The Dynamics of Ethiopia’s Unsettling Political Crisis: The Genesis, Dimensions of Stakeholders’ Inclusiveness and Remedies

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ABSTRACT
Given Ethiopia’s political reforms distorted by numerous impediments. The objective of this study was to answer to the emergent causations of the country’s political uprising, severe challenges obstructing the transition towards a democracy and hence looking a way forward remedy. Qualitative data collection approaches (interview and document analysis) as primary and secondary data sources) respectively employed. The finding of this study revealed that the political actors of the old regime and the reformist group are not only unwilling to bargain and settle on enabling strategies for a smooth transition but also intensifying their polarization. A typical pitfall rooted in the transition process is the dominance of the ruling party as major a stakeholder, to the detriment of non-state actors, opposition political parties and international actors who have been made dormant and only render mild participation. The result, furthermore, showed that the body responsible for ensuring the transition lacks appropriate reforming strategies to effectuate the transition. The root causes of the ongoing political crisis are traceable to economic and political frailties as well as social discontent mounted among the youth across the country. At the same time, the positions and hidden agenda of the actors seemed divergent and irreconcilable. The results also indicate that EPRDF's internal cracks, mass protests and communal clashes, ethnic federalism gap and presence of unregulated Media are the significant challenges of the transition. In order to make the political transition smooth, political bargaining between leaders of the autocratic (old) regime and the representatives of the reformist groups agree on strategic issues were recommended.

Keywords: EPRDF, ethnic federalism, ethnic violence, political reform, political transition

INTRODUCTION
Ethiopia's present-day turmoil is said to be associated with the absence of political opposition and the marginalization of minority groups (Getahun, 2018; Merera, 2007 and Smith, 2007). Even though

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the country’s constitution ensures rights of political participation to all ethnic groups in the country, which even extend to self-determination, the reality completely contradicts what the constitution spells out. Practically, there are rather rampant and constant complaints and allegations of violations of rights of ethnic rights (Getahun, 2018; Salih et al., 2018 and Harbeson, 2005). Inimical to the majoritarian principle of democracy, the country’s political headship is dominated by Tigrayans, who is approximately six per cent of the population, while others are marginalized (Seid, 2013; Merera, 2011 and Lyons, 1996). Although the country follows an ethnic-based federal government system, individual states are powerless, and parties which represent each state and ethnic group in the ruling coalition, Ethiopian People Democratic Front (EPRDF) are described by many as puppets (Getahun, 2018 and Smith, 2007).

Additionally, the TPLF are at the forefronts of the nation’s politics and economy. The party allegedly controls significant portions of the economy through its own companies and affiliate business institutions (Seid, 2013; Abbink, 2011 and Lyons, 2007). Party members have been accused of exploiting the country’s resources for personal and party gains, whereas other groups are extremely marginalized (Seid, 2019; Seid, 2013). Contemporarily, land-grabbing has become the new venture, which has adversely affected many ethnic groups whose livelihood depend on their land. With the signs of disappointment, the regime is not only accused of seizing land from these marginalized groups and handing it to its affiliates and supporters, but also sells it to foreign companies (Seid, 2013). However, government authorities claim that these large-scale land transfers are part of the development plan for the country. Ultimately, these multi-tiered repressions led to violent uprisings and protests against the regime (Getahun, 2018).

