SOCIOLOGY OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY

This course begins with a brief recount of the analytical frameworks that underpin the conceptualization and/or study of Ethiopian society. In the first part of chapter 1, it will survey the predominantly conventional understandings of Ethiopia. The second part would present the scholarly views, albeit their own ideological and scholastic underpinnings, of the same subject matter. It will conclude with an overview of the attempt to develop a more plausible sociological framework towards a holistic and better understanding of Ethiopian society.

Chapter 1: Analytical Frameworks of Ethiopian Studies[1]

The analytical frameworks of the Ethiopian society consists two contrasting symbolic representation of the Ethiopian society. We will start with the conventional one.

1. **Conventional Images of Ethiopia**

After the Italian invasion of 1935-36, Ethiopia came to be viewed in many parts of the world as a helpless victim of fascist aggression and a symbol of the need for collective security and international order. This was not the first time, however, that an image of Ethiopia had stirred strong sentiments in distant countries. Long before that it had aroused foreign interest for other reasons. Five types of response have been particularly prominently over the centuries. Typically, Ethiopia has been looked upon as a *terribly remote land*; a *home of pristine piety*; a *magnificent kingdom*; an *outpost of savagery*; or a *bastion of African independence*. Let us see what is subsumed under each of these representations.

A Far-Off Place: For disenchanted moderns and for romantics, the name Ethiopia has evoked the alluring image of a faraway land. This image has a notable ancestry. For instance, in the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, Homer characterized the Ethiopians as the most remote of men, a phrase remembered by his readers throughout classical antiquity. Homer's Ethiopians dwelt by the streams of Ocean, 'at earth's two verges, in sunset lands and lands of the rising sun'. Later, Herodotus scolded Cambyses for ordering a march against Ethiopia without providing supplies and 'without for a moment considering the fact that he was to take his men to the ends of the earth.'

Obviously, for the early Greek writers Ethiopia was less a geographical location than a state of mind. For Greeks and Romans generally, Ethiopians meant dark-skinned people who lived south of Egypt.[2] At times, the reference was so vague as to include peoples from West Africa, Arabia and India. At times, it was more localized, referring to the Nubian kingdom of Kush, with its capital at Napata and later at Meroe. What was constant was that the name Ethiopian denoted a person of dark color – literally, 'of burnt face' – and that it connoted, above all else, *remoteness*. As Frank M. Snowden has observed in his study *Blacks in Antiquity*, the classical attribution of remoteness to Ethiopians had two main rhetorical purposes. (1) As an example of extreme

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[1] This part is an adapted excerpt from Donald N Levine's book (1974) *Greater Ethiopia: Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, *Chapter One and Chapter Two*, pp 1-25

[2] Note here that Egypt is mentioned as a standard to define where Ethiopian reside due to the strong foreign trade the Greeks maintained with Egypt that contributed to the gain of a large portion of their wealth and power.

variations of geographical conditions and racial features, it appeared to provide evidence for hypotheses about the effects of environment on the color, features and life-styles of peoples living in widely separated regions. Thus, Aristotle attributed the woolly hair of the Ethiopians to their dry environment and the straight hair of the Scythians (a people of the far north often cited in contrast to the Ethiopians of the far south) to the effects of a moist environment. (2) The other rhetorical function of classical allusions to the remote Ethiopians was to illustrate the unity of mankind, the all-inclusiveness of the human community – popular prejudices to the contrary notwithstanding.

Early Christian writers drew on biblical reference as well as Hellenic conventions in constructing their image of faraway Ethiopia. St Augustine, like many other Christian authors, considered the Queen of Sheba referred to in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles to have been Ethiopian and associated that with New Testament statements that 'she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon.' St Augustine argued that the name Ethiopia was used in the Bible in a figurative sense. By Ethiopia was meant all nations, for St Augustine, 'chose for special mention that people which is at the ends of the earth'.

It was probably in the 4th and 5th century AD that Hebraic and Hellenic allusions to Ethiopia began to be associated with the region now called Ethiopia, whose chief political center was then at Axum. When Christian writers celebrated the success of apostolic efforts by noting that Christian missions had been effective as far away as Scythia and Ethiopia, they may well have had Axumite Ethiopia in mind.

The image of remote Ethiopia persisted long after the world had been mapped and the source of Nile discovered. From the 19th century on, Ethiopia was considered remote in two new ways. As Western institutions changed at an accelerating rate and distances were compressed, Ethiopia came to seem removed in time as she became closer in space. Many visitors described themselves as being transported into a biblical era. The current accessibility of Ethiopia by airplane is advertised as an opportunity to 'travel to a distant time'. Still another convention developed – that of viewing Ethiopia as remote from understanding. She was frequently portrayed as basically unknown, if not in some fundamental sense unknowable.

Ethiopia the Pious: Three passages in the Homeric epics depict the Olympian gods as going off to feast with the Ethiopians. In book 1 of the *Iliad*, Zeus, followed by all the gods, departs for twelve days to visit the 'blameless Ethiopians.' Later, the goddess *Iris* goes by herself to the land of the Ethiopians to participate in their sacrificial rites to the immortal gods. And in the Odyssey, the god *Poseidon* 'lingered delighted at the banquet side' of the far-off Ethiopians.

The Homeric pattern of portraying Ethiopians as close to the gods or of an especially pious nature is found in many later writings – pagan, Jewish, Christian and Muslim. This image persists despite the vague geographical identity of the subject, whether Ethiopia is taken to mean all of Black Africa, the Nubia of Napata and Meroe, the Abyssinia of Axum, or the later Christian kingdom of Nubia.

With no apparent incredulity Diodorus, the first century BC Greek historian, reports the Ethiopian belief that they were the first to institute religious worship, solemn assemblies,

sacrifices and other customs used to honor the gods; and that their own sacrifices were the most acceptable of all the gods. Six centuries later Stephanus of Byzantium, for whom Axum was the capital of Ethiopia, reiterates the belief that Ethiopians were the first to introduce the worship of gods.

An image of just and pious Ethiopians is also conveyed by the way individual Ethiopians are usually depicted in ancient literature including that of Herodotus and Diodorus. Besides, the only Ethiopian represented in any detail in the Old Testament is likewise portrayed as a man of high moral character.

Many Muslim references to Ethiopians are in a similar vain. A work of the highest standing in Islamic tradition, the *Sira* or biography of Prophet Muhammad by Ibn Hisham, reports that Muhammad advised his followers who were being persecuted by the Quraish in Macca that 'if you go to Abyssinia you will find a King under whom none are persecuted. It is a land of righteousness where God will give you relief from what you are suffering.' Whereas these Muslim references are clearly to Axumite Ethiopia, Christian references tended to confuse Ethiopia or Abyssinia with both Nubia and India for nearly a thousand years.

It is likely that monks from Axumite Ethiopia had traveled to Jerusalem from the 5th century AD onward. About the year 400 AD, St Jerome mentioned Ethiopia as one of the countries from which monks were being welcomed daily in the Holy Land. From the 13th century AD, the continuing presence of communities of Ethiopian monks in Palestine was securely established. A number of medieval European travelers to the Holy Land reported that the Ethiopians possessed important Christian sanctuaries, including the Chapel of St Mary of Golgotha adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and an altar in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre itself. Because of the rigor of their ascetic practices and the enthusiasm with which they performed the rites, Ethiopians were viewed by a number of such visitors as 'the most pious of all the monks' in Jerusalem.

A Magnificent Kingdom: A few passages from the classical writers suggest a contrasting image of Ethiopia – that of a significant worldly power. Pliny the Elder considered that Ethiopia had been a major power in archaic times, that it was 'famous and powerful' until the Trojan wars and had formerly dominated Syria and the Mediterranean coasts. Speaking of his own times, Diodorus described Nubian Ethiopia as a wealthy and well-run polity, full of rich gold mines and ruled by powerful kings who governed by principles upheld by their devoted and deferential subjects.

Axumite Ethiopia clearly had a reputation for being a particularly impressive state. In the later part of the 3rd century AD Mani wrote that Axum ranked third among the great powers of the world. To many Byzantine emperors, Ethiopia appeared a most desirable ally. Constantius II (335-61) strove to win the Ethiopians to his side in doctrinal disputes against Patriarch Athanasius. A more successful bid for collaboration was broached by Justine I (518-27). Justine's successor, Justinian (527-65), sent embassies to enlist Ethiopia's aid against Persia.

The rise of Islam was to add luster to the image of Ethiopia's magnificence. Although the Arab expansion cut off communication between Ethiopia and Europe, crusaders and other European travelers to Palestine collected and circulated stories about the Abyssinian kingdom. The

imagined potency of this realm and her desirability as an ally grew phenomenally in the 13th and 14th centuries. Some accounts stressed that Ethiopia controlled access to the Indian Ocean through her strategic position on the Red Sea. More often the Ethiopian king's presumed control over the headwaters of the Nile was emphasized.

The medieval image of Ethiopia as a potent ally was inflated by its confluence with a remarkable legend. The legend originated in the 12th century, when Crusaders brought back stories about a fabulous wealthy oriental kingdom ruled by *Prester John*, an isolated Christian monarch battling against the infidel. In 1165, a letter purportedly sent from this priest-king was received by a number of European rulers, including the Byzantine Comnenus I and Fredrick Barbarossa. These stories and letters sustained a widely shared fantasy. *Prester John* lived in an enchanted palace, with a magic mirror in front where he could see his vast dominions at a glance. Hundreds of counts and dukes waited on him; his butler was an archbishop, his chief cook a king. He wielded an emerald scepter and wore robes woven by salamanders and washed in fire. In his dominion, there was no poverty, avarice or strife.

At first, the medieval imagination located this fabulous kingdom in Asia – now in India, now in Persia, now in China. In the 1930s, however, it began to be associated with Ethiopia, the country whose pilgrims were known from the Holy Land but whose location remained obscure. Thanks to the legend of *Prester John*, Ethiopia once again became a coveted ally from European rulers long after the impulse to join her forces with the Crusaders was spent.

The Legend of the *Queen of Sheba* provided still another motif to embellish the Western image of Ethiopia as a fabulous kingdom.

The flurry of international attention excited by the exploits of Emperor Menelik II in the 1890s gave new life to the fabulous kingdom image. In that decade, as Harold Marcus has shown, several European writers sought to contrast Ethiopia with the rest of Africa by extolling it in superlative terms. Ethiopia was described as 'a civilized nation of an immense intelligence, the only one that is civilized without wearing trousers and shoes.'

Savage Abyssinia: In addition to his picture of the just and pious Ethiopians of Meroe and the regions near Egypt, Diodorus sketched a set of vignettes of 'the other Ethiopian nations' which he located both sides of the Nile farther South. Most of these people, he wrote, 'are entirely savage and display the nature of a wild beast. They are squalid all over their bodies, keep their nails very long like the wild beasts, and are as far removed as possible from human kindness to one another; and they cultivate none of the practices of civilized life as these are found among the rest of mankind.' Strabo held that the lives of people far removed from the temperate zone would be defective and inferior: this was clear from the modes of life of Ethiopians and their lack of human necessities.

Images of this sort occasionally surface in commentaries of early Christian writers. St Augustine states that the universality of the Christian message is implied here, for it is to reach even unto the Ethiopians, whom he describes as 'the remotest and the most hideous men.'

A number of Latin geographers followed their imaginations further in this direction and described Ethiopia as a land of fearful monsters. When in the 1520s Europeans reached the Ethiopian highlands, however, they found and described a civilization at about the same level as their own. With keen admiration Alvarez describes Ethiopian architecture and painting and the Ethiopian system of justice, and he duly records the aversion of Ethiopians to such crude European customs as spitting in church. Almeida's narrative of a century later includes some secondhand reports of 'barbarous customs' of some Ethiopian tribes, but the general tone of his account is appreciative, and he describes the Ethiopians as 'very amenable to reason and justice, intelligence and good-natured, mild, gentle, kind, and so inclined to forgiveness that they readily pardon any injuries.'

Visiting in the late 18th century, a much more troubled time, James Bruce was so repulsed by the civil strife and bloodshed he witnessed that eventually he became so obsessed with thoughts about 'how to escape from this bloody country.' Yet, so ingrained was the European disposition against viewing Ethiopia as a savage place that Bruce earned a bad name among his contemporaries because they refused to believe his gory accounts.

It was indeed only in the latter half of the 19th century that image of highland Ethiopia as a savage place gained any currency, as European attitudes toward Africa hardened into arrogant ethnocentrism at best and a vicious exploitative ethnocentrism at worst. A similar point of view was expressed by the Italian delegation which successfully opposed the admission of Ethiopia to the International Postal Union in 1895 on grounds that it was a 'nation of primitive tribesmen led by a barbarian.' Lord Hindlip felt that 'the Abyssinian above all things excels in cruelty, both to mankind and animals.' He agreed with those who argued that 'there are moral considerations which should compel all the civilized people of the world to lead their support to crushing out of the Abyssinian power, and the substitution of a humane government in the place of Menelik's rule.'

This image was revived in the years after World War I, that epitome of civilized conduct, by groups in England which became alarmed by the extent of the slave trade in Ethiopia, partly for general humanitarian reasons and partly for fear that people were being abducted into slavery from British-ruled Kenya. These concerns were expressed in a series of articles that appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* and *West Africa* in 1922. A decade later, in order to build up a case for its unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia, the Italian government generated propaganda designed to prove that Ethiopia was indeed so savage, primitive and disorganized that modern sensibilities required intervention by a European power to carry out a 'civilizing mission.'

A Bastion of African Independence: The ancients also had a conception of Ethiopia as a proud and independent country. Diodorus speaking about the Nubian Ethiopia wrote that 'they were never brought into subjugation by a foreign prince.'

The image of Ethiopia as a bastion of African independence became particularly widespread in the late 19th century. While people all over Africa were being subjugated by foreign powers, Ethiopians were winning victories over a series of invaders. From their victories over invading Egyptians in the 1870s, over Sudanese Mahdists in the 1880s and over the Italians in the 1890s, Ethiopians gained a reputation as spirited fighters determined to maintain their sovereignty. It was the last of these victories in particular, that at Adwa in 1896, which called Ethiopia to world

attention and prompted European states to set up diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa. The defeat of the Italians at Adwa initiated a decade of negotiations with European powers in which nine border treaties were signed.

From that time forward the image of Ethiopia the Independent was cherished increasingly by Africans and Afro-Americans. In 1892, the efforts of some Bantu Christian leaders to emancipate themselves from the authority of European missions led to the formation of an independent Black South African denomination named the Ethiopian Church. In the original use of this name Ethiopia referred to all Black Africans, a usage inspired by allusions to Ethiopia in the Old Testament – promises of the evangelization of Africa. Later, however, leaders of the Ethiopian Church movement interpreted the nomenclature to signify that the Independent Church enjoyed not only the biblical apostolic succession but also a link with an actual independent Christian African monarchy.

The victory at Adwa stimulated the energies of South African Blacks in the early years of the Ethiopian movement. The image of 'Independent Ethiopia' spread so widely among the Zulus and other tribes that by 1935-6 nightly prayer meetings on behalf of Ethiopia in Natal and Zululand attracted thousands of new followers Churches were founded with such names as the Melchizedek Ethiopian Catholic Church and the Coptic Ethiopian Church Orthodox of Abyssinia.

For many secular leaders of colonial Africa, moreover, the image of independent Ethiopia was a powerful beacon and frequent source of inspiration. Ethiopia was seen as the last vestige of black autocracy. The threat to this symbol posed by the Italian invasion so upset Kwame Nkrumah, he recalls in his Autobiography, that he became motivated to work for the day when he might play a part in bringing an end to so wicked a system as colonialism. For Jomo Kenyatta 'Ethiopia, with her Emperor leading, relies on her soldiers, her courage, her traditions. There will be no concessions; Ethiopia will fight, as she always has fought, to preserve her independence against this encroachment of Imperialism.' Together with J B Danquah of the Gold Coast, Mohammed Said of Somaliland, George Padmore of Jamaica, and others, Kenyatta formed the International African Friends of Abyssinia, a group that subsequently provided the leadership for convening the Pan-African Congress at Manchester in 1945.

Ethiopia the Independent was likewise an image to reckon with among Black Americans in the West Indies and the United States. Marcus Garvey stimulated the formation of a number of semireligious cults, chiefly in the West Indies, oriented to a renewed identification with Africa. Some of these took the name of 'Ethiopians' and others adopted the current name of the future Haile Selassie I by calling themselves the Rastafarians. Assertions of Black pride in the United States in the 1920s occasionally took the form of a yearning to return to Africa.

Many segments of the Afro-American community responded passionately to the 1935-6 Italian invasion. An editorial in *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life* observed that 'Ethiopia has become the spiritual fatherland of Negroes throughout the world'. George Edmund Haynes asserted that Ethiopia, 'proud and free', has become to thinking Negroes of African descent the symbol of the aspirations of Black people for independence, for self-determination, and the assimilation of all that is best in modern civilization. And as early as November 1935, in the Afro-American, W.E.B. Du Bois called the Italian attack a turning point in the history of darker

groups and prophesized that it would be the last time when white men would fight, invade and annex 'colored' nations almost at will.

2. Scholarly Images and Assumptions of Ethiopia

The images of Ethiopia surveyed in the section above have played a significant role at various points in world history. Notions of Ethiopia as the farthermost land in the world were invoked to advance the universalistic ideas of Greek philosophers and early Christian apologists. Muslim beliefs that Abyssinia was a just and pious country exonerated Ethiopia from the holy wars of early Islamic expansion, giving Christian Ethiopia a chance to build her strength so she could resist the Muslim onslaught when it came several centuries later – resistance which checked the sweep of Islam across Africa. The image of the fabulous kingdom of *Prester John* helped inspire Portuguese navigators to embark on voyages of discovery around Africa. The picture of Ethiopia as a savage place undermined the readiness of Europeans to condemn the first major fascist aggression preceding the Hitler war. The symbolism of independent Ethiopia gave hope to opposed Africans and Afro-Americans and support to their freedom movements.

As sources of enlightenment about the Ethiopian experience, however, these images must be treated with caution. They tell less about Ethiopian realities than they do about the history of the world outside. All these images, to be sure, have had some grounding in actual observations, and all have their counterpart in the traditional beliefs Ethiopians have about themselves and their relations to outsiders; but they have never been liberated from some admixture of poetic fancy, religious aspiration or political ambition. The Viennese classicist Albin Lesky has brilliantly analyzed the way ancient Greek conceptions of Ethiopia illustrate 'the interweaving of mythical representation and rational knowledge that pervades Greek intellectual history.'

