

From Aiding to Equal Partnership between the EU and African Countries: the Case  
of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict

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จากการให้-รับความช่วยเหลือสู่พันธมิตรที่เท่าเทียมระหว่างสหภาพยุโรปกับประเทศแอฟริกา:  
กรณีความขัดแย้งที่เกรย์ในเอธิโอเปีย

น.ส. ยู จ้าว

สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต  
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Independent Study Proposal From Aiding to Equal Partnership between the EU and African  
Countries: the Case of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict

By Miss Yue Zhao

Field of Study European Studies

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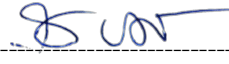
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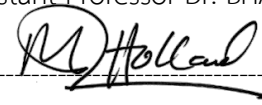
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ยู จ้าว : จากการให้-รับความช่วยเหลือสู่พันธมิตรที่เท่าเทียมระหว่างสหภาพยุโรปกับประเทศแอฟริกา: กรณีความขัดแย้งทิเกรย์ในเอธิโอเปีย. (From Aiding to Equal Partnership between the EU and African Countries: the Case of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict) อ ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ.ดร. ภาวรณ เรื่องศิลป์, อ ที่ปรึกษาร่วม : ศ.ดร. มาติน ฮอลแลนด์

บทความนี้จะแนะนำสถานการณ์ปัจจุบันของความขัดแย้ง Tigray ในเอธิโอเปียและความช่วยเหลือของสหภาพยุโรปต่อเอธิโอเปียตลอดจนการคิดวิภาษวิธีเกี่ยวกับแนวทางของสหภาพยุโรป ในส่วนแรก ผู้เขียนให้ประวัติโดยสังเขปของเอธิโอเปียเพื่ออธิบายความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) และรัฐบาลกลาง ในส่วนนี้ บทความนี้ยังบรรยายสถานการณ์ทั่วไปของสงครามไทเกรย์ด้วย ในเวลาเดียวกัน เพื่อที่จะอธิบายเพิ่มเติมถึงสาเหตุของการระบาดของความขัดแย้งในทิเกรย์ ส่วนที่สองจะแนะนำประเด็นทางเศรษฐกิจและชาติพันธุ์ที่อยู่เบื้องหลังการระบาดของความขัดแย้ง ในส่วนสุดท้าย บทความนี้จะแนะนำนโยบายต่างประเทศของสหภาพยุโรปและสถานการณ์ความช่วยเหลือแก่เอธิโอเปีย ตั้งแต่ภาพรวมโดยรวมไปจนถึงสถานการณ์ทางการเมืองและความช่วยเหลือหลังจากการระบาดของความขัดแย้งในทิเกรย์ในตอนท้ายของส่วนนี้ บทความนี้เสนอแนวทางสำหรับความสัมพันธ์ในอนาคตของสหภาพยุโรปกับเอธิโอเปีย

ในเวลาเดียวกัน บทความนี้ใช้แนวคิดเรื่อง "Normative Power Europe" (NPE) เพื่อวิเคราะห์วิภาษวิธีว่าสหภาพยุโรปได้เปลี่ยนเอธิโอเปียจากประเทศผู้รับให้เป็นความสัมพันธ์ที่เท่าเทียมกันหรือไม่ ในเวลาเดียวกัน สหภาพยุโรปควรรวมแนวความคิดเกี่ยวกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศที่เท่าเทียมกันกับเอธิโอเปียในการตอบสนองต่อความขัดแย้งไทเกรย์อย่างไร ในบทความนี้ ผู้เขียนวิเคราะห์เชิงวิภาษวิธีที่มีอยู่ของสหภาพยุโรป ว่าพวกเขาสามารถใช้ “แรงกดดันเชิงบรรทัดฐาน” ต่อเอธิโอเปียได้มากน้อยเพียงใด และวิเคราะห์ว่าพฤติกรรมเหล่านี้เอื้อต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงบรรทัดฐานทางการเมืองและความมั่นคงของชาติในเอธิโอเปียหรือไม่ และให้ข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับ ว่าสหภาพยุโรปควรจัดการกับความสัมพันธ์กับเอธิโอเปียอย่างไรในอนาคต

สาขาวิชา ยุโรปศึกษา  
ปีการศึกษา 2563

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต..... Yu Zhao  
ลายมือชื่อ อ ที่ปรึกษา.....  
ลายมือชื่อ อ ที่ปรึกษาร่วม.....

