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## **Power and Powerlessness in Contemporary Ethiopia**

Abstract: Ethiopia as a state was created at the end of the nineteenth century by Abyssinian King Menilik II conquering his neighboring nations south of his kingdom, expanding his territory three times more than his own territory (Levine 1965). During the scramble for Africa three colonial powers were the worst brutal and cruel killers compared to all colonial powers who divided Africa among themselves. In the colonial history of Africa it was King Leopold II of Belgium who captured the largest central part of Africa as his own private property in which during his agonizing rule the population of the territory as a whole was reduced by half (Young 1965:27). Slashed the area's population by ten million (Hochschild 1999), and from 1999 to 2003 – according to the United Nations' expert committee report – due to deadly conflicts 5.4 million people of the Democratic Republic Congo (former Zaire) were killed, which Gerard Prunier called Continental War (Prunier 2009).

The second long war took place in the Sudan in which the Mahdist war against British colonialism used to be considered as nationalist movement, but in reality it was Arab-Islamic colonialism in which “the population of Sudan fell from around 7 million before the Mahdist revolt to somewhere between 2 and 3 million after the fall of the Mahdist state” (Deng 2010).

The third colonial power is the Ethiopian Empire. During the conquest and colonization Menilik II, more than any other colonial ruler in Africa, killed or sold to slavery and brutal rule the peoples of Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic origin. The Population of Oromo was reduced by half (Bulatovich 2000:12), Or from 10 million to 5 million people (de Salviac 1901/2005), Kaficho kingdom people were reduced to a third of their pre-war number (Bieber 1897), the Maji people were reduced from about 45,000 to 3,000 (Hodson 1898, Pankhurst 1968, Bulcha 2002:72). These nations and others who came under the yoke of Abyssinia became powerless subjects of colonial rule of Abyssinia (in his new Constitution of 1931, Emperor Haile Sellasie I changed the name of his domain to the Ethiopian Empire). This Empire was ruled to 1991 by the Amhara ruling elite, and from May 1991 the ruling elite changed to Tigrian guerrilla fighters called Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The paper elucidates military, economic and political power of this ruling group.

## *Concepts of Power*

At the starting point of our discussion we shall define two key concepts – power and authority. The absolutely basic common core to all conceptions is power: two noted political sociologists in their book define power as “the capacity of a person or, more often, a group and institution to be able to manipulate and shape the views and actions of people” (Orum and Dale 2009:2), and the doyen of the theory of power Steven Lukes gives the concept of power in these words: “the notion of the bringing about of consequences, with no restriction on what consequences might be or what brings them about.” (Lukes 1979:634-35). The power of a river, for example, is manifested in its causal effects: it erodes a fertile top soil, transports it from highlands to low lands, like Blue Nile which annually transports millions of top fertile soil from Oromia highlands to Egypt meandering through central Sudan until it makes delta in Lower Egypt to finally disappear in the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, the power of electricity manifests in the illumination of light bulbs, in heating rooms, and in the operation of underground railways. This type of power can be identified as natural power. When used in relation to human beings in social relations with one another, it is attributed to persons or collectivities or, sometimes, to the system or structures within which they act. All members of a society affect the society in which they live and one another in countless ways all the time; any given use of the concept of power – and related concepts such as authority, influence, coercion, force, violence, manipulation, and so on – picks out ranges of such consequences that are held to be significant in specific (and related) ways. A conception of power useful for understanding social relationships must incorporate a criterion of significance – that is, it must imply an answer to the question: what makes the consequences brought about by a significant in such a way as to count as power? For such main questions, there is wide range of answers depending on the view of the authors. For some philosophers, what is essential to power is the realization of a will or desire. This will yield an intentional conception of power which may be potential; the British philosopher John Hobbes (1588-1679) described power in these words in his known book *Leviathan* (1651): “the power of man (to take it universally,) is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good”. “And is original, or instrumental” (Hobbes 1985:150). Hobbes identified many forms of power, but we shall take only two of them which are described in this definition:

**Natural power** is the eminence of the faculties of body, or mind: as Extraordinary Strength, Form, Prudence, Arts, Eloquence, Liberality, Nobility.

**Instrumental** are those powers, which acquired by these, or by fortune, are means and instruments to acquire more: as Riches, Reputation, Friends, and the Secret Working of God, which men call Good Luck (ibid).

The French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) said that “power consists in making others act as I choose” (cited Lukes 1979:635).

Another famous British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) defined power as “the production of intended effects” (Russell 2008:23).

