissolution of the sister parties making up the EPRDF, and its reconstitution into a national party.

This and other moves by the ruling party, according to an informant, brought about 'confusion' and 'fear' that the federal project was at risk of being dismantled.⁸⁸ The ruling party itself, considering the charge that working towards the erosion of the multinational federation is a 'serious' one, has consistently and publicly denied the accusation and defended the federation.

Most ethnonationalist groups believe that allowing
the splitting of 'their' ethnic federal units would
amount to political regression

The final centripetalist mechanism that requires examination is vote pooling. The first issue is the form it should take, were it to be implemented in the country. Horowitz's favoured electoral system, AV, may appear to have limited relevance to Ethiopia. This is simply due to the geographically concentrated nature of ethnic groups in much of the country. As already discussed, AV requires heterogeneous constituencies to be useful. But several multi-ethnic cities and towns do exist, and hence its utility shouldn't be totally dismissed.

Horowitz's own recommendation to recarve electoral maps to achieve more heterogeneous and multimember constituencies may also be considered where possible. Moreover, as Reilly noted, internal diversity within ethnic groups based on political, ideological, and, albeit less relevant in our case, class issues, also makes AV relevant even within specific ethnic groups, with the aim of promoting intra-ethnic moderation.⁸⁹

On the other hand, constituency pooling could be worthy of consideration. Candidates here would be required to run for elections in more killils than theirs simultaneously to represent their electoral district. The percentage of votes they need to secure in their versus other districts needs to be determined by law. AV and

constituency pooling are not mutually exclusive. As Bogaards suggests, the two can be combined to more effectively arrive at winning candidates.⁹⁰

But the most striking, almost counter-intuitive, method of encouraging aspects of vote pooling in Ethiopia would be to maintain the current plurality electoral system. Classic supporters of the accommodation technique discussed would dismiss plurality systems such as first-past-the-post (FPTP) for discouraging cross-ethnic appeals among political elites. After all, in many diverse societies, politicians can find it easier to achieve plurality in their constituencies without the help of other ethnic groups.

However in Ethiopia, where no single ethnic group forms a majority and where the difference in the population size of the two most populous and usually contending ethnic groups is not huge (Oromo 34% and Amhara 27%), plurality of votes at the national level may not be achieved by groups from any single ethnicity without help from other smaller ethnic communities.

This could push politicians from any ethnic group to form alliances with others if they wanted to win federal elections. Thus, although in the ethnically concentrated regions FPTP discourages vote pooling in Ethiopia, that same electoral mechanism encourages it to win a federal majority.⁹¹

A counter-intuitive method of encouraging vote pooling in Ethiopia would be to maintain the current plurality electoral system

Whatever form it takes, it is important to examine how vote pooling institutions can in general affect fundamental political fault lines in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is home to many lines of conflict and competition as far as identity politics is concerned – among ethnic nationalists (between and within content, culminationist and critical multinational federalists), between Ethiopian nationalists and ethnic nationalists, and among Ethiopian nationalists (between and within pragmatic and principled national federalists).

Ethnic nationalists clash over a range of issues including regional borders, grazing lands, controlling killils and central government, and so on. On the other hand, pan-Ethiopianists compete with many ethnonationalists for ideological reasons, but also struggle for power to dominate regions and the central government.

Although not yet highly pronounced, Ethiopianists also have internal debates with one another on political and tactical grounds as indicated elsewhere. Nationalist mobilisations among ethnonationalists and Ethiopianists have reached their peak in the past two years, at times sparking violent conflicts, partly due to the bursting

forth of suppressed tensions with the onset of political liberalisation, and state fragility. At the micro level, driven by a security dilemma, concern for 'group worth', and for group political empowerment, contending nationalist mobilisation has become the order of the day.⁹² Inter-group or inter-party nationalist contentions, it seems, are here to stay, not to fade away any time soon.

In this context of heightened agitation, what can vote pooling offer? While the competition is raging on multiple fronts, under vote pooling, semi-convergent politics can have more chance of becoming a possibility largely within the ethnonationalist camp, and, by implication, among the Ethiopianist camp.

Centripetalist electoral institutions could in particular narrow whatever gaps exist *between* and *within* the content and culminationist multinational federalists on the one hand, and between and within the pragmatic and principled national federalists on the other. Vote pooling may not be equally effective in transcending the division along the ethnonationalist vs Ethiopianist nationalist fault line.

These possible implications are to be expected due to ideological, programmatic, political and demographic reasons. As discussed at the start of this monograph, most elites (except those of the Amhara) in the ethnonationalist camp converge on the general interpretations of Ethiopia's modern history, especially as it relates to what they see as the persistent subjugation of ethnic groups in much of the country in political, cultural and economic terms.

They also generally agree on the need to preserve some form of multinational federation to ensure the right to self-determination for these ethnic groups. Predictably, they agree on the philosophical foundation that emphasises group rights in its own terms, without denying the importance of individual rights. Most importantly, they tend to band together against forces they see as challenging their political project and understanding of history. These ideological and political positions have the potential to bring together many⁹³ such forces into a coalition of some sort.

On the other hand, many Ethiopianist forces (mostly including the Amhara nationalists) oppose the substance of or the magnitude given to the national oppression rhetoric propounded by ethnonationalist forces. Some Ethiopian nationalists advocate an alternative interpretation that downplays the oppression part. Others tend to accept some aspects of the oppression, not all, but reject the mechanism of reaction to that oppression. Still others wish for it to be toned down, fearful of its negative consequences with its consistent overplay.

Looking forward, all stress the need to work on what makes Ethiopians unified. Most also emphasise individual rights, claiming these are the core form of rights, and should be given priority when conflicting with group rights. Just like the content and culminationist ethnonationalist forces, Ethiopianist forces do also have the

propensity to come together⁹⁴ against their contenders in ideology and political agenda, making some form of coalition possible.

Apart from ideological and programmatic reasons, there is another political reason that makes ethnonationalist-Ethiopianist convergence an arduous task. A major force working against inter-party moderation along this line in Ethiopia today is fear of outflanking by extremist political dispensations within each bloc. Party leaders confirm that they don't moderate their stance on issues precisely because moderation leaves the political space to the extremists.⁹⁵ As the party leaders note, those considered extremists have won the political game. It is important to note that both types of nationalists in Ethiopia view elements in the other as 'extremist'.

Ethiopian nationalists often dub many ethnonationalists as 'narrow minded', 'outmoded politicians', 'destroyers of the country' etc. Many in the ethnonationalist camp believe Ethiopian nationalists are 'unitarists', 'imperialists' and 'reactionaries'. These mutual vitriols tend to freeze internal rigidity and usually make cross-bloc moderation a distant possibility.

Lastly, elements in each camp believe that they are capable of mobilising huge masses of the population to challenge their contenders in the other camp. Ethnonationalist figures tend to think that if they were allowed to operate in a free and fair political environment, they could easily defeat the pan-Ethiopian forces. On the other hand many pan-Ethiopian forces are confident of crushing their contenders in free elections. How genuine and realistic the confidence of both groups is can be questioned – nevertheless it could endure for some time, resulting in a lot of effort in political campaigning.

Vote pooling may not be effective in transcending the division along the ethnonationalist vs Ethiopianist fault line

Hence centripetalist mechanisms may add further incentive structures to facilitate the crystallisation of the Ethiopianist camp versus the ethnonationalist one, and vice versa. (The only major exception in such an alignment of forces would be the Amhara nationalists, who have more cognitive and discursive affinity with the Ethiopianists than with the ethnonationalist bloc.)

In that sense the mechanisms could help, at best, to moderate ethnonationalist positions towards one another, on the one hand, and intra-Ethiopianist debates on the other. They may not spur cross-bloc vote pooling when the division between the blocs is sharp and when each bloc thinks it has a significant population size under its influence, ready to be mobilised. Under vote pooling rules, these two blocs

could engage in ardent campaigns to recruit supporters in some areas more than others. The most prominent site of struggle for both blocs in the coming years, if preferential voting were upheld or even plurality votes were maintained, would be – apart from cities and towns – the SNNPR and Amhara Region.

The SNNPR, home to 50 or more ethnic groups, is a conglomeration of diverse ideological and political forces. Some are highly ethnically mobilised, and others less so. Both ethnonationalist forces and Ethiopianist parties from all over Ethiopia would work hard here to recruit potential supporters for their causes. Likewise Ethiopianist parties, much less ethnonationalist ones (except the critical multinational federalists), would scramble to mobilise the Amhara people. With the change of nationalist consciousness in different areas in the Amhara region, their efforts would bear mixed fruits.

On the one hand they could still get supporters among hard-core Ethiopian nationalist pockets in the region. Some of them could strike alliances with Amhara nationalists – who are critical multinational federalists. They share similar historical interpretations of the country, a common need to protect individual rights, and antagonistic views towards some other ethnonationalists, especially among the Oromo.

On the other hand, many Amhara nationalists believe that liberal Ethiopianism alone cannot help them secure what they see as their core demands (such as territorial claims). They also sometimes see Ethiopianist mobilisation as a strong contender to their influence, and thus a competitor, making coalitions difficult to forge and maintain. So if Ethiopian nationalist parties can strike alliances with ethnically organised parties, it should mainly be in the Southern and Amhara regions.

It would hence be an ironic ‘achievement’ to see internally moderated Ethiopianist and ethno-nationalist blocs with extremist views towards each other. Hence vote pooling can both converge and fragment political alignments in the country. At any rate, the fragmentation of politics along the above lines can have both negative and positive repercussions for political stability in the country.

Many Ethiopian nationalists strongly believe that today’s ethnonationalist forces, being a force of disintegration, should be defeated as a whole. Some believe that total defeat could give the Ethiopianist bloc the chance to make the necessary constitutional changes to ‘save’ Ethiopia from falling into the abyss. But ethnonationalist forces see the upcoming elections as a referendum on the multinational federation, which is, they believe, an outcome of decades of struggle. This strong urge not only to win totally, but to associate winning with honouring ‘sacrifice’ and defeat with existential threat, doesn’t bode well with elections being a normal part of the political process.

Centripetalist mechanisms of vote pooling, since they are not based on proportional representation, don't satisfy the existential urge to win or not be defeated by the contenders. As other countries' experience shows, those who feel excluded in such contexts resort to other means of gaining or showing their power, leading to political instability.⁹⁶ Such experiences may provide some lessons for Ethiopia, too.