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Yue Zhao : From Aiding to Equal Partnership between the EU and African Countries: the Case of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict. Advisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. BHAWAN RUANGSILP, Co-Advisor: Prof. Dr. Martin Holland

This article mainly introduces the current situation of the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia and the EU's assistance to Ethiopia as well as the dialectical thinking on the EU's approach. In the first part, the author gives a brief history of Ethiopia to explain the relationship between the Tigray People's Liberation Front(TPLF)and the federal government. In this part, the article also narrates the general situation of Tigray War. At the same time, in order to further explain the reasons for the outbreak of the conflict in Tigray, the second part introduces the economic and ethnic issues behind the outbreak of the conflict. In the last part, this paper introduces the EU's foreign policy and aid situation to Ethiopia, from the overall overview to the political and aid situation after the outbreak of the conflict in Tigray. At the end of this part, this paper proposes ways forward for the EU's future relations with Ethiopia.

At the same time, this paper applies the concept of “Normative Power Europe” (NPE) to dialectically analyze whether the European Union has really changed Ethiopia from a recipient country to an equal relationship. At the same time, how should the EU incorporate the concept of equal foreign relations with Ethiopia into its response to the Tigray conflict. In this paper, the author critically analyzes the existing behaviors of the EU, to what extent they can exert “normative pressure” on Ethiopia, and analyzes whether these behaviors are conducive to changing the political norms and national stability in Ethiopia, and gives suggestions on how the EU should deal with the relationship with Ethiopia in the future.

Field of Study: European Studies

Academic Year: 2020

Student's Signature



Advisor's Signature.....



Co-Advisor's Signature.....



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Yue Zhao

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yue Zhao". The signature is written in a cursive style with some decorative flourishes.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is in the east of the African continent, in the center of the “Horn of Africa”. It is bounded to the east by Djibouti and Somalia, to the northwest by Sudan, to the north by Eritrea, and to the south by Kenya. The African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and many other international organizations have their headquarters in Ethiopia, which is known as the “political center of Africa.”

Ethiopia is a place that great powers must contend for. In December 2020, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the EU Commission met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and stated that the European Union plans to forge a new relationship with Africa. As the gateway to East Africa, Ethiopia is also a destination for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Ethiopia is now one of the world's fastest growing economies, owing to its strategic location and recent infrastructure improvements. Over the last decade, Ethiopia's economy has grown at a rate of 10% per year on average. In 2019, despite the global economic downturn and severe drought in the country, Ethiopia still led the world with an economic growth rate of 9.0%. Ethiopia's goal is to eliminate poverty and reach middle-income status by 2025. Despite the impact of the epidemic, the economic growth rate in 2020 is still as high as 8.3%. According to the statistics of the IMF, Ethiopia has surpassed Kenya to become the largest economy in East Africa, and has become more attractive to global enterprises.

李华香(2021)



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Despite its rapid growth, Ethiopia still faces many development-related challenges because the benefits of growth have not yet trickled down to the country's poorest people. Ethiopia is also home to a population of more than 100 million people. It is Africa's second most populous country.(UN 2019) The population is growing faster than the economy. Ethiopia's society has not yet been industrialized, and its population is challenging the capacity of traditional society, which will further lead to ecological collapse. On the other hand, for historical reasons, the national issue has always been a big problem troubling Ethiopia. Conflicts continue along the border and the people are suffering. These are issues that Ethiopia needs to address urgently.