Although there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of more recent definitions of social power, or power of power over other people in the literature of Social Science, let us see the definition given by one of the contemporary noted political sociologists who defines power: as “a capacity of persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others ” (Wrong1979:2). An exercise of power typically involves an intentional intervention in a chain of causal effects. An accidental or incidental effect of an agent’s action cannot be regarded as an exercise of power unless it is a foreseen consequence of these actions. A power relation, then, involves the intention to produce a particular effect or the desire to see particular effect occurring. Power is an intended or desired causal effect: it is an effect that realizes a purpose. A power relation cannot, therefore, be identified unless there is some reference to the intentions and interests of actors involved and, especially, to those of principal.

John Scott in his recent book (2006) elucidates that power is a social relationship between two agents, who may usefully be called the ‘principal’ and ‘subaltern’. A principal is the paramount agent in a power relationship, while subaltern is a subordinate agent. The principal has or exercise power, while subaltern is affected by this power (Scott 2006:2).

Another noted Italian political sociologist Gianfranco Poggi (2001) defines power in similar line and states, “Power is the probability, within a social relationship, of realizing one’s own even against resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (pp.15). American sociologist Talcott Parson (1937) already concluded in his now classical work in which he expressed the role of power as a “generalized means” for attaining whatever goals one wants to achieve (Parsons:1968, I:263). In his latter more developed theory of power which was presented in November 1962 to the American Philosophical Society he states that “power is here conceived as a circulating medium, analogous to money, within what is called the political system, but notably over his boundaries, into all three of the other neighboring functional subsystems of a society, ... the economic, integrative, and pattern-maintenance systems. Specification of the properties of power can best be approached through

an attempt to delineate very briefly the relevant properties of money as a medium in the economy” (Parsons, 1967:306).

The most acknowledged social theorist specializing on the sources of social power, Michael Mann, asserts that “political powers are those of centralized, institutionalized, territorial regulation; military powers are of organized physical force where they are organized” (Mann 1986:11); political power differs from other forms of social power, in that its concern is one particular area, the “center”. Political power is located in that center and exercised outward. Political power is necessarily centralized and territorial, and in these respects differs from the other source. Political power emanates from the state. We may define state as differentiated sets of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate outward to cover a territorially demarcated area, over which it claims a monopoly of binding and permanent rule-making, backed up by physical violence (1986:37). Those who control the state, the power elite, can obtain both collective and distributive power and trap others within their distinctive “organizational chart” (Mann 1986:27).

When we deal with power it is very necessary to look at the sources of power. Two political scientists came up with eight sources of power, mainly: (1) power, (2) respect, (3) rectitude, (4) affection, (5) well being, (6) wealth, (7) skill, (8) enlightenment (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950:87).

Another American political scientist, the doyen on theory of democracy distinguishes seven sources of power as: (1) social standing, (2) distribution of cash, (3) wealth and credit, (4) access to legal means, (5) popularity, (6) control over job, and (7) information (Dahl 1961:222)

Steven Lukes in his already classical work on power (Lukes 1974/2005) distinguishes three dimensions of power: decision-making power, agenda control, and systematic power.

Decision- making power exists when subordinates are aware of underlying conflict of interest with power holders but are induced to act in power holder’s interest, because resources, such as wealth, charismatic claims, or the threat of violence, allow power holders to control subjects against their will.

In the second dimension (agenda control), power holders prevail because they control what issues will be decided and what potential issues are removed from political agenda. Such process was called by sociologists “non decisions” in which power holders decide not to decide. Power holders decide agenda for decision in which can be manipulated by strong lobbyists not to go against their interest for example only in the name of creating work

opportunity; e.g., the steel industry devastates the health of the people of many parts of Central Europe. Is it not a good example of controlling agenda not to take steps to correct this situation?

The last dimension is systemic power, in which the power holders benefit by structural arrangements, such as the distribution of wealth or superior political organization. Subordinates may not be aware of their conflicting interests with the power holders and may, in fact, be ideologically indoctrinated to accept the authority of the power holders.

The second core concept is authority, which needs definition. If we compare power and authority, we come to the following conclusion: "Power generally refers to a capacity of a person or, more often, a group and institution to be able to manipulate and shape the views and actions of people". "Authority is like power except that it always refers to a set of institutions, and institutionalized arrangements, in which it operates" (Orum and Dale 2009:2). Authority is that form of power which is accepted as legitimate, that is right and just, and therefore obeyed on that basis. Thus if members of the Czech society accept that Parliament has the right to make certain decisions and they regard those decisions as lawful, Parliament power may be defined as legitimate authority.