Hence, for a sound comprehension of the Ethiopian experience we must turn to a different set of images. These have emerged from efforts to relate the understanding of Ethiopia to modern developments in the scholarly disciplines.

Foundations for the disciplined study of Ethiopian society and culture were laid by two sets of travelers in the 16th and 17th centuries. On several missions to Ethiopia sent by the kings of Portugal and the Popes at Rome, a number of Portuguese and Spanish clergymen collected basic information on the languages, cultures and history of the country. During the same period, small numbers of Ethiopian monks were making their way to Rome, some from Jerusalem and some directly from Ethiopia. This group taught interested Europeans about their languages and literature and assisted with the composition of the first *Ge'ez* (Ethiopic) grammars, dictionaries and texts which were published at Rome, Antwerp and Gottingen. Thanks to these two groups, scholars acquired a reliable fund of factual information about Ethiopia.

This period of exploration and cultural exchange culminated with the work of a German scholar, Job Ludolf, commonly considered the founder of Ethiopian studies in Europe. Aided by an Ethiopian informant, Abba Gregorios, Ludolf compiled substantial dictionaries and grammars of both *Ge'ez* and Amharic and went on to construct a circumspect history of Ethiopia with an extensive commentary.

European exploration of Ethiopia virtually stopped for a century and a half after the expulsion of the Jesuits in the 1630s. It was revived by the pioneering investigations and conclusions of James Bruce, who was in Ethiopia from 1769 to 1771. Subsequently, in the 19th century a number of explorers, diplomats, geographers and missionaries from England, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland added volumes of observations and new collections of Ethiopic documents.

Another German scholar, August Dillmann, revitalized the scholarly tradition of Ethiopian studies in the 1850s. By the early 20th century, the study of Ethiopian culture had been institutionalized on a modest basis in a smaller number of academic settings in Europe and the United States.

Intellectual disciplines have their own mythical components, however. This consists of general assumptions about particular domains of experience which scholars take for granted as they busy themselves with solving specialized problems. It may be useful at this point to articulate the scholarly myths – the overarching perspectives – which have hitherto guided the world of Ethiopianist scholarship.

Three general images have dominated that world. Scholars have viewed Ethiopia primarily either as an outpost of Semitic civilization, as an ethnographic museum, or as an underdeveloped country. In this section, we shall outline these images, examine the intellectual assumptions connected with them, and thereby prepare the way for a new image based on recent developments in sociological theory and on a fresh look at the field of Ethiopian studies.

An Outpost of Semitic Civilization: The first generation of Ethiopianist scholars saw their work chiefly as a branch of Semitic studies. They considered knowledge of Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac the right foundation for the study of Ethiopian culture. Their academic reference group was the fraternity of Orientalist scholars. Their contributions consisted largely of writing vocabularies and grammars of Ethiopian Semitic languages, cataloging manuscripts, editing and translating Ethiopian texts and examining historical source materials.

The geographical focus of these early scholars was on northern Ethiopia. Substantively their focus was on the productions of literati. Since their training was mainly in textual analysis, they naturally concentrated on Ethiopia's written traditions. Until the past few decades, moreover, few scholars anywhere were trained for the disciplined study of preliterate cultures.

Among the principal discoveries of this group of scholars one might mention the close relationship among the Semitic languages of northern Ethiopia – *Ge'ez*, *Tigre* and *Tigrinya*; the correspondences between these and Old South Arabian languages; and other kinds of evidence linking ancient Ethiopian peoples with Sabaean and other Oriental Semitic cultures. The effect of these Semitic influences on Ethiopian languages and culture, the fact that these influences were attested by the preferred scholarly materials – written documentation – and the tendency of European scholars to affirm those aspects of Ethiopian culture which drew on Judaeo-Christian traditions produced a disposition to regard Ethiopia as an outpost of Semitic civilization.

The central features of this image are that (1) the Amhara-Tigrean peoples are identified as the 'true Ethiopians' or the 'Abyssinians proper', and (2) the core elements of Amhara-Tigrean

culture are viewed as deriving from early Semitic influences. The consequences of this image are that Ethiopian history comes to be conceived as a process of the extension of Semitized Ethiopian culture over more and more peoples of Ethiopia; that those peoples who are not 'true Abyssinians' come to be viewed as alien and inferior; and that little or no attention is given to the non-Semitic components of Amhara-Tigrean culture and to the indigenous traditions of other Ethiopian peoples.

Of recent works which embody this image most extensively, the book *The Ethiopians* by Edward Ullendorff might be mentioned. Subtitled *An Introduction to the Country and People*, this work is actually an introduction to selected aspects of Amhara-Tigrean culture. Ullendorff's concern is overwhelmingly with those whom he calls 'Abyssinians proper, the carriers of the historical civilization of Semitized Ethiopia, who live in the central highlands.' He holds that the Semites provide the 'principal linguistic and cultural element' in highland-plateau Ethiopia.

As a result, Ullendorff's treatment is biased in favor of those aspects of Ethiopian culture which reflect Semitic influence. His chapter on religion devotes 18 pages on Ethiopian religions of Semitic provenance – Judaism, Christianity and Islam; but only 1 paragraph to indigenous Cushitic religions. His chapter on languages devotes only 1 page to the Cushitic languages, and none to the Nilo-Saharan languages, although these language families in Ethiopia exceed the Semitic languages both in number and variety and in the number of people speaking them. By contrast, 19 pages are spent on the Semitic languages of Ethiopia, 'since they express the 'real' Abyssinia as we know it and are the virtually exclusive carriers of Ethiopian civilization, literature and intellectual prestige.' Similarly, the chapter on literature deals exclusively with *Ge'ez* and Amharic literature, with nary a reference to available collections of Somali poetry or Oromo folk literature.

Although it continues to be useful for certain limited purposes, the Semitic outpost image suffers two serious limitations as a general orientation to Ethiopian culture. With respect to empirical inadequacy, it neglects the crucial role of non-Semitic elements in Ethiopian culture. With respect to its implicit and often explicit normative assumptions, it shares the difficulties of all views which consider cultures with written traditions and world religions to be generally superior to non-literate cultures.

An Ethnic Museum: Another image of Ethiopia is conveyed by the view of Ethiopia as a museum of peoples where implicitly assumed in the works of a number of anthropologists who have worked in the country. The chief assumptions associated with this view are that (1) Ethiopia is a country of extraordinary ethnic diversity, and (2) each of its diverse peoples deserves to be studied intensively, on its own terms, as bearer of a bounded system and a unique culture.

Whereas the proponents of the first perspective were largely products of the German universities of the late 19th century, those of the second sprang mainly from Anglo-American universities of the mid-20th century. The geographical focus of the latter has been mainly on peoples in the southern parts of the country, and their substantive focus has been mostly on the social organization of discrete tribes. Their contribution has been to provide basic ethnographies of the relatively unknown peoples of these areas. Over the years, sustained fieldwork by a number of

young scholars has produced a valuable set of intensive studies about the nations and nationalities inhabiting the southern parts of Ethiopia.

But here one intellectual orientation of the modal Anglo-American anthropologist, staunchly antievolutionary and still more or less committed to the doctrine of cultural relativism, needs a note. This doctrine holds that every culture is as valid as any other; that any cultural complex is to be examined not with respect to a presumed hierarchy of forms, but in relation to other institutions of the culture and their contributions to the group's adaptation to its environment. The Sidamo or the Dasenech, in this view, are not to be regarded as Abyssinians manqué because they lack a written tradition or a world religion, but as bearers of perfectly valid cultures in their own right.

The thrust of this view is to look for a self-sufficient, bounded system. Radical impairment of the system's integrity is viewed as pathological. Relationships with other groups outside the system are considered as peripheral, if at all. More often than not, when the group is related to other groups, it is not to other Ethiopians but to more distant peoples. Although comparisons of this sort are, of course, legitimate and often highly illuminating, they do tend to reinforce the assumption that the unit being compared is a self-contained, integral system.

Although the assumptions of cultural autonomy and uniqueness, on the one hand, and cultural relativism, on the other, have inspired anthropologists to create a rich library of ethnographic monographs, applying these assumptions to groups which belong to a wider system of relationships, as most groups do, tends to be misleading. To see Ethiopia as a mosaic of distinct peoples is to overlook the many features they have in common and the existence of discernable culture areas, and to ignore the numerous relationships these groups have had with one another. To assume that intensive study of each individual group in Ethiopia will produce a valid picture of the whole is a futile assumption. In sum, the image of Ethiopia as a collection of distinct peoples neglects what these peoples have in common, how they interact, and the nature of Ethiopian society as a whole.

Once one begins to consider these questions, moreover, the assumption of cultural relativism must be discarded. Although it may no longer be valid to rank all cultures by a single set of criteria, it is perfectly valid to rate different aspects and dimensions of culture with respect to a variety of specific criteria. In considering the respective contributions of diverse cultures to larger whole, valuations of this sort becomes indispensable. Some contribute in one area, some in another. Some contribute little, some much.

An Underdeveloped Country: In scholarly writings on Ethiopia during the 1960s a third image emerged. This is most likely to appear in works by economists, sociologists and political scientists. Like the two images previously discussed, it has a solid empirical basis. Whereas the other views were grounded on the substantial Semitic influence upon Ethiopian civilization and on the remarkable cultural diversity of its peoples, this view starts with an assessment of Ethiopian conditions relative to more economically and politically developed nations. Finding that Ethiopia ranks low by the standard indexes of modernization – per capita income, healthcare, literacy, occupational differentiation, and the like – it portrays Ethiopia as a particularly 'underdeveloped' country.

The geographical focus of this view is primarily on the central part of the country – Shoa province and its capital, Addis Ababa – and on larger towns. Substantively, it deals with the modernizing sector of the society, especially the school system, the modern economic sectors, and the central government. Proponents of this view have been few, but they have contributed to a basic mapping of some of the main points of change and problems connected with Ethiopia's halting movement toward economic development and social mobilization. They include studies on the modernization of Ethiopia's central administration; the weaknesses of the system of education and manpower development; and the counterproductive types of personal relationships found in Ethiopian firms and factories.

Disciplined research of this sort in Ethiopia is still at a rudimentary stage. Although much remains to be done, the limitations of the image of Ethiopia as an underdeveloped country ought also to be kept in mind. It disposes one to view Ethiopia not on her own terms but as a modern society manqué. The key point of reference is the experience of modernized societies, and Ethiopian realities are examined in relation to American and European standards. This focus on the center entails a neglect of the traditional sectors where most Ethiopians still live in ways that remain little understood. The focus on certain criteria of progress neglects the ways Ethiopia's past experience is reflected in her present and ignores sources of satisfaction available in her customary life.

A Complex Evolving System

The disciplined study of Ethiopian culture has made it possible to replace the various conventional images we have discussed above with more firmly grounded conceptions. Each of the latter has been connected with fruitful research and remains valid for future work, given the particular purposes associated with these conceptions – to study the diffusion and forms of Semitic civilization, the characteristics of a variety of distinct traditional cultures, or the problems and process of modernization.

None of those purposes, however, is that of developing a holistic conception of Ethiopian experience. For that, each of them is marked by characteristic deficiencies. These deficiencies are not, of course, exclusively those of Ethiopian studies but are inherent in the general modes of scholarly orientation to all cultural studies. The classical orientation to the study of Great Traditions focuses on the great feats of moral action and literary expression in some exemplary cultural climate. Past cultural achievements are considered as standards of excellence against which other cultural expressions are measured and often found wanting. To some extent this orientation entails an idealization of the past.

The modernist orientation to the study of human societies focuses on certain rationalized ideals, such as egalitarian justice and scientific mastery, and the institutional arrangements and mechanisms of change needed to implement them. Such ideals provide categories of measurement in terms of which present and past societies are analyzed – categories like extent of literacy and spread of income distribution. This orientation tends to idealize the future.

The cultural relativist orientation entails no transcendent standards for societies other than the purely formal ones connected with system integrity and wholeness. Assuming that all societies in the ethnographic present are equal, it tends to idealize the here and now.

All three orientations, thus, exhibit characteristic normative and empirical blind spots. Here we have conceptualized them as pure logical types so that the rationale and structure of these orientations of the related images may be visible.

Despite some exceptions, it is fair to say that Ethiopian studies for the most part fall into the three types of orientations defined above, orientations epitomized by and inherent in the professional scholarly orientations of the Semitic philologist, the social anthropologist, and the developmental economist. Two possible ways of dealing with the shortcomings of these orientations are ignoring them and combing them. One can, on the one hand, eschew any conception at all, in the vain hope that facts will speak for themselves. But useful though factual compendia may be, they cannot generate that economical reconceptualization of the Ethiopian experience which remains one of the outstanding tasks of Ethiopianist scholarship.

The other approach is a studied eclecticism in which one attempts to combine all three approaches, viewing data at different points in terms of the Semitic past, the ethnographic present, and the modernist future. Combining a number of deficient views, however, is not likely to produce a satisfactory synthesis. Rather, one needs to deal directly with the intellectual difficulties of each view and discover what new occupation, if any, can eliminate these difficulties in principle.

Such a conception may be drawn from recent advances in general sociological theory. Here the reference is both to the increased clarity with which total societies have come to be conceptualized as boundary-maintaining systems of action and to the more sophisticated ways in which societal evolution can be analyzed. Using this perspective one can develop an image of Ethiopia as a complex sociocultural system that has evolved through determined stages. The original units of this system are a great number of diverse, historically autonomous societies, of small scale. The crucial feature of its evolution has been the transition, still under way, from an intersocietal system to a single societal system, thanks to the development of increased adaptive capacities in some of its units.

This conception transcends the chief limitation of the three prevailing images of Ethiopia in the following ways:
1. It constrains us to take into account all peoples and traditions of Ethiopia, Semitized and non-Semitized, without prejudging the properties and achievement of any;
2. It constrains us to take into account indications of communality as well as diversity among Ethiopian peoples, interconnections as well as autonomies, centripetal as well as peripheral phenomena; and
3. It constrains us to view contemporary Ethiopia not as a static, underdeveloped country, but as a society at a certain point in a long developmental process, the understanding of which is indispensable to knowing her future options.

Although this conception may have great theoretical appeal, one cannot assume *a priori* that it will be fruitful for dealing with Ethiopian realities. Is there sufficient evidence to justify treating all of Ethiopia as a single complex? This question must be dealt with before we can carry out an elaborate analysis which takes that conception as a guiding image.

Reading:

Levine, N Donald (1974)
  Greater Ethiopia: *The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*, Chicago: Chicago University Press (Chapter 3: *The Differentiation of Peoples and Cultures* [pp 26-39] and Chapter 4: *Foundations of Unity* [pp 40-68])

Chapter 2: Education and Society in Ethiopia[3]

Introduction

Mention of the African nation of Ethiopia is likely to elicit visions of child victims of famine, and children (those fortunate to attend school) in poor quality, overcrowded schools that are unlikely to prepare them for the 21st century. This vision, which emerged from the world media response to the drought of the mid-1980s, remains a reality in drought-affected areas of Ethiopia. Research to date (e.g., Bredckamp, Knuth, Kunesh, and Shulman, 1992) strongly suggests that the best hope for changing this vision is to invest scarce resources where they most likely to result in maximum benefits – in the education of children. This chapter shades light on the various forms

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[3] This chapter is a compilation of adapted excerpts from the works of various scholars in history, social anthropology, sociology psychology and Ethiopian studies. Additional and useful resources have also been retrieved from online database available in the webpage of the US Library of Congress, 2010.

of educational systems in Ethiopia as they progress through time affected by the various social, religious and political factors happening in and around the nation and vice versa.

1. The development of education in Ethiopia

Two major traditions characterize the development of education in Ethiopia – 'traditional' and 'western' systems. While Western educational ideas have flourished since the early twentieth century, the traditional approach has characterized Ethiopian education throughout the history of this ancient nation. This traditional system is deeply rooted in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and is recognized as one of the oldest educational systems in the world.

Church education: For centuries, Orthodox Churches, monasteries, and convents were the main centers for formal learning from preschool through the higher levels. Traditional subjects of study in these programs included theology, philosophy, computation, history, *poetry,* and music (Pankhurst, 1955; Wagaw, 1979).

At least for males, the importance of early education was recognized as early as Medieval Ethiopia. Pankhurst (1997), for example, writes:

> Early historical data on children in Ethiopia is so scant that it is almost as though they were neither seen not heard. We can, however, catch occasional glimpses of the medieval educational system which must have existed for centuries.

During the Medieval period, male children began attending Church services at around age 1. At these services, children began the first stages of formal education. The curriculum for children of this age consisted primarily of drill and practice of the alphabet. Mastery of the alphabet was followed by reading and recitation of religious texts that began with the Psalms of David.

The Swiss missionary Gobat provided one of the most thorough descriptions of early education in Ethiopia. In describing the more formal church education, Gobat observed:

> Having learned to read, they were required to commit to the Gospel of St John, and to study several of St Paul's Epistles and a number of Homilies of St Chrysostom; after which they were assigned the task of learning by heart the Psalm of David, the *Waddase Mariam*, or Praises of Mary, and several prayers, and were supposed to memorize long lists of *Ge'ez* words. After this they would sit at the feet of renowned masters who would explain to them the scriptures and other texts, including traditional Ethiopian code of law. The course, thus, embraced *seven* years on chanting (muise), *nine* years on grammar, and *four* on poetry, after which the student had to face the sacred books of the Old and New Testament. There were, in addition, courses in civil and canonical law, astronomy and history (cited in Pankhurst, 1992: 130).

Koranic education: Students traveled far and wide in "the quest for knowledge" and to study under the supervision of well-known scholars. "Sessions" (sing., *Majlis*) and "circles" (sing., *Halqa*) were held by Muslim scholars for the purpose of teaching. These scholarly sessions took place at public places such as Mosques but also, privately, at the homes of scholars. Oral instruction was the primary technique for imparting (religious) knowledge, soon to be used in all branches of Islamic scholarship.