Be that as it may, if centripetal democracy could help mature two major lines of political alignments in Ethiopia, it would still have achieved something very important. Inter-ethnically divided politics has long been a major issue in the country, and has contributed to sporadic inter-ethnic violence since 1991.⁹⁷

If not attended to urgently, it could also hamper smooth democratic transition by undercutting possibilities of a successful national dialogue, a necessity for democratisation in many divided, post-conflict societies. Hence if centripetalist institutions are ever adopted in Ethiopia, the way forward should not be to undermine inter-ethnic vote pooling, but to create additional mechanisms of inclusion of both Ethionationalist and ethnonationalist forces in the political process.

Integration: Republican and liberal integrationism

The monograph's focus now shifts from accommodation to integration. The first variant in this category of public policies is republicanism. Republicans celebrate the idea of the nation state and oppose any public manifestation of identity that appears to undercut the publicly promoted common identity.

They are fierce defenders of the nation and national identity, which they believe is important for achieving other goods. 'Civic virtue,' as McGarry et al put it, 'among citizens was best promoted through a common and deliberative public culture. Shared citizenship, education, language, religion, and military service for the republic all serve to integrate the polity.'⁹⁸

Liberals, unlike republicans, support federations but
oppose multinational federations that empower
ethnic groups politically

Although they recognise historical injustice, they reject any group-based solutions to it, and instead advocate the promotion of a nation of individuals and their collective well-being. They are against federalism and any politics that they assume would splinter the 'indivisible nation'. They support a strong unifying figure – a president or prime minister – chosen through majoritarian elections. Parties should be national, not ethnic or regional, to promote unity.

Liberal integrationism, the other variant in this section, shares the anti-ethnonationalism stance of republicanism with some important modifications.

Liberals believe in the importance of national unity against division, and develop strategies for the strengthening of collective identity. Liberals, in contrast to republicans, however, support federations, but they oppose multinational federations that empower ethnic groups politically. They believe federations should empower individuals and make administration effective, but they shouldn't divide the nation or lead to local tyranny or secession. Hence they advocate national federations.

They also, in contrast to republicans, emphasise individual rights rather than the community. Liberals oppose discrimination based on culture of origin, but are fine with discrimination on the basis of one's ability or morals. They are against state intervention in ways leading to discriminatory policies against people due to their race or background. The state should be neutral in matters of culture.⁹⁹

Integration

Typical examples of countries with strong republican traditions are France and Turkey, while liberal integration is best represented by the United States.

Integrationism is criticised from diverse angles. Republican and liberal distaste for advocating the primacy of the ethno-cultural entity is attacked by both communitarians and revisionist liberals. According to Sarah Song:

Communitarians reject the idea that the individual is prior to the community and that the value of social goods can be reduced to their contribution to individual well-being. They instead embrace ontological holism, which acknowledges collective goods as, in Charles Taylor's words, "irreducibly social" and intrinsically valuable.¹⁰⁰

From a revisionist liberal point of view, three points are in order.¹⁰¹ First, cultural membership, in this view, should be seen as a 'primary good', something that is wished by and seen as a necessity by every rational individual who pursues certain goals. Second, one condition of individual autonomy 'is having an adequate range of options from which to choose', culture providing 'meaningful options and scripts with which people can frame, revise, and pursue their goals.' And 'it is not simply membership in any culture but one's own culture that must be secured in order for cultural membership to serve as a meaningful context of choice and a basis of self-respect.'¹⁰²

It is also argued that the state cannot protect cultural rights by simply protecting individual rights. There are essential differences between protecting individual rights and group-differentiated rights – both at the theoretical and practical levels. For liberal multiculturalists, 'it has become increasingly clear that minority rights cannot

be subsumed under the category of human rights,¹⁰³ which many integrationist nationalists today emphasise. Traditional human rights, according to Will Kymlicka, will have a hard time resolving some of the longest-standing communal questions in ethnically divided countries:

Which languages should be recognized in the parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts? Should each ethnic or national group have publicly funded education in its mother tongue? Should internal boundaries (legislative districts, provinces, states) be drawn so that cultural minorities form a majority within a local region? Should governmental powers be devolved from the central level to more local or regional levels controlled by particular minorities, particularly on culturally sensitive issues of immigration, communication, and education? Who passes decisions on the boundaries and powers of internal political subunits? Should political offices be distributed in accordance with a principle of national or ethnic proportionality? Should the traditional homelands of indigenous peoples be reserved for their benefit, and so protected from encroachment by settlers and resource developers? How can we arrive at decisions on internal migration/settlement policies?¹⁰⁴

Critics contend that several groups in many countries that protect individual rights still fought for their collective rights since traditional standards of human rights were found wanting in terms of fulfilling their communal aspirations. Examples include Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and Northern Ireland. In some of these countries, those who fought for the protection of their cultural rights were themselves liberals. The states that accommodated them also did so believing that the existing regime of individual rights wasn't enough to ameliorate communal grievances.¹⁰⁵

According to critics of integrationism, an important facet of political practice is that the state cannot be neutral in ethnolinguistic matters as it can be in religious ones. Hence the state should acknowledge this fact and try its best to be accommodative and reflective of its social diversity rather than claim neutrality and act hypocritically, with negative repercussions to peace and stability.

It is important to admit, they argue, the impossibility of forging stability and justice by practising a difference-blind approach to public policy. Where ethnic politics has taken deep roots, as it has in many developed and developing parts of the world today, the liberal politics of individualism and the republican desire for nation building are a bit too unworkable or risky. Both consociationalism (Lijphart) and centripetalism (Horowitz) agree on this point.

Republicans and liberals don't buy these criticisms, however.¹⁰⁶ First they believe that many accommodationists inflate the 'objective' nature and significance of ethnic identities. They accuse promoters of accommodation as being primordialists

who take communal identities for granted, and downplay their malleability. They also accuse them of downplaying internal differentiations within ethnic categories. Moreover, by amplifying the ethnic cause, integrationists accuse accommodation of setting the stage for artificially amplified rigid group categories to take over the political space at the expense of individuals and the 'common good'.

This, they believe, could lead to not only the oppression of the individual at the hands of 'the group' but also the obliteration of anything that keeps societies together, potentially leading to violence and disintegration. Group obsession also masks elite interests who allegedly 'fight for the cause of the group,' and empowers few individuals who at times tend to cause chaos and conflict in the name of the group.¹⁰⁷

Where ethnic politics have deep roots, critics argue,
the republican desire for nation building is a bit too
unworkable or risky

When institutionalised, ethnic politics usually leads neither to stability nor democracy. Consociational and centripetal experiments, in the eyes of pro-integration scholars, have fizzled out, failed to consolidate or are maintained by force. Studies usually overrate the importance of such designs. Multinational federations in particular are viewed very critically. Such federations, as critics of accommodation put it, 'have failed to remain democratic, or have fallen apart, throughout the Caribbean (West Indies); all parts of Africa (Nigeria, Mali, Ethiopia, Camerouns); and throughout Asia (Pakistan; Union of Malaya; Burma)'.¹⁰⁸

Thus integrationists believe that emphasis should be put on convergence and individual rights. Cohesive policies are not only desirable but also feasible, given the malleability of ethnic identities. National politics should cultivate democratic accountability of incumbents and empower individual citizens. It should also promote convergent politics, especially for republicans.

Relevance to Ethiopia

Integration has for three decades been discussed and debated in Ethiopia – largely in relation to the issue of federalism – much more than consociationalism and centripetalism as packages of public policy. Integration has both advocates and detractors in Ethiopia. In fact almost all Ethiopian nationalists, in the pragmatic or principled camps, propound many elements of republicanism or liberal integration or espouse elements from both schools of thought.

Many of them advocate a strong Ethiopian 'nation' or some form of collective identity that transcends all ethnic divisions. They believe that the Ethiopian

students' movement that translated ethnicity into a political project was unnecessary and has had lasting disruptive consequences for the socio-political condition of the country and its citizens. Some do believe that the movement has identified certain injustices to some languages and cultures, but it has also used those injustices as a pretext to organise and fight ethnically – a reaction that wasn't necessary to create a just society.

In fact, the rhetoric for self-determination served as a rallying ideology for decades of struggles that finally ended in 1991 in creating an 'ethno-federation' that divided Ethiopians along ethnic lines. It pitted one ethnicity against the other, and led to the suppression of individual and minority rights. It also endangered the country's very existence and the human dignity of its citizens.

Ethiopian nationalists propound elements of republicanism or liberal integration or espouse elements from both schools

Most Ethiopian nationalists today advocate some form of federalism, so they tend to side with liberal integrationism. They also emphasise the importance of individual rights, believing this is the fundamental right that should be protected before anything else. However they also share a strong commitment to the 'nation' as put forward by republicans. They believe in the existence – however threatened by ethnic nationalism today – of Ethiopian identity, and strongly support devising strategies to solidify it, and make it the umbrella form of identification that brings together all citizens. They are champions of an 'indivisible nation' that transcends all ethnic and religious divisions.

As indicated elsewhere, though, their ethnonationalist detractors don't accept their paradigms and recommendations. To the content or culminationist multinational federalists, the question of group rights has been at the very heart of Ethiopia's politics for a long time. Demands for the protection of group rights have been at the forefront of oppositional politics for over five decades.

Since the inception of the national question, marginalised peoples of Ethiopia have demanded not just democracy but the full realisation of group-differentiated rights – self-rule, language and cultural rights, and so on. Only the fulfillment of those rights in the form of a multinational federation would be considered just and acceptable in their eyes. They also argue, as we have seen, that responding to the autonomy and representation demands of the ethnic groups can be the single most reliable guarantor of peace and stability in the country, and, by implication, its territorial integrity.

Regardless of the veracity and plausibility of some of these claims by accommodationists, the fact that ethnic nationalism has become a defining feature of Ethiopian political reality, for better or worse, is undeniable.¹⁰⁹ Those integrationists who advocate a shift to national federation and transcendence of ethnic politics in the near future without offering something in return that effectively addresses the ethnonationalist insistence on group rights will continue to face a serious feasibility challenge.

However it's also important to note the need for creating reliable legal and political conditions for the full protection of individual rights in any part of the country. The major liberal contribution to this debate could be the idea that the (over)emphasis given to ethnic political considerations could lead to local tyranny, both against individuals and minorities within a given ethno-federal unit.

