

Francesca Panini
ID 236249
Government and Politics in Africa
15PPOC205
Professor Stephen Chan
Essay 1

NOT IN MY NAME.

What ethnicity? Beyond theorizations, back to the source.

MA African Studies
Academic Year 2008/09
Year 1, Term 1

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	- 1 -
PROBLEMATISING THE CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY	- 2 -
<i>Vail's five streams</i>	- 2 -
<i>Mea culpa</i>	- 3 -
<i>Imagined ethnicity</i>	- 3 -
<i>Chan's five strands</i>	- 4 -
<i>Perspectives focused on the micro-level</i>	- 4 -
THE ETHIOPIAN ETHNIC-BASED FEDERALISM	- 6 -
<i>The question of ethnicity in pre-1991 Ethiopia</i>	- 6 -
<i>The Ethiopian Constitution and its articles regarding ethnicity</i>	- 6 -
<i>The primordialist definition of ethnicity</i>	- 8 -
<i>Why use ethnicity as a basis for a federation?</i>	- 9 -
<i>The use of ethnicity in the campaign against the opposition parties</i>	- 11 -
<i>The use of ethnicity in recent official statements</i>	- 12 -
<i>A proposal for a definition of ethnicity in the Ethiopian context</i>	- 15 -
CONCLUSION.....	- 15 -
REFERENCE LIST	- 17 -

INTRODUCTION

If a number of African policy makers claim ethnicity in the context of their political activity and do this for different reasons, should we not wonder what ethnicity they are invoking and why? Should we not understand their interpretation of ethnicity, i.e. the conceptualization that hides behind certain political claims?

This essay is rooted in dissatisfaction: in the frequent impression that, although much of the analytic work on ethnicity occurs within specific case studies, the dependency of the interpretation on these becomes less evident within the development of the final argument. In the worst cases, one can even notice an implicit, maybe unconscious, tendency to overcome the case study and generalize the interpretation.¹

In the hope both to challenge this last attitude and to answer the questions stated above, the essay regards the Ethiopian ethnic-based federalism as *its particular* case study², in order to show both the definition of ethnicity which is implied in it and why ethnicity has been chosen as a basic criterion for this federation.

In the attempt to deal with its questions, the essay will adopt a philological approach and the “autopsy” method. It will strive to “swim upstream” and back to the source, without being satisfied with “second-hand” analyses.³ Obviously the essay does employ these studies but, wherever possible, it firstly searches the originals and compares what in philology is called “sources”, i.e. the original documents, and “studies”, the analyses or interpretations of the former.

With regards to the documents employed, further specifications are necessary. The essay considers a selection of sources among the huge amount produced by the Ethiopian state: first, the current Ethiopian Constitution (i.e. a non specific legislation but a collection of general principles); second, the EPRDF’s Programme and Statute; third, some statements regarding the EPRDF’s reaction against the opposition parties during the last election; and finally, some recent declarations and messages to the nation. Therefore, in general, the essay focuses on types of document that, on one hand, are somehow general and abstract but, on the other hand, are the foundations of the State and/or have a symbolic value.

¹ See Glickman (1995): his publication offers an interesting, although probably out-of-date, *summa* of different notions of ethnicity connected with the context on which each essay is focused.

² Any generalization can only fail, when we think that Ethiopian politicians used, and still use, ethnicity differently in comparison, for instance, with Rwandan and Kenyan ones, except for, possibly, the 2005 election when, as the essay will show, they invoked ethnic purity and threat of genocide.

³ Many authors wrote about the Ethiopian Constitution and the Ethiopian form of government. They have been objects of interest, in particular, in the early 1900s, when the main questions were: “What form of government?”, “What kind of federalism?”, or “Will it work?”. However, a new wave of analytic interest in the Ethiopian system has emerged in the last few years, in particular after the scandal of the 2005 election. For a flavour of the lively debate on these issues, see for instance Kidane Mengisteab (1997), Fullerton Joireman (1997), Brietzke (1995), Mattei (1995), Engedayehu Walle (1993), Abbink (2006), Serra-Horguelin (1999), Kifle Wodajo (2001), Eshete (2001).

The following essay has been divided into two main sections: the first one deals with the theoretical literature and approaches regarding ethnicity as an intellectual object of study and reflection; whereas the second one details the concrete use of this concept in the context of a political system that chose ethnicity itself as its basis⁴.

PROBLEMATISING THE CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY

A wide range of theoretical literature and different disciplines offers a huge amount of definitions and interpretations of ethnicity, but rarely does the reader of such academic works keep in mind that *none* of these are neutral. Starting with the so called “crisis of representation”⁵ during the 1980s, a number of publications eventually rose the awareness that any theorization is unavoidably interrelated with the political, historical, economic, social, cultural, religious context in which it was formulated. Moreover, a key role is played by the ideological background of the *particular* individual that is trying to hem ethnicity, which actually is something too dynamic, evolving, blurred, intermingled to be fixed in a definition. Finally, it is necessary to be aware that both who is defining ethnicity and who is using a certain notion have their own aims.⁶

VAIL’S FIVE STREAMS

Reflecting on the previous intellectual debate, Vail (1989, 2-7) recognizes five main streams of interpretations of ethnicity. The first stream claims that “tribalism”⁷ is something irrational and destined to be overcome by human development. If it still exists in Africa, this is either because Africans are “tribal” by nature or by accident. The second one argues that ethnicity is simply a product of the colonial form of governance and of the work of anthropologists, who shaped the Africans’ cultural identities. According to the third stream, ethnicities are a recent product: stereotypes of what is “The Self” and what is “The Other”, developed by the African workers in urban and industrial contexts and enforced by the employers in order to exploit them. The fourth stream argues that a new African petty bourgeoisie had a crucial role in emphasising ethnic

⁴ For reasons of space, the essay deals only with one side of the current political arena: the ruling coalition, EPRDF, while it does not search the approach to ethnicity of the two main coalitions that challenged the former in the last election. As regards the CUD (see below this essay) see its official website: <http://www.kinijit.org/> and its manifesto: <http://n.b5z.net/i/u/6142638/i/KINIJIT-MANIFESTO-English-ver-1.0.pdf>.

⁵ See as two seminal publications in that context Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Marcus and Fischer (1986).

⁶ Often these aims are not something “abstract” at all: on the contrary, they can be economic, social, political, in short, definitely “material” and “concrete”. This last point can be observed in the case of the LRA and its manipulation of Muslim identity elements in order to receive the support of the Sudanese government; see Prunier (2004) and Van Acker (2004).

