Title: **The FDRE Constitution and Nation-Building in Ethiopia: A Case Study of Multiculturalism and Unity.**

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*Abstract*

*In history of Ethiopia nation building there was different conflicts in different regime. Post 1991 Ethiopia introduce Federal state structure to accommodate multiculturalism and nationalities question in the country. In order to accommodate Ethiopia's diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural landscape while promoting national cohesion, the country adopted a federal system in its constitution, which is explored in this study along with the complex relationship between it and the nation-building process, with a particular focus on multiculturalism and unity. Using a case study approach, this research looks at the mechanisms outlined in the FDRE Constitution aimed at fostering multiculturalism and preserving national unity, analysing important constitutional provisions, institutional frameworks, and policies pertaining to ethnic representation, autonomy, and cultural rights. It also looks at the successes and failures encountered in putting these mechanisms into practice. Through a critical assessment of the FDRE Constitution's function in steering Ethiopia toward multicultural unity, this study adds to our understanding of the processes involved in creating constitutions in diverse societies and provides guidance for improving nation-building initiatives both inside and outside of Ethiopia. Therefore, constitutional provisions should be practice and implemented by the stakeholders.*

***Key Terms:*** *Federalism, Multiculturalism, Unity, Nation-Building*

* 1. **Introduction**

In the realm of Ethiopian nation-building, a journey marked by various conflicts across different regimes, the post-1991 era ushered in a pivotal shift with the introduction of a federal state structure. This transition sought to address Ethiopia's intricate tapestry of ethnicities, languages, and cultures, aiming to foster unity amidst diversity. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution emerged as a cornerstone in this endeavor, encapsulating mechanisms intended to accommodate multiculturalism while upholding national cohesion.

This study delves into the intricate relationship between Ethiopia's federal system and the nation-building process, with a specific focus on multiculturalism and unity. Employing a case study approach, it scrutinizes the provisions outlined in the FDRE Constitution designed to promote multiculturalism and preserve national unity. By analyzing constitutional mandates, institutional frameworks, and policies concerning ethnic representation, autonomy, and cultural rights, the research sheds light on both successes and setbacks encountered in operationalizing these mechanisms.

Through a critical appraisal of the FDRE Constitution's role in steering Ethiopia toward multicultural unity, this study contributes to our comprehension of constitution-making processes in diverse societies. Moreover, it offers valuable insights for enhancing nation-building endeavours, not only within Ethiopia but also beyond its borders. Ultimately, the study underscores the imperative for stakeholders to actively practice and implement constitutional provisions, thereby advancing the overarching goal of fostering unity amidst Ethiopia's rich cultural mosaic.

* 1. **Statement of Problems**

There is an indication of obstacles and difficulties in translating the theoretical framework provided by the constitution into tangible outcomes on the ground. This gap between theory and practice raises questions about the practical feasibility of implementing multicultural policies and ensuring ethnic representation, autonomy, and cultural rights as enshrined in the constitution. By delineating these problems, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricacies involved in Ethiopia's nation-building project and to provide insights for enhancing the effectiveness of constitutional provisions in promoting unity amidst diversity.

* 1. **Specific objectives**
* To investigate the specific provisions within the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution pertaining to multiculturalism and unity, and assess their significance in the nation-building process.
* To analyze the implementation and effectiveness of multiculturalism policies outlined in the FDRE Constitution, including mechanisms for ethnic representation, cultural rights, and autonomy, to understand their impact on promoting national unity.
* To evaluate the extent to which the FDRE Constitution has contributed to nation-building in Ethiopia, particularly in terms of fostering a sense of unity among the country's diverse ethnic groups and linguistic communities.
* To identify successful strategies and initiatives as well as challenges encountered in implementing multiculturalism policies prescribed by the FDRE Constitution, aiming to draw lessons for future nation-building endeavours.
  1. **The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study lies in its potential to deepen understanding and offer practical insights into the complex interplay between constitutional frameworks, multiculturalism, and nation-building in Ethiopia. Several key aspects highlight the significance of this research:

By critically assessing the mechanisms outlined in the FDRE Constitution aimed at fostering multiculturalism and unity, the study can inform policymakers and governmental institutions about the effectiveness of existing policies and provide guidance for future reforms. This can contribute to more informed decision-making processes and more inclusive governance practices. Understanding how constitutional provisions impact multiculturalism and nation-building can help identify strategies to promote social cohesion and mitigate interethnic tensions in Ethiopia. By addressing the root causes of ethnic conflicts and inequalities, the study has the potential to contribute to lasting peace and stability in the country.

The research adds to the scholarly discourse on constitution-making processes, multiculturalism, and nation-building in diverse societies. By providing a detailed case study of Ethiopia, it enriches academic understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with managing diversity within constitutional frameworks.

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* 1. **The Methods and Methodology**

Given the nature of the study as a case study, the methods and methodology include:

1.**Case Selection**: which involve choosing specific aspects of the FDRE Constitution, relevant policies, or historical events related to nation-building and multiculturalism in Ethiopia.

2. **Data Collection**:, which include primary sources such as legal documents, constitutional texts, government reports and policy documents. Additionally, secondary sources such as scholarly articles, books, and reports on Ethiopia's history, politics, and society may be consulted.

3. **Document Analysis**: Detail the process of analyzing the collected documents to identify key constitutional provisions, policies, and institutional frameworks related to multiculturalism and nation-building. This may involve thematic coding, content analysis, and qualitative interpretation of textual data.

4. **Interviews:** interviews conducted with key stakeholders and experts, to gather insights on the implementation and impact of multiculturalism policies in Ethiopia.

* 1. **Data Analysis**

Explain the analytical approach used to interpret the findings, which involve thematic analysis, comparative analysis, or theoretical frameworks relevant to multiculturalism, nation-building, and constitutionalism. Discuss how multiple sources of data were triangulated to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Overall, the methods and methodology section provides a transparent and systematic account of the research approach, enabling readers to assess the rigor and validity of the study's findings and conclusions.

* 1. **Literature Review**
     1. **The Experience of Federal States and Nation-Building**

Federalism, as a political system, aims to balance power between a central government and regional governments, often to manage diverse populations and promote national unity. Here are summaries of how federalism has contributed to nation-building in several countries.

The first countries adopted federalism is Canada. Canada’s federalism is characterized by a division of powers between the federal parliament and provincial governments, as outlined in the Constitution Act of 1867. This structure allows provinces significant autonomy, particularly in areas such as education and healthcare, which has helped manage the country's linguistic and cultural diversity. However, ongoing disputes over jurisdiction, especially regarding natural resources and economic regulation, highlight the dynamic nature of Canadian federalism (Britannica, 2023; Wikipedia, 2023).Also, Switzerland is often cited as a successful example of federalism accommodating cultural diversity. The Swiss federation consists of 26 cantons, each with considerable autonomy. The federal system unites these cantons despite differences in language, religion, and economic interests. Switzerland’s federal constitution, established in 1848 and revised in 1874, balances local and national interests, fostering a strong sense of unity and stability within a highly decentralized framework (Britannica, 2023).The Germany's federal system, established in the aftermath of World War II, divides power between the federal government and 16 Länder (states). This division was designed to prevent the centralization of power that characterized the Nazi regime. Germany’s Basic Law (Grundgesetz) provides a clear framework for shared and exclusive powers, which has been crucial for political stability and economic development. The system allows for regional diversity while ensuring national cohesion (Forum of Federations, 2023).In Asia India’s federal system is marked by a strong central government with significant powers reserved for its 28 states and 8 Union territories. The Indian Constitution allows for flexibility in addressing regional needs while maintaining national unity. Federalism in India has played a critical role in managing the country’s vast cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Despite challenges, such as regional disparities and occasional tensions between states and the central government, federalism has been a key factor in India's democratic stability (IDEA, 2023).