The Tigray conflict, which still shows no sign of a cease-fire, has exacerbated these problems. The outbreak of the Tigray conflict is inevitable for both historical and economic reasons. Historically, strong man Meles overthrew the military government and established a federal system. However, the loose federal government has only temporarily eased ethnic tensions. After the death of Meles, national tension was on the verge of breaking out. After Abbiy was elected, he carried out a number of political measures, such as dissolving the former political party, establishing the Prosperity Party, and settling the dispute with the Badme region of Eritrea. The resolution of the dispute not only won Abbiy the Nobel Peace Prize, but also became the fuse of the Tigray conflict. The fragile country is already facing huge humanitarian



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aid needs. The outbreak of the conflict makes Ethiopia need more help from the international community. The EU's help has become more important and urgent than ever for Ethiopia.

The EU's aid to Africa has a long history. From the Lomé Convention of the European Union with African countries in the 1970s to the Cotonou Agreement in the early 21st century, it has been successfully implemented on a large scale in Africa and has been recognized by African people. However, after the outbreak of the Tigray conflict, the EU's performance was not satisfactory. The coercive sanction decision and the pressure on the federal government, as well as the temporary cancellation of Ethiopia's "EU Election Observation Mission" in 2021, cast doubt on the EU's diplomatic approach towards Ethiopia. The EU has always been a big donor to Ethiopia. In recent years, the EU has also gradually changed Ethiopia from an aid target to a partner. However, it seems that the outbreak of the Tigray conflict makes the current EU approach seem contrary to this. How the EU should implement the concept of "Normative Power" and return to a path of considering Ethiopia as a partner is an urgent issue that the EU must actively address in the future. This is not only related to Ethiopia's future stability, but also related to whether the EU is playing a role that can fulfill its promise. It is even a question of whether the Horn of Africa will become the next source of refugees flow to Europe.



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## **Methodology**

This article uses inclusive reasoning to enumerate facts to explain the reasons behind the phenomenon and to analyze how the EU should improve its response to the current conflict situation in Tigray in order to be helpful to Ethiopia. The author uses the mixed model of qualitative research, and carries out literature analysis and case study. By using Malthusian trap theory and internal colonial theory (Blauner 1969), this paper analyzes Ethiopia's own reasons behind the outbreak of Tigray conflict.

Additionally, the theories of Ian Manners' and Jay Jackson's Normative Power concepts are applied to analyze how the EU should fulfill its commitments and the way forward for African countries to transition from donatorship to partnership.

### Literature review

“Ethnic Psychology and the Disintegration of Ethnic Federalist States”, by Jiang Li takes the Czech-speaking Slovak Federation as an example to illustrate the reasons for the disintegration of federal countries. It also contains descriptions of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. A main thesis in this paper is about the change of national identity and national identity between Czechs and Slovaks, including the difference of national character. From the perspective of the long-term failure of the two nations to establish mutual cognition and prejudice and the different views of the common country, the author explains the important influence of national psychology as the inner spiritual force on the legal system of the mutual relationship between the federal subjects and the destiny of the federal state. It further explains the reasons for the disintegration of Czechoslovakia. (姜琍 2014)

A related article by a Chinese scholar has a very similar view. But the author analyzes more comprehensively, explaining the reasons why the only three socialist federal systems in the world have all disintegrated without exception, and looking for commonalities. Among them, he mentioned that what cannot be ignored is the contradiction between singleness and complexity that is difficult to resolve. The unity comes through the political system, while the complexity is from the state structure. The ruling Communist Party uses the consistency of the political system and ideology to deny the identity of the nation. Whoever wants to emphasize the identity of the nation is a nationalist and will be criticized and suppressed. Under such circumstances,

the political struggle between leaders is often hidden behind the anti-nationalism. (孔寒冰 2012) In Ethiopia's case, where national federalism is a semblance of democracy and the federal government is centralised and hardline, conflict has not broken out simply because the strongmen are still there. Ethnic grievances about injustice have been suppressed for the time being, but with Mr Meles's death, ethnic conflict within Ethiopia has become inevitable.