⁷ The pejorative synonymous of “ethnicity”, according to Vail (1989).

differences and using them to mobilise support for itself. Finally, according to the fifth stream, ethnicity was a form of reaction within a condition of insecurity, instability and rootlessness, which began at the end of the 19th Century, with the coming of capitalistic economy and colonial government: ethnicity provided a sense of brotherhood, social comfort, physical and psychological safety.

In Vail's perspective, all these interpretations, except for the first one, have some value. Nevertheless, their shortcomings cannot be either ignored or solved simply by merging them as if they were complementary pieces. By expressing his opinion toward the "five streams", Vail's (1989, 1-19) own conceptualization of ethnicity emerges. Ethnicity is an ideology that subjects need, create and use. It is a political reality and a historical product. It is also an ambiguous phenomenon, both conservative and progressive, since it has a sort of "double face" that, at the same time, looks at past and at future.

MEA CULPA

The second stream mentioned by Vail has become quite "trendy" in the last two decades: it may be labelled as "Everything is the West's fault". It does explain ethnicity in terms of invention conceived by colonial administrators and ethnologists and, as a consequence, as the result of political, economic and ideological domination by the West on "The Rest of the World" (Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985; Amselle 1990).

This perspective is problematic and, above all, dangerous: it is simplistic to solve any current ethnic problem by accusing the colonial past and, as a consequence, by allowing the West to flagellate and ease its conscience and by making both the present circumstances and the "Other" free from any responsibility.⁸

IMAGINED ETHNICITY

In the context of the post-modernist emphasis on notions like those of "invention", "fiction", "negotiation", "partiality"⁹, a certain amount of fascination has been risen by the idea that ethnicities are *just* a product of imagination, for instance of social imagination (Chan 2007, 43). In this case, as in the previous one, the weakness of the theory is more in its reductionism and generalizing attitude than in its core idea.

Despite the fascination for mono-cause, easy-handling explanations, *in medio stat virtus*: colonial domination, anthropological monographs, social imagination, all of them had a role in moulding ethnicities but none of them was the sole factor.

⁸ See the argument of Chan (2007, 40-43) as regards the Rwandan genocide.

⁹ See Hobsbawm (2007), Ranger (2007) or Clifford (1986).

CHAN'S FIVE STRANDS

It is impossible to deny that, within the African continent, different languages, habits, customs, religions, and so on, do exist, together with processes of division, migrations, alliances, etc. Since they are an astonishingly concrete matter of fact, they signify that “each achieved group *stood for*, or was made to stand for” something (Chan 2007, 40; emphasis in the original). In Chan’s perspective, primordial elements, traditionally associated with the notion of “tribe”, do exist. This does not mean supporting the so-called “primordialist view”¹⁰ of ethnicity, but recognizing that there is a primordial base on which diverse elements and influences continuously stratify and interact with the “old” ones. In Chan’s view (2007, 40), this consecutive intermingling of features has led to ethnicities which are themselves *in fieri* and able to perform different functions.

In order to avoid any reductionism, and being aware of dealing with a shifting entity, Chan (2007, 43-44) does not propose a definition, since it would only be an artificial narrow constraint. He rather suggests “five strands” which fit in the notion of ethnicity and help to understand its complexity. First, ethnicity has been an instrument exploited by politicians for different aims and, in particular, for building support. Second, it certainly is a social product and an imaginative act but, as explained above, it is never a simple matter of imagination. Third, ethnicity may have an absolutely material foundation: in conditions of both a lack of other types of identity and a need to achieve resources, ethnicity may become a device for creating identities. These make the search for resources easier, and enable participation in civil society. Fourth, ethnicity interacts with other alternative identities. Therefore it is never “the only one”, for instance the unique cause of a war. Finally, nowadays any ethnic group lives within the boundaries of a state provided with a legal system in order to protect itself. Within this legal framework, any political exploitation of ethnicity must be consciously conceived, decided and planned.

PERSPECTIVES FOCUSED ON THE MICRO-LEVEL

When dealing, directly or indirectly, with the question of ethnicity and ethnic identity, other approaches share a greater interest in the micro- rather than in the macro-level, some going so far as to focus on individuals.

Tronvoll (2005), in writing about the formation of identities in contexts of conflict,¹¹ focuses on the *in fieri* aspect of ethnicity and on its emergence in challenging contexts. The problematic

¹⁰ For synthesis of this perspective, see, among many others, Vail (1989, 1-19), Aalen (2006, 247) and, although in a more confused analysis, Alemseged Abbay (1998, 11-17).

¹¹ He chooses as a case study the formation and manipulation of Tigrayan identity/*identities* within the context of the boundary war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. See also Negash and Tronvoll (2000).

framework of his own case study gives him the opportunity to express a constructive critique of analytic approaches which have mainly described sharp processes of identity formation, arguing that they are not wrong in themselves, but suitable only for macro-level analyses.

By contrast, the author (2005, 236) demands an increasing attention for what happens at the micro-level, the “individual creation of self-hood”, the “multi-vocal capacity of nationalism and ethnicity”, and for what the individual perceives as “The Self” and “The Significant Other”. In particular, shifting political and discursive contexts force individuals to shape their own consciousness of identity and have rich consequences on identity formation. They enforce both diversity inside the group and multiplication of “significant others”; moreover they make identities and allegiances particularly fluid and unstable from the point of view of individuals themselves. When individuals internalize the continuous shift of ethnic-based political allegiances and identities, they manifest a plural, contradictory and shifting identity and perception of the other. As a consequence, it becomes impossible to identify a unique and coherent collective identity.

Therefore, Tronvoll (2005) argues that ethnicity is a huge abstract concept but based on extremely “micro” and material processes within which individuals are autonomous and active agents. Ethnicity is subject to interpretation by individuals. Even within groups usually regarded as homogeneous and having a common identity, “social actors” have their own perception of “The Self” and “The Other”. This is mainly a result of their position, unique life history, personal experience, subjective interpretation of past and present events, and diverse perceptions both of themselves and of the other as individuals and as a member of a group. As a consequence, what is usually identified as an “ethnic group” is a mixture of different ethnic expressions due to different life histories, experiences and so on.¹² However, at the same time, any identity must have an attractive and “socially relevant” character and bring some advantage because people could be attracted and identify with it (Tronvoll 2005, 250-251).