Professor Petr Skalník, one of the leading political anthropologists (Kurtz 2001:175), differentiates power and authority based on his life-long anthropological research in Africa (Cameroon, Ghana and South Africa), Asia (Lebanon), Europe (Slovakia), and Oceania (Papua New Guinea). Skalník based his arguments on the anthropological data he collected from four societies (Ghana, South Africa, Slovakia, Lebanon) and elucidates the function of political institutions. First of all he criticized the ambivalent definition of power given by many authors starting from Max Weber and the usage of power and authority as interchangeable concept (Skalník 1989:8). To save the readers from confusions of concepts he clearly differentiates power and authority. In his view power is state power whereas authority is legitimate power which the people accepted without the aid of military force, or to use Weber's concept, 'state monopoly of physical violence'. "Power, in my conceptualization, should be understood primarily as state power. This means the capacity for carrying out decisions and activities ostensibly on behalf of a whole society by specific state agencies that have monopoly of use or threat of use of organized violence (ibid). Skalník as political anthropologist who studied with his colleagues from different parts of the world various types of polities all around the world and published eight volumes (Kurtz 2001:175) on the origin of state and its historical development, differentiates polities into two types: state and other political orders. Authority is a property of the people without accompany of professional

military force. He illuminates authority in these unambiguous words. In this other political order different from the state, people's coexistence does not require state power and domination of some over others. He called such arrangement authority. "Authority is legitimate without the backing of power and is voluntarily recognized by all. It is so because authority is diffuse, truly residing in and exercised by the people" (Skalniĳ 1989:8; 1999:164). According to the recorded history of North East Africa, many nations surrounded on the East and south of Abyssinia kingdom had various democratic political systems, without standing army protecting their sovereignty from expanding kingdom of Abyssinia. For a very good example can be held the conflict between Abyssinia and Somali nation in which the dream of this kingdom is starting from the 14<sup>th</sup> century when it tried to occupy the Western Indian coast of the Somali territory. The Somalis protected their territory against their enemy until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when new fire army reached Abyssinia with the great quantities/qualities from the then competing colonial powers to which Abyssinia, the only Black African state belonged to participate in the scramble for Africa, which changed the power balance between Abyssinia and Somali. Somali became victims of Colonialism in which their territory was divided into five colonial administrations and Abyssinia got the largest share – larger than France, Britain and Italy. Human societies lived for many thousand years without this new political institution called state, with clear laws to protect the society.

### ***Forms of Social Power***

Bertrand Russell (1870-1970), British philosopher, writes that there are various ways of classifying the forms of power, each of which has its utility. He classified power into two types – into power over human beings and power over dead matter or non-human forms. He was interested more in power over human beings. Power over human being was divided into Priestly power; Kingly power; Naked power; Revolutionary power; Economic power; Power on opinion, and Creeds as sources of power (Russell 2008:23-144). There are different kinds of methods of applying power on individual:

1. By direct physical power over his body, e.g. when he is imprisoned or killed;
2. By rewards and punishments as inducement, e.g., in giving or withholding employment;
3. By influence on opinion, e.g., propaganda in its broadest sense. This can include the opportunity for creating desired habits in others, e.g., by military drill, but the difference is not by influence through propaganda but by attraction to the hierarchy of military structure.

Russell wrote this very important book before the Second war (it was published in 1938).

The most influential contemporary political sociologists on theory of power, Dennis Wrong (1979), Michael Mann (1986 & 1993), and Gianfranco Poggi (2001), also divided forms of power basically very similar to Russell.

Michael Mann is the most distinguished contributor to our knowledge of theories of power. In Mann's opinion, the object of sociology should be social power, and its aim to chart the growth and transformation through time and space. In order to pursue this aim, one needs a general theory of power. That is what he offers in his volumes. Mann illuminates that, social power emanates from four main sources: meaning systems, material resources, physical violence, and administrative infrastructure (Gorski 2006:102). Hence, we can distinguish four types of social power: Ideological power, Economic power, Military power, Political power. He calls these sources of power IEMP (Mann 1986/2008:22-32).

Mann is the first social theorist who left the usually accepted trinity of power: political, economic and ideological power. Mann placed military power on the high-ground, which was sometimes ignored, more frequently treated differently and without an adequate sense of its nature and significance (Poggi 2006:135). Mann took one step forward from the traditional typology of power which previous and contemporary experts used to write. We can elucidate some of these as examples, such as Kant's trinity of three evil dispositions, 'hankering after lordship', 'hankering after possession', and 'envy' or 'hankering after recognition'. Weber's 'class', 'status group' asserts these forms of power, which his successors developed to economic, ideological and political power. One of Prof. E. Gellner's best book titles, *Plough, Sword, and Book* (1988) also belongs to this group of trinity. Mann's typology is quartet.