There is an article directly related to the Tigray War, but it is mainly about misinformation. Since the Tigray conflict took place in November 2020, there are very few documents directly related to the latest Tigray war, mostly just news materials and video materials. One of the most relevant articles is “The Atlantic Community mistake on Ethiopia: counter-productive statements and data-poor policy of the EU and the USA on the Tigray conflict.” (Abbink 2021) A main content of the article is that, because the Tigray conflict is still on-going, the news orientation of the western media is biased towards TPLF. But the truth is not necessarily what the news portrays.

According to some news sites given by the author of the article, there is indeed a sense that the Western media's portrayal tends to sympathize with the TPLF and put pressure on the Ethiopian federal government. However, some of the sites on which the “facts” are revealed are in Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia), making it extremely difficult for scholars who do not understand the language. After careful research, some of the information came from uncredited sources, such as, “While this



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does not deny the presence of (too many) Eritrean troops in Tigray, TPLF also mass-produced fake Eritrean and Ethiopian federal army uniforms in Almeda Textile Factory in Adwa and had some of its own units wear them, which contributed to the mayhem in the Region and probably to the violence perpetrated towards civilians.”(Abbink 2021) This piece of information seems very shocking and even has a great reference to the question of who is to blame for this conflict, but the author does not give the source of this piece of information. However, because the author of this article is a German scholar who has been studying the Ethiopian issue for a long time, his research is of great reference value. The author makes his point in light of the conspiracy theories and political sentiment behind the news and offers suggestions for the Atlantic Community. One of them is worth mentioning, “A stable federal Ethiopia is in the interests of Ethiopia and its citizens, the wider Horn of Africa region and Western countries, in particular the EU (as it does not need new waves of refugees and asylum seekers”.(Abbink 2021)

To analyze Ethiopia's problems, it is inevitable to study some of Ethiopia's history in order to learn more about Ethiopia. Ethiopia's multi-ethnic issue is an unavoidable major issue. The protagonists of this conflict include Ethiopia's federal government and TPLF, as well as Ethiopia's neighboring Eritrea, which is also the country where the EU has issued sanctions. (Negash 1997)What is the root cause of the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia? The conflict originated from the US-Soviet rivalry in Africa during the Cold War. (Suleiman 2013)Based on the very important strategic

position of the region in military, economic and political terms, the United States promoted the establishment of the Ethiopian-Eritrean Federation in 1950, which went against the wishes of the Eritrean people.(Fessehazion 1983, Iyob 1997) In 1962, Ethiopia abolished the union by bullying the weak and annexed Eritrea, which led to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea for decades. The people of Eritrea have waged a long and unremitting struggle to achieve the goal of national self-determination and even full independence. Although the United States and the Soviet Union intervened in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, in May 1991 the Eritrean people finally overthrew the mengistu regime and liberated the entire territory of Eritrea. After a referendum in Eritrea, Eritrea was officially established in May 1993.(Yan 2008) This also laid the fuse for the Tigray conflict. Ethiopia's ethnic problems do not stop there, for example, the Somali issue in Ethiopia. The complexity of the Somali issue is mainly manifested in that it is a cross-border ethnic group. The Somali issue in Ethiopia is mainly reflected in the fact that the local nationalists, represented by the Ogaden National Liberation Front, are demanding separation and their centripetal force towards Ethiopia is gradually drifting away.(张湘东 2008) If this trend continues, it will seriously endanger Ethiopia's territorial sovereignty. Although the possibility of the successful separation of Somali and Tigray ethnic groups in Ethiopia is very small, improper handling of ethnic issues will escalate ethnic and border issues. Compared with the severe problems of population, poverty and employment in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian government has not yet formed a set of mature and effective



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strategies and a predictable timetable to solve the ethnic identity problem.(Worldbank 2021) Of course, it seems that what Ethiopia needs most now is still just the basic humanitarian aid.