The need to work towards a unifying scheme that brings together all Ethiopians as a collective entity, however thin the collective identity and also accommodative of ethnic demands, is also a point worth considering – not least for its practical implications for overall sustainable political stability. One can reasonably argue that the sole promotion of ethnic demands with considerable neglect of the value of overall cross-ethnic societal cohesion may not automatically translate into national unity or political stability. The challenge, therefore, is to usefully reconcile accommodationist policies with integrationist schemes.

Chapter 3

Alternatives for Ethiopia: transcending the divisions

The literature has long presented the different constitutional design options as mutually exclusive. Republican/liberal designs have been counterpoised with, say, consociational ones both philosophically and practically. On the other hand, designs within the integrationist or accommodationist camps have also been presented as diametrically opposed. Centripetalism and consociationalism, for instance, have been referred to as ‘radically different solutions’¹¹⁰ or ‘dramatically different prescriptions’ to manage ethnic division.¹¹¹

The analysis presented in the previous section also maintained the division of the dominant literature that assesses ‘centripetalism versus consociationalism’ in order to help us make sense of the dominant debate both inside Ethiopia and internationally. Recent studies have started to move beyond these dichotomies. While scholarly attempts at capturing marriages between integration and accommodation in the practical political world had been under way a bit earlier,¹¹² efforts to understand the co-existence of consociationalist and centripetalist policies in states came quite recently.¹¹³

The latter cases have revealed ‘that many consociational regimes around the world today have centripetal elements.’¹¹⁴ While in some of these cases the two designs have conflicted with each other, in others they have aided each other’s political objectives.

Ethiopia, this research argues, requires a set of mixed constitutional design options. The major reason for this is that, as could be deduced from the discussion so far, not one single constitutional design can fulfil the multiple, and at times contradictory, demands and interests of the major political forces in the country.

The full operation of centripetalism could, at its best, help mend the fragmented politics to an extent but would probably disappoint the multinational federalists’ demand for inclusion and self-determination. On the other hand, the implementation of the entire package of the consociational arrangement can answer, in principle, the major demands of most ethnonationalist forces, but could probably accelerate the fragmentation of already divided politics in the country.

Likewise, republican or liberal integrationist analyses capture the multiple problems associated with ethnicised politics well, but many of their policy recommendations would fly in the face of the hardened group-differentiated demands replete in all corners of the country today.

Hence a workable democratic constitutional option for Ethiopia should be sought not in a single design, but in blending parts of these designs. The mixing, however, should not be haphazardly eclectic. An eclecticism that isn't well thought out could lead to an incoherent hotchpotch of policies that could end up neutralising the possible benefits to be accrued from each design.

The task should be to carefully extract relevant designs that can complement one another's positive impacts and at the same time mitigate their ill effects. It must be remembered though that a perfect system can never be achieved in such a divided country. And so the discussion should be geared towards striking the least harmful combination of public policies.

The major demands in Ethiopia today can be broadly summarised into three: inclusion, moderation and cohesion. Consociationalists or ethnonationalists aim to achieve the first, centripetalists promise the second, and integrationists promote the third. The challenge, then, is to look for ways and means of bringing together designs to meaningfully respond to those three demands.

The task should be to extract relevant designs that
can complement one another's positive impacts
while mitigating their ill effects

Below are some general options, along with their pros and cons for further deliberation by stakeholders in the country. The options are partly inspired by compound designs some countries followed in different parts of the world. Contrary to widely held assumptions, countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Fiji, Lebanon, Malaysia, and Northern Ireland have followed – both successfully and unsuccessfully – a mix of centripetalism and consociationalism to regulate diversity.¹¹⁵ This section draws lessons from the more successful ones and tries to adapt their experiences to the Ethiopian case.

The models are anchored in central/federal government composition, electoral system for national elections, and federal unit type, composition and administration. It should be strongly emphasised that these are only examples of possible systems Ethiopians could consider. Many others can be proposed to address the different demands which arguably also require some combination of institutional designs along the lines indicated below. First come diverse mixes of accommodation

designs, followed by integration proposals to be incorporated into any mix of accommodation package Ethiopians choose to adopt.

Proposals that combine centripetal and consociational institutions

Liberal power sharing with vote pooling and inclusive multinational federalism

This model grants inclusion at the executive level and exercises vote pooling in its electoral system. The inclusion follows the liberal consociational model proposed by Lijphart and propounded further by McGarry and Brendan O'Leary.¹¹⁶ In this design, the sharing of power is not based on pre-determined ethnic quotas but depends on the level of support any party has from below.

Hence the system avoids the ethnically fixated alternative of corporate consociationalism. By avoiding that alternative, it creates in the system in-built dynamism and adjustability following the change of political consciousness and patterns of political organisation in that society. It grants non-ethnic and multi-ethnic parties and movements opportunities to gain fair representation in the system without artificially undermining the popularity of ethnic parties.

According to this model, power at the centre is shared following the 'sequential and proportional allocation rules' (SPA).¹¹⁷ According to this rule, parties share power at the executive level based on the share of seats they get in the legislature. So the party with the most seats gets two advantages: it gets its choice and number of ministries. More seats mean more chances to pick more important ministerial portfolios. The next largest party in the legislature gets the ministry or ministries of its choice from those left. The process goes on until all ministries are taken up.

This rule has advantages over its alternatives such as 'agreements reached in inter-party negotiations; the assignment of portfolios by the party leader with most legislative support; or proposals by an executive president, a symbolic head of state, a formateur, or a third party.'¹¹⁸

Most importantly, SPA helps avoid the possible endless conflicts and deadlocks usually seen with other rules in the process of forming a coalition government. Relatedly, it can help resolve the dilemma of who/how many groups to include in a grand coalition. SPA is clear, automatic, fair and easy to understand and implement. The benefits of this rule could be maximised and complemented in Ethiopia by using a centripetalist electoral system. This could take the form of AV or constituency pooling or, with reduced impact, FPTP.

Parties would try their best to reap as many votes as possible to gain several seats in the legislature, with the rational intent of standing to benefit from SPA the most. Hence the SPA, a consociational rule, could be productively dovetailed with vote

pooling. The process could help ensure fair representation of groups (inclusion), as well as cross-ethnic appeal (possibly leading to moderation) by parties.

At the regional level, the multi-national federal structure largely remains intact with some significant guarantees for minority inclusion. Mechanisms of inclusion include securing a guaranteed fixed proportional number of seats in regional councils, or the application of the same SPA rule to establish regional executive bodies as employed at the federal level.

Alternatively (or in addition to one of the above mechanisms), autonomy rights for minority groups should be upheld. Autonomy could be granted in two ways. It could take the form of territorial self-administration for identity groups or non-territorial autonomy in using their preferred language for any level of education, practising collective religious and cultural activities and so on.

Whatever form they take, inclusion mechanisms should undergo thorough negotiations among diverse stakeholders with a direct stake in the institutions before adoption. These rights should be protected by veto powers of some sort. Such mechanisms should be employed to respond to the demands of minorities in different killils. The electoral system at the regional level is assumed to follow the national line, but that shouldn't necessarily be the case. As long as the above principles are maintained or incurred in the process, killils may choose their own electoral systems.

Inclusion mechanisms should undergo thorough negotiations among diverse stakeholders before adoption

In general, this model has some major advantages: first, it promotes the inclusion of all popular parties (ethnic or non-ethnic) at the centre without ignoring the need for a cross-ethnic appeal, and hence moderation. It could therefore resonate to a degree with the major interests of the most influential actors in the country. It promotes both self-administration and power sharing, on the one hand, and opens up a space for non-ethnic and multi-ethnic party politics to flourish. In addition, it could to some extent tone down the appeal of an ethnically charged political environment by encouraging cross-ethnic voter mobilisation.

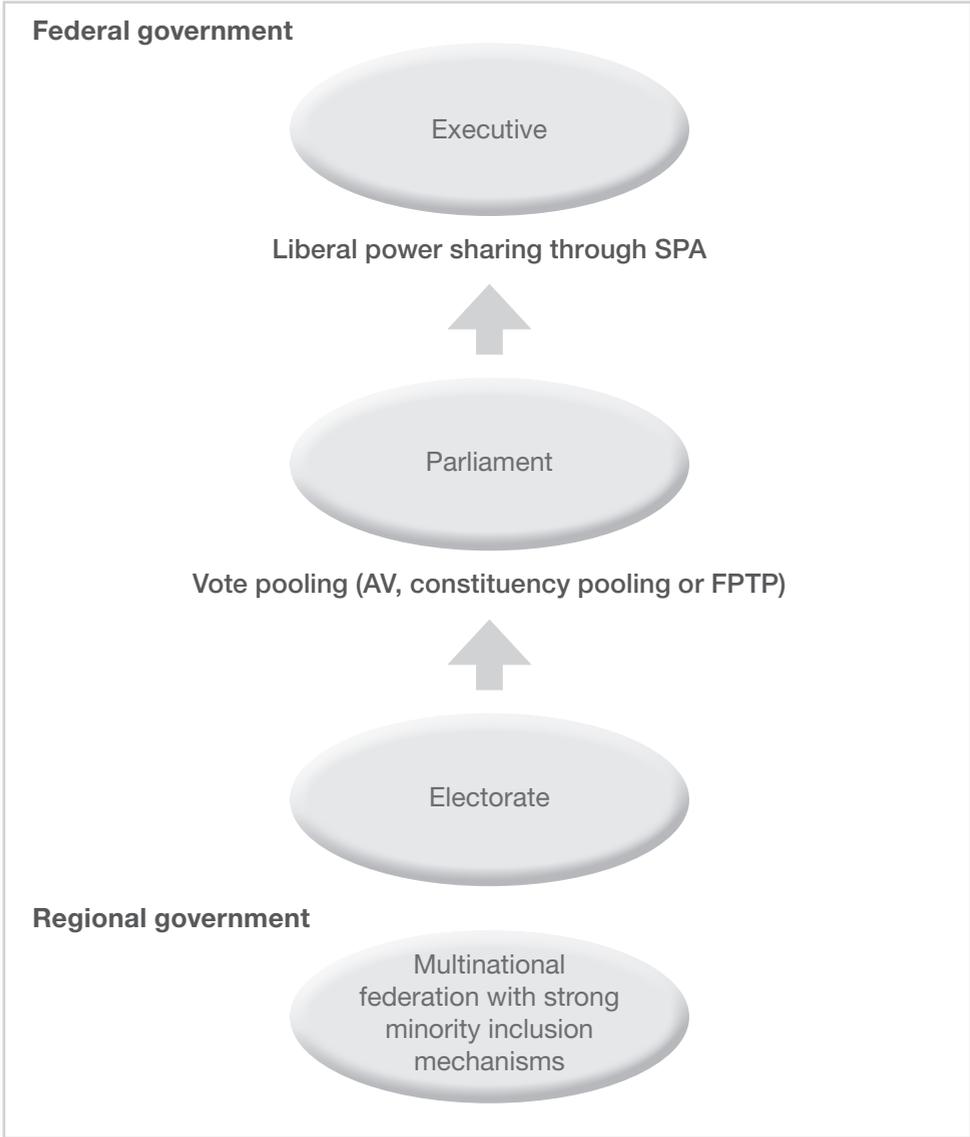
There could be some disadvantages though. First, by focusing on power sharing, it reduces the power of for example AV to promote maximum vote pooling. When parties know they can get cabinet seats with a certain level of votes, they may not be strongly motivated to exert themselves to the maximum to moderate their positions.