He explains that these four types are ideal types and that the real 'power networks – the networks of interaction in which power is embedded through which it is exercised – tend to draw on multiple power sources. One type of power 'fertilizes' the others through various channels to control all powers as much as possible in the hands of power holders

Mann elucidates **Ideological power** which derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life to share norms and values and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices (Mann1993:7). Control of ideology that combines ultimate meanings, values, norms, aesthetic, and ritual brings general social power. Religions provide along with secular ideologies like liberalism, socialism and nationalism – all grappling with the meaning of class and nation. Each power source generates distinct organizational forms. Ideological power is

predominantly diffused, commanding through persuasion, a claim to “truth” and “free” participation in ritual. Its diffusion has two principal forms.

It may be socio-spatially “transcendent“. That means an ideology may diffuse right through the boundaries of economic, military, and political power organizations. Human being belonging to different states, classes, and so forth faces similar problems to which an ideology offers plausible solutions. Then ideological power spreads transcendently to form anew, distinct and powerful network of social interaction.

Ideological power may solidify the existing power organization, developing its “immanent moral”. Transcendence is a radically autonomous form of power; immanence reproduces and strengthens the existing power relations.

**Economic power** derives from the need to extract, transform, distribute, and consume the resource of nature. It is peculiarly powerful because it combines intensive, everyday labor cooperation with extensive circuits of the distribution, exchange and consumption of goods. All complex societies have an equally distributed control over economic resources. Thus classes have been ubiquitous. Marx distinguished most basically between those who own and control the means of production, distribution, and exchange and those who control only their own labor.

**Military power** is a social organization of physical force. It derives from the necessity of organized defense and utility of aggression. On this form of social power the two noted political sociologists have different views. Michael Mann (1986) asserts that there are four independent social powers in his ‘quadripartite’ formula disconnecting conceptually political power from the phenomenon of organized violence-military power; the second author Gianfranco Poggi (2001) sees military power through political or state power because military organization is one of state institutions which is specialized in physical violence.

**Political power** derives from the usefulness of centralized, institutionalized, territorialized regulation of many aspects of social relations. The regulations and coercion are centrally administered and territorially bounded – that is, to the state power (Mann 2008:26.). Political power heightens boundaries, whereas the other power sources may transcend them. Political relations concern one particular area, the “center”. Political power is necessarily centralized and territorial, and in these respects it differs from the other sources. In one of his writings Mann gives his complete definition of state which contains four main elements as follows:

1. *differentiated* sets of institutions and personnel, embodying



2. *centrality*, in the sense that political relations radiate outwards from a center to cover a
3. *territorially demarcated* area, over which it exercises
4. a monopoly of the *authoritative binding rule-making*, backed up by a monopoly of the means of physical violence (Mann 1984:188).

The application of state power by the state elite can be divided into two groups according to the ways of endorsement: (1) infrastructural power and (2) despotic power.

1. Infrastructural power is what people call in today's capitalist democracies 'power of the state'. Infrastructural power is the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm. Infrastructural power was comparatively weak in the historical societies but expanding throughout the world slowly expanding its political space, pushing despotic power of state from scene. We remember that universal suffrage was fully established after World War II in several of the advanced capitalist states. The basic political rights of groups such as ethnic minorities and women are still increasing. Robert Dahl prepared interesting figure in one of his books that shows there was no democratic state in the world in 1860, whereas in 1870 there are only two such states. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were only 8 democratic states and in 1990 out of 192 states he marked 65 as democratic ones (Dahl 1998:8). Freedom House measures for a long time the democratic development in the world; according to this organization at the end of 2010, there are 87 free democratic states in the world. In Africa, out of 54 states only 9 of them are free (19 %), 22 are partially free (46 %) and 17 states (35 %) are authoritarian and not free. As it is known, Ethiopia is included in this last group ([http:// www.freedomhouse.org/](http://www.freedomhouse.org/)).
2. Despotic power of the state elite is the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups. The despotic powers of many historical states have been virtually unlimited. Let us mention several examples of such despotic state power: the Chinese Emperor as the Son of Heaven 'owned' the whole of China and could do as he wished with any individual or group within his domain; the Roman Emperor, only a minor god, acquired powers which were also unlimited (except the restricted area of affairs nominally controlled by the Senate). Some of the monarchs of the early modern Europe also claimed the divinely derived, absolute power (though they were not themselves divine) (Mann 1984:189). With this type of despotic power of the state