In light of the uprisings and protests, the political hierarchy of the country agreed to embark on political reforms geared towards democracy (Salih et al., 2018). However, there is collective anxiety that this reform could become another pseudo start to democracy due to disagreements about participation, among stakeholders, state and organizational inefficiencies (Ezekiel, 2018). Informed by the political uprisings and complexities stifling the political reforms, we investigate empirically and theoretically with the aid of the transitology theory, the dynamics of the unsettled political reforms of Ethiopia and its commensurate inability to see a smooth transition to democracy. To be able to conduct this study empirically, the following research questions are to be answered: (1) what emergent causes are inflaming the political crisis in Ethiopia? (2) What are the crucial and excruciating challenges obstructing the transition towards a democracy?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
We believe the political antagonisms among some grieved citizens and actors crippling the crossover to democracy may be associated with transitional inadequacies for regime changes and as such the theory of transitology provides useful lenses for making sense of our data. Focusing on regime changes, the theory stresses on issues arising during a movement from authoritarianism to democracy (Lewin, 1988). In O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), the determinant factor during political transition is elite bargaining, especially the strategic interaction between leaders of the autocratic regime and representatives of the opposition forces. They take a huge role to effectuate the process. Subsequently, Karl and Schmitter (1991) also add the essence of civil society and political parties also play a role in the transition process, while international actors take a backseat to domestic factors concerning transition outcomes.
As per the theory, patterns of elite interaction impact the prospects for democratization and influence the institutional features and quality of the democracy that emerges. Thus, formal and informal bargains among the elite are essential to neutralize the influence of hardliners within the collapsing authoritarian regime and radicals among the opposition. This negotiated transition abets the process of democratization (Karl and Schmitter, 1991). However, uncertainty and agency are fundamental principles of the theory. Thus, during the early stages of regime transformation, an exaggerated form of political causality tends to predominate in a situation of rapid and unpredictable change, high risk, shifting interests and indeterminate strategic reactions. Actors believe that they are engaged in a "war of movement" where dramatic options are available, and the outcome depends critically on their choices (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Inspired by this, we explore the processes and causes along with the diverging and converging interest of stakeholders in the transition process.

However, transitions from an authoritarian regime to democratic ones and its possible outcomes are summarized as follows. Historical experience tells us, the first and most probable scenario would be, a reversion to the same or a different form of tyranny but may be able to consolidate some type of democracy (Schmitter and Karl, 1994). The second possible outcome would be the formation of a hybrid regime which does not satisfy the minimal procedural criteria for political democracy (Schmitter, 2014). A third logical outcome is an unconsolidated democracy in which the minimal procedural criteria for democracy are respected, but without mutually acceptable rules of the game to regulate the competition between political forces.

The fourth possible outcome is the one we most obviously desired, namely, a democracy consolidated through mutually acceptable rules and broadly valued institutions of civic freedom, political tolerance and fair competition among its major actors (Schmitter and Karl, 1994). Related to this proposition, we assess what type of democracy the actions and inactions of actors in the transition would lead to and whether it can lead to democracy.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Study Area**

The research was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where all key actors of the political transition are presented. Hence, informants were selected from EPRDF side, opposition political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs), higher institutions and research institutions. The data obtained from purposively selected informants from the groups described above. The rationale for such an approach is derived from the idea of purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling gives freedom to the researcher to select the most productive informant to answer the research questions (Marshall, 1996)

**Source of Data and Target Groups**

Informants were identified based on a preliminary assessment of their understanding of the subject matter. Thus, data on the dynamics of Ethiopia’s unsettled political crisis: the genesis, dimensions of stakeholders' inclusiveness and remedies were obtained from thirty-five purposively selected informants from EPRDF side, opposition political parties, civil society organizations, higher institutions and research institutions. Seven individuals represent all selected institutions. The reason for choosing a purposive sampling technique as it will help the researcher to access the right informant and to address the core research question of the study (Creswell, 2009). However, the
researchers used data saturation as a frame of reference to determine the number of informants who were involved in the study.

**Informants’ Positions and Gender Category**

Informants were diverse in terms of positions in their organization that assured the fair representation of the data. Hence, the selection was made deliberately as follows: from EPRDF side (7), opposition political parties (7), higher institutions (7), CSOs leaders (7) and research institutions (7). Furthermore, twenty informants were male, and the rest were female informants to maintain gender balance.

**Data Collection Tools**

For this study, both primary and secondary data sources employed. Thus, questionnaires addressed through an interview with each informant to examine the ongoing political crisis of the country. The questionnaire has eight questions with four parts that are: two questions related to causes of the political crisis, two questions about the core challenges of the transition, two questions related to the hidden agenda of the political actors and other two questions are about possible solutions to actualize the transition. Also, we employed these secondary sources for contextual and academic purposes without twisting or massaging the sources to suit our interest or changing the meaning of the source (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002).