In Africa ,Nigeria operates a federal system to manage its complex ethnic and regional diversity. The Nigerian Constitution distributes power between the federal government and 36 states. This arrangement aims to ensure equitable resource distribution and political representation. Federalism in Nigeria has faced challenges, including regional inequalities and conflicts, but it remains a vital mechanism for maintaining national unity and addressing diverse local needs (Wikipedia, 2023).The other most known federal structure goes to Russia’s federal system includes 83 federal subjects with varying degrees of autonomy. These subjects, which include republics, territories, and regions, reflect the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity. Federalism in Russia is designed to accommodate the specific needs of different regions while maintaining central control. However, the balance of power has been a contentious issue, especially with reforms that have centralized authority under the presidency (Britannica, 2023; Wikipedia, 2023).

To sum up, Federalism, as a system of governance, offers a way to manage diversity and promote nation-building by distributing power across multiple levels of government. Each country’s approach to federalism is shaped by its unique historical, cultural, and political context, leading to varying degrees of success and challenges in fostering national unity and addressing local needs.

* + 1. **Federalism State Structure Experience of Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution, adopted in 1995, marked a pivotal shift in Ethiopia's approach to governance and nation-building. It aimed to address the country’s ethnic diversity through a federal system designed to promote both unity and multiculturalism. This review examines the academic discourse surrounding the FDRE Constitution, focusing on its impact on ethnic federalism, national identity, and political stability. Ethiopia’s adoption of ethnic federalism has been a significant subject of scholarly analysis. The FDRE Constitution grants extensive autonomy to ethnically defined regions, allowing for self-administration and cultural preservation. This framework is seen as an attempt to reconcile Ethiopia's diverse ethnic groups by providing a sense of ownership and participation in governance (Van der Beken, 2013). However, the constitution’s provision for self-determination, including the right to secession, remains a contentious point that has both stabilized and destabilized various regions at different times (Assefa, 2012).

One of the primary criticisms of the FDRE Constitution is its role in perpetuating ethnic divisions rather than fostering a cohesive national identity. Critics argue that ethnic federalism has entrenched ethnic identities at the expense of national unity, leading to increased ethnic tensions and conflicts (Aalen, 2011). Additionally, the unequal development among regions has exacerbated grievances, leading to calls for constitutional reforms to balance regional autonomy with national integration (Young, 1996).

* + 1. **Case Studies and Comparative Analysis**

Comparative studies of other federal systems reveal mixed results regarding the success of Ethiopia's model. While some scholars highlight the constitution’s success in empowering marginalized groups and reducing central authoritarianism, others point to persistent challenges in governance and political inclusion (Fiseha, 2012). The balance between regional autonomy and national coherence remains delicate and often contested within the political landscape. Recent political dynamics, including the rise of ethno-nationalist movements and changes in federal policies have renewed debates on the effectiveness of the FDRE Constitution. The ongoing discussions suggest a need for revisiting and possibly amending certain constitutional provisions to better align with the evolving socio-political context of Ethiopia (Abbink, 2011).

Generally, the FDRE Constitution's approach to nation-building through ethnic federalism presents a unique case of managing diversity in a multicultural society. While it has achieved notable successes in decentralization and cultural autonomy, it also faces significant challenges in promoting a unified national identity and ensuring political stability. Future research should continue to explore the dynamic interplay between federal structures and ethnic relations in Ethiopia. The debate over the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution is integral to discussions on nation-building in Ethiopia. The FDRE Constitution, adopted in 1995, was designed to establish a federal system that respects the country's diverse ethnic composition. However, this framework has been subject to considerable debate, particularly regarding its effectiveness in promoting national unity and stability.

* + 1. **Constitutional Provisions and Ethnic Federalism**

The FDRE Constitution enshrines the principle of ethnic federalism, granting significant autonomy to ethnically defined regions. This structure aims to address historical grievances and promote self-governance among Ethiopia's diverse ethnic groups. Notably, Article 39, which grants ethnic groups the right to self-determination, including secession, has been particularly contentious. Critics argue that such provisions could encourage fragmentation rather than unity, posing a threat to national stability.