elite we come to Ethiopia which can provide historical as well as contemporary examples of such power. The last Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Sellasie, who ruled the Empire as Regent from 1916-1930, and as Emperor from 1930-1974 (except 1936-1941 the period of Italian occupation) gave the first written constitution for his subjects in July 1931. Article 5 of this constitution declares that “**By virtue of His Imperial Blood, as well as by anointing which He has received, the person of the Emperor is sacred, His dignity is inviolable and His power indisputable.** Consequently, He is entitled to all the honours due to Him in accordance with tradition and the present Constitution.” (Eth. Constitution 1931: art. 5). On the occasion of the signature of the Constitution Haile Sellasie in his speech declared that “ We, Haile Sellasie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, **have been called to the Empire by the Grace of God and by the unanimous voice of the people**, and having received the Crown and the Throne legitimately by anointment according to law, are convinced that there is no better way of manifesting the gratitude which **we owe to our Creator, Who has chosen Us and granted Us His confidence**, than render ourselves worthy of it by making every effort so that he who comes after Us may be invested with this confidence and may work in conformity with the laws according to the principles established” and continues how the Constitution was established: “We have, after our elevation to the Imperial Throne, and second year of Reign in the Year of Grace 1923 (A.D. 1931), **unasked and of Our own free will decreed the present State of Constitution**” (Perham 1969: 423-4) (all emphasis are mine).

In Abyssinia political culture, a person who became victorious in power struggle to capture the throne will be recognized by the Orthodox Christian Church which Donald Levine calls “as embodiment of national spirit” (Levine 1965: 267). Haile Sellasie was ascended to power through the palace coup against Lij Iyasu (Emperor of Ethiopia 1913-1916) organized by Amhara aristocrats and Orthodox Christian Church who refused to accept a person who is in his father’s side Oromo, a son of Menelik’s daughter. Tafari Makonen was known after his coronation as “Haile Sellasie I, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah Elected of God, Emperor of Ethiopia” (Ullendorff 1960: VI). After eliminating his political competitors by political intrigue, killing by poison, and killing political prisoners (it is believed that Haile Sellasie killed Lij Iyasu in prison during his way via Djibouti to England in 1936) (Warqineh and Melka 1986:1958 ).

### *Comparing Colonial Powers*

In the contemporary Africa, there are two regions which are the worst devastated by various kinds of war. These two regions according the periods of violent conflict and number of peoples killed in the war or the causes emanated from war conflict are Central part of Africa and the Horn of Africa. The causes of these deadly conflicts have rooted in colonial formation, “there is hardly any zone of conflict in contemporary Africa that can not trace its sordid violence to colonial history and even the late nineteenth century” (Zeleva 2008:1). Comparing will help us why these two regions are the tragedy of our period. As the French social philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville reminds us, “without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed” (quoted in Almond & Powell 1992:3). Comparison is fundamental to all human thought as well as being the methodological core of the scientific method. Comparing colonization processes and the colonial administration of both areas will give us the experiences of both regions as American great sociologist Martin Seymour Lipset used to say “an observer who knows only one country knows no countries. Without comparison, there is no way of knowing whether a particular practices or behavior is unique to the society in question or common to many” (Fukuyama 2011:18). During the scramble for Africa which was officially signed during the Berlin Conference 1884-85, Leopold II, King of Belgium, got the largest territory in the central part of Africa as his private colony called ‘Congo Free State’ (1885-1908) and the Belgian Congo (1908-1960). Congo Free State under Leopold II experienced holocaust which is hidden from the world opinion only to enrich one individual and his group. Until the territory transferred to Belgian state, the Congo people of the Congo Free State as private property of Leopold II of Belgium suffered one of the worst war crimes in African colonial history. “A population that was estimated to be between 20 and 30 million people at the beginning of the colonial era, was reduced 8.5 million in 1911 and 10 million in 1924, according to official data” (Hochschild Adam: 1998:233). The King’s own Commission in 1919 published its finding of atrocities committed against the colonial people by King’s agents states “Since the beginning of European occupation, the population has been in a continuous decline owing to a high mortality rate ... to a point where it is not exaggerating to say that, as a whole, the population has been reduced by half” (quoted in Young 1965:27). The death toll was caused by three interrelated causes: (1) murder; (2) starvation, exhaustion, and exposure, and disease, and (4) another cause of population decline in areas ravaged by the rubber campaign was a plummeting birth rate (Hochschild 1998:226-233). Beginning in 1891, the Congolese were required by law to supply labor, rubber and ivory to Leopold’s agents. From all forced labor the worst one which devastated the population was “the collection of wild rubber that resulted in the depopulation of the entire

villages and perpetration of heinous crimes against humanity in the Congo” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2003:22). Villages unwilling or unable to meet the assigned daily quotas of production were subject to rape, arson, bodily mutilation and murder (see photographs of men holding hands severed from victims, a person looking at the severed hand and foot of his five years old daughter, and other photographs in Hochschild 1998: between p.116-17). This horrendous crime against the African people happened in their own ancestral land.