From a historical perspective, Ethiopia's problems are long-standing. Loose federalism only survives temporarily under strongmen. After the fall of the strongman, the existing problems will no longer be suppressed. This is the root cause of the Tigray conflict. The direction of the Western news media can be seen from the political position of the West on this conflict. From this dialectical analysis, since the world calls for a ceasefire, the EU, as a normative power, should make corresponding efforts. However, sometimes the direction of effort is more important than the effort. This makes it worthwhile to analyze how the EU should properly assist Ethiopia

## CHAPTER II

### ETHIOPIA OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 History of the Ethiopians overview

The international section

Before the 19th century, the Amharas were the most powerful ethnic group in Ethiopia, which was surrounded by small countries. (*The Los Angeles Times* has reported that mainstream scholarship holds that a group of humans migrated from Africa more than 3,000 years ago, returning to the Horn of Africa from Asia and Europe. Thirty percent of the genes of the Amharas can still be traced back to this group.) The Amharas, after the founding of Ethiopia, fought on all sides. As a result, the Amharas themselves have become a minority, making up only 27% of the population. They believe in an iron-fisted and strong national policy, which leads to the existence of very serious hatred among the various ethnic groups.

In 1896, the Italians invaded Ethiopia. The final result was defeat for Italy and victory for Ethiopia. But this brief victory could not disguise Ethiopia's backwardness. To avoid the wrath of the Italians, the Amharas agreed to cede Eritrea, their northern port, to Italy for colonial rule. It also laid the groundwork for a split in the future.

In 1935, the second Italian invasion succeeded in conquering Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia went into exile in Britain.



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In 1942, British forces defeated the Italians and took over the colony of Eritrea. Haile Selassie was reinstated successfully.

On December 2, 1950, the British trusteeship of Eritrea ended. Eritrea and Ethiopia formed a federation, but Eritrea retained autonomy. In 1962, the emperor forcibly dissolved the Eritrean parliament and made it a direct territory, but the move was met with resistance. Then the war began.

In 1974, a severe famine broke out in Ethiopia. The army staged a coup and overthrew the American-backed monarchy. The Soviet Union had long supported the Mengistu military government, which had long been sympathetic to socialist ideology. In terms of ethnic issues, the Mengistu military government learned from the Soviet Union and created 74 ethnic groups. The Government is also actively recruiting non-Amharic people into the Government. This eased ethnic tensions to some extent.

But the economic policy of land reform and nationalization will also affect the interests of the tribal elders. In addition, Amharic is the dominant language in school education and literacy campaigns. As a result, national policy and economic policy were separated from each other, and left and right fought each other, leading to complaints from all ethnic groups.



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In the same year that the army overthrew the monarchy, seven Marxist university students from the Tigray ethnic group in northern Ethiopia organized to promote a real socialist revolution, believing that the military government was fake socialism.(Gebregziabher 2019)

In 1975, the TPLF was established. The TPLF began an alliance with the divided Eritrea and fought a civil war with the military government.(Berhe 2004)

In 1988, a growing number of ethnic groups joined forces, and the leadership of the TPLF formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front(EPRDF).(Berhe 2004)

When the EPRDF overthrew Mengistu's military government in 1991, Meles Zenawi became the leader of a new regime led by the Tigrayans. Mr Meles argues that neither the Soviet Union nor China is socialist; only Hoxhaism in Albania is. Mr Meles believed in ethnic unity and saw ethnic federalism as the way forward for Ethiopia. He did not shy away from ethnic contradictions, recognized and encouraged the development of ethnic differences, and encouraged them to conduct political activities on the basis of ethnic groups. This was first demonstrated by the agreement to respect Eritrea's independence in a referendum in 1993, which deprived Ethiopia of access to the sea.

In 1995, Meles formally adopted a new constitution. He changed the administrative divisions of the country into nine ethnic states and two special municipalities. In 2019, a tenth state was created, and each ethnic state was able to establish an autonomous government, with independent executive, judicial, legislative and working language rights. Each ethnic state has the right not only to govern itself, but also have the power to secede from the Union. Nonetheless, thanks to Mr Meles's revolutionary status and the new constitution's ultra-liberal powers, the country's ethnic tensions have been resolved for the time being.