This strong emphasis on the oral component of learning did not exclude the fact that Muslim scholars in early Islam also based their teaching on written material such as collections of data and lecture scripts (often organized in notebooks), and notes used as memory aids. In the course of time, these thematically organized collections of data gradually gained more definite shape and came to be fixed (in writing, or memory, or both). Some old collections became known as the literary or scholarly "work" of the scholar who had prepared them initially and had then "published" them in his lectures; others were revised, edited, and formally published first by a scholar's student(s). Scholars preparing such written collections and lecture scripts, however, were not deprived of authorial creativity altogether: for they expressed their individual opinions and convictions through thematic selection and arrangement of the material they included in their works. Beginning in the 9th century, there was a steady increase in the number of scholars who were writing books, editing them definitively, and publishing them themselves.

***Education under the Imperial Rule*:** Until the early 1900s, formal education was confined to a system of religious instruction organized and presented under the aegis of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Church schools prepared individuals for the clergy and for other religious duties and positions. In the process, these schools also provided religious education to the children of the nobility and to the sons of limited numbers of tenant farmers and servants associated with elite families; very few children to received education. As a result, Ethiopia did not meet the Educational standards of other African countries in the early 1900s.

Toward the end of the 19th century, Menelik II had permitted the establishment of European missionary schools. At the same time, Islamic schools provided some education. At the beginning of the 20th century, the education system's failure to meet the needs of people involved in statecraft, diplomacy, commerce and industry led to the introduction of government-sponsored secular education. The first public school to provide a western style education was the Ecole Imperiale Menelik II, which was opened in October 1908 under the guidance of Hanna Salib and a number of Copt teachers. By 1924, Pankhurst notes, "no fewer than 3,000 students had passed through the school," and states that in 1935 the school had 150 pupils. That same year, Emperor Menelik II established a primary school in Harar.

In 1925, the government adopted a plan to expand secular education, but 10 years later there were only 8,000 students enrolled in 20 public schools. A few students also studied abroad on government scholarships; Pankhurst provides minimum numbers for several countries: at least 20 studied in Lebanon, 19 in Egypt, 12 in Sudan, 63 in France, 25 in England, 8 in the United States, 10 in Switzerland, 10 in Italy, and smaller numbers in Germany, Belgium and Spain. Schools were closed during the Italian occupation of 1936-41. After the Italians were driven out, the country started to build up the sector, but the system faced shortages of teachers, textbooks and facilities. The government recruited foreign teachers for primary and secondary schools to offset the teacher shortage. By 1952, a total of 60,000 students were enrolled in 400 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, and 3 institutions offering college-level courses. In the 1960s, 310 mission and privately operated schools with an enrollment of 52,000 supplemented the country's public school system. While reforms have been made in the aims of education, the actual structure of the Ethiopian school system has remained unchanged from that established in the 1950s.

In May 1961, Ethiopia hosted the United Nations-sponsored Conference of African States on the Development of Education. Among other things, the Conference highlighted Ethiopia's educational deficiencies. The Ethiopian education system, especially in primary and

secondary education, was ranked the bottom among African nations. There were school and teacher shortages, a high dropout rate, and low overall attendance rates; especially among females, non-Christians and rural children. Embarrassed by this record, the Ministry of Education developed a new education policy, which was in effect until 1974. Designed in conjunction with the objectives of the government's second and third five year development plans, extending from 1962 to 1973, the policy gave precedence to the establishment of technical training schools, although academic education was also expanded. Curriculum revisions introduced a mix of academic and nonacademic subjects.

There were two institutions of higher education: Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa formed by Imperial Charter in 1961, and the University of Asmara, founded by a Roman Catholic religious order based in Italy. The government expanded the public school system and in 1971 there were 1,300 primary and secondary schools and 13,000 teachers. But the system suffered from shortage of qualified personnel, lack of funds, and overcrowded facilities. Often financed with foreign aid, school construction usually proceeded faster than the training and certification of teachers. In addition, most schools were in the major towns. Crowded and under-staffed, those schools in small towns and rural areas provided a poor education. The inadequacies of public education before the mid-1970s resulted partly from the school financing system. To finance primary education, the government levied a special tax on agricultural land. Local boards of education supervised the disbursement of tax receipts. The system's inequities fostered the expansion of primary education in wealthier regions rather than in poorer ones. Moreover, urban inhabitants, who did not have to pay the tax but who were predominantly represented in the schools, sent their children at the expense of the tax-paying rural landowners and poor peasants.

The government attempted to rectify this imbalance in 1970 by imposing an education tax on urban landowners and a 2 per cent tax on the personal income of urban residents. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Finance treated the funds collected as part of the general revenue and never spent the money for its intended purpose. Expenditure on education was only 1.4 to 3 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) between 1968 and 1974, compared with 2.5 to 6 per cent for other African countries during the same period. Under the pressure of growing public dissatisfaction and mounting student activism, the Imperial Government initiated a comprehensive study of the education system. Completed in July 1972, The Education Sector Review (ESR) recommended (1) attaining universal primary education as quickly and inexpensively as possible, (2) ruralizing the curricula through the inclusion of informal training, (3) equalizing educational opportunities, and (4) relating the entire system to the national development process.

The ESR criticized the education system's focus on preparing students for the next level of academic study and on the completion of rigid qualifying examinations. Also criticized was the government's lack of concern for the young people who dropped out before learning marketable skills, a situation that contributed to unemployment. The report stated that, by contrast, "The recommended system would provide a self-contained program at each level that would be terminal for most students." The report was not published until February 1974, which gave time for rumors to generate opposition among students, parents and the teachers' union to the ESR recommendations. Most resented what they considered the removal of education from its elite position. Many teachers also feared salary reductions. Strikes and widespread disturbances ensued, and the education crisis became a contributing factor in the Imperial Regime's fall later that year.

By 1974, despite efforts by the government to improve the situation, less than 10 per cent of the total population was literate. The national literacy campaign began in early 1975 when the government mobilized more than 60,000 students and teachers, sending them all over the country for two-year terms of service. Most critics, however, saw this as the government's way to silence rising opposition while at the same time creating a network of government spies in the rural areas. The military government's attempts to facilitate a level of decent literacy through procedures such as adult education have produced commendable results. Generally the campaign to increase literacy remained illusive even though government reports showed improvements.

***Education under the Dergue*:** After the overthrow of Imperial rule, the provisional military government dismantled the feudal socioeconomic structure through a series of reforms that also affected educational development. By early 1975, the government had closed Haile Selassie I University and all senior secondary schools and had deployed some 60,000 students and teachers to rural areas to participate in the government's Development through Cooperation Campaign (commonly referred to as Zemetcha). The campaign's stated purposes were to promote land reform and improve agricultural production, health, and local administration and to teach peasants about the new political and social order.

In 1975 the new regime nationalized all private schools, except church-affiliated ones, and made them part of the public school system. Additionally, the government reorganized Haile Selassie I University and renamed it Addis Ababa University. It also initiated reforms of the education system based partly on ESR recommendations and partly on the military regime's socialist ideology. However, no meaningful education occurred (except at the primary level) from 1975 to 1978 because of the social turmoil, which pitted the regime against numerous opposition forces, including students.

Beginning in 1975, a new education policy emphasized improving learning opportunities in the rural areas as a means of increasing economic productivity. In the mid-1980s, the education system was still based on a structure of primary, secondary, and higher education levels, much as it was during the Imperial Regime. However, the government's objective was to establish an eight-year unified education system at the primary level. This curriculum emphasized expanded opportunities for nonacademic training. The new approach also decentralized control and operation of primary and secondary schools to the sub-regional level, where the curriculum addressed local requirements. In each case, committees drawn from the peasant associations and Kebeles and augmented by at least one teacher and one student over the age of sixteen from each school administered the public schools. Students used free textbooks in local languages. In late 1978, the government expanded the program to include nine languages, and it adopted plans to add five others.

There were also changes in the distribution and number of schools and the size and composition of the student body. The military regime worked toward a more even distribution of schools by concentrating its efforts on small towns and rural areas that had been neglected during the imperial regime. With technical assistance from the Ministry of Education, individual communities performed all primary school construction. In large part because of such community involvement, the number of primary schools grew from 3,196 in 1974/75 to 7,900 in 1985/86 (the latest years for which figures were available in mid-1991), an average increase of 428 schools annually. The number of primary schools increased significantly in all regions except three, including Eritrea and Tigray, where there was a decline because of continuing insurgencies. In

Addis Ababa, the number of primary schools declined because of the closure or absorption of nongovernment schools, especially religious ones, into the government system.

Primary school enrollment increased from about 957,300 in 1974/75 to nearly 2,450,000 in 1985/86. There were still variations among regions in the number of students enrolled and a disparity in the enrollment of boys and girls. Nevertheless, while the enrollment of boys more than doubled, that of girls more than tripled. Urban areas had a higher ratio of children enrolled in schools, as well as a higher proportion of female students, compared with rural areas.

The number of junior secondary schools almost doubled, with fourfold increase in Gojjam, Kefa, and Wollega. Most junior secondary schools were attached to primary schools.

The number of senior secondary schools almost doubled as well, with fourfold increase in Arsi, Bale, Gojjam, Gondar, and Wollo. The prerevolutionary distribution of schools had shown a concentration in the urban areas of a few administrative regions. In 1974/75 about 55 percent of senior secondary schools were in Eritrea and Shewa, including Addis Ababa. In 1985/86 the figure was down to 40 percent. Although there were significantly fewer girls enrolled at the secondary level, the proportion of females in the school system at all levels and in all regions increased from about 32 percent in 1974/75 to 39 percent in 1985/86.

The number of teachers also increased, especially in senior secondary schools. However, this increase had not kept pace with student enrollment. The student-teacher ratio went from forty-four to one in 1975 to fifty-four to one in 1983 in primary schools and also increased from thirty-five to one in 1975 to forty-four to one in 1983 in secondary schools.

Although the government achieved impressive improvements in primary and secondary education, prospects for universal education in the near future were not bright. In 1985/86, the latest year for which government statistics were available, enrollment in the country's primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools totaled 3.1 million students, up from the nearly 785,000 enrolled a decade earlier. Only about 2.5 million (42 percent) of the 6 million primary school-age children were enrolled in school in 1985/86. Junior secondary school enrollments (grades seven and eight) amounted to 363,000, while at the secondary school level (grades nine through twelve), only 292,385 out of 5.5 million, or 5.3 percent, attended school. In addition, prospects for continued study for most primary school graduates were slim. In 1985/86 there was only one junior secondary school for every eight primary schools and only one senior secondary school for every four junior secondary schools. There were many primary school students for whom space would not be available and who therefore would most likely end up on the job market, where work already was scarce for people with limited educations.

School shortages also resulted in crowding, a situation aggravated by the rural-urban influx of the late 1980s. Most schools operated on a morning and afternoon shift system, particularly in urban areas. A teacher shortage exacerbated the problems created by crowded classrooms. In addition to these problems were those of the destruction and looting of educational facilities as a result of fighting in northern regions. By 1990/91 destruction was especially severe in Eritrea, Tigray, and Gondar, but looting of schools was reported in other parts of the country as well.

The military government: higher and vocational education: In 1977 the revolutionary regime issued Proclamation No. 109, which created the Commission for Higher Education. This document also outlined the main objectives of higher education institutions as follows: to train individuals for high-level positions in accordance with the national plan of development and to provide qualified medium-level personnel to meet the immediate needs of the economy; to

improve the quality of education, strengthen and expand tertiary-level institutions, and establish new research and training centers; and to contribute to a better standard of living among the masses by developing science, technology, the arts, and literature.

Additionally, Addis Ababa reoriented institutions of higher education to reflect the new regime's objectives and modified admission criteria to benefit students from small towns and rural areas. But the government also assigned many students to specialize in certain fields, which denied them the opportunity to decide on careers of their choosing.

Higher education expanded modestly in the period after 1975. The College of Agriculture at Alemaya, which was part of Addis Ababa University, was granted independent university status in 1985. A postgraduate studies program was established in 1978, which had an enrollment of 246 students in 1982/83, of which 15 were women. Graduate programs were offered in several fields, including engineering, natural science, agriculture, the social sciences, and medicine. Several research institutes supported these institutions of higher education. Addis Ababa University also provided an evening extension program offering courses in many fields.

Other diploma-granting independent colleges trained middle-level manpower in several fields. These included the College of Teacher Education, the Junior College of Commerce, and the Municipal Technical College, all in Addis Ababa. There were also junior colleges of agriculture in Ambo and Jima, the Institute of Animal Health Assistants in Debre Zeit, and the Institute of Health Sciences in Jimma. Altogether, there were approximately twelve colleges or universities in the country in the early 1990s, with intense competition among students for admission.

Enrollment in higher education grew from 4,500 in 1970 to more than 18,400 in 1985/86, of which nearly 11 percent were women. But enrollment was low, considering the size of the population. Space limitations at the colleges and universities caused the government to raise admission standards. To narrow the gap somewhat, the number of students sent abroad on scholarships and fellowships grew from an annual average of 433 during 1969-73 to about 1,200 during 1978-82.

The number of Ethiopians on teaching staffs also grew. The faculty of Addis Ababa University increased from 437 in 1970 to 1,296 in 1983, with a corresponding increase in Ethiopian faculty from 48 percent to 74 percent of this total during the same period.

There was also more emphasis on the creation of technical and vocational schools, most of which were operated by the government. The Ministry of Education operated or supervised nine such schools scattered around the country. These schools had an enrollment of more than 4,200 in 1985/86, and their graduates were in great demand by industries. With Soviet assistance, Ethiopia established its first polytechnic institute, in Bahir Dar, in the 1960s. It trained personnel in agro-mechanics, industrial chemistry, electricity, and textile and metal-working technology. In addition, a system of general polytechnic education had been introduced into the senior secondary school curriculum so that those who did not continue their education still could venture into the skilled job market.

The government also introduced vocational training to upgrade peasant skills. The peasant training centers, operated by the Ministry of Agriculture, provided training in vocational trades related to agriculture for periods ranging from three weeks to six months. The country had twelve such centers, which trained more than 200,000 farmers from 1974 to 1988.

The Literacy Campaign: Among the revolutionary regime's few successes was the national literacy campaign. The literacy rate which was under 10 per cent during the imperial regime,

increased to about 63 percent by 1984, according to government figures. Others sources, however, estimated it at around 37 percent. In 1990/91 an adult literacy rate of just over 60 percent was still being reported in government as well as in some international reports. As with the 1984 data, it several wise to exercise caution with regard to the latest figure. As some observers pointed out, defining just what the term "literacy" means presented a problem; in addition, the military government's desire to report as high a literacy rate as possible had to be taken into account.

The national literacy campaign began in early 1975 when the government mobilized more than 60,000 students and teachers, sending them all over the country for two-year terms of service. This experience was crucial to the creation in 1979 of the National Literacy Campaign Coordinating Committee (NLCCC) and a nationwide effort to raise literacy levels. The government organized the campaign in rounds, which began in urban centers and spread outward to the remote parts of the country up to Round 12. Officials originally conducted the literacy training in five languages: Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Wolayita, and Somali. The number of languages was later expanded to fifteen, which represented about 93 percent of the population. By the end of Round 12, in the late 1980s, about 17 million people had been registered, of whom 12 million had passed the literacy test. Women represented about half of those enrolled.

According to government sources, about 1.5 million people eventually worked in the campaign. They included students, civil servants, teachers, military personnel, housewives, and members of religious groups, all of whom, it was claimed, offered their services freely. Adult literacy classes used primary and secondary school facilities in many areas. Officials distributed more than 22 million reading booklets for beginners and more than 9 million texts for post-literacy participants. The Ministry of Education also stocked reading centers with appropriate texts. These books focused on topics such as agriculture, health, and basic technology. To consolidate the gains from the literacy campaign, the government offered follow-up courses for participants up to grade four, after which they could enroll in the regular school system. In addition, national newspapers included regular columns for new readers. The literacy campaign received international acclaim when the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) awarded Ethiopia the International Reading Association Literacy Prize in 1980.

Education under EPRDF: Beginning with 1991, series of basic changes were introduced to restructure the whole educational system along policy lines developed by the incumbent government. Let us discuss these changes in terms of the various stages in the institutionalized educational system.

Preschool Education: Since current resources are insufficient for providing even basic primary education to Ethiopian children, the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2001) currently deemphasizes preprimary education. Nevertheless, recognizing the importance of quality education at this level, the Ministry is currently strongly encouraging the involvement of private institutions and individuals to invest in education at this level. Thus, through nongovernmental organizations, missions, private individuals, religious institutions, and other organizations, a number of preschools are beginning to emerge in urban areas. Only a very small number of parents, however, can afford tuition for their children to attend such programs.

Concomitant with the lack of access to preschool programs is a lack of qualified teachers in these programs. A recent educational directive (MOE, 2002) requires that those who teach in

the few available preschool programs must now be high school graduates who have taken an additional 3 months of specialized training from a Preschool Teacher-Training Institute. Sites for obtaining such training (and funds to attend), however, are scarce.

The Preschool Teacher Training Institute (PTTI), established in Addis Ababa in 1986, is one of the few PTTIs in the country. During the 3-month specialized training program at this institute, trainees engage in basic coursework emphasizing the preparation of preschool teaching materials. Courses are organized in 12-course modules that include: *preschool pedagogy*, *child psychology*, *health and nutrition*, *language development*, *pre-math*, *environmental education*, *arts and crafts*, *music*, *health and physical education*, *preschool management and administration* and *play*. Following this coursework, trainees engage in a short practicum with children using the materials they constructed through the modules.

Primary Grade Education: Given the magnitude of problems with providing high-quality education for preschool children, the current government in Ethiopia has made the decision to invest more heavily in what most nations describe as 'basic' education – that is, education of elementary grade children. In Ethiopia, basic education refers to school-age children from Grades 1-4 (Cycle I) and Grades 5-8 (Cycle 2). In this regard, the government recently began to increase support for *Teacher Training Institutes* (TTI) and *Teacher Training Colleges* (TTC) which are responsible for producing primary teachers. For those committed to teaching younger children, one year of specialized training had previously been required after completion of Grade 12.

In response to a greater demand for primary teachers, however, most current educational reforms recommend this training may be provided upon completion of Grade 10 at TTI and TTC. To support this rapidly increasing demand for primary teachers, the number of TTI has increased in the country, and almost all administrative regions now have at least one such institution. In addition, many institutions that previously offered only 1-year programs for Cycle 1 teacher preparation recently have expanded and begun to offer 2-year preparation programs for Cycle 2 teacher preparation.