### ***Abyssinian Conquest and Colonization of Its Neighboring Nations***

Colonialism is colorless alien rule. The American scholar on colonialism, Ronald J. Horvath, who taught at the then Haile Sellasie I University in Finfine (Addis Ababa) (1963-65) and had done a field research in the Empire adds theoretical bases for the argument of the existence of colonialism in all civilizations. He criticizes scholars of humanity studies, because of the lack of general definition of colonialism in the cross-cultural perspective and gives his own definition based on historical facts from different parts of the world. Horvath correctly argues that colonialism is not only characteristics of particular civilization (Western Civilization), and to consider it as peculiar features of particular civilization is “simply to ignore the full range of reality ... every major and minor civilization has sought to extend its borders and its influence, and Colonialism is not to be equated by only with the civilized (cultures having cities and literate population); pre-civilized people, too, have colonized” (Horvath 1972:3). Colonialism is a form of domination – the control by individuals or groups over territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups. There exist two basic types of domination: inter-group and intra-group domination.

In the Ethiopian Imperial state there exist both types of domination. The domination of the Abyssinian government over the colonized peoples like Oromo, Afar, Somali, Sidama, and other nations is the inter-group domination. At the same time, within the Abyssinian society there exist the intra-domination of the ruling political elite against the other defeated group (which is the history of Abyssinian statehood between Amhara and Tigrian elite).

There are two types of colonialism in the world history: (1) overland colonialism and (2) oversea colonialism. From these types of colonialism the oldest is the overland one, the second type started at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Portuguese colonized the northwestern corner of Africa, a place called Ceuta, in 1415.

Inter-group domination refers to the domination process in culturally heterogeneous society when the people of one culture dominate the people(s) of different culture, whereas intra-group domination concerns the situation in which one group of the same culture

dominates the other groups (for example, class political domination of one group by other group from the same cultural space).

My argument is that colonialism is very old in the human history; it “predates capitalism, playing an important role in imperial expansion during antiquity” (Boswell 1989:182). Colonialism is the direct and formal political acquisition of states or territories in the periphery; it is but one form of imperialism (Etherington 1984). Colonization establishes a hierarchal organization that has monopolistic privileges over peripheral land, labor, production or trade. It destroys competition in export and import trade.

The Ethiopian Imperial state was established by Menelik II of Abyssinia as other colonial states in Africa at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from 1872- 1900, with the highest human lives lost in the African colonization history. The first and largest nation southern neighbor of Abyssinia was Oromo nation which fought against expanding imperial conquest for more than quarter of a century but finally was defeated like other African nations, because – as the English poet Hilaire Belloc summed up aptly – **Whatever happens we have got the Maxim gun and they have not** (Boahen 1990: 4). Let us elucidate what happened to Oromo fighters to keep out enemy from their territory in the eye witness of two foreigners, Russian Colonel Alexander Bulatovich who spent many years with the Abyssinian Army in the south, and French Catholic pastor and ‘Anthropologist’ who lived in Oromo land as preacher of Christianity and observer of Oromo social life before and during the colonial war. The longest bloody conquest war was against the Oromo nation (the second largest nation after Hausa of West Africa), which took place from 1872 to 1899 (Bulcha 1988:34). This conquest war reduced the population of Oromo nation from 10 million to 5 million people (de Salviac 2005); half of the nation’s people (Bulatovich 2002:12) were killed, captured in the battle and sold to slavery by King Menelik – the Butcher of Oromo. Other neighboring nations of Oromo also faced holocaust in the hand of Menelik predatory army, such as Kaficho kingdom (67 % of its people), Gimira nation (80 %) and Maji (90 %) were killed or sold to slavery (Pankhurst 1968:111). The peoples south of Abyssinia were defeated and included into the new imperial state called Ethiopia; similarly to the medieval period in East Europe they became serfs and sold as slaves under Menelik II rule, the founder of the Empire.