Badme is the territory of the Tigrays. But during the Revolution, the Tigrayans agreed and gave Badme to Eritrea after the war. But after Eritrea became independent, the Tigrays backed out, because the Tigrays were the rulers of Ethiopia's new government, and many of its leaders, including Meles, came from Badme. All ethnic states can be separated, but not Badme. And that sows the seeds of border conflict. In 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea clashed over the disputed Badme region. A ceasefire began in 2000, but border clashes continue.

#### Domestic Situation in Ethiopia

With the war over and the initial focus on development, the hyper-unstable national federation has stumbled forward under Mr Meles. With agriculture and infrastructure construction as the lead, Ethiopia has completed the confirmation of land rights “Land approval”.



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Thanks to political stability and growing exports of cash crops such as coffee and rapeseed, Ethiopia has entered a period of development with a substantial increase in GDP. Since 2004, it has grown at an average annual rate of 10.9 percent for ten years in a row. Life expectancy and population are both rapidly increasing. The neonatal mortality rate has been significantly reduced.

However, Ethiopia's weaknesses are very obvious, namely the poor foundation in all aspects. Domestic inflation is too high, at 158%. Farming and animal husbandry employ 85 percent of the country's population, and agricultural output value accounts for 40 percent of GDP. Agricultural products account for 70 percent of exports, half of which is coffee, which is traded for oil and industrial goods. Under the theory of Wallerstein's world system (Sorinel 2010), it belongs to the margin of the marginal countries. (Sala, Silva et al. 2012)

But on the political front, this sagging constitution has not performed nearly as well as the economy. Mr Meles, a Tigrayan prime minister, reinvented the country with a coalition of political parties. In this form of party organization, they have no unified ideology or class representation or political ideals. It started out as a combination for a specific purpose.

For Ethiopia, the revolutionary Front that led the revolution to overthrow the military government was initially led by the TPLF, affiliated with various political groups,

including the Afar National Democratic Party and the Oromo National Democratic Party. Although the Tigrays led the revolution, they make up only 6% of the population. But Mr Meles's long rule, which has left Tigrays in most of the most powerful political and military posts, has long brought corruption and rent-seeking.

Tigray people poured into the capital circle, and then have constantly occupied the resources for policy tilt. Although the Tigray people did not have the coercion policy against other ethnic groups as the Amhara did in the past, they have replaced the ecological niche of the Amhara people in the past in the scramble for social and political resources. Such abuses have caused resentment among other ethnic groups, and there was a bloody clash between the main ethnic groups in 2005.

It all came to light after Meles' death in 2012. Without the coordination of powerful figures at the level of the founding father, the contradictions are more intense. The first to raise the flag was the largest ethnic group, the Oromo, who make up 35% of the population. In 2015, due to the economic development of the capital Addis Ababa, the city expanded to Olomi Asia, which surrounds the capital, due to the shortage of land. (The capital is dominated by the Tigrays.) So the local Oromo, believing that their land has been seized, joined the Amharas in street protests demanding that the Tigrays step down. In the end, violence broke out between the government and civilians, killing thousands. (Young 2006)

The unrest lasted until the second half of 2017, when the top ruling coalition agreed that an Oromo would be appointed prime minister or the unrest would worsen. The following year Abiy Ahmed, an Oromo, became the EPRF's party chairman and then prime minister.

Because the EPRDF's Tigray imprint was too strong, PM Abiy disbanded the longtime ruling Party in 2019 and rebuilt The Prosperity Party in its place. Whereas EPRF used to be a big coalition, this one is an even bigger coalition, drawing in more opposition parties than before. They won 512 of the 547 seats in Parliament. They consider Prime Minister Abiy's formation of the Prosperity Party illegal and do not take part in it. As a result, the Tigray Front is now the only opposition Party, with 35 seats, or 6.8% of the Prosperity Party.