Despite the government's goal of improving the quality of teacher education, the lack of sufficient qualified teachers remains a major problem. For example, only 73% of the teachers of children in the second cycle currently hold even a diploma or higher level of training. Furthermore, the education of those with such credentials is mostly highly academic and nearly devoid of skills that might help teachers prepare for the challenges of real classrooms. In response to this challenge, the Ministry now sponsors in-service summer programs for thousands of teachers. These programs are believed to be critically important to enable school teachers to meet the demands of the new curriculum reforms that have been taking place in the country since the early 1990s (MOE, 2000/2001).

Let us now turn to a discussion about the situation of higher educational institutions: their organization and functions.

3. Higher Education Institution

Organization: Higher Educational Institutions

The Higher Education Institutions Board reviews and adapts the plans and budgets of each institution. The universities have senates, which fall in between the boards and the academic commissions in their powers and duties. Each of these administrative bodies creates various

committees to assist their duties. The academic commission (AC) of each college faculty deliberates on and submits proposals about programs, plans, courses, certification, promotions, and students' status. The department councils are composed of all full-time academic staff and chaired by the department heads. The council prepares and submits recommendations to the AC concerning programs of study, curricula, courses, staff promotion, research projects, teaching materials, and examinations.[6]

Higher education institutions recruit their own staff based on certain criteria. Once employed, the teachers are assessed at the end of every semester (twice a year) by their students, colleagues, and the department head. The teacher must receive an above average rating to continue their employment. Contracts are renewed every 2 years. Those teachers whose performance falls below average for 2 consecutive semesters will not have their contracts renewed. In the past 5 years, a few contracts have been terminated due to low evaluations by students at the AAU.[6]

Salaries of faculty are based on their ranks. There are six salary scales and after two years of service a teacher will go up to the next rank. Previously all were paid the same and there was no incentive. Thus the new plan was every two years teachers receive a pay increase. A good teacher can be promoted every 2 or 3 years and has pay increments every year. As a consequence teachers are now highly motivated, although many instructors still complain that their salaries are too low.[6]

As of 2008, there are 16,161,528 children enrolled in grades 1 through 12 in Ethiopia; 13,476,104 are in government schools and 2,685,424 in non-government schools, while are 8,760.958 are boys and 7,380,570 are girls. These were taught by 267,191 teachers in 267,191 schools, which had a total of over 267,191 classrooms.

There were 2,228 teachers in higher education institutions in 1989-99. The professors and associate professors were only 2.29% and 6.78% respectively. Over 66% of the instructors had a master's or PhD degrees, with the rest hold a bachelor's or the equivalent. There was 5,169 support staff working in higher education institutions in Ethiopia in 1998-99. In 1999, 48.36% of the supportive staff was females. The academic staff of Ethiopian higher education institutions spends 75% of their time in teaching and 25% in research activities. Those working in research institutes spend 25% in teaching and 75% in research work.

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES), the first research unit in the country, was established in 1963. In 1999, there were six well-established research units within HEI; the IES, the Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Center (under the Alemaya University of Agriculture), Geophysical Observatory, Institute of Development Research, Institute of Educational Research, and Institute of Pathobiology. The scientific and professional journals published by research institutes, professional associations, or colleges include: Bulletin of Chemistry, Ethiopian Journal of Agriculture, Ethiopian Journal of Development Research, Ethiopian Journal of Education, Ethiopian Journal of Health Development, Ethiopian Medical Journal, Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Journal, Journal of Ethiopian Law, Journal of Ethiopian Studies, SINET: Ethiopian Journal of Science, and ZEDE: Journal of the Association of Ethiopian Engineers and Architects.[6]

The journals associated with the AAU are assessed every 2–3 years by a committee composed of 7 members from various disciplines. The funds for the research work come from the government budget and donors. Higher education in Ethiopia has been financed mainly by the government. The funds for the capital and recurrent expenses are provided to institutions through the Ministry of Finance. About 12% of the education budget is set aside for higher education. Out of the recurrent budget, about 50% is allocated for salaries. Ethiopian tuition fees have been

increasing over the years. The fees for foreign students are about double. The admission rate for women has been only about 15% for the past several years up to 1999. Some efforts have been made to improve the rate of admission by lowering the admission cut-off grade point by 0.2 (for example, admitting boys with 3.0 and girls with 2.8 GPA to the same program). This affirmative action has improved women's admission rate, but has not resulted in significant changes; the attrition rate of this group is higher than average.

Most women are also enrolled in social and pedagogical sciences and in diploma programs. Out of the total of 864 graduate students, only 62 (7.18%) were women. Engineering, agriculture, and pharmacy had the least female enrollment. In the past several years, new private colleges have been accredited by the Ministry of Education. The four officially recognized colleges are: Unity University in Addis Ababa, Alfa College of Distance Education and People to People College in Harar, and Awassa Adventist College. The total government budget for education has increased by 84%. In attempt to provide education for all, huge expansion of education through the construction of new schools was initiated close to the communities they serve. After regionalization was introduced in 1993, almost all Ethiopians had the right to education in their own languages. Educational texts, although vetted by the Ministry of Education, are devised by the educational bureaus in regional states in order to ensure their appropriateness to the diverse cultures of Ethiopia. Social awareness programs to teach that education is vital were set up to combat cultural and historical barriers.

Regional government has had a role to play in reviewing and reinvigorating education in the primary and secondary sectors, but higher education remains the responsibility of central government. The government set up a new plan to establish one new university per regional state and one education college, one technology college and one medical college. The number of girls enrolled has doubled from 1996 to 2000. Most still do not have equal status with boys, but there are measures such as "positive discrimination," which are helping to right this imbalance. In 2004 UNESCO Institute for Statistics showed percentage of female teachers in primary education reaching 44.6 percent and primary gross enrollment rate to 93.4 percent. There are a growing number of private and public Universities and colleges in Ethiopia. As of 2007, the University Capacity Building Program (UCBP) to build 13 new universities is undergoing nationwide.

The expansion of and privatization of higher educational institutions is discussed as follows.

Academic Freedom: Ethiopian HEI

Any attempt to understand the emergence, development and present status of Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia should start from recognizing Ethiopia's intellectual legacy that predates the age of Ethiopian Universities and Colleges in the 20th century. While recognizing indigenous systems of knowledge production and transmission in Ethiopia, one can not afford to omit, as we have attempted at above, the pivotal role that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has played. For centuries, we have noted, the clerics and theologians of the Church were and still are engaged in both spiritual and liberal education. Up until the 1920s, it was the Church that furnished the bulk of educated men who filled the various ranks of the Ethiopian Civil Service. As one writer rightly stated, the Church has been "the central force of the intellectual and cultural life of Ethiopia" (Teshome 1990: 64).

This role of the Church, however, started to decline as the twentieth century progressed. Its spiritual emphasis, curricula and methods of teaching could not go in par with the dominance

of rational, secular and western forms of knowledge that rely on 'scientific' inquiry and technological progress. As a result, "Ethiopia's traditionally independent education looked elsewhere for new inspiration, for new models for a new era" (Teshome 1990: 64).

It should also be recognized that the seeds of modern education in Ethiopia were sown mainly during the period from 1906-36. Emperor Haile Selassie's accession to the throne in 1930 boosted the expansion of primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia during this period. He was eager to see the construction of new schools, closely supervised the hiring of foreign teachers for the schools, and in some cases paid parents so that their children go to school. According to Trudeau (1964), the expansion of modern education in Ethiopia was so vigorous in this particular decade and there were "more than 20 government schools in the country" before the Italian invasion. Fascist Italy's invasion and five-year occupation (1936-41) means a terrible blow to the crop of educated Ethiopian men. Many were jailed, tortured, and killed. Post 1941, Ethiopia faced the daunting challenge to resuscitate its system of education. These were difficult times when teachers were few, the facilities were run down, books and other teaching materials were in short supply. And yet, Trudeau (1964:10) states "a complete system of education from the elementary to University level was developed" in a space of a decade (1941-51). This is a laudable achievement that the Emperor, his government and Ethiopians of that generation should be remembered for.

A landmark in the history of Higher Education in Ethiopia is, however, December 11th 1950 when the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) was inaugurated and became operational. Four years later, on 28 July 1954, the UCAA secured its Charter from the Imperial government and on 26 August 1954, it held its first graduation ceremony. In 1956 the Ministry of Education established a department to "coordinate and supervise the functions and development of special schools and institutions of higher learning."(Teshome1964:85). During the period from 1950 to 1960, the total number colleges grew to 12. These include UCAA, Alemaya College of Agriculture, Engineering College, Building College and Jimma Public Health College. Even more the Armed forces had 3 military colleges including the Harar Military College, Naval Forces Academy in Massawa and the Air Force College in Debre Zeit. In line with these developments, a survey team from the University of Utah (1959) was authorized to develop a Higher Education Development Program. Particularly, the team was commissioned to explore the possibility of founding a national university. The team submitted in its final report on April 29th 1960 favoring the establishment of such a University and outlining detailed recommendations on how to go about the task. For our purpose, two major recommendations of the Utah team deserve mention. First of all, the team emphasized the importance of autonomy to the University. It pointed out,

> The granting of a Charter to University in which autonomy or near autonomy could be guaranteed to the University so that political, religious, economic or other interference would be eliminated so far as is humanely possible. That freedom of teaching, research, discussion, publication and all other freedoms and privileges essential to academic excellence and prestige in the academic word, thus established would be maintained (Survey Team Report, 1960:23).

Secondly, the Survey team recommended that the new University should command budget adequate enough to allow further expansion and the challenge to furnish skilled personnel to the burgeoning civil sector of the country. Its recommendations go,

All budgets and funds which regularly and normally go to the various units of higher education, including budgets for teacher Education and training together with all other funds that may logically and rightfully be secured, be included in the budget of the proposed University (Survey Team Report, 1960:25).

These recommendations attest that ensuring and protecting academic freedom, institutional autonomy and financial self reliance of Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia were salient policy matters even before the Haile Selassie I University (HSIU) was inaugurated. Soon afterwards, on 28 February 1961, the Charter of Haile Selassie I University was published on the *Negarit Gazzeta*. The Emperor donated his *Genete Le'ul* Palace to be the main campus of the new University and the convocation marking the founding of HSIU was held on 18 December 1961. Even though American assistance was sought at the early stages, the University leadership was Ethiopian from the very beginning. The first President was Lij Kassa Woldemariam (1962-1969) succeeded by Dr. Aklilu Habte (1969-1974). According to Teshome (1990), the University became very assertive of its autonomy and freedoms right from its inception. Pressures used to come from the government urging the University to rapidly increase its student intake, open up new programs and meet the work force needs of the country. The University leadership was, however, adamant responding to government pressures stating,

Motivation, academic standards, the relevance of what is thought to current professional requirements and post academic training are more decisive factor than are the size of the department or the number of students in a given production line (Teshome, 1990:130)

Since then, the University has experienced similar other pressures and the University community never relented to express its skepticism towards hurried and imposed Higher Education expansion plans. Even more, Haile Selassie's University students began to become ardent critics of the Imperial regime. Political radicalism of the students gained ground in the campuses because students enjoyed the freedoms to study; reflect on the social, economic and political conditions of their country and the freedom to organize themselves into a student union. The student body also started to publish articles on its newsletter, Struggle, over political issues like the "National Question". These developments led to constant student demonstrations, clashes with the police that involved brutal beatings, student detentions, and killings as well. These dissenting voices were joined by the choir of strikes from the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) and the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), grievances and mutinies from the Armed Forces, and the outbreak of the 1972-73 famine. The political crisis reached its apogee in 1974 when the Imperial government in Ethiopia collapsed. The University which bore the Emperor's name and was promoted under his tutelage became the pioneer to sow the seeds of the regime's destruction. Since then successive Ethiopian regimes view the University as the bastion of resistance and opposition. A reputation, the writer believes, deservingly earned.

The Military government that seized power in 1974, the Dergue in popular parlance, had this fear towards the University community. Its first action after stepping into power was, therefore, to send students, faculty and staff into the rural areas for what was dubbed, the *zemetcha*. In the meantime the curricula of University programs were revised to ensure a "thorough application of the principles of Marxism Leninism" (Teshome, 1990: 250). Even more, "faculty and staff attended orientation classes at the Yekatit school of Political Education"

(Teshome, 1990: 250). All of these were attempts to indoctrinate staff members with a single ideology and ban every other intellectual exercise or inquiry. This exercise is a clear contravention of the academic freedom of the University community to think, reflect, research and publish about any socio-political or economic concept, perspective, theory or ideology. No wonder the Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia lost their warmth and activism but became known for their dullness and stagnation. Teshome (1990:254) narrates this tragedy stating, "There is no faculty union worthy of its name, and very few publications by staff members. The lively and useful student unions, together with their publishing organs, no longer exist."

The Dergue founded a Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in 1977 which was authorized to coordinate and supervise the operation of existing higher education institutions. In 1987, CHE was dismantled and a new Higher Education Management Department (HEMD) was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. An HEMD report in 1989/90 shows that there were only three Universities in the country (Addis Ababa University, Alemaya University of Agriculture and Asmara University), 6 colleges (Awassa College of Agriculture, Ambo Agricultural College, Jimma College of Agriculture, Addis Ababa Commercial College, Wondo Genet Forestry College and College of Urban Planning) and 3 Institutes (Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute, Jimma Institute of Health Sciences, and Arba Minch Water Technology Institute). Many of the above mentioned colleges were upgraded to college status during the time of the Derg. In addition, progress has been made in terms of student intake (both in the regular and evening classes), the number of teaching staff in the institutions and the opening of some graduate (MA) programs between 1974-91.Broadly speaking, however, academic freedom and intellectual exuberance gave way to a stifled and docile University environment in the days of the Dergue.

Post-1991 Higher Education

Fifteen years have lapsed [the author was writing in 2006] after the downfall of the Dergue and it is appropriate to examine the Higher Education Policy of the incumbent EPRDF led government. In so doing, we have to explore not just the imperatives but also the practicalities of Higher Education Reform currently underway. The beginning of the EPRDF government was marred with suspicion, fear and harsh measures towards Higher Educational Institutions in general, and the Addis Ababa University in particular. The first clash happened on January 4th 1993, when security forces fired live ammunition into the crowd of unarmed students, beaten and arrested large numbers of Addis Ababa University (AAU) students. Four months later (April 1993) the government summarily dismissed more than 40 professors who had been critical of the government. This was a terrible blow to a University that has enjoyed little capacity building and academic freedom during the Dergue period.

The incumbent government repeatedly states that the level of enrolment, the number of graduates, and the contribution of the sector to the country's development has been limited. A prominent ex-official in the MOE writes, "The higher education system was mediocre by not being in a position to inspire the country's government and society towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development" (Teshome, 2003:4). Even though it is not clear on how mediocrity could be measured at an institutional level, the government had the iron will to do away with it. Hence, it launched what was dubbed the Higher Education Expansion and Reform agenda from the early 90s. Two conferences were held in Adama (1995) and Bishoftu (1996) consecutively where the status, problems and prospects of the Ethiopian higher education system were discussed.

The outcome of these deliberations was a document entitled *Future Directions of Higher Education in Ethiopia* (1997). According to Teshome (2003:7), the major problems identified in this document are:

1. The lack of clarity and vision;
2. Problems of quality and relevance;
3. Lack of program and institutional evaluation mechanisms;
4. Financial and resource constraints;
5. Inability to mobilize alternative financial resources;
6. Inefficient resource utilization; and
7. Poor quality and community of leadership.

It seems like the responsibility of the blame lay with University leadership and staff members who do not have the vision and mission, the wit to solicit extra funding resources, to constantly upgrade the quality of their staff through evaluation and furnish relevant products. The government wanted Higher Educational Institutions to put their house in order by fending for themselves, utilizing their resources scrupulously, and engaging themselves in constant evaluative exercise. These were believed to weed out the 'mediocrity' quoted earlier. There was no mention of issues relating to academic freedom and institutional autonomy of higher education systems in Ethiopia. These, the writer believes, are staggering omissions that might have impinged on the effectiveness of the government reform agenda.

A striking observation in government policy is the recognition that the quality of graduates from Ethiopian Higher Education institutions has been declining. Following from that is the conviction to mitigate issues that have contributed to this decline. This, the Ministry reckoned, could be handled by introducing a national Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA) mandated to review and evaluate the quality and the practical relevance of Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia. Another is the National Pedagogical Research Centre (NPRC) mandated to equip and enhance the pedagogic skills of university and college instructors. Accordingly, almost all Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia were urged to revise and update their curricula. One challenge in implementing these reform measures, Teshome (2003:9) states, was that the academia in the older Higher Educational Institutions "does not accept any change and was at the centre of this resistance".

One gathers that officials saw not only mediocrity but also resistance to their reform agenda. There was not however any explanation why such resistance was faced in these institutions. It is however clear that the government's approach has been top-down in curriculum revision, student enrolment, program development and institutional reforms and restructuring which closed avenues for dialogue and initiative between the university community and the higher authorities. A subsidiary reform measure meant to ensure high quality and relevance was "putting the students at the centre of the system". This line of reform inter alia meant calling a round of meetings (at the department, faculty and university level) where students appraise their teachers publicly and make the latter account for their weaknesses and mistakes. This would allow the instructors swallow their criticisms [a crude equivalent for the Amharic phrase: *Hisin Mewat*].

The second frontier of the reform agenda was broadening access by expanding the intake of existing Higher Education institutions. This materialized by creating four new regional universities (2000) through merging smaller tertiary learning institutions and by opening up new graduate (Masters Level) programs. Resource wise, the government thinks that Higher Education

institutions are costly establishments where the lion share of their expenses is spent for administrative instead of academic purposes. Financially speaking, these institutions solely depend on the government and generate very little income through research collaborations. This trend, the government believes, should be reversed. Public universities and colleges should generate income "by mobilizing a greater share of the necessary financing from students themselves" (Teshome, 2003:12). Hence cost sharing systems were put in place. Other financial sources suggested include providing "short courses, contract research, consultancy services, farm activities and production services."(Teshome, 2003: 12) The authorities have also thought of introducing a "block grant" budgeting system for universities and colleges so that the latter have greater autonomy while managing and utilizing funds.

Last but not the least, the government reform agenda targeted at appointing leaders who commensurate with the reform agenda. This involved instituting new board structures, and ensuring accountability and transparency in the leadership. But once again, it is very difficult to confidently state if the reforms that entered into force have resulted these much coveted virtues i.e. democracy, accountability and transparency. A logical climax of the reform initiatives is the Higher Education Law which was enacted by parliament in (2003). The Law recognized that Higher Educational Institutions should have administrative and financial autonomy and enjoy the freedoms of recruiting, promoting and their staff. It is not, however, explicit about the various academic freedoms that Higher Educational Institutions should enjoy in order to thrive in their ventures. This Law has also authorized the establishment of the Ethiopian Higher Education Strategic Institute (EHESI), and the Quality and Relevance Assurance Authority (QRAA).