The subjugated people under the Abyssinian colonial yoke faced many harsh notorious actions, mainly the Maji and Kaffa people – southern neighbors of the Oromo nation. Slave raiding and lucrative slave trade brought great amount of wealth. Since the Amhara colonization until the invasion of Italy (1936-1941) slave trade reached a climax of profit depopulating the region. „Eye-witnesses at Maji and at other places near Sudan border stated

that whole areas of the country had been completely devastated and that the remains of villages overgrown with bush could still be seen” (Perham 1969:220).

During the Menelik’s conquest war and raiding the people to be sold as slaves the inhabitants of former strong kingdom of Kaffa suffered extremely: “raiding automatically declined the population having been almost exterminated” (Pankhurst 1968:111). In 1938, the population of Bonga, the former capital of the Kaffa kingdom, was 3,000 out of which about only 200 were Kaffa (Huntingford 1955:105).

The chance of the Oromo people was not different from other sister neighboring nations, who had fallen under the Abyssinian subjugation: they were sold as slaves in the market, given as a wedding gift, during marriage between royal families, as domestic slaves and male as eunuchs. At one time Menelik and Taitu owned a large estate of 70,000 slaves. The Oromo people tried all alternatives to protect themselves from this horrendous, barbaric act against them. Some fled to the forest, whereas some took refuge in British Sudan, Kenya and British Somalia to escape slavery. The first exodus of refugees from Oromo land to escape slavery and Gabbar system in history started at this time (Bulcha 1988:41).

The land of Oromo and other colonized nations was measured into Gasha (1 gasha = 40 hectares) and divided to Naftanya (lit. gun-carrier, i.e., armed settler), Amhara who came as soldiers, priests, colonial governors, irregular fighters and others. This confiscation of the land belonging to the colonized people and its distribution for Amhara was known as **Gabbar system**.

The colonial government introduced the Balabbat system in which the land was divided into three parts, the author of the topic tells us „Immediately after the conquest, the northern rulers divided the southern lands into three, theoretically equal, parts according to a tradition principle known as Sisso, meaning one third. They confiscated two-third outright, leaving the last third to the indigenous population“ (Markakis & Ayele 1986:33). This two-third land of colonized peoples was divided to Naftanya according to their position in the government.

A governor received 1,000 Gasha, a Fitawrari (commander of the front) 300 Gasha, a Qanyazmach (commander of the right) 150 Gasha (Melba 1980:48), and soldiers according to their ranks: „an ordinary soldier, depending on length of service received from one to three Gasha; and captain of fifty men was granted up to five Gasha; commander of one hundred received up to twenty Gasha of land” (Markakis 1974:113).

The peoples of the colonized countries in such system were divided among the Abyssinian armed settlers (colonizers) and obliged to pay the major part of their products – up

to seventy-five percent from their harvest – as tribute to the new landlords (Bulcha 1988:42). Each Gabbar (one who pays taxes or tributes) faced different kinds of onerous works for his new master. The Gabbar's obligations were not limited; all necessary works were ordered by the Naftanya. The Gabbar works (plough, weeding, harvesting), on the field some day in the week, builds fences, kraal for his cattle; meanwhile Gabbar' wives and children also have many duties to fulfill for wives of Naftanya such as fetching water, grinding grains, collecting fire wood, washing clothes, generally all household duties for the families of Naftanya.

The colonization and confiscation of land established a new group of people without land ownership in a country where 85 % of the population are peasants who live on agriculture. The main cause of the 1974 revolution was the question of landownership in colonized territory of the Empire. Horowitz wrote about the 1974 Revolution, "in Ethiopia, a major effect of a land reform was to take land from Amhara and distribute it to the Galla, and for a time the revolution is suspected of being a Galla plot" (Horowitz 1985:8). Galla is misnomer for Oromo which entered literature via Abyssinian writers, but Oromo never used it as their own name.

Starting from the creation of this Empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today the political, economic, military and ideological power is in the hands of the Abyssinian state elite; the only difference is that starting from 1991 the circulation of power changed from the Amhara power elite to the Tigrians. The power circulation between these two groups of Abyssinians is part of their political culture. Amhara ruled from 1270-1872, the Tigrians from 1872-1889, then again Amhara 1889-1991.

The Tigrians came to power through armed struggle in 1991, at the end of the cold war with the blessing of Euro-Americans and it seems they are prepared to rule for a long time – according to how they structured their empire economically, militarily and ideologically.