One of the central issues is the implementation of the constitutional provisions. While the Constitution theoretically provides a robust framework for rights and governance, the practical application has often fallen short. Issues such as lack of genuine political autonomy, centralization of power, and uneven development have fuelled dissatisfaction and conflict. For instance, the exclusion and marginalization of peripheral regions in economic and political spheres have exacerbated tensions and hindered nation-building effort. The debate on constitutional reform is multifaceted. Some argue for minor amendments to enhance inclusivity and address specific grievances, while others advocate for more radical changes. For example, discussions have cantered on revising or removing Article 39, changing the working language of the federal government, and redrawing administrative boundaries to reduce ethnic-based territorial divisions. These proposed reforms aim to create a more integrated national identity and mitigate ethnic tensions. Efforts to promote nation-building also emphasize the need for peace-building and reconciliation. This involves addressing past injustices and fostering a culture of dialogue and mutual respect among different ethnic groups. Grassroots peace-building initiatives, involving community leaders and elders, play a crucial role in this process. Such approaches seek to build trust and cooperation from the bottom up, complementing formal political reforms【 】.The debate on the FDRE Constitution reflects broader challenges in Ethiopian nation-building. Balancing ethnic autonomy with national unity remains a complex task. While the Constitution provides a foundation for addressing ethnic diversity, its implementation and potential reforms are critical to ensuring long-term stability and cohesion in Ethiopia. Ongoing discussions and empirical research, such as those conducted by various academic and policy institutions, are essential in navigating these challenges and finding sustainable solutions.

* 1. **Result and Discussion**

**1.8.1. The Mechanisms in the FDRE Constitution Aimed at Fostering Multiculturalism**

The mechanisms outlined in the FDRE (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) Constitution aimed at fostering multiculturalism primarily revolve around provisions that recognize and accommodate the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural landscape of Ethiopia while promoting national unity. Some key mechanisms include: The FDRE Constitution establishes a federal system of government, dividing Ethiopia into nine ethnically based regional states and two chartered cities. This is currently extended to twelve (12) regional states. This federal structure recognizes the diversity of ethnic groups and grants regional states a degree of autonomy in managing their internal affairs, including cultural and linguistic matters; that was the key quest in history of Ethiopian civil war or nationality question. The Constitution guarantees proportional representation of ethnic groups in government institutions, including the federal parliament and regional councils. This ensures that diverse ethnic communities have a voice in decision-making processes at both the national and regional levels. According to respondents (2024) the Constitution enshrines the protection of cultural rights, including the right to practice and promote one's culture, language, and identity. It prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity or language and affirms the equality of all ethnic groups before the law.

Furthermore, the FDRE Constitution includes provisions for affirmative action to address historical injustices and inequalities faced by marginalized ethnic groups. This may include policies aimed at promoting socio-economic development, education, and representation for historically disadvantaged communities. The Constitution recognizes multiple languages spoken across Ethiopia and grants official status to several regional languages, in addition to Amharic, the official working language of the federal government. This promotes linguistic diversity and ensures access to government services and information in various languages. The Constitution includes provisions for the preservation and promotion of Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage, including historical sites, traditions, and customs. In line with the respondents(2024) this may involve measures to safeguard cultural artifacts, support cultural institutions, and promote cultural exchange and education. The FDRE Constitution provides mechanisms for resolving conflicts arising from ethnic diversity, including the establishment of regional courts and conflict resolution bodies. These mechanisms aim to address grievances, promote reconciliation, and prevent interethnic violence.

These mechanisms outlined in the FDRE Constitution reflect a commitment to multiculturalism and diversity while seeking to promote national unity and cohesion. However, their effective implementation and enforcement remain critical to realizing the constitutional vision of a harmonious and inclusive Ethiopian society.