A year from the promulgation of the Higher Education Law (2004), a Higher Education System Overhaul (HESO) study was carried out by a commission which has come up with two key findings. These are:

a. Higher Educational Institutions, Government and its agencies have not been preparing sufficiently for the new situation of autonomy and accountability. For instance, the document states (HESO, 2004:6), "The introduction of formula funding and the block grant will place much more responsibility on HEI managers and boards to "do more with less"". Unfortunately, HEI leaders and their Ministry counterparts do not have that skill.

b. All agencies involved "display aspects of a disabling culture: in particular, they suffer from a 'blame culture', are insufficiently outcome-oriented, and are not yet empowering organizations (HESO, 2004:6)." The recommendations of the HESO study are directed to the top most echelons of power urging the Ministry of Education officials, board members of Higher Education Institutions, and the CEOs of universities and colleges to "provide visionary, participatory and inspiring leadership (HESO 2004: 13).

In conclusion, much of the work done in promoting higher education institutions in Ethiopia Post-1991 focused on institutional reforms. The four major strategic areas of reform were quality and relevance assurance, augmenting access by increasing student intake and commencing new programs, appointing new senior leadership and management systems, and introducing the Higher Education Law (2003). These reforms are highly technocratic. This legacy seems to have soured university-state relations in Ethiopia and must have acted as a barrier even to well meaning government policies of reform.

Privatization of Higher Education in Ethiopia

In today's world where market rules seem to govern the production and access of goods and services, the notion of higher education as a "public good" is being revisited. The privatization of Higher Education is global phenomenon brought about by two major factors. These are, "A combination of unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the inability or unwillingness of governments to satiate the demand (Altbach, 1999:1)." These same factors (increasing demand and government inability to satiate the demand) explain the reason why Ethiopia is currently experiencing the 'massification' of higher education. Teshome (2003:1) argues that private providers now "complement public institutions as a means of managing costs of expanding higher education enrolments, increasing the diversity of training programs and broadening social participation in higher education." To its credit, the current government has introduced favorable policy and legal instruments that have encouraged the opening up of many private higher education institutions.

According to Desalegne (2004:65), the Education and Training Policy of the Transitional Government (1994) first stipulated that the government will "create the necessary conditions to encourage and give support to private investors to open schools and establish various educational and training institutions." But it also underscored that the quality of education rendered in these private institutions should be constantly monitored and evaluated. The Ministry of Education was authorized to set the quality standard for these institutions and grant accreditation. Later, the Ministry issued a guideline for opening up private Higher Educational Institutions. Its requirements were set in terms of curricula and credit loads, requisite classroom and teaching facilities, and the number and qualification of academic staff. Since then various proclamations were passed regarding the licensing of private higher education institutions and their accreditation. The latest was Regulation Number 206/1997 that charged the Ministry of Trade and Industry with the responsibility of giving licenses. The Ministry of Education however retained the authority to accredit these institutions. Among other things, the regulation stated that "private higher education institutions should be assessed every two years so that its license is renewed before the beginning of the next academic year" (Desalegne 2004:70).

The proliferation of private Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia Post-1991 is staggering. Desalegne (2004:72) quotes data from the Ethiopian Privatization Agency where a total of 333 education projects with a capital outlay of 4.4 billion birr have been approved from 1993/94 to 2002/03. Much of the investment has of course gone to the establishment of many private higher education institutions. On a positive note, private higher education institutions in the country are contributing a lot in terms of enrollment. Ashcroft and Rayner (2004:1) stated, "Only in 2002/03 those private Higher Educational Institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education accounted for 24% of student enrollments". This figure is believed to increase in the years to come.

However, these institutions have a number of problems. They are mainly financed by tuition payments from students. This has affected their geographical distribution (they are disproportionately found in urban areas), the type of programs and training them offer (many are tuned towards trainings in accounting, business management, ICT etc…) and the quality and sustainability of their programs (changing programs and course offerings following trends in the market). Most of these institutions are housed in rented buildings many of which were not constructed for education purposes. They usually have inadequate equipment, facilities, and libraries. Still more, many of these private institutions rely on part time teaching staff and have a limited number of teaching staff who are employed on a full time basis. According to Wondwosen (2003:26), the reluctance to employ full time teaching staff arises from the fact that

these "institutions find it profitable to run their programs with part time professors and lecturers". For all these reasons, there is a lot of mistrust about the quality of education in these private Higher Educational Institutions. Just as many people appreciate the access private higher education institutions have offered to youngsters, others consider these institutions as " diploma mills" or "certificate shops" (Desalegne 2004:78)

Seen from this vantage point, a lot has to be done in order to promote the quality of private Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia. Ashcroft and Rayner (2004:3) suggest that "providing stakeholders with quality information" could be one major way of cultivating confidence amongst the general public. Stakeholders like the fee-paying public, potential employers as well as the government should see that private institutions add value to their students. This should particularly be the case if private Higher Educational Institutions seek assistance from the government. According to Ashcroft and Rayner (2004:4),

> It is no longer enough to argue that, if government wishes to achieve a quality system it must invest in it. As an example, it would be more convincing to argue, that at present, say, 75% of employers are happy with private HEI graduates, but many say they wish to see more IT competence: the private sector could then argue that with tax relief on or soft loans for technological products, the sector would aim to improve the employer satisfaction ratings by at least 10%.

According to Ashcroft and Rayner (2004), private higher education institutions should also be active in influencing the direction of the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA). This involves seeking "more autonomy [emphasis mine] to follow their individual mission and to define quality processes for themselves according to their circumstances (Ashcroft and Rayner, 2004:5)." As far as autonomy is concerned, we need to recognize that private institutions enjoy more autonomy and freedoms when compared with their public counterparts. This is mainly "because private institutions typically receive little, if any, public funds and because legal structures do NOT restrict most academic activities (Altbach, 1999:10)." On the other hand, many scholars are skeptical about the relative autonomy of these institutions. Some regard them as "elite" institutions both in terms of their student intake and staff profiles that exclude the ordinary African/Ethiopian. More often than not, these private institutions work to the detriment of public institutions leading to the "fragmentation of higher education systems, with intellectuals, in their search for economic and political opportunities, being drawn more and more towards the 'elite' institutions".[4] In the African context, A. Mama (xx: 16) argues, the marketisation of higher education has "undermined most of the pre-requisites for academic freedom and social responsibility." We can therefore conclude that debates about academic freedom, institutional autonomy and issues of financial and human resource management in private Higher Educational Institutions are substantively and contextually different from that of the public institutions in Ethiopia.

4. Challenges of Education in Ethiopia:

Ethiopia faces many historical, social and political obstacles that have restricted progress in education for years. According to UNESCO reviews, most people in Ethiopia feel that work is

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[4] Academic Conference on the "Problems and Challenges in Arab and African Countries", 10-11 September, 2005, Alexandria, Egypt

more important than education, so they start at a very early age with little to no education. Children in rural areas are less likely to go to school than children in urban areas. Though gradually improving, most rural families cannot afford to send their children to school because parents believe that while their children are in school they cannot contribute to the household chores and income. Social awareness that education is important is something that Ethiopia lacks but has improved gradually. There is a need to change the importance of education in the country's social structure, and children should be encouraged and required to attend school and become educated.

Corporal punishment is also an issue that has affected progress for centuries. The society of Ethiopia expects teachers and parents to use corporal punishment to maintain order and discipline. Most believe that through punishing children for bad habits they in turn learn good ones. Also since the mid-1970s there have been drastic losses of professionals who leave the country, mostly for economical reasons. Many educated Ethiopians seek higher salaries in foreign countries thus many of those who manage to finish higher education immigrate creating endless shortage of qualified personals and professionals in every sector of the country. As of 2006, there are more Ethiopia-trained doctors living in Chicago than in the entire country.

Given scarce resources of the developing nation of Ethiopia, the government bas determined that improvement of primary education is the best hope for its future. Yet, even at the primary level, children and teachers are confronted by problems not easily overcome. These include major economic barriers, early marriage and traditional female roles, attitudes toward education, preparation of teachers and classroom realities.

Basic Economic Barriers
Especially in rural Ethiopia, where the majority of the population lives, day-to-day economic realities seriously impede prospects for improving the education of very young children. The Ethiopian economy is based on agriculture, a sector of the economy that suffers from recurrent droughts and inefficient cultivation practices. Because of time factors, 45% of the population is below international poverty measures (CIA: World Factbook-Ethiopia, 2003). Thus, in order for many families to survive, children in rural areas are needed to help support the family by herding animals and assisting with the crops rather than attending school. In urban areas, on the other hand, this view has been changing. Since education is seen as one of the few means for economic improvement in the city, increasing numbers* of urban families now hire tutors at home to assist very young children in receiving better academic preparation in hopes they will be more successful in schools.

Early Marriage/Traditional Female Roles
Early marriage and traditional female roles generate still further barriers to early education. These traditions, though changing in towns and cities, are still evident among the vast majority of the population of rural Ethiopia. Families see early marriage as a way to improve the family's economic status, to strengthen ties between marrying families, to increase the likelihood that girls will be virgins at marriage, and to avoid the possibility of having an unmarried daughter later in life. These attitudes and values seriously impede the participation of females in education at nearly all levels. Although such views are beginning to change in the larger cities, it is not uncommon to see children (primarily females) married as early as ages 9-11. Along with such marriages are often early pregnancies and accompanying birth complications for child-mothers whose bodies are not mature enough to support pregnancy and childbirth. Such complications

often result in serious injury and/or death of both infants and mothers – placing even greater economic demands on survivors. Moreover, since girls tend to marry so early and are quickly relegated to a life of childcare and traditional chores, it is little wonder that families with such limited incomes are unwilling to invest financially in the education of females. To address this problem, the MOE has been working on ways to include formal discussion of such issues in emerging curricular material.[5]

Attitudes toward Education

Low educational attainment and aspirations of most parents pose another challenge facing early education. In a society where the literacy rate is 43%, the level of educational aspiration for children tends to be lower (CIA: World Factbook-Ethiopia, 2003). Further, parents who hope education will provide advancement opportunities for their children are unaware of decades of research strongly supporting play-oriented approaches to learning in the early grades over the traditional academic approaches (Isenberg and Quisenberry, 2001). During informal interviews conducted by the authors with a number of preschool teachers in 2001, one teacher depicted the feelings of many families us follows:

> Most families do not know the significance of preschool education in general and the role of play in educational life of children in particular. As a result of this, even those families who send their children to preschools asses the performance of their children in terms of their academic achievement, i.e., to what extent a child is able to count numbers, recite the alphabet, etc. That is one reason why most of the preschools follow teaching methods similar to the primary school children rather than emphasizing creative play.

> Lower educational aspirations for children might also be accounted for by the very remote probability of their children being admitted to higher education institutions on completion of secondary education. Currently, however, the government is opening new higher education institutions and expanding existing programs. Such expansion should increase the likelihood of admission of more students and give increasing numbers of students and parents greater hope that higher education pursuits will be rewarded.

Perceptions of Teaching as a Profession

As in many countries of the world, teaching young children in Ethiopia is considered among the lowest rungs of professions. Thus, comparatively low salaries result in little interest in teaching as a career path. As a result, after only 1 or 2 years of service, many new primary teachers leave the profession for higher paying jobs. Thus, new teachers often consider teaching as only a stepping-stone for future career opportunities.

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[5] Besides, the government through its legislative and executive branches has taken practical steps towards early marriage practices that the rate has declined very dramatically. However, the resilience of the institutions cannot be overstated. There had been a research endeavor in West Gojjam during the summer of 2009 in which, in an attempt to understand the community's understanding of masculinity and femininity, questions were included about marriage practices, in particular age at first marriage. Most have reported that everyone in the community gets married after age 18; but a curious note made by one participant in one of the focus group discussions highlighted the fact that people are reporting so for they assume if they have not done so, they would be reported to the police for going wrong on the law – which prohibits marriage under the age of 18. This fact has indicated to us that the institution is still being practiced, though with its clandestine nature being pushed to the underground by the active involvement of law enforcement offices.

Classroom Realities

Day-to-day classroom realities such as high student-teacher ratio, lack of school materials, curriculum concerns, and gender bias pose serious challenges to teachers as they begin their work. One such reality is the teacher-child ratio existing in most schools. In observations of Cycle I schools during seven site visits over the past 3 years, for example, authors observed classes with teacher-child ratios from 1:60 to 1:90. Such ratios certainly pale the complaints of teachers in most countries who express concerns about class sizes of 25 or 30 students.

In addition to teacher-child ratios, Abebe (1998) aptly describes current classroom realities regarding teaching materials:

> In elementary schools it is a common sight to observe one book shared among four to five students. In classrooms where children are sitting so close together that free movement is almost impossible, the teacher cannot move around to attend to individual students. He or she can only stand in front and lecture. The teaching and learning environment is so uninviting that both teachers and students are not motivated at all. It is a situation in which teachers have lost their enthusiasm to teach, and students have lost their interest to learn (9).

In addition to the above physical realities of class-rooms, under the most recent reforms, teachers are given additional responsibilities of adapting the national curriculum to specialized needs of local regions. Since over 80 different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, even this simple curricular innovation poses a major burden on already overextended teachers.

Chapter 3: Politics in Ethiopian Society

In his chapter, we will discuss about the peculiar characteristics of politics and political organization in Ethiopia in two sections. In the first section, we will discuss the political history of Ethiopian state divided under four epochs. In the section, we will discus how politics and governance is organized in the incumbent government to highlight the character of politics and its claim for social base.

Let us start with the first section.

A. Political History of Ethiopian State

Some have divvied the political history of Ethiopian society and/or state into four epochs which include the following: (1) Prehistoric and Axumite Ethiopia; (2) Medieval Period; (3) Early Modern Times; and (4) Modern Times. It might be a good idea to frame our discussion on based

on this classification of Ethiopian political history based on the character of relationship between the state and civil society and the process of modernization.

1. Prehistoric and Axumite Ethiopia:

Ethiopia is widely considered one of the oldest human inhabited areas, if not the oldest according to some scientific findings, which is possible: Ethnographic migration studies, Anthropological artifactual discoveries, Anthropological skeletal remains and Genetic variegation radiation analyses all lend evidence to this school of thought. As the Washington Post's David Brown put it, "the new research further shows that genetic diversity declines steadily the farther one's ancestors traveled from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia". Lucy, discovered in the Awash Valley of Ethiopia's Afar region, is considered the world's second oldest, but most complete, and best preserved adult Australopithecine fossil. Lucy's species is named Australopithecus afarensis, which means 'southern ape of Afar', after the Ethiopian region where the discovery was made. Lucy is estimated to have lived in Ethiopia 3.2 million years ago. There have been many other notable fossil findings in the country including the recently found potential early *hominin Ardipithicus ramidus*, *Ardi.*

Around the eighth century BC, a kingdom known as Dʿmt was established in northern Ethiopia and Eritrea; its capital was around the current town of Yeha, situated in northern Ethiopia. Most modern historians consider this civilization to be a native African one, although Sabaean-influenced because of the latter's hegemony of the Red Sea, while others view Dʿmt as the result of a mixture of Sabaeans and indigenous peoples.

By ca. 7000 BC., Cushitic- and Omotic-speaking peoples were present in Ethiopia, after which further linguistic diversification gave rise to peoples who spoke Agew, Sidamo, Somali, Oromo, and numerous Omotic tongues. Initially hunters and gathers, these peoples eventually domesticated indigenous plants, including the grasses *teff* and *eleusine*, and *enset*, a root crop, kept cattle and other animals, and established agricultural patterns of livelihood that were to be characteristic of the region into contemporary times. By at least the late first millennium BC, it appears, the Agew occupied much of the northern highlands, whereas the Sidama inhabited the central and southern highlands. Both played important roles in subsequent historical developments.

However, Ge'ez, the ancient Semitic language of Ethiopia, is now thought not to have derived from Sabaean (also South Semitic). There is evidence of a Semitic-speaking presence in Ethiopia and Eritrea at least as early as 2000 BC. Sabaean influence is now thought to have been minor, limited to a few localities, and disappearing after a few decades or a century, perhaps representing a trading or military colony in some sort of symbiosis or military alliance with the Ethiopian civilization of Dʿmt or some other proto-Axumite state.

After the fall of Dʿmt in the fourth century BC, the plateau came to be dominated by smaller successor kingdoms, until the rise of one of these kingdoms during the first century BC, the Axumite Empire, ancestor of medieval and modern Ethiopia, which was able to reunite the area. They established bases on the northern highlands of the Ethiopian Plateau and from there expanded southward. The Persian religious figure Mani listed Aksum with Rome, Persia, and China as one of the four great powers of his time.

During the first millennium BC, Sabaeans from southwest Arabia migrated across the Red Sea and settled in the extreme northern plateau. They brought with them their Semitic speech and writing system and a knowledge of stone architecture. The Sabaeans settled among the Agew

and created a series of small political units that by the beginning of the Christian era had been incorporated into the Axumite Empire, with its capital at Aksum. The Axumite Empire was a trading state that dominated the Red Sea and commerce between the Nile Valley and Arabia and between the Roman Empire and India. Centered in the highlands of present-day Eritrea and Tigray, it stretched at its height from the Nile Valley in Sudan to Southwest Arabia. The Axumites used Greek as a trading language, but a new Semitic language, Ge'ez, arose that is thought to be, at least indirectly, ancestral to modern Amharic and Tigrinya. The Axumites also constructed stone palaces and public buildings, erected large funerary obelisks, and minted coins. In the early fourth century, Christianity was introduced in its Byzantine Orthodox guise. Although it took centuries before Christianity gained a firm hold, in time Orthodoxy became the embodiment of Ethiopian identity. During the seventh century A.D., Aksum began a long decline. By the eleventh century, the political center of the kingdom had shifted southward into Agew territory, and a non-Axumite dynasty, the Zagwé, had assumed control. Aksum faded, but it bequeathed to its successors its Semitic language, Christianity, and the concept of a multi-ethnic empire-state ruled by a "king of kings."