### ***Political Power in Ethiopia***

During the military rule (1974-1991) many National Liberation Fronts fought to oust the brutal government of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The main strong liberation fronts were the Eritrea People's Liberation Front (EPLF) with political program of liberating Eritrea from Ethiopian and establish the Eritrea Republic; the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) aimed to free Oromo from the shackle of Abyssinian colonial rule and to establish the Republic of Oromia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) declaring in its original political program to establish the Republic of Tigray; later it is alleged to change its goal to rule the Empire. At the end of the cold war the Mengistu Government collapsed because of many internal and

external reasons and EPRF expelled the Ethiopian Army from the Eritrean soil and became an independent state. In Ethiopia, the Amhara state elite lost their state power and the Tigrian captured the Menelik palace in the Center of Oromia. OLF accepted the American Government promise in which during the conference in London on the future of Ethiopia organized by USA and chaired by Herman Cohen-Undersecretary of state it was said clearly that “without democracy, no help”. The OLF leaders, hoping to end the century old colonial rule in peaceful way participated as junior partner in TPLF led government for one year; when it realized that there is no window for democratic way of solving the problem, it resigned from the government to struggle as opposition party. The TPLF declared war on it and from 1992, low-level armed struggle occurs in Oromia and the Somali region of Ogaden in Ethiopia. The American Government’s phrase “without democracy, no help” seems to be a false promise, because now TPLF is already in power for 20years, and when we look at the USA foreign policy it seems that the opposite is true. As we know and all foreign observers certify, each five years there were parliament and local elections and the results speak for themselves, to quote only the 2010 parliament election result: according to the Ethiopian National Election Commission the ruling party garnered 99.6 % votes (Tronvoll 2011:121-136): Political power is completely monopolized by the TPLF.

### **Military Power in Ethiopia**

In history of state making and its existence, armed people played a key role. There are many different types of theories of state (Carneiro 1970, Krader 1968, Oppenheimer 1975). From all theories of formation of the state Oppenheimer theory fits the Ethiopian state formation which was established through conquest and plunder and survives until today by unlimited exploitation of the conquered nations. Oppenheimer continues to explain its origin and developments “the State, completely in its genesis, essentially and almost completely during the first stages of its existence, is a social institution, forced by a victorious group of men on a defeated group, with the sole purpose of regulating the domination of the victorious group over the vanquished, and securing itself against revolts from within and attacks from abroad. Teleologically, this domination had no other purpose than the economic exploitation of the vanquished by the victors” (Oppenheimer 1975: 8). The Abyssinian conquest and colonization of its neighboring nations created in the new Imperial state two groups of people, the victorious (Abyssinians) and vanquished (colonized) people, which European Anthropologists who studied Ethiopian society called true Ethiopians and those forced to be Ethiopians. Huntingford G. W. B.(1955) in his studies Ethiopians and various vanquished nations in Ethiopia presents the census of the population as follows:



Ethiopians	32.6%
Oromo	42.7%
Sidama, etc,	10.1%
Somali	6.0%
Negroid and Nilotes	6.6%
Afar	2.0% (Huntingford 1955: 23)

During Haile Sellasie, majority of Army echelon had been filled by Amhara individuals, but few individuals from vanquished nations reached the highest rank in military hierarchy, in the era of military government the space for vanquished people relatively expanded. Contemporary Ethiopian government and military is completely controlled by Tigrians, who came to power through the power of a gun in 1991. Tigrians are 6% of the Ethiopian population of 82 million. When Tigrian People's Liberation (TPLF) captured the state power, Ethiopian Armed Forces were completely demobilized and its officers thrown to prison. TPLF militia became the country's Defence Force. Today there is no Army General from Oromo and Amhara nations (whose population is more than 65% of the country's inhabitants). All military commanders are Tigrians except two individuals who are from minority group. René Lefort, the author of *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* (1981) a long time observer of Ethiopian politics in his recent article summarized the role of Tigrian Army if there will be peoples' revolution in Ethiopia as in North Africa and Middle East in these words "If the Arab uprisings soon broke through the wall of fear, it is probably because the demonstrators sensed that their own strength would lead the army to distance itself from the ruling power and thus deprived it of its only trump card-repression. But how would the command of the Ethiopian army-monopolized by Tigrians-react in the same circumstance? The answer is almost unanimous- it would defend the regime to the last bullet, because its position as well as the advantages it brings lie entirely on the regime remaining in power " (Lefort 2011: 5). Prime Minister Meles Zenawi also in the line of Abyssinian political culture told to the opposition parties that he fought and got the state power and if they want to come to power they must go to the mountains to push him off from power. All leaders of Abyssinia in modern history came to power by bullet of a gun.

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