Tronvoll’s perspective is not unique, however. There had been previous examples of scholars interested in the individual creation of identities, although they did not employ real “individual-centred” approaches.

Among the ones who tried to go beyond the façade of macro-level analyses, Epstein (1978) argued that ethnic identity is always, in some way, a product of the interaction of inner perception and outer response of forces operating from inside and from outside the group.

From a different perspective, Cohen (1994a; 1994b; 2000) claimed that ethnic identity is symbolically expressed and that this symbolical aspect allows internal diversity to be preserved. Moreover, he characterized ethnic identity as both indefinite and substantial since it is informed by

¹² Nevertheless, in particular contexts, it can occur that one particular feature of the multiple identity gets particularly strong and hinders the other ones.

self-experience and self-consciousness. Finally, he argued that ethnicity consists in collective boundaries of identity constructed by anthropologists: as a consequence, both its existence and its generalization should be questioned. According to this last claim, Cohen appears to agree with “Vail’s second stream”.¹³

THE ETHIOPIAN ETHNIC-BASED FEDERALISM

Keeping in mind the whole theoretical framework depicted so far, the essay is now moving on to consider its core questions, employing the Ethiopian case: what kind of ethnicity is implied by those politicians that try to take advantage of it for their political goals and why do they choose ethnicity as a political instrument?

THE QUESTION OF ETHNICITY IN PRE-1991 ETHIOPIA

Ethnicity and conflictual relationships among the diverse ethnic groups living within the current Ethiopian boundaries are issues that develop alongside the whole history of Ethiopia.¹⁴

The following analysis is enriched by an awareness of the long history of ethnic conflicts, uneven roles and powers that different ethnic groups could enjoy, and of an ethnic hegemony that shaped the Ethiopian forms of state and its attitude toward other ethnic groups.¹⁵

THE ETHIOPIAN CONSTITUTION AND ITS ARTICLES REGARDING ETHNICITY

The last Ethiopian Constitution¹⁶ was ratified on 8th December 1994, became effective on 22nd August 1995 and established Ethiopia as a parliamentary, democratic and ethnic-based Federal Republic.¹⁷

¹³ See both Chan (2007) and Vail (1989) for comments about the deficiencies and negative consequences of such views of ethnicity.

¹⁴ Here a distinction is necessary: what Ethiopia was before the end of the 1800 does not correspond to what it became in the last decades of the 1800 and in the early 1900. The “moving capitals” and the military campaigns against the southern territories demonstrate the aim and necessity to keep them under control, i.e. to lay under tribute peoples that normally were not part of the Negus Negesti’s administration. For these issues see Marcus (1994), Pankhurst (1998), Abbink (1995, 61-62). However, the history of Ethiopia is more complicated than the linear description and list of names of Negustat Negesti offered by many capital studies on the subject. A study by Holcomb and Ibssa (1990) challenges the common thesis that Ethiopia was an exception in the context of the colonized Africa and argues that Ethiopia was a colonial power itself: because of being backed by Western countries, it could colonize the southern territories. This image of a colonialist Ethiopia allows to reconsider Minilik’s final run for conquering the neighbouring territories and the violence of his campaigns that left deep marks on subject peoples and posed long-term problems of national identity and cohesion in Ethiopia (Abbink 1995, 61-62). About the Ethiopian “exceptionalism” see Levine (2000).

¹⁵ Both Aalen (2006, 246) and Abbink (1995) emphasise the ethnic hegemony that shaped the Ethiopian system of power: while the Ethiopian imperial power was Amhara-centred and the Derg was Amharized, both the EPLF and TPLF had Tigrinya basis. This feature might have remained as a latent memory in the current relationships both within groups and between state and civil society. See also Alemseged Abbay (1998, 12).

The Constitution never employs the word “ethnicity” but the circumlocution “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia”. Furthermore, it never explains the difference among these three notions, which are usually used together.

Within the constitutional text, the richest source of information regarding ethnicity is Article 39, that enlists “Rights of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples”. These consist of “unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession”¹⁸, “the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language”, the right “to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history”, “the right to a full measure of self-government”¹⁹. At the end of Article 39, the definition of “Nation, Nationality and People” is devised. But this problem will be dealt with in the next paragraph.

Many other articles or sub-articles of the Constitution are substantially either specifications or elaborations of what is stated in Article 39, or contextualizations of ethnicity within the state structure.²⁰ With regards to this last point, it is worth making the content of other articles explicit. According to the Constitution, sovereignty “resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia” (Art.8.1), therefore the Ethiopian territory consists in “the territory of the members of the Federation” (Art.2). The federation is composed of States (Art.46.1) each of which is “delimited on the basis of the *settlement patterns, language, identity and consent* of the peoples concerned” (Art.46.2; emphasis added).²¹

¹⁶ The essay does not deal with the Constitution itself, but with those articles regarding, more or less directly, ethnicity. The Ethiopian Constitution is available from http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/Ethiopian_Constitution.html.

¹⁷ For a collection of contributions regarding the notion of ethnic-based federalism as such and comparing the Ethiopian case with the Nigerian and Indian systems, see Turton (2006).

¹⁸ According to Nahum (1997c), the rights to self-determination and secession stem from the significance recognized to ethnicities and are an *enforcement of democracy*: since the nation-state is *for* the Ethiopian ethnicities, this naturally implies that they must be free to change a *status quo* that does not satisfy them. For a critique of the right to self-determination and a claim of the necessity of a post-colonial approach to this concept, see Paukkunen (2007). A Conference about “New Approaches to Self-Determination” was run at SOAS by the Centre for the Study of Colonialism, Empire and International Law in association with the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy on 12th and 13th June 2008 (the programme of the Conference is available from <http://www.soas.ac.uk/cceil/events/44082.pdf>).

¹⁹ “[...] which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments” (Art.39.3).

²⁰ See Art.2; Art.3.2; Art.5; Art.8.1; Art.34.6 and, as regards the theme of the interaction between customary conflict solving and state legal system, see Turton (2003); Art.35 and, as regards state interventions against what is labelled as “violent habits” *according to its own criteria* and the consequences that these have on the life of local groups, see Abbink (2003); Art.40.3; Art.41.9; Art.46.1-2; Art.47.2-9; Art.61.1 (where it should be noticed that, in theory, the Constitution guarantees representation to minorities in government institutions); Art.88.1-2; Art.89.4-6; Art.91.1 that poses, in our perspective, many questions: Is the fact that cultures and traditions must be preserved and enriched only if they are *compatible* with democracy, human rights, human dignity in contrast with the idea of an ethnic-based federalism? Is it coherent that an ethnic-based federalism asks ethnicities to consider if they are satisfying certain criteria and to amend themselves if not? For an answer to these issues, consider Nahum (1997, 191-192), Abbink (2003) and the risk of cultural misunderstandings implied in such questions; Art.94.2.

