



Ethiopia at War:

Political causes of the civil war between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) between 2020 and 2022

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INTRODUCTION

- The research was conducted attempting to delineate the **underlying political causes of the civil war between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front between 2020 and 2022**;
- The framework used was the **Contentious Politics Approach to Civil War Onset** (Florea, 2017), that explains civil conflict as a result of a **crisis of authority and legitimacy** and two distinct but interdependent mechanisms: **radicalization and militarization**;
- The research adopts the **classical historical method**, and also establishes a **comparative historical analysis**.

FINDINGS

- Crisis of authority and or legitimacy happened as a result of **the postponing of regional and national elections in June 2020**;
- **Radicalization** actions included the bringing back to legal activity the pan-Ethiopian group Genbot 7 by the federal government and the holding of the polls in 2020 by the TPLF;
- **Militarization** actions were taken by both sides of the conflict, such as the looting of military equipment after the attack to the Northern Command base by the TPLF forces and the using of civilian aircraft to move military equipment and personnel by the federal government;
- it discusses ethnic fragmentation and polarization and their impact on the conflict onset. Nonetheless, **the research does not stand for the classification of the war as an ethnic conflict**.

The research identifies three different clashes that are represented by the conflict:

- centralization vs. regionalism/federalism;
- government vs. opposition, and
- nationalism vs. ethnonationalism.

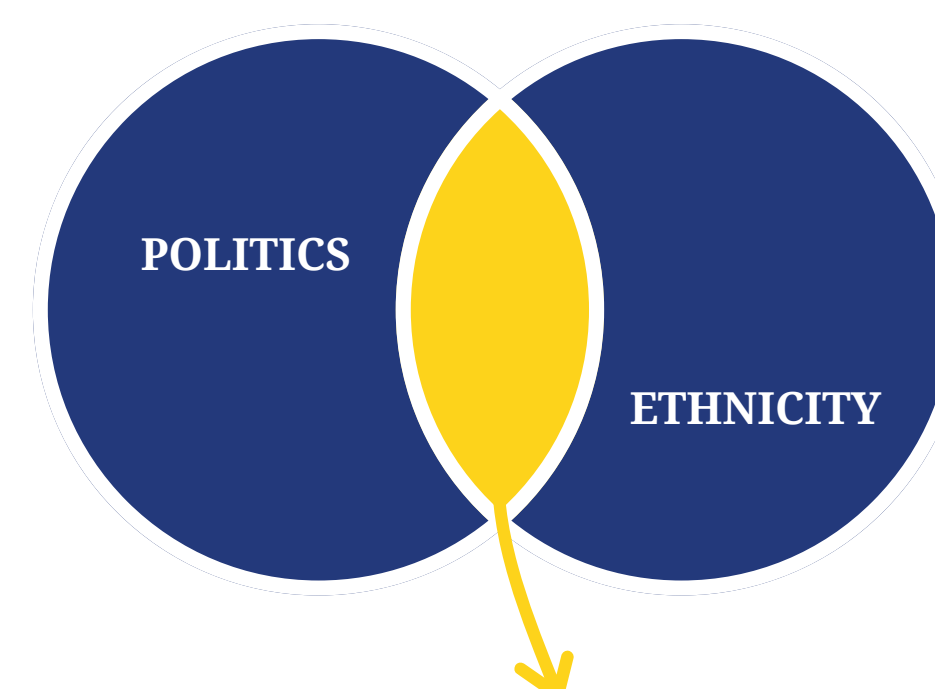
Periods of the Ethiopian history that were also shaped by those clashes:

- the Ethiopian Empire, especially under **Menelik II** and **Haile Selassie** rules;
- the military government known as the **DERG** and the transitional years under the **leadership of the TGE**;
- the **2005 elections** under the TPLF-led EPRDF coalition rule, and
- the violently repressed **political demonstrations between 2015 and 2018**.

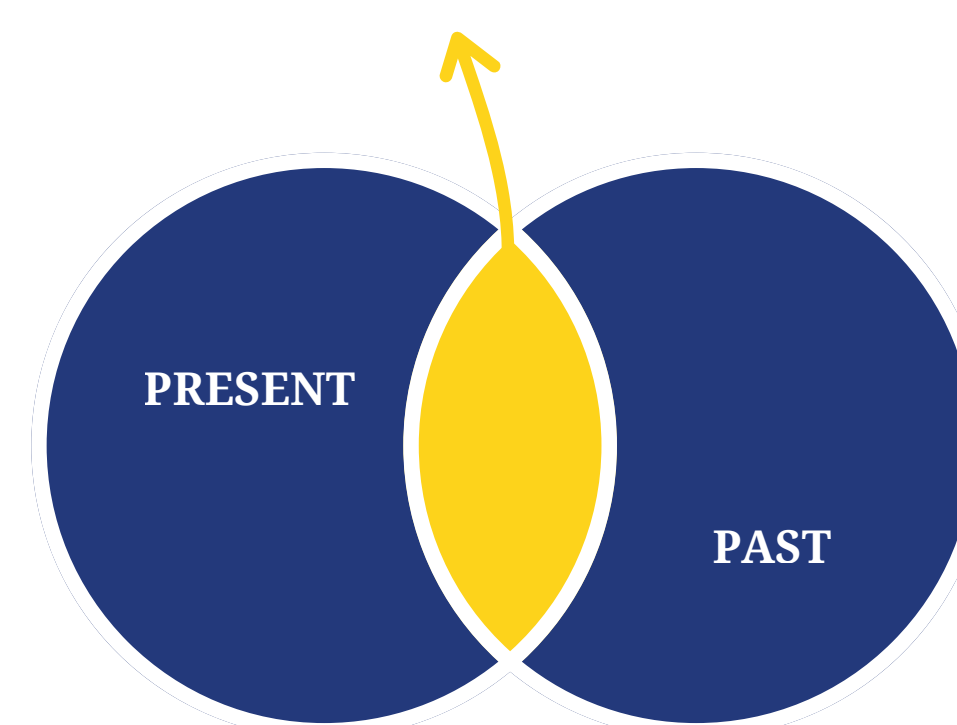
CONCLUSION

The political underlying causes for the conflict in Ethiopia between 2020 and 2022:

- **the non-democratic and violent constant imposing of opposing political projects** to the society;
- **ethnically-shaped grievances** reinforced during decades of politicization process of ethnicity;
- institutionalization and **normalization of violence** in the Ethiopian society;
- the presence of the enabling mechanisms of **radicalization and militarization**, taken by both actors in the conflict, and
- the **authority and legitimacy crisis** that resulted after the elections postponement announcement from the central government.



CAUSES FOR THE CIVIL WAR



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