**Data Analysis**

The study employed qualitative data analysis method to analyze the response of informants according to the standard procedure. This is because, the method does not restrict informants from divulging information, and it is also suitable to organize, analyze, interpret and present the data about the research questions.

**RESULTS**

**Causes of the Crisis**

Unanimously, all informants agreed that the ongoing political crisis in Ethiopia has political, economic and social bases. The results, in this regard, revealed that economic challenges (chiefly massive foreign currency shortages, faltering growth, inflation and pervasive corruption), political challenges (EPRDF’s internal cracks) and social discontent mounted especially among youth in large provincial towns of the country, are the driving forces that push the reformist group from EPRDF’S womb upfront as the caretaker to lead the transition. In agreement with the finding, Getahun (2018), Seid (2018) and Salih et al. (2018) underlined that TPLF’s political domination under EPRDF’s umbrella makes TPLF, the only maker and breaker of the laws, contrary to the country’s constitution. Furthermore, Merera (2011) and Smith (2007) further adds deep-rooted causes of the crisis by stating that Ethiopia’s constitution reorganizes the importance of the political participation of all ethnic groups in the country and guarantees their rights which extend to self-determination. However, the practice contradicts the constitution and violates the rights of these ethnic groups. Unlike to majoritarian democracy principle, the politics is dominated by Tigrayans, who is approximately six per cent of the population, ousted the majority from decision making role. All in all, informants remarked that absolute political control makes TPLF’s dominant in controlling the country’s economy and that birthed nationwide protest which initially sparked in Oromia Regional State and later on spreading across the country including the capital city, Addis Ababa against the regime.
Positions and Hidden Agenda of Political Actors

Informants agreed that positions and interest of the actors were very diverse and irreconcilable. Besides, current Ethiopia's political fluidity paved to the proliferation of political parties. Further, they emphasized that almost all of these political parties are established without defined political philosophy; instead, they formed based on ethnic identity. This result is correlated with ICG report (2019), Yohannes (2019) and Dawit (2019) research findings which explained action and inactions of the actors in the transition: Thus, TPLF is resistant to the transition, instead, working to abort the reform by destabilizing the security of the country using its previous connections. Furthermore, the report underlined that TPLF’s has an insignificant role in Abiy’s administration and hence are working against the interest of other EPRDF’s members to regain its political monopoly. Hence, Tigray Regional State vice president, Debretsion Gebremichael, declared that "we either live together respecting each other or we will fall apart", implying that some Tigrayans advocate the state's secession. Since Abiy's ascension to power, the TPLF has been concentrating on building consensus in Tigray preparing its constituents for a scenario in which the region pushes for at least greater autonomy.

Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) and Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), on the other hand, are working together to actualize the transition. The coalition of ADP and ODP were successful in ousting TPLF’s political monopoly in the EPRDF regime as well as to address the grievances of the mass which surfaced across the country (ICG, 2019). Initially, their political marriage was successful in winning the heart and mind of protesters as well as to control the state machinery. Eventually, dissatisfaction grew during power-sharing between ADP and ODP. This is because, ODP took vital political offices in the military, security, ministerial positions, and other governmental posts, including Mayer of Addis Ababa. Besides, massive displacement and home demolitions of peoples in the name of correcting land grabbing in the outskirts of the capital city with the knowledge of Lemma Megersa deteriorated the political unification of ADP and ODP.

Meanwhile, the tension further escalated and became public when ODP raised ownership rights of Addis Ababa (Capital city of Ethiopia) and the strong reaction from ADP by defying ODP’s claim on Addis Ababa took their unity for another hidden confrontation. To claim the dust, therefore, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Lemma Megersa (the then Oromia region president) addressed this issue in their media briefing by saying that there is no as such bold disagreement between ADP and ODP. Still, both parties are working together to make the transition fruitful. Nevertheless, the deeds of both parties in their jurisdiction are often different, and still, ODP is working secretly to undertake political monopoly under cover of Ethiopiawinet (Ethiopian-ness).

Whereas, the position of Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) is still blurred and often takes neutral positions. This is because Sidama-Wolayta conflict twisted SEPDM to have less engagement in the reform. Hence, the party has no specific position either to support or reject the transition, particularly at a regional level, instead, takes periphery role of the transition. On top of that, SEPDM has leadership gap at the grassroots level to address the grievances of their constituents and hence, dissatisfaction grown secretly on the deeds of the governing body which are fueling the conflict as well as posing SEPDM to have a vital role in the transition.