²¹ Actually, in the Ethiopian federation, there is not a one to one correspondence between ethnicities and state members, i.e. there is not an ethnic state for each ethnicity. Because of the huge number of ethnicities and the small dimension of some of them, different ethnicities were made to join and form multi-ethnic states. These ones do constitute the final federation (Nahum 1997, 52). As a consequence, the Ethiopian ethnic-based federalism is not composed of mono-ethnic

As the mentioned articles show, the current Constitution²² attributes a crucial role to Ethiopian ethnicities (Nahum 1997, 51) and, through the formula “We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia”, it does not identify with a Constitution of individual citizens joined in a nation but with the Constitution of several ethnicities joined in a nation of nations.²³ As a consequence, the 1994 Constitution confirms ethnic identity as the priority character of any Ethiopian citizen (Nahum 1997, 51). Therefore, there would be nothing superior to the ethnic identity and membership from the state’s point of view (Aalen 2006).

THE PRIMORDIALIST DEFINITION OF ETHNICITY

At the end of Article 39, the Ethiopian Constitution itself provides us with a precious definition of what it means by “Nation, Nationality or People”. Therefore, the present essay can “write back”²⁴ by holding an analytic instrument made available by the Constitution itself.

According to the constitutional text,

‘Nation, Nationality or People’, for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share *large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory*” (Art.39.5; emphasis added).²⁵

The set of features that, according to Article 39, should define ethnicity as such is only partly consistent with another one enlisted in Article 46.2: each state member of the federation is “delimited on the basis of the *settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the peoples concerned*” (Art. 46.2; emphasis added).²⁶

states but of multi-ethnic ones. This last point adds further elements to the ambiguity of the Ethiopian ethnic based federalism. For the ambiguous characters of the Ethiopian federalism see Aalen (2006).

²² The 1994 Constitution is not completely new in its emphasis on ethnicity: the Transitional Period Charter of 1991, that established a transitional federal system, attributed great relevance to “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia”, built the foundations of the rights to self-determination and self-government and, in the end, of the ethnic based federalism (Nahum 1997c).

²³ The constitutional emphasis on the notion that sovereignty resides in Peoples, Nations, Nationalities may be either rhetoric or sincere. However, the difference from, for instance, the Italian Constitution is evident: here, it is stated that the sovereignty resides in the people, i.e. in the Italian citizens as a whole; whereas, in the Ethiopian case, any sovereign power resides in the ethnicities that live within the Ethiopian territory.

²⁴ Expression borrowed from the title of a seminal publication by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin: *The empire writes back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*, published in 1989 (London ; New York : Routledge).

²⁵ See also the Constitution’s Preamble: “[We, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia] Further convinced that by *continuing to live with our rich and proud cultural legacies in territories we have long inhabited*, have, through continuous interaction on various levels and forms of life, built up common interest and have also contributed to the emergence of a common outlook” (Preamble; emphasis added).

²⁶ Moreover, this article seems to forget that more than one ethnicity can be joined to form a state member.

Combining the two “recipes”, the key criteria that would define an ethnicity are culture, customs, language, identity, psychological make-up, settlement patterns, and consent.²⁷ In this way, the Constitution does deal with the problematic concept of ethnicity by offering its own definition, but it ends up being trapped in a paradox: explaining a concept through a series of categories that are even more problematic to define. Nevertheless, the constitutional text does not face the new problem created by itself and simply ignores the “vicious cycle”.

According to Aalen (2006, 246-247; emphasis added), the Ethiopian Constitution expresses a “primordialist view” of ethnicity, since it “is viewed as something naturally *inborn, fixed and stable*”. Within a political system that, at least in theory, recognizes ethnicity as its core element, i.e. institutionalizes it and its definition, such a “primordialist” idea of ethnicity has significant consequences: it anchors individuals to super-individual entities that are, at the same time, rigid and vague, makes them trapped, for instance, in a “common culture” or in a specific “territory”. “The Constitution also presumes that ethnic groups live in *geographically concentrated areas*, that ethnic groups are *homogenous*, have the *same interests* and are *equated with political units*” (Aalen 2006, 247; emphasis added).

Employing this kind of definition as a base for any official policy and any relation between state and citizens is likely to produce stereotyped ethnic identities, since subjects are required to adapt to the state’s static notion of ethnicity. In such a context, subjects are victims of policies moulded by essentialism, reductionism and generalization that follow the “primordialist” kind of politicization of ethnicity.

WHY USE ETHNICITY AS A BASIS FOR A FEDERATION?

In the light of a political history marked by the dominance of an ethnicity on the others, the idea of a federation in which, eventually, any ethnicity would see recognized equality, dignity, power, political representation, self-determination, and self-government, should sound as an undeniable improvement. According to Aalen (2006, 245), Meles Zenawi²⁸ justified the adoption of an ethnic-based federalism with the aims to stop the war, guarantee internal peace, overcome Amhara hegemony, and give space to the previously marginalized ethnicities.

With regards to these reasons, Nahum (1997c, 255) does believe that the new Ethiopian political system realizes minorities’ “elevation to equal status with the dominant culture(s)”. The

²⁷ Each of these notions is highly problematic in its definition and their combination can only be more confusing. How much is a “large measure”? Considering how hard it is defining the concept of culture, how and when can we establish that a culture is “common”? Can we live or make people live under the illusion that a one to one correspondence of cultural elements among different individuals and groups is possible? What is “similarity” among customs? If the “territory” is so important, might the risk be of individuals trapped within narrow boundaries and of a country similar to a chessboard of stuck human beings? The list of questions could obviously continue.

²⁸ TPLF/EPRDF leader and current Ethiopian Prime Minister.

time in which he was writing probably led Nahum (1997c, 156-157) to overestimate both the real “measure of self-government” (to which the Peoples of Ethiopia would have had the right) and the idea that the government did “learn the Eritrean lesson”: it is not correct to maintain state unity by force. As a consequence, the right of self-determination would be an instrument for guaranteeing voluntary unity and awareness of population’s agency at the grassroots level.