Conversely, it reduces the degree of inclusion of groups – compared to what pure consociationalism can offer – in its quest to moderate political positions. Parties that

could have lower electoral popularity nationally (for example, by representing small ethnic groups) may be thrown out of the system, although not to the extent found in pure centripetalism.

Secondly, it could at times lead to political deadlock at the centre, but that is easier to handle among the fewer party blocs that AV can offer (compared to what the proportional electoral system – PR – could produce). Finally, the design may not bridge the gap between Ethiopianist and ethnonationalist forces, which could be an enduring political fault line in Ethiopia. Could the inclusion of diverse voices at the centre as in this model be the most viable way to manage them?

Model 1



STV with inclusive multinational federalism

In this model there is no formal predetermined power sharing at the centre. Government is technically established based on a parliamentary majority. However, through the electoral system, proportional representation is expected to be achieved. The preferred electoral system here is standard transferable vote (STV), which is basically: 'A multimember district proportional representation method of election in which a voter ranks candidates in order of preference. As candidates pass a specified electoral quota, they are elected and their surplus votes apportioned to the remaining candidates, until all the open seats are filled.'¹¹⁹

STV combines elements of both proportional representation (the quota system) and vote pooling (preferential voting). It could help include in the legislature all parties with a certain degree of support (passing threshold). But it also pushes the parties to seek support from other ethnic groups since their degree of prominence (and the possibility of forming a government) in the legislature depends not just on the number of votes they get from their own ethnic group, but from others too.

Since no ethnic group in the country consists of a plural majority, some level of vote pooling would be necessary to form a government. If pre-election coalition cannot form a majority, then post-election coalition government could be a reality. The form that that coalition government takes would be negotiated by the winning party and the party it wants to work with, if any.

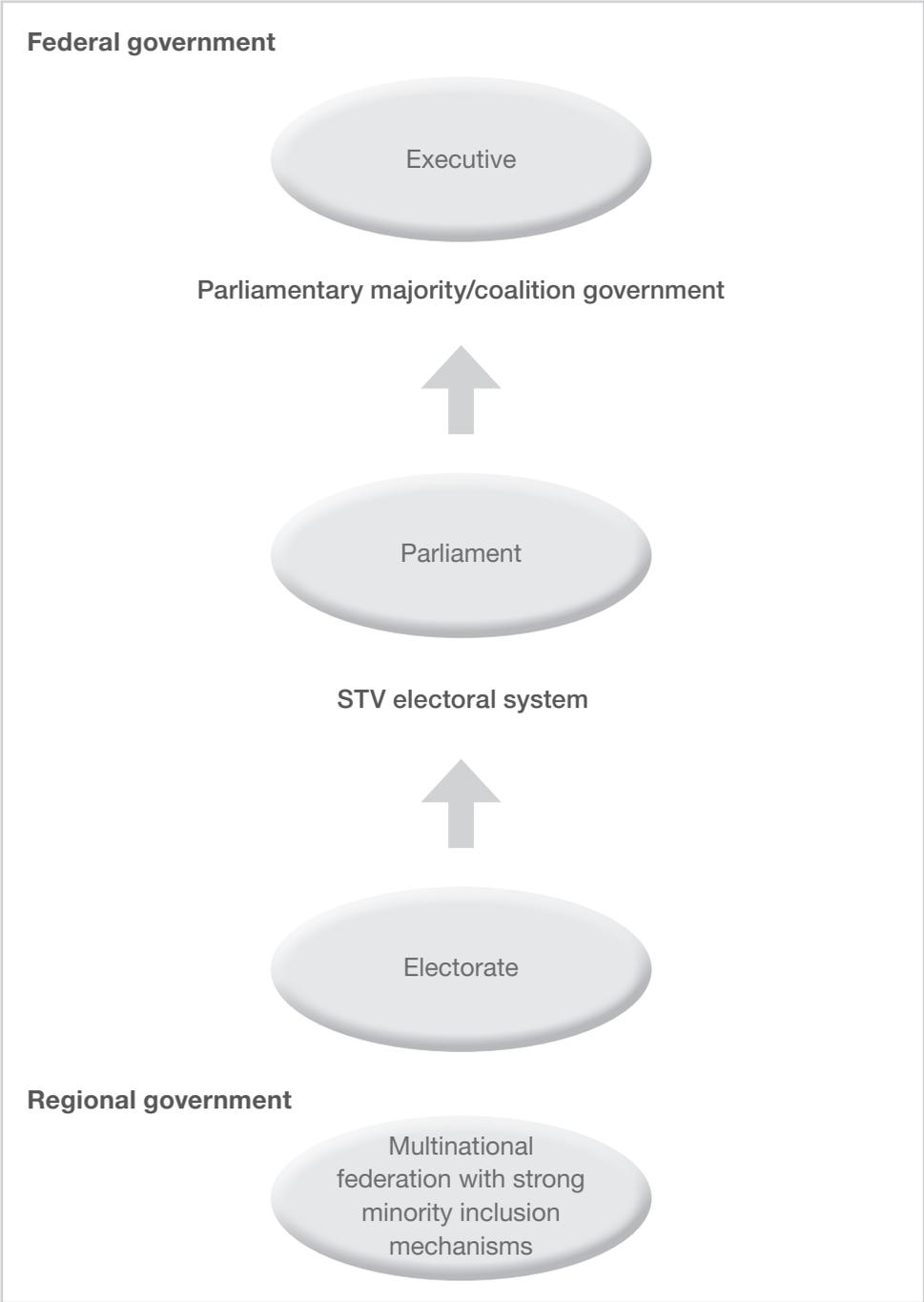
Less dramatic outcomes could be an advantage
possibly calling for less resistance from parties
promoting contradictory agendas

Regional governance would follow similar patterns to the first model: an inclusive multinational federation that includes, among others, proportional representation or autonomy or both. The major advantage here again is that the package combines both elements of inclusion and power sharing, but not by combining two different designs (like the previous one did), but through a single electoral system with both elements at the same time. It shares some of the advantages of the previous system but to a more limited extent, given the less dramatic forms of inclusion or vote pooling in this design. The less dramatic outcomes could be an advantage, though, possibly calling for less resistance from political parties or groups promoting contradictory agendas.

The disadvantages are worth noting. First, it further diminishes the motive for vote pooling (since it is a proportional electoral system) on the one hand, and undermines 'true' proportional representation (since it involves preferential voting as well) on the other. The proportionality can be enhanced to an extent by decreasing

the quota threshold, but with negative implications for moderation. Another notable criticism of STV is similar to that of AV: it is a relatively sophisticated system for voters, a challenge in Ethiopia with massive scales of illiteracy.

Model 2



Vote pooling with inclusive multinational federalism

In this model, instead of STV, stronger vote pooling is adopted.¹²⁰ While the former has consociational elements in it, the latter will essentially be centripetal. Coupled with a similar regional administrative formula as the two models above suggest – the consociationalism-inspired proportional representation, ethnically carved out regions, and autonomy for dispersed or small minorities – vote pooling could form a balanced system of inclusion and moderation, of course slightly tilted to centripetalism compared to the first option.

The AV electoral system or constituency pooling, as mentioned elsewhere, could encourage cross-ethnic vote pooling among parties that otherwise operate within a consociationally engineered regional administration. One advantage of this model compared to the first and second is tied to vote pooling. Without the pre-determined power sharing at the centre that diminishes its power, centripetalist electoral systems could help vote pooling reach its maximum potential. As such it could be the best model to see the effects of the ‘incentives approach’. It does this without ignoring the foremost question of many ethno-nationalists – about preserving the multi-national federation.