Meanwhile, the role of opposition political parties in the transition is mild; everything is controlled by the ruling party (Prosperity Party). However, among the notable opposition political parties Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) due to its hidden, but, calculated marriage with ODP becoming a
threat for the transition. According to Yohannes (2019), OLF leaders are acting as a government by refusing the PM’s decision to disarm their troops. Hence, OLF troops in the Oromia Region are integrating into the society without disarming their troops, and hence, caused for massive displacement for non-Orromom people, cross-border raids, kidnappings and robberies in various parts of the Oromiya region. However, Abiy’s administration kept silent against OLF action while taking action to maintain peace and order in the country.

**MAJOR CHALLENGES OF THE TRANSITION**
Informants boldly mentioned that EPRDF’s internal cracks, mass protest and communal clashes, ethnic federalism gap and presence of unregulated media as critical challenges of the transition.

**EPRDF’S internal cracks**: All in all informants agreed that EPRDF is collapsed due to lack of charismatic leader after the death of Meles Zenawi and that birthed leadership gap. This finding has similarity with Lefort (2018) argument about EPRDF’s internal cracks. He argued that striking ideological difference between the ruling coalitions (EPRDF) as a government to stand together in realizing the transition is at a crossroad. In his analysis, both ADP and OPD are working together to actualize the transition, while, TPLF is a bit distanced and adding negative synergy to abort the reform. Whereas, SEPDM still playing an insignificant role in due to the process. Lefort also explained the causes of the crack of EPRDF by associating with the death of Meles Zenawi. This is because, during his administration, Meles had made the political and security apparatus, both responsible and dependent on him. Hence, he forceful controlled the direction of EPRDF without any problem. However, his unexpected death created internal mistrust within the EPRDF coalition and sisterly political parties. Eventually, the party nominated Hailemariam Desalegn as a new Prime Minister. However, Desalegn continued in maintaining Meles’s revolutionary democracy rhetoric without addressing the grievances their internal problem as well as the mass and hence this eventually birthed total dissatisfaction across the country.

According to Dawit (2019) and Ademo (2018) in late 2014, EPRDF had begun to admit shortcomings of leadership and inefficient bureaucracy at both national and local levels. Henceforward, the party went through critical self-evaluation (in Amharic called Gimgema), leadership replacement (in Amharic called Metekakat) and deep reforms (in Amharic called tiluq tihadeso). However, it was too little and too late to address the longstanding deprivation of the mass. Meanwhile, internal quarrels continued and crippled the party’s ability to implement reforms and addressing public inquires. This situation paved for the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) and Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) leaders to take advantage of Meles’s absence as an opportunity to assert their relevance within the ruling coalition by ousting TPLF from the epicentre of the country’s politics. Thus, the open confrontation had begun between the old governing and oligarchic elite, basically Tigrayan, and the reformists headed by Abiy Ahmed. Frictions within the ruling coalition prevailed openly during a media briefing and press releases. This birthed three bold power shifts within the EPRDF regime. First, the military and security apparatus was controlled by the reformist group. Secondly, regional states grab power and challenged TPLF dominance in their spheres of administration. Thirdly, the reformist group started to take action against corrupt ministers and officials of the regime.

**Mass Protest and Communal Clashes**: Informants who represented CSOs, opposition political groups and TPLF accused Abiy’s loose administration contributed a lot for the existence of communal violence. While the rest believed that local administration of EPRDF who resisted change massively
played a significant role in the presence of communal violence, in support of this result, Dawit (2019) argued that he (the Prime Minister) has no clear strategies to address the grievances of the protesters. On the other hand, Gethaun (2018) stated that both the central government and regional states are responsible for the existence of communal clashes across the country. This fact indicated that the check and balance system among the central government and regional states becoming blurred due to the inability of the central government to enforce law along with its jurisdiction.