Contrary to Nahum’s (1997c) optimistic considerations, Mattei (1995)²⁹ alleges that the ethnic federalism may simply be a device for guaranteeing a way out for the ruling party in case of political defeat. Furthermore, he claims there are dangers hidden behind the politicization of ethnicity, but, unfortunately, the author (1995, 16) does not expand on this point and confines himself to an apocalyptic declaration: “Ethnical federalism particularly when ethnicism gets represented by political parties (politicized ethnicism) is the worst of the possible worlds”, since it brings the risk of ethnic conflicts whenever the different peoples claim their constitutional rights.³⁰

On the other hand, Aalen (2006) denounces that the constitutional emphasis on ethnicity, as the core of the political system, sources of sovereignty and object of rights, is rhetoric³¹ and hides an actual rigid centralization.³² In fact, the ruling party has tried to take advantage of the established ethnic-based federalism to create an *impression* of autonomy, widespread rights and involvement in the government; to assure electoral support³³ for itself; and to keep the population divided and, as a consequence, weaker.

Within this framework, the official ethnic policies have obtained ambiguous results. Among the positive ones, it is possible to recognize some improvements in the conditions of minorities; the guarantee of the right of self-determination, although up to a certain extent; and the prevention of ethnic conflicts at the state level. Among the negative ones, one can observe the exacerbation of ethnic identities, divisions, claims, and conflicts at the local level; the exploitation of ethnic identities and requests by local elites for pursuing their goals; and the “ethnisation” of any issue.³⁴

²⁹ Moreover, Mattei (1995) stresses that the Constitution was politically and ethnically supported only by the Tigrayan minority, since the opposition could not participate to its elaboration.

³⁰ However, Mattei (1995) is not completely consistent since, on one hand, he denounces the risks implicit in the politicization of ethnicity; on the other hand, he states that, after all, in the Ethiopian case, ethnicity should not be either overlooked or exaggerated in its importance, since Ethiopia is a quite unitary nation-state, despite its high number of ethnicities.

³¹ Not only in the government practice but even within the constitutional text.

³² By contrast, Nahum (1997, 51; emphasis added) declares that “The importance given to the ethno-linguistic components of the society by the Constitution is *absolute* and *real* and cannot be overemphasised”.

³³ Even through ethnic-based parties and a system of formal and informal allegiances (Nahum 1997, 51).

³⁴ “The containment of ethnic uprisings on the national level must rather be understood as an outcome of the centralized structures of the dominant party and its repression of opposition [...] Mobilization of ethnic identities is encouraged, but only as long as it does not challenge the major party line [...] as long as the ethnic tensions remain on the local level [...]” (Aalen 2006, 260). For the increasing conflictuality, the dangerous effects of the current politicization of ethnicity and the obstacles to the emergence of a “Pan-Ethiopian” national identity and sense of citizenship caused by the emphasis on ethnicity see also Abbink (1995, 71-74). For the paradoxical consequences of the politicization of ethnicity on the previous relationships among ethnic groups and, in particular, on processes of local conflict solving see Turton

In the end, the ruling party has become a victim of its own system, of the consequent revitalization (or creation) of ethnicity, and of an increasing ethnic entrepreneurship³⁵. In the current context, the Ethiopian federalism would not be sustainable without the presence of a centralized and semi-authoritarian state, the existence of a dominant party, a strong control from the centre, the use of force, and the denial of constitutional rights. The Ethiopian balance and peace are increasingly fragile and undermined, as the last elections demonstrated (Aalen 2006).

The process, started by the EPRDF/TPLF's pro-ethnicity policies, now seems to have come full circle: the story began with the claims of Meles in favour of equality and representation for any Ethiopian ethnicity; but today the government is no longer perceived as ethnic neutral and the feeling that there is a new hegemonic ethnicity, by the Tigrayans, seems to be spreading (Aalen 2006).

THE USE OF ETHNICITY IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE OPPOSITION PARTIES

During the 2005 election, when for the first time it faced a real threat of defeat, the EPRDF made new use of the ethnic issues, this time as a weapon against political rivals.³⁶

The CUD (Coalition for Unity and Democracy), the strongest opposition representative in the last election, campaigned against the current ethnicization, asking for the abolition of the ethnic base³⁷. The EPRDF sharply reacted, claiming that the opposition intended to destroy the Ethiopian Constitution; to suppress ethnic policies and, therefore, to cause ethnic wars; to *eliminate differences* among ethnicities and *create a mixture*; and to commit a genocide against the dominant Tigrayan ethnicity (Aalen 2006, 252-254).³⁸

(2003): "The essence of the change is that they now see themselves, or are coming to see themselves, as a *local group*, existing on the periphery of a larger political structure [while before] In their own eyes they were a sovereign people..." (Turton 2003, 18; emphasis in the original).

³⁵ Trying to solve the contradictions that itself created, the EPRDF, after having emphasised ethnic diversity and self-determination, is adopting a de-ethnicising policy, but this is rising the discontent of the larger groups, that have been taking advantage of the ethnicization.

³⁶ As regards statements or declarations made by politicians during the election period, it was not possible to find "first hand" documents, as required by the philological approach adopted in this essay. Therefore, it was necessary to employ the brief quotations referred by Aalen (2006).

³⁷ "By taking this position, CUD had attacked the *raison d'être* of the EPRDF's political system, the rights of nationalities to self-determination up to and including secession." (Aalen 2006, 253; emphasis in the original).

³⁸ "CUD is not different from the mere Derg's Worker's Party. Thus they oppose Article 39 of the Constitution. . . CUD has planned to *destroy this constitutional system and abolish the Constitution*" (the EPRDF's campaign on Ethiopian TV, 2 April 2005, quoted in Aalen 2006, 253, footnote 33; emphasis added) and "[w]ar is their zeal and the Derg regime is the state that they want to re-establish" (the EPRDF's campaign on Ethiopian TV, 15 April 2005, quoted in Aalen 2006, 253, footnote 33). "The opposition parties, which are proponents of the *Interhamwe*, want to *destroy differences and form mixtures*. They raise conflicts between people. Voting for the opposition brings a worse *genocide* than that of Rwanda. . . If *Interhamwe* is voted in urban centres, cities will become arenas of chaos, development will stagnate and genocide will take place." (The EPRDF's campaign on Ethiopian TV, 22 April 2005, quoted in Aalen 2006, 253, footnote 34; emphasis added). For a more recent document, describing the opposition leaders' pardon request and significant here for its incredible emphasis on threats against Constitution, democracy, peace and development, see "Pardon request of rowdy CUD leadership and constitutional victory", available from

All these claims are rich of meaning for this essay. The destruction of the Constitution is presented as the return of a chaotic and violent political system. The ruling coalition was trying to mobilise a sort of “constitutional affection”, i.e. to make the population face the danger of losing the greatest political conquest obtained “by the sacrifices of multitudes of people”³⁹ and the symbol of the defeat of the military regime and triumph of democracy.