In June 2018, Abiy went to the disputed area of Badme to announce the withdrawal of his troops and end the dispute with Eritrea. As a result, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 11, 2019 for his aimed at achieving peace and international cooperation, especially his decisive effort to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea. The award is also intended to recognize all stakeholders working for peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia, as well as in the East and Northeast African regions.(Nobelprice 2019)

## 1.2 The Tigray Conflict overview

*Given that the Tigray War is still going on, the author can only try to restore the general situation of the war through the news on the Internet. The news is written by journalists, which is more or less biased according to the political views of the journalists or publishers. Meanwhile, the authenticity of the news remains to be examined. However, it is not hard to see that supporters of Tigray are indeed more likely to believe that the TPLF is the underdog and the federal army is the bad Wolf in this conflict, especially in the western media.*

*The TPLF forces unexpectedly attacked the local federal forces trooped in Tigray at night, and was the result of TPLF's power trade and its tension with the Ethiopian federal government. The attacks on November 3-4 caused a major reaction from the federal forces. More than 800 Amharic-speaking inhabitants in Mai Kadra township in Sitigar were killed in horrific ways by TPLF-affiliated troops and militias five days after the TPLF onslaught on November 9, 2021. This is a "typical" ethnic cleansing. Most of the perpetrators fled to refugee camps in Sudan. The November 4th attack and the subsequent "ethnic cleansing" were crucial and dramatic events in the war.(Abbink 2021)*

The Tigray war began with a dispute over "the truth" of "what happened" as well as "who was to blame," with the TPLF portrayed predominantly in the role of "underdog" and "victim" by the world media and Tigray government supporters.(Abbink 2021)



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## CHAPTER III

### ISSUES BEHIND THE TIGRAY CONFLICT: KEY ISSUES IN ETHIOPIA

Rather than trying to tear Ethiopia apart, the Tigray elite should now reflect on why they failed. The author thinks that the fundamental reason is that public policy has lost popularity for the people. Getachew T. Alemu, an Ethiopian academic and economist, argues that the Meles model has lost its dynamism. "Ending the era of excessive political patrimony is important." (Alemu 2018)

#### **3.1 Economic problem**

The world is divided into 3 grades, according to Wallerstein's world theoretical framework: semiperipheral, peripheral, and core. As for the peripheral countries, they must find ways to integrate into the international division of Labour, or they will end up in a Malthusian trap. (Malthus 1798) In other words, before the industrialization of the society, the population broke through the capacity of the traditional society, which led to the ecological collapse. It's either civil war or cannibalism. (Goldfrank 2000)

Now Ethiopia's mainstay industry is agriculture, which accounts for 85% of the population. However, if the arable area is stable for a long time and the population is growing rapidly, the per capita income can only be lower and lower. Ethiopia's population growth has consistently outpaced its industrial progress. Ethiopia has 110 million people, making it Africa's second most populated country. According to the



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statistics of Fudan University from 2012 to 2016, Ethiopia's industrial added value accounted for only about 15% of its GDP, lagging far behind the world average level by about 10 points.(复旦大学国际关系与公共事务学院 2017)

The Ethiopian government also knows that this situation is not sustainable. As *The Economist* reported in January 2017, Ethiopia must add hundreds of thousands of jobs a year to cope with a population boom. (MAUA 2017) But without a guarantee of electricity, there is no way to build more factories. So Ethiopia has been building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam since 2011, but it has been in trouble with Egypt down the Nile.(Abdelhadi 2020)

Tigray's "dragon slayers"( Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Nietzsche), after the revolution, did not want to make progress, they did not integrate the whole country, but in the name of national federation, to create a modern feudalism. Then, after the "dragon slayer" becomes the "dragon", as long as his life in the capital circle is good, then it does not matter whether other ethnic groups live or die. The author thinks this is the practice of internal colonialism.(Blauner 1969) Development is uneven between Ethiopia's capital region and the rest of the country. This phenomenon separates the advantages of the central part of the country from those of the periphery. Rich and poor vary greatly between regions. There was also a need for humanitarian assistance in the Tigray area before the outbreak of the conflict. The root cause of exploitation

was the key difference, which was between neocolonialism and internal colonialism. Control in the former comes from outside the nation, whereas control in the latter comes from within the nation. When the exploiter comes from within the state, conflict is inevitable.