2. The Medieval Period:

From Axumite times, there began a process of cultural and linguistic fusion between the northern Semites and the indigenous Agew that was to continue over the course of a millennium. This process gave rise to northern Christianized Agew, who formed themselves into the Tigray and Amhara ethnic groups. Zagwé dynasty ruled many parts of modern Ethiopia and Eritrea from approximately 1137 to 1270. The name of the dynasty comes from the Cushitic speaking Agew people of northern Ethiopia. From 1270 AD on for many centuries, Solomonic dynasty ruled the Ethiopian Empire. The Zagwé placed their capital, Lalibela, far south of Aksum and constructed there and elsewhere across their domains a remarkable ensemble of rock-hewn churches. In the late thirteenth century, an Amhara dynasty moved the center of the kingdom still farther south into Shewa in the southernmost part of the northern highlands. During the succeeding centuries, the Amhara kingdom, a military state, was often at war either with Sidama kingdoms to the west or with Muslim principalities to the east.

In the early fifteenth century Ethiopia sought to make diplomatic contact with European kingdoms for the first time since Axumite times. This proved to be an important development, for when the Empire was subjected to the attacks of the Adal General and Imam, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (called "Gragñ", or "the Left-handed") at the head of a Muslim Afar-Somali army in 1529, Portugal assisted the Ethiopian emperor by sending weapons and four hundred men, who helped his son Gelawdewos defeat Ahmad and re-establish his rule. During the 1530s, this Muslim force nearly succeeded in destroying the Amhara-Tigray state and Christianity. At almost the same time, the Oromo were in the midst of a decades-long migration from their homeland in the far southern lowlands. The Oromo moved north through the southern highlands, bypassing the Sidama on the west, and into the central highlands, where they settled in the center and west on land, some of which had formerly belonged to the Amhara.

This Ethiopian–Adal War was also one of the first proxy wars in the region as the Ottoman Empire and Portugal took sides in the conflict. The Jesuits who arrived to minister to Portuguese soldiers, who had helped defeat the Muslims, stayed back in the kingdom. As part of their mission, however, the Jesuits attempted to convert the Orthodox Ethiopians to Roman Catholicism. They met with some initial success. However, when Emperor Susenyos converted to

Roman Catholicism in 1624, years of revolt and civil unrest followed resulting in thousands of deaths. The Jesuit missionaries had offended the Orthodox faith of the local Ethiopians, and on 25 June 1632 Susenyos's son, Emperor Fasiledes, declared the state religion to again be Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and expelled the Jesuit missionaries and other Europeans.

3. The Early Modern Times:

All of this contributed to Ethiopia's isolation from 1755 to 1855, called the Zemene Mesafint or "Age of Princes". The Emperors became figureheads, controlled by warlords like Ras Mikael Sehul of Tigray, Ras Wolde Selassie of Tigray, and by the Oromo Yejju dynasty, such as Ras Gugsa of Begemidir. All this ensued before the era of reconsolidation and cultural flowering ensued during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries following the founding of a new capital at Gondar. Ethiopian isolationism ended following a British mission that concluded an alliance between the two nations; however, it was not until 1855 that Ethiopia was completely united and the power in the Emperor restored, beginning with the reign of Emperor Tewodros II. Upon his ascent, despite still large centrifugal forces, he began modernizing Ethiopia and recentralizing power in the Emperor, and Ethiopia began to take part in world affairs once again. Most scholars trace the origins of the modern history of Ethiopia to his reign.

But Emperor Tewodros suffered several rebellions inside his empire. Northern Oromo militias, Tigrean rebellion and the constant incursion of Ottoman Empire and Egyptian forces near the Red Sea brought the weakening and the final downfall of Emperor Tewodros II, who died after his last battle with a British expeditionary force. His throne was succeeded by Emperor Yohannes IV.

The 1880s were marked by the Berlin Conference and modernization in Ethiopia, when the Italians began to vie with the British for influence in bordering regions. Asseb, a port near the southern entrance of the Red Sea, was bought in March 1870 from the local Afar sultan, vassal to the Ethiopian Emperor, by an Italian company, which by 1890 led to the Italian colony of Eritrea. Conflicts between the two countries resulted in the Battle of Adwa in 1896, whereby the Ethiopians defeated Italy and remained independent, under the rule of Menelik II. Italy and Ethiopia signed a provisional treaty of peace on 26 October 1896, although the Italians were allowed to retain the frontier province facing the Red Sea, which they named Eritrea.

During the 1880s and 1990s, Sahle Selassie, king of Shewa, and later as Emperor Menelik II, with the help of Ras Gobena's Shewan Oromo militia, began expanding his kingdom to the south and east, expanding into areas that had not been held since the invasion of Ahmed Gragñ, and other areas that had never been under his rule, resulting in the borders of Ethiopia of today, with its capital at Addis Ababa. He also opened the country to Western influence and technology, for example, by establishing diplomatic relations with several European powers and by authorizing construction of a railway from Addis Ababa to Djibouti on the Red Sea.

The early twentieth century was marked by the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I, who came to power after Iyasu V was deposed. It was he who undertook the modernization of Ethiopia, from 1916, when he was made a Ras and Regent (Inderasé) for Zewditu I and became the de facto ruler of the Ethiopian Empire. Following Zewditu's death he was made Emperor on 2nd November 1930. Haile Selassie's reign as emperor of Ethiopia is the best known and perhaps most influential in the nation's history. He is seen by Rastafarians as Jah incarnate.

Emperor Haile Selassie was born from parents of the three main Ethiopian ethnicities of Oromo, Amhara and Gurage. He played a leading role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity,

The independence of Ethiopia was interrupted by the Second Italo-Abyssinian War and Italian occupation (1936–1941). During this time of attack, Haile Selassie appealed to the League of Nations in 1935, delivering an address that made him a worldwide figure, and the 1935 Time magazine Man of the Year. The Italians never controlled large parts of the countryside and at times ruled harshly. Nonetheless, they constructed public buildings, built a rudimentary road system throughout the country, and in general sought to modernize the country. Following the entry of Italy into World War II, British Empire forces, together with patriot Ethiopian fighters, liberated Ethiopia in the course of the East African Campaign in 1941. This was followed by British recognition of full sovereignty, (i.e. without any special British privileges), with the signing of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement in December 1944. During 1942 and 1943 there was an Italian guerrilla war in Ethiopia. On 26 August 1942 Haile Selassie I issued a proclamation outlawing slavery. After World War II, Haile Selassie pursued a policy of centralization, but he also continued to introduce change in areas such as public education, the army, and government administration. The slow pace of his reform efforts, however, fostered discontent that led to an attempted coup in 1960.

In 1952 Haile Selassie orchestrated the federation with Eritrea which he dissolved in 1962. This annexation sparked the Eritrean War of Independence. Although Haile Selassie was seen as a national hero, opinion within Ethiopia turned against him owing to the worldwide oil crisis of 1973, food shortages, uncertainty regarding the succession, border wars, and discontent in the middle class created through modernization.

In early 1974, a mutiny among disgruntled lower-ranking army officers set a process in motion that led to the fall of the imperial government. The mutineers were joined by urban groups disappointed by the slow pace of economic and political reforms and aroused by the impact of a devastating famine that the government failed to acknowledge or address. Over a period of several months, the rebellious officers arrested the emperor's ministers and associates, and in September removed the emperor himself. Finally, Soviet-backed Marxist-Leninist military junta, the "Derg" led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, and established a one-party communist state which was called People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

4. The Modern Time:

a. The Military Regime:

The Derg pursued a socialist agenda but governed in military style, and it looked to the Soviet Union as a model and for military support. The ensuing regime suffered several coups, uprisings, wide-scale drought, and a huge refugee problem. It nationalized rural and urban land and placed local control in the hands of citizen committees; it also devised controversial policies of peasant resettlement in response to another devastating drought in 1984–85 and of "villagization," ostensibly to improve security. In 1977, there was the Ogaden War, when Somalia captured the part of the Ogaden region, but Ethiopia was able to recapture the Ogaden after receiving military aid from the USSR, Cuba, South Yemen, East Germany and North Korea, including around 15,000 Cuban combat troops. Hundreds of thousands were killed as a result of the red terror, forced deportations, or from the use of hunger as a weapon under Mengistu's rule. The Red

Terror was carried out in response to what the government termed "White Terror", supposedly a chain of violent events, assassinations and killings carried by the opposition. But, thereafter, resistance against the Derg arose in all parts of the country, most notably in the north.

In the beginning of 1980s, a series of famines hit Ethiopia that affected around 8 million people, leaving 1 million dead. Insurrections against Communist rule sprang up particularly in the northern regions of Tigray and Eritrea. In Eritrea, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) pursued a campaign against the 1962 annexation and eventually sought separation from Ethiopia. In Tigre, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) sought regional autonomy and the overthrow of the Derg. In 1989, the Tigrean Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) merged with other ethnically based opposition movements to form the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Concurrently the Soviet Union began to retreat from building World Communism under Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika policies, marking a dramatic reduction in aid to Ethiopia from Socialist bloc countries. This resulted in even more economic hardship and the collapse of the military in the face of determined onslaughts by guerrilla forces in the north. The Collapse of Communism in general, and in Eastern Europe during the Revolutions of 1989, coincided with the Soviet Union stopping aid to Ethiopia altogether in 1990. The strategic outlook for Mengistu quickly deteriorated.

b. The EPRDF Regime:

In May 1991, EPRDF forces advanced on Addis Ababa and the Soviet Union did not intervene to save the government side. Mengistu fled the country to asylum in Zimbabwe. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, composed of an 87-member Council of Representatives and guided by a national charter that functioned as a transitional constitution, was set up. In June 1992, the Oromo Liberation Front withdrew from the government; in March 1993, members of the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Coalition and the (Somali) Ogaden National Liberation Front withdrew and resorted once more to armed insurgency. In 1994, a new constitution was written that formed a bicameral legislature and a judicial system. In 1993 a referendum was held and supervised by the UN mission UNOVER, with universal suffrage and conducted both in and outside Eritrea (among Eritrean communities in the Diaspora), on whether Eritreans wanted independence or unity with Ethiopia. Over 99% of the Eritrean people voted for independence which was declared on May 24, 1993.

The EPRDF committed itself to multi-party democracy and to economic reconstruction, for which it relied on international donor assistance. The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was adopted in 1994. In May 1998, a border dispute with Eritrea led to the Eritrean-Ethiopian War that lasted until June 2000. This has hurt the nation's economy, but strengthened the ruling coalition. Despite international arbitration, the status of the border in mid-2005 remained stalemated and relations between the two nations, hostile.

On 15 May 2005, Ethiopia held another multiparty election, which was a highly disputed one with some opposition groups claiming fraud. Though the Carter Center approved the preelection conditions, it has expressed its dissatisfaction with postelection matters. The 2005 EU election observers continued to accuse the ruling party of vote rigging. Many from the international community are divided about the issue with Irish officials accusing the 2005 EU election observers of corruption for the "inaccurate leaks from the 2005 EU election monitoring body which led the opposition to wrongly believe they had been cheated of victory." In general, the opposition parties gained more than 200 parliamentary seats compared to the just 12 in the

2000 elections. Despite most opposition representatives joining the parliament, some leaders of the CUD party were imprisoned following the post-election violence. Amnesty International considered them "prisoners of conscience" and they were subsequently released.

The coalition of opposition parties and some individuals that was established in 2009 to oust at the general election in 2010 the regime of the TPLF, Meles Zenawi's party that has been in power since 1991, published its 65-page manifesto in Addis Ababa on October 10, 2009.

Some of the eight member parties of this Ethiopian Forum for Democratic Dialogue (FDD or Medrek in Amharic) include the Oromo Federalist Congress (organized by the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement and the Oromo People's Congress), the Arena Tigray (organized by former members of the ruling party TPLF), the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ, whose leader is imprisoned), and the Coalition of Somali Democratic Forces.

2. Politics and Governance

The current politics of Ethiopia takes place in a framework of a federal parliamentary republic, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government. Executive power is exercised by the government. Federal legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament. On the basis of Article 78 of the 1994 Ethiopian Constitution, the Judiciary is completely independent of the executive and the legislature.

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was adopted by the country's transitional government in December 1994 and came into force in August 1995. At that time, power also was formally transferred to the newly elected legislature, the Federal Parliamentary Assembly. The constitution provides for a parliamentary form of government and an administration based on nine states. It enshrines the separation of church and state and basic human rights and freedoms, and guarantees that all Ethiopian languages will enjoy equal state recognition, although Amharic is specified as the working language of the federal government. Ethiopia has a tradition of highly personal and strongly centralized government, a pattern the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (the present government) has followed despite constitutional limits on federal power.

Ethiopia's present constitution was created and ratified in 1994 by a constituent assembly. The constitution establishes Ethiopia as a federal republic with a parliamentary form of government.

The government has three branches. The legislative branch is made up of a bicameral parliament; the upper chamber is the House of the Federation (108 seats); the lower chamber is the House of People's Representatives (548 seats). Members of the upper chamber are elected by the states' parliamentary assemblies, whereas members of the lower chamber are elected by popular vote. All recognized national groups are guaranteed representation in the upper house; representation in the lower chamber is on the basis of population, with special set-asides for minorities. Terms in both chambers are five years, with elections last held in May 2000 and scheduled next for May 2005. Legislative power is vested in the House of People's Representatives.

The executive branch includes the president, prime minister, Council of State, and Council of Ministers. The president is elected by both legislative chambers for a six-year term. The leader of the largest party in the lower chamber becomes prime minister, who submits cabinet ministers for the chamber's approval. All ministers serve for the duration of the

legislative session. Executive power is in the hands of the prime minister, who is also the commander in chief of the armed forces.

The judicial branch is composed of federal and state courts. The Federal Supreme Court is the highest court and exercises jurisdiction over all federal matters; lesser federal courts hear cases from the states. The president and vice president of the Federal Supreme Court are recommended by the prime minister and approved by the lower chamber of the legislature.

Before 1996, Ethiopia was divided into 13 provinces, many derived from historical regions. Ethiopia now has a tiered government system consisting of a federal government overseeing ethnically based regional countries, zones, districts (*Woredas*), and neighborhoods (*Kebele*). Ethiopia is administratively divided into nine ethnically based states: Afar, Amhara, Banishangul/Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromiya, Somali, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples, as well as two special city administrations: Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The states are subdivided into zones, districts, and sub-districts.

With regards to the provincial and local organization of the system of government, each of the nine states has its own parliamentary assembly, which elects representatives to the upper chamber of the federal parliament, the House of the Federation. Each has taxing powers and its own budget, but in practice the assemblies have had to rely on the central government for funding.

About the status of judicial and legal System, in 2004, the United States Department of State reported that the judiciary remains weak and overburdened, with a significant backlog of cases. Although the judicial and legal system are beginning to show signs of independence, routine abuses or neglect by the government of rights afforded under the Ethiopian constitution occur, and severe shortages of personnel and funding hamper effective operation of the courts. The government continues to decentralize and restructure the judicial system and has established courts at the state, zonal, district, and local levels. The structure of the state judiciary mirrors that of the federal judiciary. Efforts to strengthen the state court system mean that regional cases now are more likely to have a local hearing.

About the electoral System, elections for state assemblies and for the House of People's Representatives are by universal suffrage at age 18 and secret ballot. A National Election Board prepares and conducts elections for federal and state offices. According to international and local observers, the 2000 national elections were generally fair and free in most areas, despite reports of serious irregularities in some areas.

The various political parties are predominantly ethnically based. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is a coalition of ethnically based parties founded by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in 1989 to unite insurgent groups fighting against the military government. The TPLF was and remains the dominant member, and since 1991 it has provided most of Ethiopia's military and political leadership. The TPLF's most important partners are the Amhara National Democratic Movement and the Oromo People's Democratic Organization. A large number of other parties, sponsored by the TPLF and often labeled "democratic organizations," are allied with the EPRDF and hold seats in parliament. In the national elections held in 2000, the EPRDF and affiliated parties carried 519 of 548 seats in the lower chamber of parliament. The EPDRF and affiliated parties also control all regional parliamentary assemblies by a large margin. A number of opposition parties exist and are permitted to contest elections. These include the Joint Action for Democracy in Ethiopia and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition, both composed of several member groups united by their opposition to the EPRDF.

The role of the mass media in Ethiopian political seen has been very far from being controversial. Radio and television remain under the control of the Ethiopian government. Nine radio broadcast stations, eight AM and one shortwave, are licensed to operate. The major radio broadcasting stations (all AM) are Radio Ethiopia, Radio Torch (private), Radio Voice of One Free Ethiopia, and the Voice of the Revolution of Tigray. The single television broadcast network is Ethiopian Television. In keeping with government policy, radio broadcasts occur in a variety of languages. Print media, because of high poverty levels, low literacy rates, and poor distribution outside of the capital, serve only a small portion of the population. The paucity of distribution is mirrored by a scarcity of diversity in the official press. Since 1991 private newspapers and magazines have started to appear, and this sector of the media market, despite heavy-handed regulation, continues to grow. The Ethiopian government has a history of restricting the freedom of the press, and during the last few years has imprisoned a number of independent journalists. In 2003 the government suspended the only independent media organization in the nation, the Ethiopian Free Journalists Association, charging it with failure to comply with the state's onerous bureaucratic regulations. Major daily newspapers include *Addis Zemen*, the *Daily Monitor*, and the *Ethiopian Herald*.

Foregone we have seen what the internal dynamics looks about governance and politics in Ethiopia. Let us turn to Ethiopian foreign relations Ethiopia has engaged in international diplomacy with its neighbors since at least the mid-seventeenth century and with the European world since the mid-nineteenth century. It was a member of the League of Nations and a founding member of the United Nations (UN). Under Haile Selassie I, the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa located their headquarters in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia participated in UN missions in Korea (1950–53) and Congo (1960–64) and, more recently, in Burundi, Liberia, and Rwanda. Since 1991, and leaving aside Eritrea and Somalia, Ethiopia's relations with the African and European communities in general have been constructive and stable. Relations with Eritrea have been hostile since the peace agreement that ended the 1998–2000 war over their border. An international commission—the Eritrean-Ethiopian Boundary Commission—proposed a demarcation of the border in April 2002, but Ethiopia has requested modifications of the findings, a position Eritrea rejects. The issue remains unresolved, leading some observers to speculate about a resumption of hostilities.