Above all, the claims regarding ethnicity, and, in particular, the risks of mixture and loss of ethnic “purity”, confirm and are consistent with the primordial idea of ethnicity embodied in Article 39 of the Constitution. Moreover, by invoking the threat of genocide, the EPRDF aimed to increase feelings of ethnic solidarity and self-defence. However, it also spread, among non-Tigrayan groups, the suspicion of an underlying attempt to put the Tigrayans in a dominant position: as a consequence, it fostered counter-productive anti-Tigrayans feelings and, in general, inter-ethnic tensions.

THE USE OF ETHNICITY IN RECENT OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

In this last paragraph, the essay considers some diverse documents available from the EPRDF’s official website⁴⁰.

The first document considered here is the EPRDF Statute⁴¹, which confirms the idea of a fixed and immutable ethnicity, as provided by the “primordialist” view, explicit in the Constitution. But it also adds further cues of reflection when detailing the relationship between nations, nationalities and peoples and the regional members of the EPRDF itself.

According to the Statute, the creation of a coalition of parties composed of “multi-national” members is a natural consequence of the fact that Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic country (Introduction II.2). In fact, since not individuals but nations, nationalities and peoples are the beneficiaries of rights and benefits, an ethnic-based party that represents its own nation is regarded as the most involved defender of the interests of its ethnicity and the most serious guarantor of “organizational leadership and political participation” (Introduction II.2.a). Nevertheless, the higher position of the EPRDF is never questioned and, throughout the Statute, it identifies with the top of a hierarchy. If

http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/anal_file/CUD%20leaders%20-pardon.htm. In this last piece any reference to ethnic issues lacks. Can this be seen as a manifestation of EPRDF’s attempts to de-ethnicise its political discourse (see above this essay)?

³⁹ “Statement by the Executive Committee of the EPRDF On the Occasion of the 16th Anniversary of the May 28 Victory”, available from http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Pres_doc/Stat_May28.htm.

⁴⁰ See EPRDF’s official website: <http://www.eprdf.org.et/>.

⁴¹ The Statute was only modified and approved, not elaborated, by the 6th Congress of the EPRDF, held at the end of September 2006, and immediately implemented. The Statute is rich of cues for a number of political questions but the present essay can just focus on the most significant ones, according to its topic. See http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/statute.htm.

its main aim is to protect values, rights, equality and unity among all the Ethiopian peoples⁴², it may realize this thanks to the membership of national parties that are involved in the protection of their ethnicity at the grassroots and can therefore “gain support from their people easily” (Introduction II.2.b).⁴³

The Statute’s Introduction confirms that individuals are never considered as such but only as members of a certain ethnicity. Thus the plural and nuanced feature of human identity is neglected or denied through considering ethnic identity as the immutable hard core of any identity. The newly introduced idea that a member of a certain ethnicity is the best guarantor and defender of that ethnicity confirms and enriches the “primordialist” perspective (Aalen 2006) of ethnicity as a stable, fixed, homogeneous, super-individual entity.⁴⁴ This approach not only has theoretical shortcomings, but, above all, it takes for granted and actually creates social and cultural groups as “closed worlds”, unable to communicate or establish mutual relationships.⁴⁵

The second official document is the “Report by the Council of the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front to the 6th Organizational Congress”.⁴⁶ This report is relevant here because it shows how full of contradictions the attempt to associate implementation of federal policies and primordialist idea of ethnicity may be. In short, the problem regards the possibility, for an ethnic-based federation built on a *primordialist* concept of ethnicity, to be able to harmonize the respect for each *static* ethnicity and the implementation of federal policies.⁴⁷

The third document is the EPRDF Programme⁴⁸, which, in many points, echoes and enforces or specifies some principles established in the Constitution.⁴⁹ However, a valuable idea, not expressed

⁴² “EPRDF, being an organization of nations and nationalities and dedicated to the respect of rights and values of Ethiopian nations and nationalities, should embrace organizations that are formed on the basis of nations and nationalities to protect the rights and benefits of nations and nationalities” (Introduction II.2.a).

⁴³ For other points in the Statute in which ethnicity is somehow involved see Introduction II.3 and 4; Art.7.1.c; Art.7.4; Art.7.6; Art.8. In particular, the Article 8, regarding “Becoming member of the Front”, allows to catch the criteria of composition of the EPDRF: each potential member must be “A national political organization or a Front that is formed by a group of regional national revolutionary democratic organizations or a multi-national organization”.

⁴⁴ A similar ideal guides the so called “native anthropology”: only an “indigenous” ethnographer, i.e. a member of the studied community, has the cultural means for understanding it; as a consequence, he/she is regarded as the only one legitimated to investigate it.

⁴⁵ The notion of “closed worlds” incorporates risks of *ethic relativism* and dangerous political effects.

⁴⁶ See http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/Organizational%20Congress-report.htm.

⁴⁷ The mentioned problem can be stated in these terms only because of the specific notion of ethnicity on which the Ethiopian federalism is built. Obviously, the situation would be different if ethnicity had been conceived as *in fieri*, blurred, nuanced, transformational, hybrid and so on. In 2006, federal policies aimed, for instance, to spread education and build a school system, without recognizing the problem of establishing school programmes able to take into account the local cultural and social context.

⁴⁸ See http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/EPRDF_Program.htm.

⁴⁹ See Introduction 3; Part II.1; Part II.2.9; Part II.4. The fourth point of the second part repeats and develops some main ideas also expressed in the Constitution. Within this point, the words “people” and “peoples” are used interchangeably. In the context of the present essay, this difference is not of little importance. Considering the whole tone of the point, however, it may be stated that the Programme is actually using “people” as the singular of “peoples” and not as the plural of “person”. Considering how the term “peoples” has employed by other documents so far, it may be suggested that Part II.4 as a whole is referring to ethnic groups, and not, for instance, to citizens. See also Part II.5.4 and the

in the Constitution, is that, for the success of democracy, a culture of and education to democracy and participation is necessary both at the individual level and at the ethnic group level. A long past of undemocratic systems and culture hinders the consolidation of a democratic system in the present and “Narrow nationalism and chauvinism, attitudes that undermine unity and solidarity, are still widely prevalent in the society” (Introduction 5). These attitudes of many Ethiopian peoples must be remoulded by “the furtherance of popular understanding as well as democracy culture” (Introduction 12).