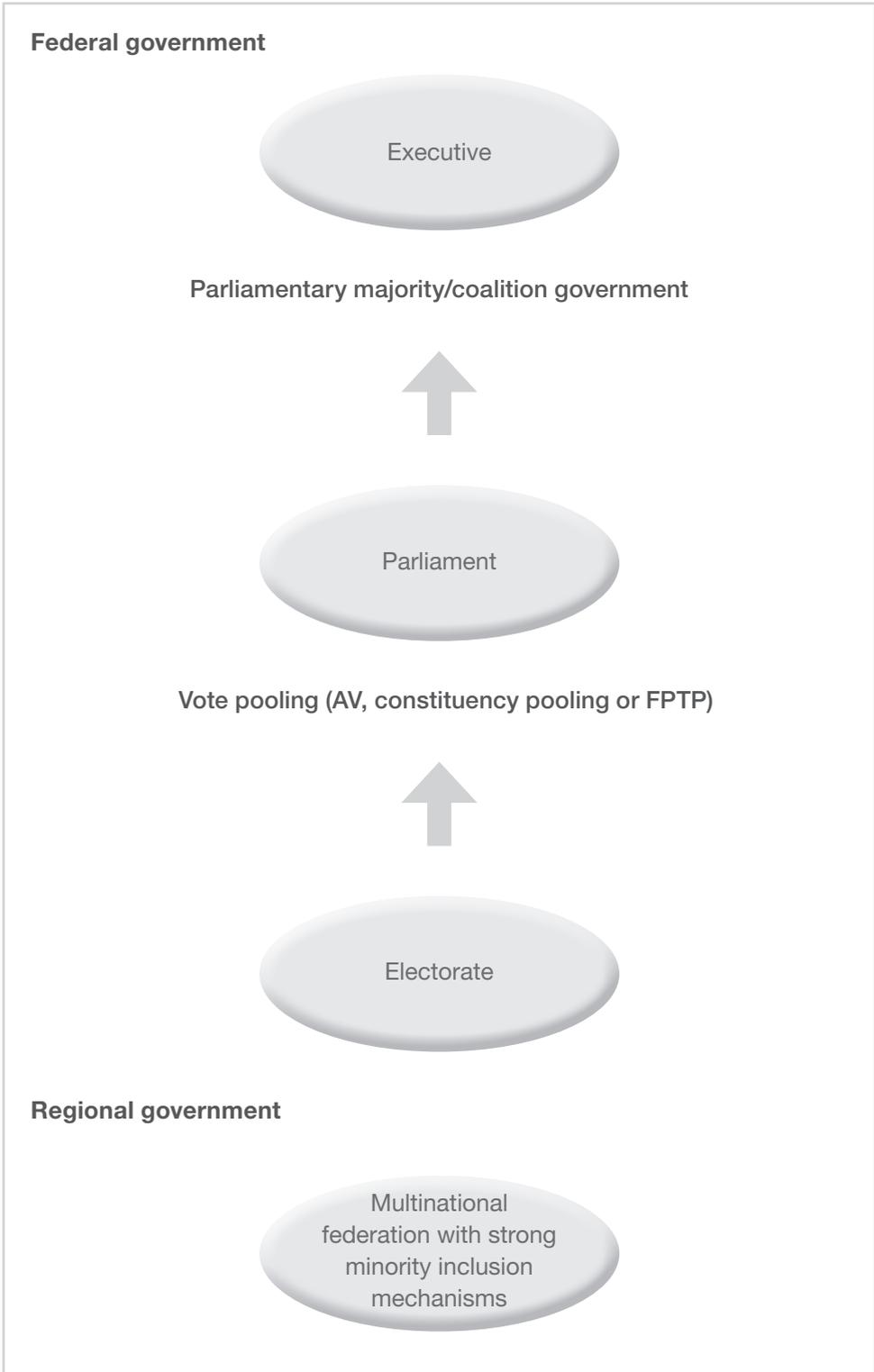
Instead of having groups in the executive, this design leaves the task of creating an inclusive system to parties advancing cross-cutting agendas

The disadvantage is obvious. The model trades direct power sharing for an indirect one. Instead of directly including groups in the executive, the design leaves the assignment of making the system inclusive to parties who are expected to bring forth cross-cutting agendas that could gain support from different ethnic groups.

The extent to which this scheme can bring about desired outcomes, however, isn't guaranteed. As previously discussed, there is a limit to the moderation this system can trigger in Ethiopian politics. It may not bring some influential and opposite blocs together. The reaction, then, of those whose voices are not included in the executive is crucial in making the system stable.

Both could have reasons for calming down under this model. Would the excluded ethnonationalists (if and when they are) be content with the guaranteed self-administration and the possibility of winning next time? Or would the excluded Ethiopianists (again in the event they are) be satisfied with the strong convergent mechanisms put in place, and again, with the possibility of outvoting their contenders in the future?

Model 3



Corporate power sharing with PR and national federalism

This model combines ethnic quotas with liberal consociationalism in the executive. Parties could be ethnic-based or multi-ethnic and they get representation at the centre on the basis of their share in the legislature using SPA as mentioned above. Also, the electoral system here is proportional representation to maximise fair representation in the legislative body.

Quite distinct in this design is that whatever party wins any type and number of cabinet seats, it is supposed to put in place the 'right' ethnic representative according to the quota set for each ethnic group. Failing to do so results in disqualification from the position.

Such an emphatic focus on ethnic power sharing at the centre and proportional representation is to balance the other part of the design at the regional level which follows centripetalist lines. Accordingly, federal units would be re-carved to divide ethnic groups into several regions, and tone down the appeal of ethnic nationalism from below. This works especially for ethnic groups with large populations such as the Oromo and the Amhara.

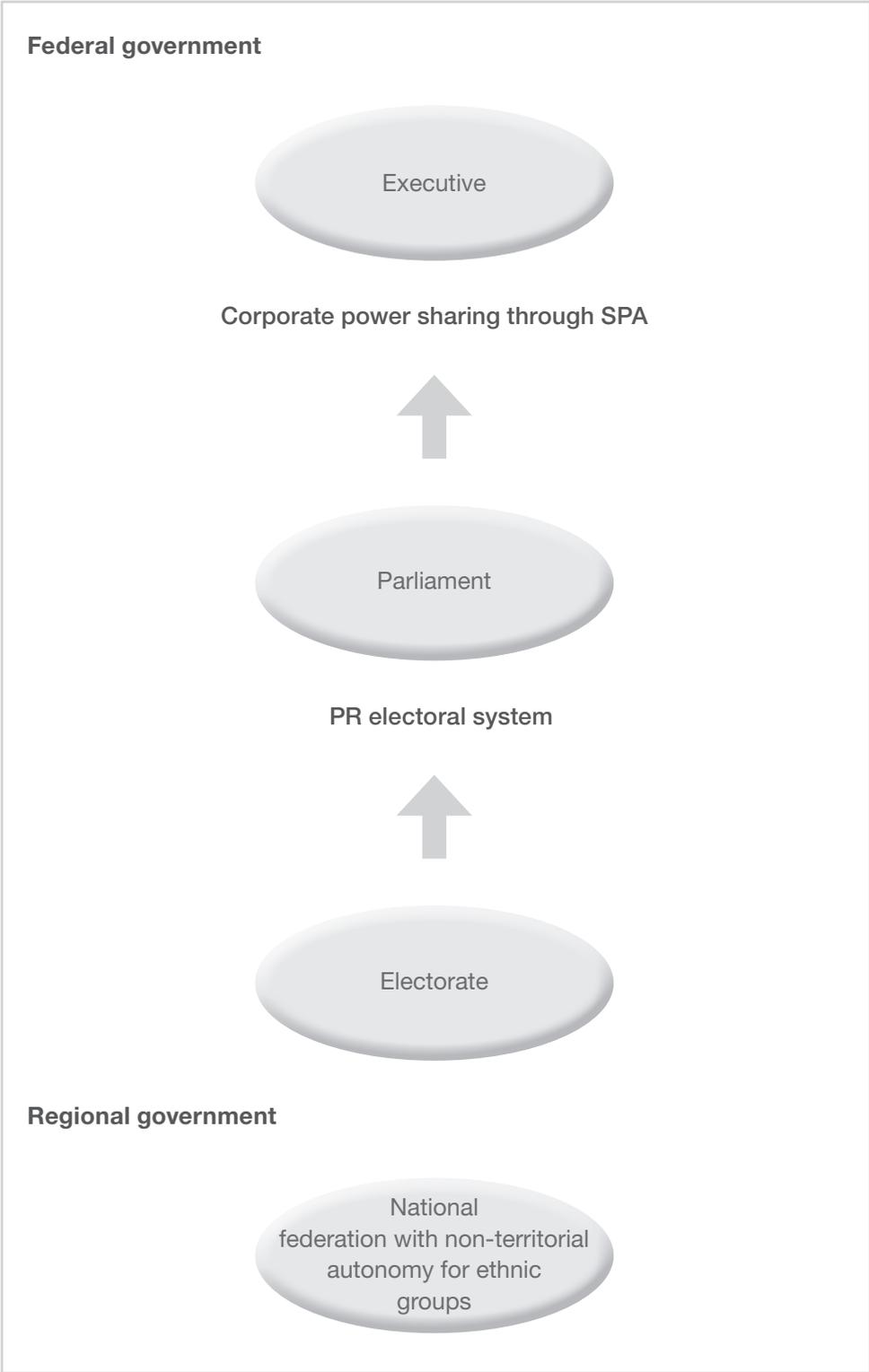
The focus on ethnic power sharing at the centre balances the re-carving of federal units to diminish the appeal of ethnic nationalism from below

Newly established federal units would decide their working languages, regional symbols, constitutions etc. through negotiations and discussions internally as well as with national stakeholders. In each region, non-territorial cultural autonomy for ethnic groups would be constitutionally upheld backed by veto rights for the relevant ethnic groups.

The major advantage of this model lies in the attempt it makes to radically shift the governing system by combining the most explicit form of ethnic inclusion at the centre with the maximum effort at toning down ethnic appeal at the regional level.

It therefore meets some critical demands of many ethnic nationalists, and of Ethiopian nationalists at the same time. However it is sure to meet a feasibility challenge. Both radical measures could be resisted from opposite sides: direct ethnic representation could be resisted by Ethiopian nationalists, while reordering of federal units could be unacceptable to ethnic nationalists. However both should seriously consider whether what they'd lose in the design could be compensated by what they would gain from it.

Model 4

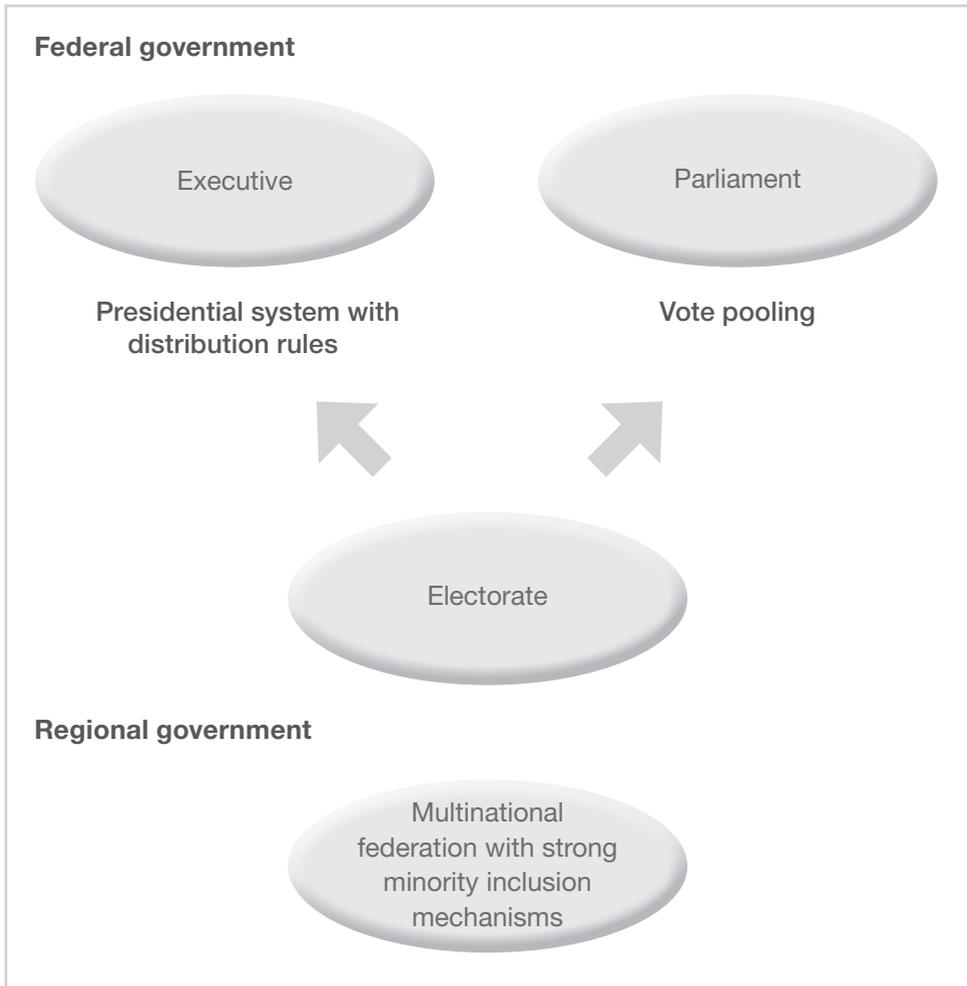


Presidentialism with distribution rules and vote pooling, with inclusive multinational federalism

In all the previous models, a parliamentary form of government is assumed. The major difference in this particular model is that it adopts presidentialism as the preferred form of government. The president would be elected by direct votes from the electorate.