Horne (2019) in this regard, explaining that there is no credible evidence that Abiy's administration has a clear road map or strategy for the growing grievances of the mass. Disputes over access to land and question of identity and loss administration along boundaries have led open conflicts along ethnic lines. Furthermore, dissatisfaction and hunger are grown from ODP about who gets to govern and manage the capital city, Addis Ababa. The rising tensions across Ethiopia led to the displacement of more than 3.5 million people since Abiy took power. Taking this fact into account, Yohannes (2019) stated that Abiy's government lost public trust seems to be declined. Instead, ethnic hardliners from different groups are continuing to defy the prime minister's calls for pan-Ethiopian unity and keeping the possibility of conflict alive in several regions. Moreover, various groups continue to demand the right to form their states under the federal system. In a nutshell, Abiy's administration is becoming unable to assure the prevalence of peace and order across the country. Hence, the country's situation has gone down from bad to worse with a severe possibility of a civil war.

**Ethnic Federalism Gap:** Informants who represented research institutions agreed that there is a practical gap about the application of the 1995 EPRDF constitution. As to them, due to lack of proper exercise of authority among each constituent of EPRDF's coalition that eventually caused the rebirth of EPRDF as Prosperity Party to address the flaw of the former regime by ousting TPLF from the political centre. While, informants who represented opposition political parties, CSOs and higher institutions argued that it is not the failure of constitutional application, first, the ethnic-based federal system of EPRDF by itself is a cause for the current federalism gap. In this regard, Takele (2019) added that the 1995 EPRDF constitution delegated authority to ethnic communities in each of the regional states and two city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). However, up till now, the constitution is vague on the application and division of powers between centre and periphery as well as each ethnic community's right to self-determination, which theoretically ranges from autonomy to independence. As a result, no consensus exists so far among Ethiopians on the appropriate application of the EPRDF's imposed federalism.

**Presence of Unregulated Media:** All informants believed that the act of the media's in Ethiopia is quite the opposite from universally excepted responsibilities. This finding has a correlation with the conclusion of Salih et al. (2018) and Ezekiel (2018) highlighted that in a democratic society, media are considered as the fourth state with their critical role in monitoring the government's activities, exposes weakness and report on political and economic corruption. Besides, it served as a platform for discussion and debate on policy issues, a source of information about citizens' concerns and a voice for the voiceless. However, in Ethiopia, by deviating from this fact media are party-affiliated and working in bolstering party ideology, values, socio-economic-political and development programmes and channel for disseminating hate speech against the norm of the society. Abiy's administration is reluctant in managing media's role by law and instead served as a fault line for several Media to intensifying the crisis.
DISCUSSION

During the past two decades, Africa has seen significant changes and various countries have made substantial progress in achieving political stability (Merera, 2011). In this regards, countries like Mali, Ghana and Senegal achieved credible political culture (Abbink, 2010). However, Africa still suffers neither lack of a continent-wide democratic breakthrough nor an institutionalization of democracy and the rule of law, and hence, violent conflict and authoritarianism remained constant (Abbink, 2010 and Ottaway, 1998). In this regard, the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia is located, is one of them. In terms of state formation, Ethiopia has a long tradition of indigenous state formation and a relatively more robust state structure in the region, but, unable to build democracy yet (Abbink, 2010). In 1991, the Derg regime was militarily defeated by TPLF. Since then, TPLF has been in power ever since as the dominant partner in the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front until the recent riot surfaced across the country (Lyons, 1996).

Having this political story in mind and examining Ethiopia's current political transition with transitology gives a better picture of the country's move towards democracy. As per the idea of transitology, elite bargaining mainly leaders of the former regime and representatives of the reformist group on strategic issues are determent factors for the success or failures of political transition (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Nevertheless, contrary to the idea, both parties are not willing to negotiate on the critical matters of the transition, while, their polarization becoming intense. Nebiyu (2019), in this regard, described that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's verbal abuse against leaders of the old regime (TPLF leaders) was a sparking point for their polarization. His first piece of verbal assault by saying that "day-time hyenas" (termed as in Amharic language yek' eni hibachi) on television briefing that immediately followed the Meskel Square blast at his support rally blocked the political bargaining process. Then after, leaders of the old regime, particularly the Tigrians were moving to Mekele from Addis Ababa, hiding from political negotiations and smooth interaction with the reformist group as well as refusing to commend from central government. The political reality of the country, therefore, showed that the transition is in trouble in completing its phase to actualize a democratic system in Ethiopia. This is because; key political actors, including TPLF, were not still willing to open up a genuine political discussion on strategic issues to effectuate the transition; rather, they are working against one another.