When expressing these necessities, the EPRDF Programme is not really addressing individual citizens, but, as usual, the “peoples of Ethiopia”, since *they* are the *real foundations* of the Ethiopian federation.

Democratic order is not limited to respecting human and democratic rights of the individual. On the basis of these rights and parallel to them, rights should extend to the right to self-determination and equality of nations and nationalities. The *peoples of Ethiopia* must become *beneficiaries of these entitlements* full and an equal footing. In this regard, their capability to exercise these rights must be augmented and enhanced. In order to create a single, vibrant and coordinated economic community, all regions must have equal right and support to develop. A concerted struggle must be waged to create unity among Ethiopia’s peoples based on mutual interest and fraternity. To overcome sentiments that are hostile to the democratic unity of our people requires a relentless struggle based on democratic principles.” (Introduction 13; emphasis added)

This article is probably one of the best synthesis of what “ethnic-based” really means.

Within other documents, some references to ethnic questions may be found. Although all of them are significant for the current topic, they do not add new contributions and are, for the most part, self-celebrations of the ruling coalition and of the peoples of Ethiopia. These documents are “Elections in Ethiopia”⁵⁰, the “Statement by the Executive Committee of the EPRDF On the Occasion of the 16th Anniversary of the May 28 Victory”⁵¹ and, finally, the “Message of H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Chairman of EPRDF”⁵².

purpose “to ensure that the composition of the armed forces is a balanced reflection of the country's national and ethnic composition.” See finally Part II.9.

⁵⁰ Available online from <http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/elect-eth.htm> . See in particular what is said about the election for Addis Ababa administration, held on 20th April 2008: “the balance in composition of the nations and nationalities of the candidates was taken into consideration as Addis Ababa is the federal capital. Accordingly, 29% of candidates of EPRDF are Amharas, 24% Oromos, 18% Tigreans and 29% from the SNNP State.”

⁵¹ Available online from http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Pres_doc/Stat_May28.htm. But notice in particular the following statements: “We have become owners of a Constitution where the entire nations, nationalities and peoples of our country are able to live in equality, unity, mutual respect and solidarity”, “In this Constitution, our people who, for centuries, were denied the right to run their own affairs have now become masters of their destiny”, “Political power that for centuries was concentrated at the top of the unitary state has now been decentralized and devolved to the regions and most importantly to Kebles (local councils) where the peoples live”.

⁵² Available online from http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/anal_file/Message%20of%20H.E.%20PM.htm. See in particular the statement “The new federal system rooted in the diversity of our nations, nationalities and peoples has been growing day by day cementing their unity.”

A PROPOSAL FOR A DEFINITION OF ETHNICITY IN THE ETHIOPIAN CONTEXT

At the end of the analysis of varied documents, by having the EPRDF's definition and use of ethnicity as a base and Abbink's (1995) study of Derg's violence as a source of inspiration, this essay has come to elaborate its own operative definition of ethnicity: ethnicity is a *language*, but not necessarily a verbal one; a *discursive form*, a *way of talking and acting*; a quite autonomous phenomenon with relevant political and socio-cultural consequences, since it is *rooted* both in the *political practice* and in the *people's mind*.

Through this theoretical definition, the main aim is to emphasise the idea that ethnicity is not at all a set of defined "ingredients", but is something absolutely material, concrete and loaded with consequences, often unforeseeable even for those who employ it as a political instrument.

CONCLUSION

What concept of ethnicity moves behind political agendas? Why do politicians invoke ethnicity? What is their aim? In Rwanda, according to Pottier (2002), there was a problem of access to resources, however what is the goal in Ethiopia?

The interrogatives of this essay rise from the impression that, sometimes, theorizations about ethnicity lack roots, at least evident, explicit and immediately comprehensible ones. The essay did not aim to deny or question that there are specific case studies behind interpretations and problematizations of the notion of ethnicity. It rather expresses the need to change the *relative priority* of our interrogatives. Firstly, recognizing that ethnicity does have a role in *a certain* political arena. Secondly, concretely wondering "what do you mean?", i.e. "what kind of ethnicity is implied in *this* case?", "what is the representation of ethnicity in the mind of *this* politician?". Thirdly, looking at the "sources": Constitutions, party programmes, party statutes, official statements, radio and TV declarations, official websites and so on. Fourthly, virtually asking the politicians *why* they are using ethnicity as a political instrument. Finally, but not necessarily, conceiving our own definition of ethnicity, in order to contribute to the theoretical debate on this notion. In the present case, for instance, ethnicity has come to be regarded as a *discursive form*, a *way of talking and acting* that derives its *multiple power* from being *rooted both in the political practice and in the people's mind*.

Probably the present approach could be considered as a corrupted form of ethnography and a unusual "political philology": it does not interview individuals, but politicians and, above all, political documents.

Hoping to have been faithful to this approach, the essay has reached some conclusions rooted in the Ethiopian context. A primordialist notion of ethnicity is implied there. A federation based on ethnicity allowed the ruling coalition to have a strong control on the country while using an opposite rhetoric and creating the illusion that the power was in the hands of ethnic entities.

Ethnicity is a particularly sensitive issue in Ethiopia due to its political history and ethnic rhetoric has been employed in different moments for specific aims. It has been used to legitimate the new order after the Derg's defeat in the early 1990s; and, a decade later, to fight an organized and efficient political opposition. Nowadays, the ethnic rhetoric is one of the last resources to persuade the population of the government's good intentions and effective policies, when in fact the country is facing internal increasing tensions and repressions; external political and military frictions; and widespread famine, drought and poverty.