An important corollary to this, under the centripetalist recommendation, would be regional distribution requirements. So the president, for example, should get 50-plus majority whereby a certain percentage of those votes should come from a certain number of killils. The aim is to force the presidential candidate to come up with agendas that have cross-ethnic appeal. The legislative body would be filled by AV, constituency pooling or simple FPTP to encourage vote pooling.

Model 5



However the consociational regional administration would be kept intact. As mentioned earlier, the multinational federation would be maintained with proportional representation and territorialised and non-territorialised autonomy for minorities in each region. The presidential and centripetalist electoral designs could balance the consociationalist regional administration here as well.

The distinctive benefits of this mechanism could be those associated with presidentialism in various (especially less divided) societies: political stability and more cohesion. Its major critics would again point out that very system as a source of some problems particularly in ethnically divided societies. These include a perceived lack of representation in the eyes of many ethnonationalist/ethnic groups other than that of the president, and susceptibility to autocratic rule. If the sense of exclusion is a real threat in a president-led Ethiopia, could guaranteed (backed by mutual veto) rights to self-administration, as in this model, act as pacifiers?

Consociationalism as a prelude to a permanent system

All the above options could be adopted automatically after consensus is reached among all major political forces in the country. Alternatively, they could be adopted after a certain span of time that could be used to build trust and confidence among the political forces.

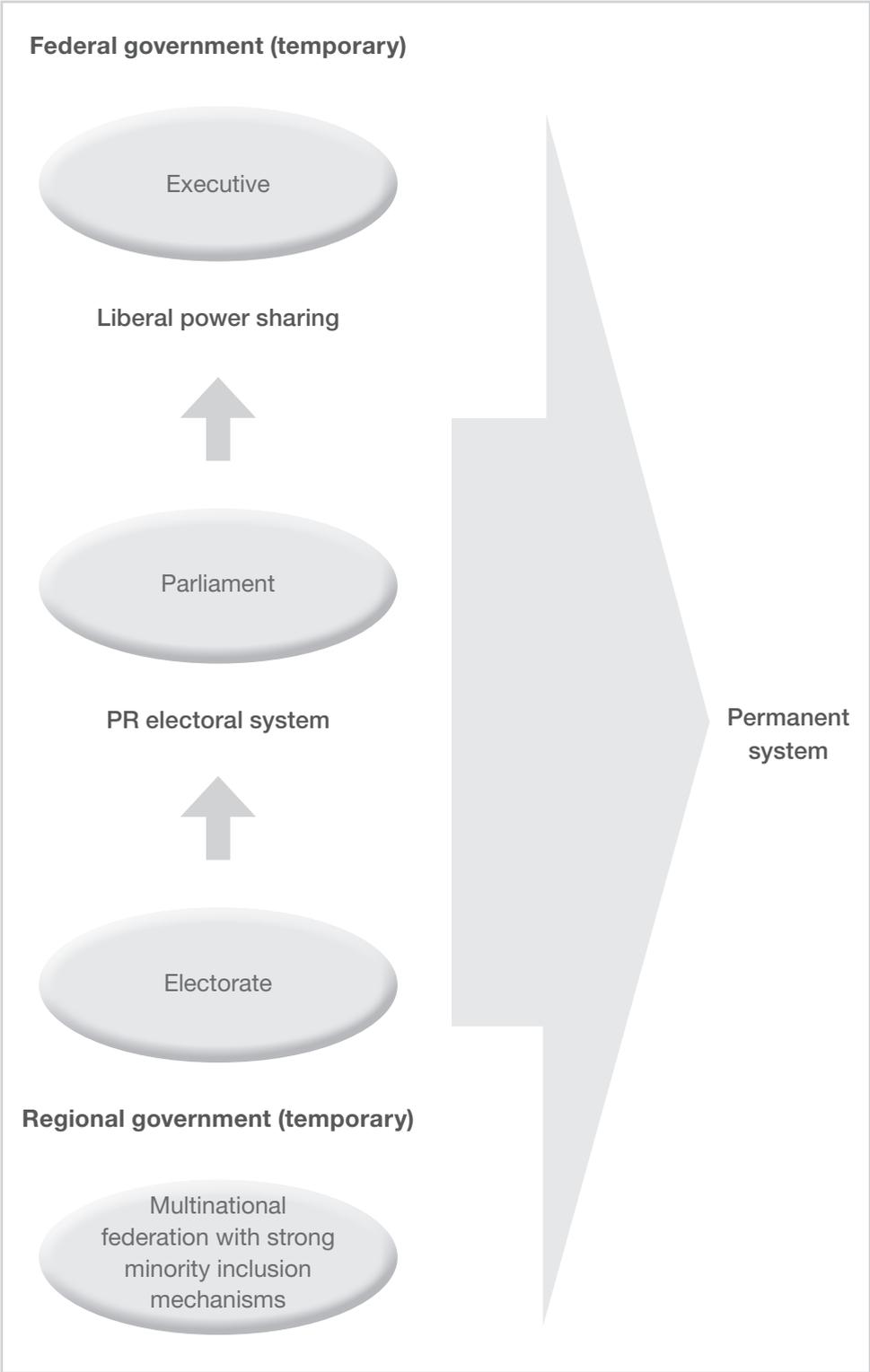
During this ‘transitional’ period, a liberal consociation could be put in place with at least three of the major components: a grand coalition of all major forces that get seats in Parliament (rule to be negotiated); a proportional electoral system with a low threshold to include as many political parties as possible in the legislative body; and segmental autonomy as it exists at present.

The advantage of a temporary power-sharing scheme is that it can help political forces know each other’s intent, programme and behaviour better

After five or so years of jointly governing the state, the country could transition into the permanent form of design already agreed on by all stakeholders. The advantage of a temporary power-sharing scheme lies in the possibility of helping political forces know each other’s intent, programme and behaviour better, and in the process improve relations and mutual opinions.¹²¹

That could help stabilise the more permanent modus operandi afterwards. On the other hand, in some unfortunate circumstances, a consociational transitional period could also strain and complicate mutual relations among parties. This problem is mentioned in a previous section as well. Hence the worth of this option should be critically assessed before adoption.

Model 6



Need for incorporating integration into the designs

In all the above options, or any other options, special attention should be given to two elements emphasised by many integrationists: the protection of individual rights and enhancement of national cohesion.

The liberal consociational recommendations (and the centripetalist ones in some circumstances) in some of the models proposed can lay the foundation for the realisation of both demands. For example designs meant to promote moderation as well as those suggesting an ethnic-blind formula for power sharing can facilitate the gradual cultivation of cohesive imagination among Ethiopians, and the further opening up of the political space for individual autonomy.

But these are not enough. In the area of strengthening social/national cohesion, for instance, some mechanisms are also indispensable. Examples include the installation of certain formidable, trustworthy, fairly representative and iconic public institutions; the participatory and joint crafting of visual and verbal national symbols; and the consolidation of vibrant, inclusive, integrative and widely dispersed civil society organisations.

In combining accommodation and integration, the
least controversial constitutional design can be found
for a future Ethiopia

Decisions on the degree of centralisation within the federal system also directly speak to levels of integration in the country. Whereas in theory a more centralised system may enhance unity, in deeply divided states a higher degree of centralisation can lead to deeper social fragmentation as well.

Ethiopia should consider a relatively centralised federal system only to the extent that, and in areas where, it doesn't clash with necessary modes of inclusion and self-administration. Discussions on federal language policy should also be informed by the need to create both an inclusive state and cohesive/integrative imagination at the same time.

The protection of individual rights requires the establishment of strong, or the reinvigoration of existing, legal frameworks that uphold those rights, and the reinvention of law enforcement agencies in line with a new democratic internalised vision, commitment and decisiveness to enforce the law. It also requires the formation or strengthening of independent institutions to monitor the full realisation of those rights and report on any infringements thereof.

This research argues that in combining the various accommodation and integration approaches, the least controversial constitutional design can be found for a future Ethiopia.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Contending nationalist mobilisations have become an enduring feature of Ethiopia's political configuration. Nationalist visions have produced diverse and contradictory policy recommendations, mostly about alternative ways to conceptualise and implement federalism. However to arrive at reasonable intersection points more inclusively will take careful interrogation of a wide array of institutional mechanisms employed by other similar countries worldwide. More could be learnt from their successes and failures.

The task, then, for Ethiopian political and academic elites is to take lessons from best practices elsewhere and adapt them to the specific political conditions in the country. Models designed this way should be presented to relevant actors on a national dialogue platform where they must be negotiated thoroughly. This research is a preliminary work aimed to trigger such an exercise, in order to prepare the groundwork for the negotiations to come.