On top of that, Ethiopia's ethnic federalism and its application created polarized views among political elite towards the ongoing transition. Likewise, the federal structure is established along ethnic lines and caused a source of conflict among several ethnic groups. Hence, the system created more animosity and competition for power and influence among political actors in the country.

The theory further upholds the essence of civil society organizations (CSOs), non-state and international actors in political transition (Karl and Schmitter, 1991). Thus, the theory emphasized the role of CSOs, opposition political parties and international actors to actualize successful political transition. However, in Ethiopia, the transition process so far is dominated by the ruling party with mild participation of opposition political parties and non-state actors. This birthed difference between actors of the transition. This, in turn, makes EPRDF powerless to consolidate itself as a credible government to make the transition more institutionalized, instead, continuing by making the transition on the shoulders of few individuals primarily on Abiy Ahmed. This structural vacuum created due to the absence of CSOs and other non-state actors in the process and adversely impacted the effort of the reformist group to make the transition institutional and participatory. Until recently, CSOs and other non-state actors are not actively engaged in strategic dialogue with
the ruling party to actualize the transition. Instead, they have only a watchdog role in the process. Whereas, international actors who have an interest in Ethiopia, such as the United States of America, Gulf Countries, including Saudi Arabia, continued to manipulate the transition process by lobbing the reformist group. This may lead the transition into a pseudo-democratic transition. This fact is also correlated with Salih et al. (2018) recommendation on the essentiality CSOs, opposition political groups, non-state actors as well as professional associations in the political transition to make the road smooth to realize successful democratic transition. However, Abiy's administration is giving less attention to these actors so far and hence, the transition lacks credibility, especially by most the non-Oromo ethnic groups.

Another challenge of the transition is associated with patterns of elite interaction in the process. According to Karl and Schmitter (1991) and Karl (1990), patterns of elite interaction have a considerable impact either to build or destruct political transition. Schmitter (2014) further indicated formal and informal bargaining approaches between the elite to avoid the influence of ethnic hardliners and radicals among the opposition political groups. Ethiopia's political transition, in this regard, suffers from the absence of credible bargaining approaches between the actors, first ethnic hardliners are working together to fuel the gap between leaders of the old regime and reformist group. This makes the transition more chaotic. As a result, the level of anarchy becoming high in the federal system, which practically makes the regional states busy in strengthening their capability through military recruitment and training. This created a lack of political trust within EPRDF as well as within the reformist group. This, in turn, exposed the people to conspiracy politics. A notable example for this, after the killings of ADP high ranking officials at Bahir Dar and chief of staff of the Ethiopian army General Seare Mokonnen along with another general, Gezai Abera at Addis Ababa on 22 June 2019, the reaction of Abiy's administration in delivering information to the public was inefficient. Sadly, there was also jamming of internet across the country and defying independent Media to access the event.

Furthermore, government-owned Media, the federal police commander, including the PM's press secretariat office, was alleged to misleading the public by giving wrong information about the killings. Such measures of Abiy's administration lead the people to conspiracy politics as well as making sceptical to information which is coming from the government. All these political upheavals within EPRDF and by far among opposition political parties paved "war of movement" between actors of the transition notably between ODP and ADP; ADP and TPLF and ODP and TPLF.