**1.8.2. Important Constitutional Provisions Related to Multiculturalism and Nation-Building.**

The first article in FDRE constitution in line with nation building is Article 39: This article recognizes the right to self-determination, including the right to secession, for all ethnic groups in Ethiopia. While affirming the unity of the Ethiopian state, it also acknowledges the diversity of its peoples and their right to autonomy within a federal framework. The second one is Article 46: this article mandates that the House of Peoples' Representatives (the lower house of the Ethiopian Parliament) be composed of representatives elected from each regional state based on population size and taking into account the number of ethnic groups. This ensures proportional representation of diverse ethnic communities in the national legislature. In addition Article 39(4) article Subsection 4 of Article 39 provides constitutional safeguards to prevent secessionist movements and ensures that any attempt to secede must comply with specific procedural requirements, including popular referendums and approval by regional legislatures. Also Article 5 establishes the supremacy of the Constitution, stating that it is the highest law of the land. This provision underscores the importance of adhering to constitutional principles, including those related to multiculturalism and unity, in all aspects of governance and policymaking.

Moreover, Article 8 states that Unity of the People and Equality of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples: Article 8 emphasizes the unity of the Ethiopian people while recognizing the equality of all nations, nationalities, and peoples. It prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity or language and affirms the equality of all citizens before the law.

Subsection 5 of Article 39 reaffirms the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, stating that the right to self-determination does not include the right to secede from the Ethiopian state. This provision reinforces the constitutional commitment to maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. Subsection 6 of Article 39 outlines the procedural requirements for secession, including the need for a referendum in the affected region and approval by the House of Peoples' Representatives. This provision establishes clear legal mechanisms for addressing secessionist aspirations within the framework of the Constitution.

These constitutional provisions play a crucial role in shaping Ethiopia's federal system, promoting multiculturalism, and preserving national unity. They reflect a balance between recognizing the diversity of Ethiopia's ethnic groups and ensuring the country's territorial integrity and unity as a sovereign state.

**1.8.3. Institutional Frameworks Relevant to Multiculturalism and Nation-Building**

Institutional frameworks relevant to multiculturalism and nation-building in Ethiopia include governmental bodies, agencies, and organizations tasked with implementing policies and programs aimed at promoting ethnic representation, cultural rights, and national unity. Some key institutional frameworks include:

* **House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR**):As the lower house of the Ethiopian Parliament, the HPR plays a central role in national governance and legislative processes. It is composed of representatives elected from each regional state based on population size and ethnic diversity, ensuring proportional representation of diverse ethnic communities.
* **House of Federation (HoF**): The HoF represents Ethiopia's regional states and serves as a forum for addressing issues related to federalism, intergovernmental relations, and ethnic diversity. It plays a crucial role in mediating conflicts and promoting dialogue among different ethnic groups.
* **Ministry of Federal Affairs** The Ministry of Federal Affairs is responsible for coordinating intergovernmental relations between the federal government and regional states. It facilitates cooperation and collaboration among diverse ethnic communities and supports the implementation of federal policies and programs.
* **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC**):The EHRC is an independent governmental body tasked with promoting and protecting human rights across Ethiopia. It monitors human rights violations, including those related to ethnic discrimination and cultural rights, and advocates for inclusive policies and legal reforms.
* **Regional State Governments**: Each of Ethiopia's nine regional states has its own government and administrative structures responsible for implementing policies and programs at the regional level. These governments play a key role in promoting ethnic representation, cultural rights, and socio-economic development within their respective regions.

These institutional frameworks form the backbone of Ethiopia's federal system and play a vital role in promoting multiculturalism, preserving cultural rights, and fostering national unity. Effective coordination and collaboration among these institutions are essential for advancing Ethiopia's nation-building efforts in a diverse and pluralistic society.