Notes

- 1 M Gudina, *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960–2000*, Maastricht, Shaker Publications, 2003; H Lewis, Ethnicity in Ethiopia: The View from Below (and from the South, East, and West), in C Young (ed.), *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. It is important to note that these terms are controversial in Ethiopia. For instance, some ethno-nationalists do believe that “Ethiopian/ist” or “pan-Ethiopian” nationalism is not inclusive enough of all forms of diversity in Ethiopia to deserve the name. I will not go into that debate in this monograph. I will simply use the terms (including “ethno-nationalism”) to indicate certain assumptions and positions of groups on diversity management--my foremost concern.
- 2 The assertion that federalism and autonomy questions dominate the debate on managing diversity in Ethiopia does not mean that political parties have never discussed, debated or propounded other mechanisms to address the problem of division in the country. It just means that these other mechanisms have usually been dominated by and caged within concerns in one way or another related to the federal arrangement. See the next section in this monograph.
- 3 S Choudhry, Bridging Comparative Politics and Comparative Constitutional Law: Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, in S Choudhry (ed), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 5, 2008.
- 4 The issue of federalism has also overwhelmingly dominated academic discussions on ethnic diversity management, inter-ethnic relations and national cohesion in Ethiopia for the past three decades. The numerous publications on the topic indicate the strong academic emphasis given to it (to mention a few, L Aalen, *Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: the Ethiopian Experience 1991–2000*, Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute Development Studies and Human Rights, 2002; J Abbink, *Ethnicity and Conflict Generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno-Regional Federalism*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24:3, 2006; M Bassi, *Federalism and Ethnic Minorities in Ethiopia: Ideology, Territoriality, Human Rights, Policy*, *DADA Rivista di Antropologia post-globale*, 4:1, 2014; C der Beken, *Unity in Diversity: Federalism as a Mechanism to Accommodate Ethnic Diversity: The Case of Ethiopia*, Zurich, LIT Verlag, 2012; Y Fessha, *Ethnic Diversity and Federalism: Constitution Making in South Africa and Ethiopia*, London, Routledge, 2010; A Fiseha, *Federalism and the Accommodation of Diversity in Ethiopia: A Comparative Study*, Addis Ababa, Artistic Printing, 2007; A Habtu, *Ethnic Pluralism as an Organizing Principle of the Ethiopian Federation*, *Dialectical Anthropology*, 28, 2004; International Crisis Group (ICG), *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its Discontents*, Africa Report No.153, Brussels, ICG, 2009; E Keller and L Smith, *Obstacles to Implementing Territorial Decentralization: The First Decade of Ethiopian Federalism*, in P Roeder and D Rothchild (eds.), *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2005; A Kefale, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia: A Comparative Regional Study*, London, Routledge, 2013; M Mennasemay, *Federalism, ethnicity, and the transition to democracy*, *The Horn of Africa*, 21, 2003; D Turton (ed), *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, Oxford, James Currey, 2006). In contrast, consociationalism and centripetalism as public policy packages have received scant attention. Most of the very few works on these topics have only started to emerge recently and do not properly engage in the task of comparing and contrasting the desirability, feasibility and implications of the two designs in the Ethiopian context. See A Abeje Belay, *Evaluating the System of Power Sharing in Ethiopia in Light of Arend Lijphart’s Model of Power Sharing*, *European Scientific Journal*, 9:31, 2013; T Bekele, *Examining the Design of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian Constitution in Light of Arend Lijphart’s Guidelines of Constitutional Design for Divided Societies*, *Haramaya Law Review*, 5:1, 2016; B Girma, *Consociation as a Guarantee for the Protection of Minority Rights in Ethiopia*, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 26:3, 2019.

- 5 S Choudhry, Bridging Comparative Politics and Comparative Constitutional Law: Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 5, 2008.
- 6 M Gudina, *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960–2000*, Maastricht, Shaker Publications, 2003.
- 7 The ‘question of nationalities’, ‘the national question’ or ‘the nationalities question’ are terms popularised in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian students’ movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The terms have since remained quite influential in Ethiopian politics. They have similar meanings to what they had in the socialist/communist world elsewhere, i.e. ethno-communal demands for ‘self-determination’.
- 8 That is, content with the substance of the existing constitution especially as it relates to the federal structure. See note 12 below.
- 9 Interview with an OLF leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa. The perspectives mentioned in the paragraph were expressed by diverse political leaders from the OLF, OFC, ONLF, FEP and others.
- 10 Interview with an ONLF leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 11 Interview with an OLF leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 12 Hence I call them culminationists. They contend that the federal project should logically and legally culminate in establishing killills out of existing zones where such demands exist. It should be noted that, generally speaking, the differences in the views between the ‘content multinational federalists’ and those referred to here as ‘culminationist’ is not that huge. If anything, it is a matter of accent. The former do not in general object to the quest for autonomy by southern ethnic groups; in fact a few are active supporters. But in the final analysis, it is the culminationist camp that gives this agenda of self-rule in the south (which could require constitutional amendment) paramount importance both in the critique of the current federation and as an objective of struggle. In contrast, many ‘content’ federalists, as the name indicates, are generally happy about the substance of the constitution and are focused on struggling to get it in practice in letter and spirit or interpret it in ways that make it work better in line with group demands.
- 13 Interviews with Sidama and Wolayta activists, March and April 2020, Addis Ababa. At the time of writing, the Sidama quest for autonomy has been realised with the establishment of Sidama as the 10th regional state in the federation after a referendum that took place in November 2019.
- 14 K Wansamo, *Towards Building Stability in a Multinational/Ethnic Society: Conflicts in Sidaamaland, Ethiopia*, PhD diss. Lancaster University, 2007; K Tronvoll and S Vaughan, *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, Stockholm, Edita Sverige, 2003; L Aalen, *Ethnic federalism in a dominant party state: The Ethiopian experience 1991–2000*, Bergen, Chr. Michelsens Institute, 2002; S Vaughan, *Ethnicity and Power in Ethiopia*, PhD diss. University of Edinburgh, 2003.
- 15 T Gurr, Psychological Factors in Civil Violence, *World Politics*, 20:2, 1968. Referring here to the sense of being deprived compared to other autonomous groups in the country.
- 16 Interviews with a party leader of the WNDM, a Wolayta activist, and a Sidama activist, March and April 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 17 It should be emphasised that these are *assumed* benefits of achieving killill status. Whether having such a status in reality automatically bestows on the respective people all these benefits is open to question.
- 18 This is a thesis that stresses that ethnic groups have been subjected to multifarious forms of oppression by successive regimes in the past. See M Gudina, *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960–2000*, Maastricht, Shaker Publications, 2003.
- 19 Some members from the Amhara Region are strong opponents of the national oppression thesis. They argue, in line with the Amhara nationalists in the NAMA, that the thesis was concocted by anti-Amhara elements for the purpose of degrading and subjugating the Amhara people. Interview with a member of the PP from the Amhara Regional State, July 2019.
- 20 A Ahmed, *Medemer*, LA, Tsehai Publishers, 2019.
- 21 Ibid, 117.
- 22 Interviews with a party leader and an activist from Wolayta, March 2019, Addis Ababa.
- 23 Interviews with two NAMA leaders, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Interview with a NAMA leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa.

- 26 As will be elaborated below, scholars differentiate between multi-national (aimed at providing self-administration rights to ethnic/national groups) and national (aimed at melting away politicised ethnicity and promoting more social cohesion) federations.
- 27 For instance, interviews with EZEMA and EDP leaders, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Interview, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 30 Interview, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 31 J McGarry et al, *Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation*, in S Choudhry (ed) *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- 32 Ibid, 41.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 A Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press, 1977.
- 37 A Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, *World Politics*, 21:2, 1969, 216.
- 38 A Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press, 1977; A Lijphart, *The Evolution of Consociational Theory and Consociational Practices, 1965–2000*, *Acta Politica*, 37, 2002; A Lijphart, *Consociation: The Model and its Applications in Divided Societies*, in D Rea (ed.) *Political Co-operation in Divided Societies*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1983.
- 39 A Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press, 25, 1977.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 A Lijphart, *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies*, *Journal of Democracy*, 15:2, 2004.
- 42 P Norris, *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- 43 Ibid, 211. Her recommendations are that: '[Societies] which are deeply divided, whether by identities based on religion, language, region/nationalist, ethnicity, or race, which are emerging from deep-rooted conflicts should consider adopting power-sharing arrangements in democratic constitutional settlements.'
- 44 H Binningsbø, *Consociational Democracy and Postconflict Peace: Will Power-Sharing Institutions Increase the Probability of Lasting Peace after Civil War?* Presented at the 13th National Conference in Political Science, Hurdalsjøen, 2005.
- 45 Ibid, 19.
- 46 M Hoddie and C Hartzell, *Civil War Settlements and the Implementation of Military Power-Sharing Arrangements*, *Journal of Peace Research* 40:3, 2003; C Hartzell and M Hoddie, *Crafting Peace: Power-sharing Institutions and the Negotiated Settlement of Civil Wars*, State College, PA, Penn State University Press, 2007.
- 47 C Hartzell and M Hoddie, *Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management*, *American Journal of Political Science*, 47:2, 318, 2003.
- 48 D Horowitz, *Democracy in Divided Societies*, *Journal of Democracy*, 4:4, 1993.
- 49 I Spears, *Civil War in African States: The Search for Security*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2010.
- 50 I Spears, *Africa's Informal Power-Sharing and the Prospects for Peace*, *Civil Wars*, 15:1, 2013.
- 51 I Spears, *Civil War in African States: The Search for Security*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2010; M Zahar and C Sriram, *The Perils of Power-Sharing: Africa and Beyond*, *Africa Spectrum*, 44:3, 2010.
- 52 D Tull and A Mehler, *The Hidden Costs of Power-Sharing: Reproducing Insurgent Violence in Africa*, *African Affairs*, 104: 416, 2005.
- 53 M Zahar and C Sriram, *The Perils of Power-Sharing: Africa and Beyond*, *Africa Spectrum*, 44:3, 2010.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 A Mehler, *Introduction: Power-Sharing in Africa*, *Africa Spectrum*, 44: 3, 2009; A Mehler, *Peace and Power Sharing in Africa: A Not So Obvious Relationship*, *African Affairs*, 108: 432, 2009.