Since 1998, Ethiopia has attempted to isolate Eritrea from its African neighbors and to maintain its political dominance in the Horn of Africa region. In an effort to develop a regional bloc, Ethiopia settled a long-lasting border dispute with Sudan, returning some land in order to secure access to Port Sudan as an alternative to Djibouti. In Somalia, Ethiopia continues to support groups opposed to the transitional government, and it has sent its forces into the country to track down Ethiopian dissidents and to support friendly factions. Ethiopia's relations with Djibouti, which has handled all of Ethiopia's land commerce since the loss of Eritrean ports, are by necessity close, despite disagreements over transit fees and policy toward Somalia. Geopolitical events, notably the inception of the U.S. war on terrorism, have served to strengthen Ethiopia's relations with the United States and other Western nations, as the country is now regarded as a key ally in the effort to constrain the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. In 2003 Ethiopia joined Sudan and Yemen in an agreement ostensibly about trade but that has strategic implications for Eritrea. Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda are currently engaged in talks about a new agreement to share the waters of the Nile.

Another aspect of Ethiopia's relations with the external world is its signatory or satisfying membership various regional, continental and international agreements and

conventions. Ethiopia is a member of the following organizations for international cooperation: the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labor Organization, the Nonaligned Movement, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the United Nations (UN) (including subsidiary UN agencies such as the Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the World Health Organization), and the World Trade Organization. Ethiopia is also a member of the following international lending institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), the International Development Association, the International Finance Corporation, and the International Monetary Fund. Finally, Ethiopia is a member of the following multilateral African organizations: the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States, the African Development Bank, and the African Union.

The major International Treaties that Ethiopia is a party include the following: the Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous, or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol); Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste; Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Ethiopia has signed, but not ratified, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (The Treaty of Pelindaba); Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques; and United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Ethiopia is not a party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

Chapter 4: Economy of Ethiopian Society

In this chapter, we will discussion about the general economic situation of the Ethiopian economy and its interdependence with the various aspects of the society and its characters at it manifests itself in the rural-urban contrast and rapid urbanization, and its ability to create jobs for the majority of the working age population. We will start with a general overview of Ethiopian economy.

1. General Overview of Ethiopian Economy:

Ethiopia is often ironically referred to as the "water tower" of Eastern Africa because of the many (14 major) rivers that pour off the high tableland. It also has the greatest water reserves in Africa, but few irrigation systems in place to use it. Just 1% is used for power production and 1.5% for irrigation (nonetheless, there have been improvements with the expansion of commercial agriculture and hydropower development). Historically, Ethiopia's feudal and communist economic structure has always kept it one rainless season away from devastating droughts. But Ethiopia has a big potential and it is one of the most fertile countries. According to the New York Times, Ethiopia "could easily become the breadbasket for much of Europe if her agriculture were better organized."

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. The basis of the economy is rainfed agriculture, which means that crop production fluctuates widely according to yearly rainfall patterns, leaving the country subject to recurrent and often catastrophic drought. Droughts have increased in severity since the 1970s in step not only with shortfalls in crop production but also with burgeoning population growth. Indeed, the increase in population has outstripped the productive capacity of the agricultural sector, creating a structural food deficit even in times of normal or superior production.

Services, including retail trade, public administration, defense, and transportation, constitute the second largest component of the economy. Manufacturing and mining are a distant third and fourth. Within the budget, defense outlays have been high since the early 1990s, most recently because of war with Eritrea from 1998 to 2000, although they have declined since then. The budget has been in deficit since at least the late 1990s, with expenditures regularly exceeding revenues. Shortfalls have been covered by grants and loans from international lending institutions. Ethiopia is heavily dependent on international donor largesse, particularly in times of drought.

Since the early 1990s, the country has received financial support for economic reforms from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In 2001 it qualified for debt reduction under these institutions' heavily indebted poor countries initiative. On the whole, the reform process has been beneficial; government revenue has risen, and outlays have been redirected from defense to education, health, and infrastructure. Still, economic performance suffers from hindrances such as public ownership of farmland, low levels of investment, corruption in high levels of the government, and dependence on foreign finance. The United Nations and the World Bank maintain that without immediate steps to deal with a burgeoning population, large-scale environmental degradation, soil exhaustion, and rural land-holding policies, Ethiopia will become permanently reliant upon donor largesse just to feed itself.

Various reports by the government have, alternatively depicted Ethiopia registering a fast-growing annual GDP and it was the fastest-growing non-oil-dependent African nation in

2007 and 2008. Since 1991, there have been attempts to improve the economy; however, there has been some political opposition to the policies as well as a 2008 drought which slowed progress. The effectiveness of these policies is reflected in the ten-percent yearly economic growth from 2003-2008. Despite these economic improvements, urban and rural poverty remains an issue in the country.

Largely because of the long-term demands of economic and social development and the short-term impact of recurrent drought, government expenditures have regularly exceeded revenues since the early 1990s. Much of the difference has been made up by foreign assistance. Government revenue has been rising steadily since the late 1990s, reflecting, among other measures, recently improved tax-collection procedures and the substitution of a value-added tax in January 2003 for the former sales tax on transactions of larger enterprises. On the spending side, there has been a marked shift in funding from defense to economic and social programs since 2000 and the conclusion of the war with Eritrea. For 2003/4, revenue and foreign grants were estimated to have reached ca. US$1.7 billion, up from ca. US$1.5 billion in 2001/2; spending was estimated at ca. US$2.2 billion, up from ca. US$2 billion in 2001/2. For 2004/, revenue was projected to increase by almost 20 percent, reflecting further rises in both domestic revenues and foreign grants, whereas spending was expected to increase by 14 percent, reflecting increases in outlays for regional administration, infrastructure, and poverty alleviation. Deficits for 2003/ and 2004/5 were in the range of ca. US$500,000.

Agriculture is the most important sector of Ethiopia's economy, constituting nearly 40 percent of gross domestic product. The sector provides by far the largest percentage of exports and employs up to 80 percent of the population. About 20 percent of potential arable land is actually cultivated, almost all of it dependent on rainfall. Many other economic activities depend on agriculture, including marketing, processing, and export of agricultural products. Production is overwhelmingly by small-scale farmers and enterprises and a large part of commodity exports are provided by the small agricultural cash-crop sector. Farming is in the hands of peasants, who cultivate individual plots. The Ethiopian constitution defines the right to own land as belonging only to "the state and the people", but citizens may only lease land (up to 99 years), and are unable to mortgage or sell. Renting of land for a maximum of twenty years is allowed and this is expected to ensure that land goes to the most productive user. In the highlands, grains (barley, corn, teff, and wheat) as well as pulses and oilseeds are the major crops; at lower elevations, sorghum and sugarcane are favored. Ethiopia is home to an estimated 7 million pastoralists who tend a large number of livestock—a survey in 2003 counted 35 million cattle, 25 million sheep, and 18 million goats. A large portion of them are found in the dry lowlands of the east, southeast, and south that are suited to pastoralism but not farming. Two bush crops flourish in the south—coffee, the major export earner, in the southern highlands, and chat, a mild stimulant that is also exported, in the southeastern lowlands. The government has announced plans to boost both grain and livestock production in an effort to address the problem of chronic food shortages. Ethiopia has no significant fishing or forestry industries. Deforestation and destructive farming practices have led to increasing soil erosion and degradation during the last 30 years, especially in the northern highlands. Recurrent droughts and livestock disease have had a severe impact on pastoralism in the southeast and south.

Industry and manufacturing sector constitutes about 4 percent of the overall economy, although it has shown some growth and diversification in recent years. Much of it is concentrated in Addis Ababa. Food and beverages constitute some 40 percent of the sector, but textiles and

leather are also important, the latter especially for the export market. A program to privatize state-owned enterprises has been underway since the late 1990s.

2. Urbanization in Ethiopia:

Ethiopia was under-urbanized, even by African standards. In the late 1980s, only about 11 percent of the population lived in urban areas of at least 2,000 residents. There were hundreds of communities with 2,000 to 5,000 people, but these were primarily extensions of rural villages without urban or administrative functions. Thus, the level of urbanization would be even lower if one used strict urban structural criteria. Ethiopia's relative lack of urbanization is the result of the country's history of agricultural self-sufficiency, which has reinforced rural peasant life. Population growth, migration, and urbanization are all straining both governments' and ecosystems' capacity to provide people with basic services. Urbanization has steadily been increasing in Ethiopia, with two periods of significantly rapid growth: first, in 1936–1941 during the Italian occupation of Mussolini's fascist regime, and from 1967 to 1975 when the populations of urban centers tripled.

In 1936, Italy annexed Ethiopia, building infrastructure to connect major cities, and a dam providing power and water. This along with the influx of Italians and laborers was the major cause of rapid growth during this period. Such a pace of urban development continued until the 1935 Italian invasion. Urban growth was fairly rapid during and after the Italian occupation of 1936-41. The second period of growth was from 1967 to 1975 when rural populations migrated to urban centers seeking work and better living conditions. Urbanization accelerated during this period, when the average annual growth rate was about 6.3 percent. Urban growth was especially evident in the northern half of Ethiopia, where most of the major towns are located.

This pattern slowed after to the 1975 Land Reform program instituted by the government provided incentives for people to stay in rural areas. As people moved from rural areas to the cities, there were fewer people to grow food for the population. The Land Reform Act was meant to increase agriculture since food production was not keeping up with population growth over the period of 1970–1983. The program proliferated the formation of peasant associations – large villages based on agriculture. The act did lead to an increase in food production, although there is debate over the cause; it may be related to weather conditions more than the reform act.

Addis Ababa was home to about 35 percent of the country's urban population in 1987. Another 7 percent resided in Asmara, the second largest city. Major industrial, commercial, governmental, educational, health, and cultural institutions were located in these two cities, which together were home to about 2 million people, or one out of twenty-five Ethiopians. Nevertheless, many small towns had emerged as well. In 1970 there were 171 towns with populations of 2,000 to 20,000; this total had grown to 229 by 1980.

The period 1967-75 saw rapid growth of relatively new urban centers. The population of six towns – Akaki, Arba Minch, Awassa, Bahir Dar, Jijiga, and Shashemene – more than tripled, and that of eight others more than doubled. Awassa, Arba Minch, Metu, and Goba were newly designated capitals of administrative regions and important agricultural centers. Awassa, capital of Sidamo, had a lakeshore site and convenient location on the Addis Ababa-Nairobi highway. Bahir Dar was a newly planned city on Lake Tana and the site of several industries and a polytechnic institute. Akaki and Asseb were growing into important industrial towns, while Jijiga and Shashemene had become communications and service centers.

Urban centers that experienced moderate growth tended to be more established towns, such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, and Debre Zeit. A few old provincial capitals, such as Gondar, also experienced moderate growth, but others, such as Harar, Dese, Debre Markos, and Jimma, had slow growth rates because of competition from larger cities. By the 1990s, Harar was being overshadowed by Dire Dawa, Dese by Kembolcha, and Debre Markos by Bahir Dar.

Overall, the rate of urban growth declined from 1975 to 1987. With the exception of Asseb, Arba Minch, and Awassa, urban centers grew an average of about 40 percent over that twelve-year period. This slow growth is explained by several factors. Rural-to-urban migration had been largely responsible for the rapid expansion between 1967 and 1975, whereas natural population growth may have been mostly responsible for urban expansion between 1975 and 1984. The 1975 land reform program provided incentives and opportunities for peasants and other potential migrants to stay in rural areas. Restrictions on travel, lack of employment, housing shortages, and social unrest in some towns during the 1975-80 period also contributed to a decline in rural-to-urban migration.

Although the male and female populations were about equal, men outnumbered women in rural areas. More women migrated to the urban centers for a variety of reasons, including increased job opportunities.

As a result of intensified warfare in the period 1988-91, all urban centers received a large influx of population, resulting in severe overcrowding, shortages of housing and water, overtaxed social services, and unemployment. In addition to beggars and maimed persons, the new arrivals comprised large numbers of young people. These included not only primary and secondary school students but also an alarming number of orphans and street children, estimated at well over 100,000. Although all large towns shared in this influx, Addis Ababa, as the national capital, was most affected. This situation underscored the huge social problems that the political leaders had neglected for far too long. Urban populations have continued to grow with an 8.1% increase from 1975 to 2000.

3. Rural versus Urban Life

Migration to urban areas is usually motivated by the hope of better living conditions. In peasant associations daily life is a struggle to survive. About 16% of the population in Ethiopia is living on less than 1 dollar per day (2008). Only 65% of rural households in Ethiopia consume the World Health Organization's minimum standard of food per day (2,200 kilocalories), with 42% of children under 5 years old being underweight. Most poor families (75%) share their sleeping quarters with livestock, and 40% of children sleep on the floor, where nighttime temperatures average 5 degrees Celsius in the cold season. The average family size is six or seven, living in a 30-square-meter mud and thatch hut, with less than two hectares of land to cultivate. These living conditions are deplorable, but are the daily lives of peasant associations.

The peasant associations face a cycle of poverty. Since the landholdings are so small, farmers cannot allow the land to lay fallow, which reduces soil fertility. This land degradation reduces the production of fodder for livestock, which causes low milk yields. Since the community burns livestock manure as fuel, rather than plowing the nutrients back into the land, the crop production is reduced. The low productivity of agriculture leads to inadequate incomes for farmers, hunger, malnutrition and disease. These unhealthy farmers have a hard time working the land and the productivity drops further.

Although conditions are drastically better in cities, all of Ethiopia suffers from poverty, and poor sanitation. In the capital city of Addis Ababa, 55% of the population lives in slums. Although there are some wealthy neighborhoods with mansions, most people make their houses using whatever materials are available, with walls made of mud or wood. Only 12% of homes have cement tiles or floors. Sanitation is the most pressing need in the city, with most of the population lacking access to waste treatment facilities. This contributes to the spread of illness through unhealthy water.

Despite the living conditions in the cities, the people of Addis Ababa are much better off than people living in the peasant associations owing to their educational opportunities. Unlike rural children, 69% of urban children are enrolled in primary school, and 35% of those eligible for secondary school attend. Addis Ababa has its own university as well as many other secondary schools. The literacy rate is 82%.

Health is also much greater in the cities. Birth rates, infant mortality rates, and death rates are lower in the city than in rural areas owing to better access to education and hospitals. Life expectancy is higher at 53, compared to 48 in rural areas. Despite sanitation being a problem, use of improved water sources is also greater; 81% in cities compared to 11% in rural areas. This encourages more people to migrate to the cities in hopes of better living conditions.

Many NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are working to solve this problem; however, most are far apart, uncoordinated, and working in isolation. The Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium is attempting to coordinate efforts among NGOs in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sudan, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria.

4. Unemployment

Generally, it is difficult to measure unemployment in less developed countries such as Ethiopia because of the lack of reliable records and the existence of various informal types of work. However, based on Ministry of Labor surveys and numerous other analyses, a general assessment of unemployment in Ethiopia can be made. According to the Ministry of Labor, the unemployment rate increased 11.5 percent annually during the 1979-88 period; by l987/88 there were 715,065 registered unemployed workers in thirty-six major towns. Of those registered, l34,ll7 ultimately found jobs, leaving the remaining 580,948 unemployed. The urban labor force totaled 1.7 million in 1988/89. The Ministry of Labor indicated that the government employed 523,000 of these workers. The rest relied on private employment or self-employment for their livelihood.

According to the government, rural unemployment was virtually nonexistent. A l981/82 rural labor survey revealed that 97.5 percent of the rural labor force worked, 2.4 percent did not work because of social reasons, and 0.l percent had been unemployed during the previous twelve months. However, it is important to note that unemployment, as conventionally defined, records only part of the story; it leaves out disguised unemployment and underemployment, which were prevalent in both urban and rural areas. For instance, the same rural labor force survey found that 50 percent of those working were unpaid family workers. What is important about unemployment in Ethiopia is that with an expansion of the labor force, the public sector – with an already swollen payroll and acute budgetary problems – was unlikely to absorb more than a tiny fraction of those entering the labor market.

5. Alternative Development Policies: Imperial and Dergue Regimes

By African standards, Ethiopia is a potentially wealthy country, with fertile soil and good rainfall over large regions. Farmers produce a variety of grains, including wheat, corn, and millet. Coffee also grows well on southern slopes. Herders can raise cattle, sheep, and goats in nearly all parts of the country. Additionally, Ethiopia possesses several valuable minerals, including gold and platinum.

Unlike most sub-Saharan African countries, Ethiopia's resources have enabled the country to maintain contacts with the outside world for centuries. Since ancient times, Ethiopian traders exchanged gold, ivory, musk, and wild animal skins for salt and luxury goods, such as silk and velvet. By the late nineteenth century, coffee had become one of Ethiopia's more important cash crops. At that time, most trade flowed along two major trade routes, both of which terminated in the far southwest in the Kefa-Jima region. From there, one route went north to Mitsiwa via Gonder and Adwa, the other along the Awash River valley to Harer and then on to Berbera or Zeila on the Red Sea.

Despite its many riches, Ethiopia never became a great trading nation. Most Ethiopians despised traders, preferring instead to emulate the country's warriors and priests. After establishing a foothold in the country, Greek, Armenian, and Arab traders became the economic intermediaries between Ethiopia and the outside world. Arabs also settled in the interior and eventually dominated all commercial activity except petty trade.

When their occupation of Ethiopia ended in 1941, the Italians left behind them a country whose economic structure was much as it had been for centuries. There had been some improvements in communications, particularly in the area of road building, and attempts had been made to establish a few small industries and to introduce commercial farming, particularly in Eritrea, which Italy had occupied since 1890. But these changes were limited. With only a small proportion of the population participating in the money economy, trade consisted mostly of barter. Wage labor was limited, economic units were largely self-sufficient, foreign trade was negligible, and the market for manufactured goods was extremely small.

During the late l940s and 1950s, much of the economy remained unchanged. The government focused its development efforts on expansion of the bureaucratic structure and ancillary services. Most farmers cultivated small plots of land or herded cattle. Traditional and primitive farming methods provided the population with a subsistence standard of living. In addition, many nomadic peoples raised livestock and followed a life of seasonal movement in drier areas. The agricultural sector grew slightly, and the industrial sector represented a small part of the total economy.

By the early l950s, Emperor Haile Selassie I (reigned 1930- 74) had renewed calls for a transition from a subsistence economy to an agro-industrial economy. To accomplish this task, Ethiopia needed an infrastructure to exploit resources, a material base to improve living conditions, and better health, education, communications, and other services. A key element of the emperor's new economic policy was the adoption of centrally administered development plans. Between l945 and l957, several technical missions, including one each from the United States, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Yugoslavia, prepared a series of development plans. However, these plans failed to achieve any meaningful results, largely because basic statistical data were scarce and the government's administrative and technical capabilities were minimal.