On the venue, the transition is also challenged by the constitutional procedure. Unarguably, there were some irregular attempts to actualize the transition from the reformist group in the early stage of the transition. However, their efforts were not significant enough to realize the transition. In order to understand how the process is impossible for the reformist group, it is significantly better to assess the constitutional challenge of the transition. As per article 104 and 105 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian Constitution, constitutional change or amendments on the content of constitution required two-thirds majority vote in the House of Peoples' Representatives; a two-thirds majority vote in the House of the Federation and willingness of all State Councils is mandatory (Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995). This implied that the refusal of one regional state council is enough to dismiss any proposal of constitutional change or amendment inquiries. Therefore, parties like TPLF and some ethic hardliners are still resistance to the transition and have a constitutional base to disprove any kind of amendment inquiry to defy the transition unattainable. Meaning, the constitution is secretly locked and makes constitutional change
unattainable unless and otherwise, someone followed a populist approach to dissolve the current constitution. Abiy Ahmed, in this regard, lacks the momentum to take advantage of dissolving this rigid constitution. This is because, at the early stage of his appointment, he has wide-ranging public support which makes him very powerful to follow a populist approach to dissolve the constitution to effectuate the transition. Therefore, Abiy can use such kind of tactical move to escape the rigid nature of the constitution as well as to establish a commission who work for constitutional change to make the transition successful. Unfortunately, now he is too late to do that and dissatisfaction raised against him who may lead him lack of public support to follow such an approach. As a result, he came back to party procedure to conduct constitutional change which seems unattainable due to the reasons mentioned above.

This indicated that, therefore, the reformist group might not be interested in actualizing the transition, instead of as per the theory of transitology they seem to need a different form of tyranny government or a hybrid regime which does not satisfy the minimal procedural criteria for political democracy. The key reformist group, in this regard, including the PM, often saying that once a democratic election is conducted, the democratically elected government will be responsible for any kind of constitutional change, which seems logical, but unattainable with the current constitutional procedure of the current constitution. For instance, the second-largest ethnic group (the Amhara) people were not represented in the ratification process of the current constitution due to TPLF’s open blockage the Amhara political party and hence ADP is claiming constitutional change, whereas, TPLF resisting such kind of constitutional inquires by saying that, if there will be an amendment on the constitution, Tigray Regional State will ask secession as per article 39 of the constitution. Therefore, how can we imagine or expect the forthcoming government to be democrat without first having a constitution which accommodates the will, aspirations and interest of its constituents? This makes the future of the country gloomy as well as dangerous to determine the stand of the reformist group towards the TPLF introduced ethnic-based federalism. Hence, as per the prediction of the theory of transitology on the possible outcomes of transitions from an authoritarian regime to democratic ones and the deeds of the reformist group in the transition process so far seems that they are following the footsteps of TPLF system to build the ODP’s domination with some sort of pseudo-political transition. There are several indications also, for instance, the prime minister is playing with both cards and trying to address the bottlenecks of the transition without commenting on the shortcoming of the constitution. Still, the PM has no clear stand on the ethnic-based federal system of the country, whereas, he often claiming togetherness with his "love" and "medemer" rhetoric. This indicated that the PM lacks articulated policy and strategies as a leader of the transition. Love and medemer do not exist in a political domain; instead, are moral values which more-off inclined to the spiritual domain. In political realism, nation-states are motivated by national interest; hence, the PM should come up with clear national agenda by pulling himself out of ethnic politics to actualize the ongoing political transition for the wellbeing of Ethiopians irrespective of their ethnic identity.

On the other juncture, the appointment of ministers is crucial in the course of political transition. However, Abiy's ministerial appointment is also causing another challenge by itself. The prime minister has appointed new ministers by giving 50% of the ministerial positions for females. This is a breakthrough in the country’s politics and highly welcomed by the public. Nevertheless, there is a clear gap between the prime minister and the majority of his ministers in defending the transition so far. Most of his ministers are not active in the process and are not capable enough to convince the
public in their speech as well as their deeds. The only minister, in this regard, who are trying to support the transition and Abiy Ahmed is Muferiat Kamil (Minister of Peace), while, the others are kept silent. This implied that the ministers are not aware of the pace and approach of the transition or they are not willing to support the prime minister in the process of actualizing the transition. Therefore, it is time for Abiy to re-think his ministerial appointment to lead the country towards a democratic state unless addressed this leadership gap which probably leads the country from bad to worst scenario.