REFERENCE LIST

- Aalen, L., 2006, 'Ethnic Federalism and Self-Determination of Nationalities in a Semi-Authoritarian State: the Case of Ethiopia'. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 13, 243-261.
- Abbink, J., 1995, 'Transformations of Violence in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia: Cultural Roots, Political Conjunctures'. *Focaal*, 25, 57-77.
- , 2003, 'Ritual and Political Forms of Violent Practice'. In: T. Young, ed., 2003, *Readings in African Politics*, London, Oxford: International African Institute and James Currey, 80-89.
- , 2006, 'Ethnicity and Conflict Generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno-Regional Federalism'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24(3), 389-413.
- Alemseged Abbay, 1998, *Identity Jilted, or, Re-Imagining Identity?: The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrayan Nationalist Struggles*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Amselle, J.-L., 1990, *Logiques Métisses. Anthropologie de l'identité en Afrique et ailleurs*. Paris: Payot.
- Amselle, J.-L. and M'Bokolo E., 1985. *Au coeur de l'ethnie: ethnies, tribalisme et état en Afrique*. Paris: Découverte.
- Anon., "Kinijit Manifesto", Available from: <http://n.b5z.net/i/u/6142638/i/KINIJIT-MANIFESTO-English-ver-1.0.pdf> [Accessed 20 October 2008].
- Anon., "Report by the Council of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front to the 6th Organizational Congress", Available from: http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/Organizational%20Congress-report.htm [Accessed 30 October 2008].
- Anon., "Elections in Ethiopia", Available from: <http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/elect-eth.htm> [Accessed 30 October 2008].
- Anon., "Pardon request of rowdy CUD leadership and constitutional victory", Available from: http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/anal_file/CUD%20leaders%20pardon.htm [Accessed 10 November 2008].
- Brietzke, P. H., 1995, 'Ethiopia's "Leap in the Dark": Federalism and Self-Determination in the New Constitution'. *Journal of African Law* 39(1), 19-38.
- Chan, S., 2007, 'Ethnicity'. In: Chan, S., 2007, *Grasping Africa. A Tale of Tragedy and Achievement*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 39-51.

- Clifford, J., 1986, 'Introduction: Partial Truths'. In: Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E., eds., 1986, *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1-26.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E., eds., 1986, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Cohen, A. P., 1994a, 'Boundaries of Consciousness, Consciousness of Boundaries. Critical Question in Anthropology'. In: Vermeulen H. and Govers, C., (eds), 1994, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 59-80.
- , 1994b, *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity*. London; New York: Routledge.
- , 2000, *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Engedayehu, Walle, 1993 'Ethiopia: Democracy and the politics of ethnicity'. *Africa Today*, 40(2), 29-53.
- EPRDF Executive Committee, "Statement by the Executive Committee of the EPRDF On the Occasion of the 16th Anniversary of the May 28 Victory", Available from http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Pres_doc/Stat_May28.htm [Accessed 10 November 2008].
- EPRDF Programme, Available from: http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/EPRDF_Program.htm [Accessed 10 November 2008].
- EPRDF Statute, Available from: http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/Basicdoc/Basicdocuments_files/statute.htm [Accessed 10 November 2008].
- Epstein, A. L., 1978, *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity*. London; Chicago: Tavistock Publications; Aldine Publishing Company.
- Eshete, A., 2001, 'The Protagonists in Constitution-Making in Ethiopia'. In: Goran, H. and Venter, D., (eds), 2001, *Constitution-Making and Democratisation in Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 69-83.
- Ethiopian Constitution, Available from: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/Ethiopian_Constitution.html [Accessed 19 October 2008].

- Fullerton Joireman, S., 1997, 'Opposition Politics and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: We Will All Go down Together'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(3), 387-407.
- Glickman, H., ed., 1995, *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa*. Atlanta: African Studies Association Press.
- Hobsbawm, E., 2007 (1983), 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions'. In: Hobsbawm E. and Ranger, T., (eds), 2007, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-14.
- Holcomb, B. K. and Ibssa, S., 1990, *The Invention of Ethiopia*. Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press.
- Kidane Mengisteab, 1997, 'New Approaches to State Building in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism'. *African Studies Review*, 40(3), 111-132.
- Kifle Wodajo, 2001, 'The Making of Ethiopian-Constitution'. In: Goran, H. and Venter, D., (eds), 2001, *Constitution-Making and Democratisation in Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 132-142.
- Levine, D. N., 2000, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*. 2^o ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcus, G. E. and Fischer M. M. J., 1986, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcus, H. G., 1994, *A History of Ethiopia*. Updated ed., Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mattei, U., 1995, 'The New Ethiopian Constitution: First Thoughts on the Ethnical Federalism and the Reception of Western Institutions'. Paper published online on the University of Trento website, Available from: <http://www.jus.unitn.it/cardozo/Review/Constitutional/Mattei2.html> [Accessed 30 October 2008].
- Meles Zenawi, "Message of H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Chairman of EPRDF", Available from: http://www.eprdf.org.et/Eprdf/files/analysis/anal_file/Message%20of%20H.E.%20PM.htm [Accessed 10 November 2008].
- Nahum, F., 1997c, *Constitution for a Nation of Nations: The Ethiopian Prospect*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Pankhurst, R., 1998, *The Ethiopians. A History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Paukkunen, S., 2007, 'Towards a Critique of the Concept of the Right to Self-Determination in Africa: a Conceptual Examination and the Cases of Western Sahara, Southern Sudan and Eritrea'. PhD Dissertation, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science, 29th June 2007.

- Pottier, J., 2002, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prunier, G., 2004, 'Rebel movements and proxy warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo (1986–99)'. *African Affairs*, 103(412), 359-383.
- Ranger, T., 2007 (1983), 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa'. In: Hobsbawn E. and Ranger, T., (eds), 2007, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 211-262.
- Serra-Horguelin, A., 1999, *The Federal Experiment in Ethiopia: A Socio-Political Analysis*. Pessac: Centre d'etude d'Afrique noire, Institut d'etudes politiques de Bordeaux, Université Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV.
- Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, K., 2000, *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrea-Ethiopia War*. Easter African Studies. Oxford: James Currey.
- Tronvoll, K., 2005, 'Ambiguous Identities: The Notion of War and 'Significant other' among the Tigreans of Ethiopia'. In: Broch-Due, V., (ed.), 2005, *Violence and Belonging: the Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*. London: Routledge, 236-255.
- Turton, D., 2003, 'The Politicians, the Priest and the Anthropologist: Living Beyond Conflict in Southwestern Ethiopia'. *Ethnos*, 68(1), 5-26.
- , (ed.), 2006, *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Vail, L., 1989, 'Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern Africa History'. In: Vail, L., ed., 1989, *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. London; Berkeley; Los Angeles: James Currey; University of California Press, 1-19.
- Van Acker, F., 2004, 'Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army: the New Order no one ordered'. *African Affairs*, 103(412), 335-357.