In 1954/55 the government created the National Economic Council to coordinate the state's development plans. This agency, which was a policy-making body chaired by the emperor, devoted its attention to improving agricultural and industrial productivity, eradicating illiteracy and diseases, and improving living standards for all Ethiopians. The National Economic Council helped to prepare Ethiopia's first and second five-year plans.

The First Five-Year Plan (1957-61) sought to develop a strong infrastructure, particularly in transportation, construction, and communications, to link isolated regions. Another goal was the establishment of an indigenous cadre of skilled and semiskilled personnel to work in processing industries to help reduce Ethiopia's dependence on imports. Lastly, the plan aimed to accelerate agricultural development by promoting commercial agricultural ventures. The Second Five-Year Plan (1962-67) signaled the start of a twenty-year program to change Ethiopia's predominantly agricultural economy to an agro-industrial one. The plan's objectives included diversification of production, introduction of modern processing methods, and expansion of the economy's productive capacity to increase the country's growth rate.

The Third Five-Year Plan (1968-73) also sought to facilitate Ethiopia's economic well-being by raising manufacturing and agro-industrial performance. However, unlike its predecessors, the third plan expressed the government's willingness to expand educational opportunities and to improve peasant agriculture. Total investment for the First Five-Year Plan reached 839.6 million birr, about 25 percent above the planned 674 million birr figure; total expenditure for the Second Five-Year Plan was 13 percent higher than the planned 1,694 million birr figure. The allocation for the Third Five-Year Plan was 3,115 million birr.

Several factors hindered Ethiopia's development planning. Apart from the fact that the government lacked the administrative and technical capabilities to implement a national development plan, staffing problems plagued the Planning Commission (which prepared the first and second plans) and the Ministry of Planning (which prepared the third). Many project managers failed to achieve plan objectives because they neglected to identify the resources (personnel, equipment, and funds) and to establish the organizational structures necessary to facilitate large-scale economic development.

During the First Five-Year Plan, the gross national product (GNP) increased at a 3.2 percent annual rate as opposed to the projected figure of 3.7 percent, and growth in economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and mining failed to meet the national plan's targets. Exports increased at a 3.5 percent annual rate during the first plan, whereas imports grew at a rate of 6.4 percent per annum, thus failing to correct the negative balance of trade that had existed since l95l.

The Second Five-Year Plan and Third Five-Year Plan anticipated that the economy would grow at an annual rate of 4.3 percent and 6.0 percent, respectively. Officials also expected agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation and communications to grow at respective rates of 2.5, 27.3, and 6.7 percent annually during the Second Five-Year Plan and at respective rates of 2.9, l4.9, and l0.9 percent during the Third Five-Year Plan. The Planning Commission never assessed the performance of these two plans, largely because of a shortage of qualified personnel.

However, according to data from the Ethiopian government's Central Statistical Authority, during the 1960/61 to 1973/74 period the economy achieved sustained economic growth. Between 1960 and 1970, for example, Ethiopia enjoyed an annual 4.4 percent average growth rate in per capita gross domestic product (GDP). The manufacturing sector's growth rate more than doubled (from 1.9 percent in 1960/61 to 4.4 percent in 1973/74), and the growth rate

for the wholesale, retail trade, transportation, and communications sectors increased from 9.3 percent to 15.6 percent.

Relative to its neighbors, Ethiopia's economic performance was mixed. Ethiopia's 4.4 percent average per capita GDP growth rate was higher than Sudan's 1.3 percent rate or Somalia's 1 percent rate. However, Kenya's GDP grew at an estimated 6 percent annual rate, and Uganda achieved a 5.6 percent growth rate during the same 1960/61 to 1972/73 period.

By the early l970s, Ethiopia's economy not only had started to grow but also had begun to diversify into areas such as manufacturing and services. However, these changes failed to improve the lives of most Ethiopians. About four-fifths of the population was subsistence farmers who lived in poverty because they used most of their meager production to pay taxes, rents, debt payments, and bribes. On a broader level, from 1953 to 1974 the balance of trade registered annual deficits. The only exception was l973, when a combination of unusually large receipts from the export of oilseeds and pulses and an unusually small rise in import values resulted in a favorable balance of payments of 454 million birr. With the country registering trade deficits, the government attempted to restrict imports and to substitute locally produced industrial goods to improve the trade balance. Despite these efforts, however, the unfavorable trade balance continued. As a result, foreign grants and loans financed much of the balance of payments deficit.

The l974 revolution resulted in the nationalization and restructuring of the Ethiopian economy. After the revolution, the country's economy can be viewed as having gone through four phases.

Internal political upheaval, armed conflict, and radical institutional reform marked the 1974-78 period of the revolution. There was little economic growth; instead, the government's nationalization measures and the highly unstable political climate caused economic dislocation in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Additionally, the military budget consumed a substantial portion of the nation's resources. As a result of these problems, GDP increased at an average annual rate of only 0.4 percent. Moreover, the current account deficit and the overall fiscal deficit widened, and the retail price index jumped, experiencing a l6.5 percent average annual increase.

In the second phase (1978-80), the economy began to recover as the government consolidated power and implemented institutional reforms. The government's new Development through Cooperation Campaign (commonly referred to as zemetcha) also contributed to the economy's improvement. More important, security conditions improved as internal and external threats subsided. In the aftermath of the 1977-78 Ogaden War and the decline in rebel activity in Eritrea, Addis Ababa set production targets and mobilized the resources needed to improve economic conditions. Consequently, GDP grew at an average annual rate of 5.7 percent. Benefiting from good weather, agricultural production increased at an average annual rate of 3.6 percent, and manufacturing increased at an average annual rate of l8.9 percent, as many closed plants, particularly in Eritrea, reopened. The current account deficit and the overall fiscal deficit remained below 5 percent of GDP during this period.

In the third phase (1980-85), the economy experienced a setback. Except for Ethiopian fiscal year (EFY) 1982/83, the growth of GDP declined. Manufacturing took a downturn as well, and agriculture reached a crisis stage. Four factors accounted for these developments. First, the 1984-85 drought affected almost all regions of the country. As a result, the government committed scarce resources to famine relief efforts while tabling long-term development projects. Consequently, the external accounts (as shown in the current account deficit and the debt service ratio) and the overall fiscal deficit worsened, despite international drought assistance totaling

more than US$450 million. Notwithstanding these efforts, close to 8 million people became famine victims during the drought of the mid-1980s, and about 1 million died. Second, the manufacturing sector stagnated as agricultural inputs declined. Also, many industries exhausted their capacity to increase output; as a result, they failed to meet the rising demand for consumer items. Third, the lack of foreign exchange and declining investment reversed the relatively high manufacturing growth rates of 1978-80. Finally, Ethiopia's large military establishment created a major burden on the economy. Defense expenditures during this time were absorbing 40 to 50 percent of the government's current expenditure.

In the fourth period (1985-90), the economy continued to stagnate, despite an improvement in the weather in EFY l985/86 and EFY l986/87, which helped reverse the agricultural decline. GDP and the manufacturing sector also grew during this period, GDP increasing at an average annual rate of 5 percent. However, the lingering effects of the 1984-85 drought undercut these achievements and contributed to the economy's overall stagnation. During the 1985-90 period, the current account deficit and the overall fiscal deficit worsened to annual rates of l0.6 and l3.5 percent, respectively, and the debt service ratio continued to climb.

Involvement of the Government in Economic Activities

The imperial government presided over what was, even in the mid-twentieth century, essentially a feudal economy, with aristocrats and the church owning most arable land and tenant farmers who paid exorbitant rents making up the majority of the nation's agriculturalists. Acting primarily through the Ministry of Finance, the emperor used fiscal and monetary strategies to direct the local economy. The various ministries, although not always effective, played a key role in developing and implementing programs. The government conducted negotiations with the ministries to allocate resources for plan priorities.

Officials formulated actual operations, however, without adhering to plan priorities. This problem developed partly because the relationship between the Planning Commission, responsible for formulating national objectives and priorities, and the Ministry of Finance, responsible for resource planning and management, was not clearly defined. The Ministry of Finance often played a pivotal role, whereas the Planning Commission was relegated to a minor role. Often the Planning Commission was perceived as merely another bureaucratic layer. The ultimate power to approve budgets and programs rested with the emperor, although the Council of Ministers had the opportunity to review plans.

After the revolution, the government's role in determining economic policies changed dramatically. In January and February l975, the government nationalized or took partial control of more than l00 companies, banks and other financial institutions, and insurance companies. In March l975, the regime nationalized rural land and granted peasants "possessing rights" to parcels of land not to exceed ten hectares per grantee. In December l975, the government issued Proclamation No.76, which established a 500,000 birr ceiling on private investment and urged Ethiopians to invest in enterprises larger than cottage industries. This policy changed in mid-1989, when the government implemented three special decrees to encourage the development of small-scale industries, the participation of nongovernmental bodies in the hotel industry, and the establishment of joint ventures.

Under the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC; also known as the Derg), Ethiopia's political system and economic structure changed dramatically, and the government embraced a Marxist-Leninist political philosophy. Planning became more ambitious

and more pervasive, penetrating all regions and all sectors of the society, in contrast to the imperial period. Article 2 of the l987 constitution legitimized these changes by declaring that "the State shall guide the economic and social activities of the country through a central plan." The Office of the National Council for Central Planning (ONCCP), which replaced the Planning Commission and which was chaired by Mengistu as head of state, served as the supreme policy-making body and had the power and responsibility to prepare the directives, strategies, and procedures for short- and long-range plans. The ONCCP played a pivotal role in mediating budget requests between other ministries and the Ministry of Finance. The government also sought to improve Ethiopia's economic performance by expanding the number of state-owned enterprises and encouraging barter and counter-trade practices.

On March 5, 1990, President Mengistu delivered a speech to the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) Central Committee in which he declared the failure of the Marxist economic system imposed by the military regime after the 1974 overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie. He also announced the adoption of a new strategy for the country's future progress and development. Mengistu's proposals included decentralization in planning and a free-market, mixed economy in which the private and public sectors would play complementary roles. The new strategy would permit Ethiopian and foreign private individuals to invest in foreign and domestic trade, industry, construction, mining, and agriculture and in the country's development in general. Although Mengistu's new economic policy attracted considerable attention, many economists were skeptical about Ethiopia's ability to bring about a quick radical transformation of its economic policies. In any case, the plan proved irrelevant in view of the deteriorating political and military situation that led to the fall of the regime in 1991.

Chapter 5: Religion in Ethiopian Society

The 1955 constitution stated, "The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, founded in the fourth century on the doctrines of Saint Mark, is the established church of the Empire and is, as such, supported by the state." The Church was the bulwark of the state and the monarchy and became an element in the ethnic identity of the dominant Amhara and Tigray. By contrast, Islam spread among ethnically diverse and geographically dispersed groups at different times and therefore failed to provide the same degree of political unity to its adherents. Traditional belief systems were strongest in the lowland regions, but elements of such systems characterized much of the popular religion of Christians and Muslims as well. Beliefs and rituals varied widely, but fear of the evil eye, for example, was widespread among followers of all religions.

Officially, the imperial regime tolerated Muslims. For example, the government retained Muslim courts, which dealt with family and personal law according to Islamic law. However, the imperial authorities gradually took over Muslim schools and discouraged the teaching of Arabic. Additionally, the behavior of Amhara administrators in local communities and the general pattern of Christian dominance tended to alienate Muslims.

The revolution brought a major change in the official status of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and other religions. In 1975, the Dergue regime disestablished the church, which was a substantial landholder during the imperial era, and early the next year removed its patriarch. The Dergue declared that all religions were equal, and a number of Muslim holy days became official holidays in addition to the Christian holidays already honored. Despite these changes, divisions between Muslims and Christians persisted.

According to the 2007 National Census, Christians make up 62.8% of the country's population (43.5% Ethiopian Orthodox, 19.3% other denominations), Muslims 33.9%, practitioners of traditional faiths 2.6%, and other religions 0.6%. This is in agreement with the updated CIA World Factbook, which states that Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in Ethiopia. According to the latest CIA Factbook figure Muslims constitute 32.8% of the population.

Orthodox Christianity was introduced to the ancient Axumites from the Byzantine world in about 340 A. D., thereafter slowly spreading southward into the northern highlands. Islam was introduced a few centuries later by merchants from Arabia to peoples along the Red Sea coast, spreading thereafter into the center and south. Orthodoxy is most strongly represented among the Tigray and Amhara, Islam among the Somali, Afar, Oromo (particularly those in the southern highlands), Gurage, and Sidama in the southwest. Merchants in major towns also tend to be Muslims. In the east and to an extent in the south, Muslim peoples surround Orthodox Christians. Protestants number perhaps 11 million, constituting up to 10 percent of the population. Smaller groups include Roman Catholics (about 500,000), Eastern Rite Catholics, and Ethiopian Jews (Felasha). The last group, a small ancient group of Jews, the Beta Israel, live in northwestern Ethiopia, though most emigrated to Israel in the last decades of the twentieth century as part of the rescue missions undertaken by the Israeli government, Operation Moses and Operation Solomon. Some Israeli and Jewish scholars consider these Ethiopian Jews as a historical Lost Tribe of Israel.

The Kingdom of Aksum was one of the first nations to officially adopt Christianity, when King Ezana was converted during the fourth century AD. Many believe that the Gospel had entered Ethiopia even earlier, with the royal official described as being baptized by Philip the Evangelist in chapter eight of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:26–39).

Today, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, part of Oriental Orthodoxy, is by far the largest denomination, though a number of Protestant (Pentay) churches and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tehadeso Church have recently gained ground. Since the eighteenth century there has existed a relatively small (uniate) Ethiopian Catholic Church in full communion with Rome, with adherents making up less than 1% of the total population.

The name "Ethiopia" (Hebrew Kush) is mentioned in the Bible numerous times (thirty-seven times in the King James version). Abyssinia is also mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith. While many Ethiopians claim that the Bible references of Kush apply to their own ancient civilization, pointing out that the Gihon river, a name for the Nile, is said to flow through the land, most non-Ethiopian scholars believe that the use of the term referred to the Kingdom of Kush in particular or Africa outside of Egypt in general. Some have argued[citation needed] that biblical Kush was a large part of land that included Northern Ethiopia, Eritrea and most of present day Sudan. The capital cities of biblical Kush were in Northern Sudan.

Islam in Ethiopia dates back to the founding of the religion; in 615, when a group of Muslims were counseled by Muhammad to escape persecution in Mecca and travel to Ethiopia via modern day Eritrea, which was ruled by Ashama ibn Abjar, a pious Christian king. Moreover, Bilal, the first muezzin, the person chosen to call the faithful to prayer, and one of the foremost companions of Muhammad, was from Abyssinia (Eritrea, Ethiopia etc.). Also, the largest single ethnic group of non-Arab Companions of Muhammad was that of the Ethiopian's.

There are numerous indigenous African religions in Ethiopia, mainly located in the far southwest and western borderlands. In general, most of the (largely members of the non-Chalcedonian Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church) Christians live in the highlands, while Muslims and adherents of traditional African religions tend to inhabit more lowland regions in the east and south of the country.

Ethiopia is also the spiritual homeland of the Rastafarian movement, whose adherents believe Ethiopia is Zion. The Rastafarians view Emperor Haile Selassie I as Jesus, the human incarnation of God. The Emperor himself was an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian, which also has a concept of Zion, though it represents a separate and complex concept, referring figuratively to St. Mary, but also to Ethiopia as a bastion of Christianity surrounded by Muslims and other religions, much like Mount Zion in the Bible. It is also used to refer to Axum, the ancient capital and religious centre of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, or to its primary church, called Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion. The Bahai Faith is concentrated primarily in Addis Ababa, but also in the suburbs of Yeka, Kirkos and Nefas Silk-Lafto.

Conclusion:

Though most African nations are, in their modern form, less than a century old, Ethiopia has been an independent state since ancient times, being one of the oldest countries in the world. A monarchical state for most of its history, the Ethiopian dynasty traces its roots to the 10th century BC. Besides being an ancient country, Ethiopia is one of the oldest sites of human existence known to scientists today, having yielded some of humanity's oldest traces; it might be the place where Homo sapiens first set out for the Middle East and points beyond. When Africa was divided up by European powers at the Berlin Conference, Ethiopia was one of only two countries that retained its independence. It was one of only four African members of the League of Nations. After a brief period of Italian occupation, Ethiopia became a charter member of the United Nations. When other African nations received their independence following World War

II, many of them adopted the colors of Ethiopia's flag, and Addis Ababa became the location of several international organizations focused on Africa.

The modern Ethiopian state, and its current borders, is a result of significant territorial reduction in the north and expansion in the south, toward its present borders, owing to several migrations and commercial integration as well as conquests, particularly by Emperor Menelik II and Ras Gobena. In 1974, the dynasty led by Haile Selassie was overthrown as civil wars intensified. Since then, Ethiopia has been a secular state with a variety of governmental systems. Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G-77 and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Today, Addis Ababa is still the site of the headquarters of the African Union and UNECA. The country has one of the most powerful militaries in Africa.[citation needed] Ethiopia is one of a few African countries to have its own alphabet. Ethiopia also has its own time system and unique calendar, seven to eight years behind the Gregorian calendar. It has the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Africa.

Ethiopia has close historical ties to all three of the world's major Abraham religions. It was one of the first Christian countries in the world, having officially adopted Christianity as the state religion in the 4th century. It still has a Christian majority, but a third of the population is Muslim. Ethiopia is the site of the first hijra in Islamic history and the oldest Muslim settlement in Africa at Negash. Until the 1980s, a substantial population of Ethiopian Jews resided in Ethiopia. The country is also the spiritual homeland of the Rastafarian religious movement, which is influenced by Pan-Africanism. Ethiopia is the source of over 85% of the total Nile water flow and contains rich soils, but it nevertheless underwent a series of famines in the 1980s, exacerbated by adverse geopolitics and civil wars, resulting in perhaps a million deaths. Slowly, however, the country has begun to recover, and today Ethiopia has the biggest economy in East Africa (GDP) as the Ethiopian economy is also one of the fastest growing in the world and it is a regional powerhouse in the Horn and east Africa. The country remains politically fragile, with the opposition struggling for democracy and with reports of human rights abuses.