The last, but not the least reason associated the weakness of the central government to manage the security of the country. In the course of this transition, the prime minister seems failed to maintain peace and order in his jurisdiction. Since Abiy became a prime minister, the extent of lowliness in the country became high. This is because; he welcomed ideologically irreconcilable exile political parties without crafting rules and regulation for their political engagement. Consequently, the rate of internal displacement massively increased, ethnic hardliners were massively intensifying the conflict with their hate speech and the Burayu massacre are among the prominent example that showed the weakness of the central government to manage the chaos. The main reason for the weak reaction of Abiy’s administration is associated with the shift of power balance between the central government and regional states. Analyzing the current situation, seemingly, the regional states are becoming more powerful than the central government. Hence, the prime minister often denounces such violent acts instead of taking serious measures against law violators. As a result, the majority of the people are uncertain on the commitment of the prime minister and even starting questioning his political attitudes. The publicly known ethnic hardliners and hate speech speakers are jealous of the prime minister, and no one accused him to deeds. Apart from this, when the Oromiya regional state is claiming the ownership of the Addis Ababa by ousting the rights of other citizens, the prime minister kept silent instead of addressing the problem. The reluctance of the prime minister on refusing the question of Oromo Democratic Party on the issue of Addis Ababa massively down-play his acceptance by most non-Oromo people of Ethiopia.

THE WAY-FORWARD
The current griming political, economic and social situations suggest that Ethiopia is at a crossroad between hope and hopelessness, change and disintegration. Hence, in order to attain durable peace across the country, all the political actors should come to genuine political discussion along with other non-state actors. To effectuate this, the following remarks are forwarded:

- The PM should back to its initial populist approach to regain public support instead of working on getting party backing to dissolve the constitution. Currently, it seems unlikely for him because; he is on the verge of losing public support, particularly among the most non-Oromo ethnic groups. However, it is a must for him to think critically to regain public support to dysfunction the constitution, the EPRDF political centralism, and organizational approach of the regime to install the ongoing transition properly.
- Identifying the grand challenges of the transition and restoring the security by calming ethnic tension and violence should be the PM priority. To encourage a positive national unity, Abiy should develop a governance style that matches his inclusive rhetoric. Working with ministries and the civil servants to develop the reforms that they will implement can help dispel the impression shared by some that he is governing from a closed circle of co-ethnic and co-religionist advisers.
- Lastly, the prime minister will need to institute comprehensive economic reforms: creating opportunities for more excellent domestic and foreign investment; streamlining regulation;
breaking up inefficient state monopolies; carrying out banking reform to free up lending to
the private sector; increasing manufacturing and agricultural productivity and revitalizing the
long-neglected small and medium-sized enterprise segment of the economy. All these
measures will be critical to begin producing jobs for the burgeoning population. In support of
this effort, Ethiopia's international partners should, through a coordination mechanism,
support his reform efforts with quiet counsel and the substantial financial aid needed to
breathe new life into an economy whose pre-existing weaknesses have been compounded
by five years of unrest and capital flight. They should disburse these funds as soon as
possible to help the new administration address festering grievances over mass youth
unemployment, which some leaders exploit to drive violence.

CONCLUSION
Ethiopia, an East African giant, is at the midst of political transition with many impediments that
could make the transition pseudo in all political measures. This study, in this regard, revealed that
actors of the transition mainly the leaders of the old regime and the reformist group were not willing
to bargain on crucial matters of the transition, unlikely, their difference becoming irreconcilable and
often attracting ethnic hardliners to lead the crisis to irreversible manner. Furthermore, finding also
showed that the reformist group lacks fair policy and strategy to effectuate the transition; instead,
they often claiming togetherness with "love" and "medemer" rhetoric as a political centre. Even
though "love" and "medemer" do not exist in a political domain, instead, are moral values which
more-off inclined to the spiritual domain.

Therefore, in order to make actualize the transition, genuine political discussion from all political
actors are mandatory to materialize the transition. Successful political reform will put the country on
a path to political openness, inclusion and economic liberalization. This practice might help and
transform the Horn of Africa by setting a positive example for other political transitions that are
occurring in the region. Up until now, international communities have sent encouraging gestures to
Abiy and his administrations. Hope, they should continue to do so and which is crucial for calming
tensions, stabilizing the country and helping Ethiopia through this transition toward a brighter
future.

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