**1.8.4. Policies Pertaining to Ethnic Representation**

In Ethiopia aim to ensure that diverse ethnic groups are adequately represented in government institutions and decision-making processes. Some key policies include:

* **Proportional Representation**: Electoral systems in Ethiopia often incorporate mechanisms for proportional representation, whereby seats in legislative bodies are allocated based on the proportion of votes received by each political party or ethnic group. This ensures that diverse ethnic communities have a voice in national and regional governance.
* **Ethnic Federalism**: Ethiopia’s federal system of governance is based on the principle of ethnic federalism, which recognizes the cultural, linguistic, and territorial rights of different ethnic groups. Each regional state has its own government and legislative assembly, with powers devolved to manage internal affairs, including matters related to ethnic representation.
* **Constitutional Quotas**: The FDRE Constitution includes provisions for ensuring ethnic diversity and representation in government institutions. For example, Article 39 mandates that the House of Peoples' Representatives (the lower house of the Ethiopian Parliament) be composed of representatives elected from each regional state based on population size and ethnic diversity.
* **Affirmative Action**: Affirmative action policies may be implemented to address historical injustices and inequalities faced by marginalized ethnic groups. These policies may include quotas or special measures to increase the representation of underrepresented ethnic communities in government, education, employment, and other sectors.
* **Decentralization**: Decentralization policies empower regional and local governments to make decisions that affect their communities, including matters related to ethnic representation and cultural rights. This allows for greater autonomy and self-governance at the local level, catering to the specific needs and priorities of diverse ethnic groups.
* **Cultural Rights Protection**: Policies aimed at protecting cultural rights may include measures to preserve and promote indigenous languages, traditions, and customs. This may involve the provision of resources for cultural institutions, language education programs, and cultural heritage preservation initiatives.

These policies play a crucial role in promoting ethnic representation, preserving cultural diversity, and fostering national unity in Ethiopia's multicultural society. However, their effective implementation and enforcement are essential to ensure meaningful participation and inclusion of all ethnic communities in the governance process.

Policies pertaining to autonomy and cultural rights in Ethiopia aim to safeguard the rights of diverse ethnic groups to self-governance, preserve their cultural identities, and protect their cultural heritage. Some key policies include:

1. **Regional Self-Governance**: Ethiopia's federal system grants significant autonomy to its regional states, allowing them to govern their internal affairs, including matters related to culture, language, education, and economic development. Regional governments have the authority to enact laws and policies that reflect the cultural, linguistic, and historical realities of their respective constituencies.

2**. Ethnic-Based Regional States**: The creation of ethnically based regional states in Ethiopia reflects the recognition of the cultural diversity and territorial rights of different ethnic groups. Each regional state has its own government and legislative assembly, with powers devolved to address the specific needs and priorities of its constituents

**3. Cultural Rights Protection**: The FDRE Constitution guarantees the protection of cultural rights, including the right to practice and promote one's culture, language, and identity. This includes the preservation of cultural heritage, traditions, and customs, as well as the promotion of cultural diversity and pluralism.

4**. Official Language Policy:** Ethiopia recognizes multiple languages spoken across the country and grants official status to several regional languages, in addition to Amharic, the official working language of the federal government. This policy promotes linguistic diversity and ensures access to government services and information in various languages.

5. **Education Policy:** Ethiopia's education policy includes provisions for promoting multilingual education and preserving indigenous languages. Efforts are made to provide instruction in students' mother tongues during the early years of schooling, alongside proficiency in the official language(s) of instruction.

6. **Cultural Heritage Preservation**: Policies and initiatives are in place to safeguard Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage, including historical sites, artifacts, and traditions. This may involve the establishment of cultural institutions, museums, and heritage sites, as well as efforts to document and preserve intangible cultural heritage.

7. **Media and Arts Promotion:** Policies may support the development and promotion of media, literature, arts, and cultural expressions that reflect the diversity of Ethiopia's ethnic groups. This includes funding for cultural productions, festivals, and events that celebrate the country's cultural richness.

These policies play a vital role in promoting cultural diversity, protecting cultural rights, and fostering a sense of belonging and identity among Ethiopia's diverse ethnic communities. However, their effective implementation and enforcement are essential to ensure the full realization of autonomy and cultural rights for all Ethiopians.

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