- 56 B Barry, The Consociational Model and its Dangers, *European Journal of Political Research*, 3:4, 1975.
- 57 However the electoral system used to fill up seats in the HoPR is first-past-the-post.
- 58 E Keller and L Smith, Obstacles to Implementing Territorial Decentralization: The First Decade of Ethiopian Federalism, in P Roeder and D Rothchild (eds.), *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2005.
- 59 J Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*, Oxford, James Currey, 281–82, 2011.
- 60 A similar question can be asked for the post-1991 period, but the concern of this work is the present and future.
- 61 The ‘grand’ coalition in Ethiopia could be formal (codified into a formal rule) or informal; it could be liberal or corporate (see the discussion below under this section).
- 62 D Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985.
- 63 See the discussion above under the section ‘Existing perspectives on federalism in Ethiopia’.
- 64 Interview with a NAMA leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 65 Interview with an EDP leader, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 66 See the discussions under ‘Existing perspectives on federalism in Ethiopia’.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Interview, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 69 Interview, February 2020, Addis Ababa.
- 70 A Lijphart, Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-sharing Systems, in W Kymlicka (ed.), *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford University Press, 1995. For criticisms of this revision within consociationalism, see for example A McCulloch, Consociational settlements in deeply divided societies: the liberal-corporate distinction, *Democratization*, 21:3, 2014.
- 71 A McCulloch, Contemporary challenges to power-sharing theory and practice, in A McCulloch and J McGarry (eds.), *Power-Sharing: Empirical and Normative Challenges*, London and New York, Routledge, 7, 2017.
- 72 Apart from the need to ensure political stability, a core issue among the Ethiopian public at large is propelling economic development. One may disagree on the degree of state intervention in the economy and the exact role it should play therein, but whether the state should be deemed an important actor both in the process of driving growth and in narrowing income inequality seems beyond question. And in order to fulfil its roles effectively, the internal coherence of the state would be an important, if not necessary, requirement.
- 73 D Horowitz, Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management, in J Montville, *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, Lexington, Lexington Books, 1990.
- 74 D Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, CA, University of California Press, 1991; D Horowitz, Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers, in J Montville (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, Lexington Books, 1990; D Horowitz, Encouraging electoral accommodation in divided societies, in B Lal and P Larmour, *Electoral Systems in Divided Societies: The Fiji Constitution Review*, Canberra, The Australian National University, 1997; D Horowitz, Democracy in Divided Societies, *Journal of Democracy*, 4:18, 1993.
- 75 S Choudhry, Bridging Comparative Politics and Comparative Constitutional Law: Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 23, 2008.
- 76 D Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985.
- 77 B Reilly, Institutional Designs for Diverse Democracies: Consociationalism, Centripetalism and Communalism Compared, *European Political Science*, 11:2, 2012, 263.
- 78 M Bogaards, Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?, *Swiss Political Science Review*, 25:4, 2019.
- 79 A McCulloch, Does Moderation Pay? Centripetalism in Deeply Divided Societies, *Ethnopolitics*, 12:2, 2013.
- 80 Ibid, 117. Some of the cases of ‘failure’ analysed in this and other studies have been disputed by some scholars as to whether they demonstrated the failure of centripetalism or the fact that they were not

- centripetalist enough. See M Bogaards, Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?, *Swiss Political Science Review*, 25:4, 2019.
- 81 A McCulloch, Does Moderation Pay? Centripetalism in Deeply Divided Societies, *Ethnopolitics*, 12:2, 2013; A McCulloch and J McGarry (eds.), *Power-Sharing: Empirical and Normative Challenges*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017.
 - 82 B Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*, Cambridge University Press, 207, 2001.
 - 83 According to Horowitz, strictly speaking these are not multimember seats but two or three separately elected seats in the constituencies. Two or three members would have to be elected by the same electorate to fulfil the requirement of constituency scale for heterogeneity, but candidates competing for one seat would compete only with candidates competing for that same seat, and preferences would be transferred only within single seats. D Horowitz, Encouraging electoral accommodation in divided societies, in B Lal and P Larmour (eds.), *Electoral Systems in Divided Societies: the Fiji Constitution Review*, Canberra, the Australian National University/Stockholm, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 31, 1997.
 - 84 The major differences between AV and constituency pooling are as follows. 'First, the pooling of votes takes place across constituencies, not within them. Votes are pooled not among voters but among electoral units that correspond to societal cleavages. Second, the constituencies are homogeneous, not heterogeneous ... (AV) only works in heterogeneous districts without a majority group. Constituency pooling, on the other hand, works on the premise that the districts that are pooled are more homogenous than the nation as a whole. In order to win, a candidate needs to collect a certain rate of approval from a variety of constituent groups, groups which are geographically concentrated in clearly delineated electoral districts.' M Bogaards, Electoral choices for divided societies: Multi-ethnic parties and constituency pooling in Africa, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 41:3, 2003.
 - 85 Quoted in S Choudhry, Bridging Comparative Politics and Comparative Constitutional Law: Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 26, 2008.
 - 86 Interviews with many leaders of ethnic parties, February, March and April 2020, Addis Ababa.
 - 87 Different party leaders made this assertion in their own different ways during interviews.
 - 88 A prominent Wolayta political leader, March 2020, Addis Ababa.
 - 89 B Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
 - 90 M Bogaards, Electoral choices for divided societies: Multi-ethnic parties and constituency pooling in Africa, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 41:3, 2003.
 - 91 This projection is based on the experiences of alliance-led Malaysia and EPRDF-led Ethiopia. In both cases, the need to pool votes at the national level has encouraged ethnic coalition building even under plurality systems. Although both systems had authoritarian tendencies, and hence may not be perfect examples of how FPTP can help the forging of inter-ethnic alliances, the experiments are important enough to show the viability of vote pooling in plurality systems.
 - 92 S Yusuf, *Drivers of ethnic conflict in contemporary Ethiopia*, ISS Monograph No.202, Institute for Security Studies, 2019.
 - 93 Not all. There will remain certain differences among some (say due to power struggles) precluding (stable) coalitions.
 - 94 Here, too, the road to coalition building will never bring together all such parties due to several reasons, mainly anchored in tactical matters and power struggles.
 - 95 Interview with notable pan-Ethiopianist and ethnonationalist political figures, July 2016, Toronto, and February 2020, Addis Ababa.
 - 96 A McCulloch, Does Moderation Pay? Centripetalism in Deeply Divided Societies, *Ethnopolitics*, 12:2, 2013.
 - 97 S Yusuf, *Drivers of ethnic conflict in contemporary Ethiopia*, ISS Monograph No.202, Institute for Security Studies, 2019.
 - 98 J McGarry et al, Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation, in

S Choudhry (ed.) *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 46, 2008.

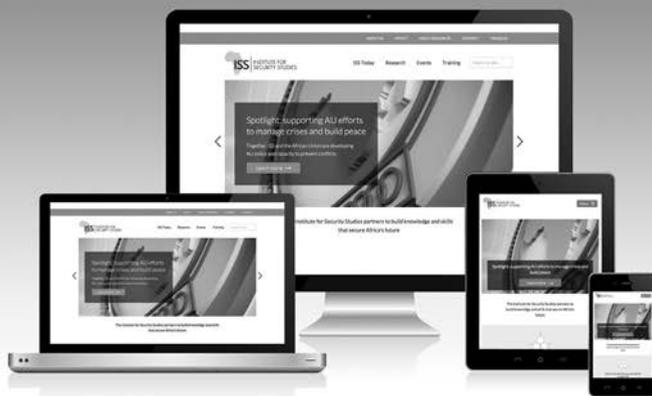
- 99 Ibid. Non-experts may be confused as to the major difference between integration in general and centripetalism which is categorised under accommodation. The two have some similar assumptions and policies such as the need to foster unity through national federation. However centripetalism, unlike integration, is not particularly against the existence of ethnic politics or ethnic elites. It just wants them to become moderate by appealing to other ethnic groups too, sometimes necessitating pre-election coalitions. Horowitz does not share the ethnic-blind politics of the integration camp and rejects the assumption that majoritarian elections without any ethnic considerations can produce stable political order in divided societies. See J McGarry et al, *Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation*, in S Choudhry (ed), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 41–88, 2008.
- 100 S Song, Multiculturalism, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/fall2016/entries/multiculturalism/>, 2017.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 W Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 5, 1995.
- 104 Ibid, 4–5.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 For discussions on the following points, see J McGarry and B O’Leary, Iraq’s Constitution of 2005: Liberal consociation as political prescription, *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 5:4, 2007.
- 107 P Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Newbury Park, California, Sage Publications, 1991.
- 108 J McGarry et al, *Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation*, in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 73, 2008.
- 109 Accepting this fact is not holding primordial views about ethnicity. Many constructivists do believe that despite the social construction of identities, those identities could be ‘sticky’ with persistent long-term and wide-spread mobilisation, for better or worse. See Ibid. This doesn’t mean that ethnic imagination has always existed, nor does it signify that it cannot in any way change in the future. Based on the assumption that some form of gradual remoulding of ethnic and national imaginations is possible, this monograph advocates a mix of institutions that aims at reconciling the dreams of Ethio- and ethno-nationalists. See the section ‘Alternatives for Ethiopia’ below.
- 110 S Choudhry, Bridging Comparative Politics and Comparative Constitutional Law: Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 18, 2008.
- 111 A McCulloch, *Power-Sharing and Political Stability in Deeply Divided Societies*, London, Routledge, 10, 2014.
- 112 See the different case studies in S Choudhry (ed.), *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- 113 M Bogaards, *Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?*, 25:4, 2019.
- 114 Ibid, 519.
- 115 All these cases are re-analysed anew in M Bogaards, *Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?*, 25:4, 2019. As Bogaards compellingly demonstrates, none of these countries can be considered as exclusively consociational or centripetal in their political arrangements.
- 116 See the section on consociationalism above.
- 117 J McGarry and B O’Leary, Power-Sharing Executives: Consociational and Centripetal Formulae and the Case of Northern Ireland, *Ethnopolitics*, 15:5, 2016.
- 118 Ibid, 499.
- 119 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Single transferable vote, 25 March 2020.
- 120 This could again take the form of AV or constituency pooling or, with reduced impact, FPTP. If FPTP is used, the model would structurally be similar to the current system put in place in Ethiopia,

the difference being the greater emphasis given in the model to minority representation at the regional level.

- 121** As it happened in South Africa in the early 1990s before progressing into a more permanent system. See T Sisk and C Stefes, Power sharing as an interim step in peace building: lessons from South Africa, in P Roeder and D Rothchild (eds.), *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2005.

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About this monograph

Ethiopia's contending political forces have suggested diverse and contradictory policies to manage ethnic division in the country. Reconciling these interests requires understanding the various debates and examining all possible options to manage diversity as recommended and practised elsewhere in the world. These options also need to be innovatively combined so that the core needs and interests of the various political forces and ethnic communities can be incorporated into the new institutional design.

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