### 3.1.1 No access to the sea

Although Ethiopia has no access to the sea, the central government does not fight for it. However, the Badme area, which has disputes with Eritrea, is not in the same latitude as the sea. Since the dispute does not have much impact on the national economy, long-term disputes will also affect people's livelihood. Disputes just for the sake of face are unnecessary. No wonder PM Abiy gave up without pressure.

Industrialization cannot be accelerated, and people's need cannot be met. Meanwhile, development is still uneven and inadequate. The result is the bankruptcy of the political consensus. Even with the revolutionary conflict led by Tigray, the Tigray tribe has been in charge of Ethiopia for 20 years with a minority and has a knack for power. They know what will happen after not being in the top position. From this point of view, the occurrence of the Tigray conflict is not surprising.

For the latecomer countries, the East Asian model represented by China, Japan and South Korea has a certain advanced nature. The government used Iron fist to break the old social rights network to a certain extent, liberating people from the clan and



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participating in modernization. So for East Asia, it is all sparks of fire, which can start a prairie fire. For Ethiopia, it was the ruling party who took the initiative to build a firewall around the sparks of fire. (This sentence comes from a letter from Mao Zedong to Lin Biao on January 5, 1930. It means that a little spark can burn a large field. The metaphor means new things that are small at the beginning but have great development prospects.) (江幸福 2004)

During the development process of Ethiopia, it has constantly learned from China. The BBC said this is a model of China's experience in Africa, and China is also one of Ethiopia's largest sources of investment. Half of the 26 billion US dollars of investment came from China. Ethiopia has since then had its first industrial park, first wind power station, Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, first highway, even the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and so on.

There are about 40,000 Chinese in Ethiopia, and Chinese companies have helped 33 million people in Ethiopia have access to electricity. However, there is a typical Chinese example that can illustrate the problems currently encountered in Ethiopia. It was the problem of the Qing Dynasty. (Flath 2012) The Qing Dynasty's problems were institutional, structural and social. These problems cannot be solved by "Self-Strengthening Movement" and a few Jiangnan Shipyard or Hanyang Arsenal. (Mao

2016) Therefore, the output of productivity is not enough to solve the fundamental problem of Ethiopia. Once serious conflicts (like Tigray conflict) occur in Ethiopia, no matter how much effort is made, they will be in vain. National stability is the prerequisite for Ethiopia's long-term development.(Tesfaye 2002)

### 3.1.2 Population boom

Africa has the world's youngest population, and the abundant labor force is one of the reasons people are optimistic about Africa's future. (Malthus 1798)Africa's population boom has long been seen as a demographic dividend, but unleashing it faces many challenges. But in any case, the population boom means that Africa will have more labour, more consumer markets and become a destination for global investors. In recent years, some non-resource-based African countries, such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire, have maintained an economic growth rate of more than 6 percent, which is related to the younger population structure. Among them, Ethiopia's economy has grown by an average of 10% a year over the past decade.

Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma, former chairman of the African Union Commission, said at the African Union summit that by 2025, one quarter of the world's young people under 25 will be Africans. Africa is a dynamic continent. Young people are Africa's comparative advantages. They must be turned into demographic dividend.(AfricanUnion 2017)



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However, the author believes that there are still multiple challenges to whether the demographic dividend in Africa can be truly and completely released. A report by the foreign affairs Committee of the French national assembly warned that sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 15% of the world's population, but its gross domestic product (GDP) accounts for only 1.4% of the world's total. African countries urgently need to push forward the demographic transition. It can be predicted that Africa's population explosion will become a global issue.

It is important to note that Ethiopia's economy has yet to achieve diversified development, relying too heavily on agriculture as well as mining and failing to adequately alleviate poverty. Combined with the effects of climate change, Africa's agricultural production has been growing slowly, as well as conflicts over land and water resources between farmers and herdsman are more and more intense. More people will move to cities in the future, but local agriculture will not be able to keep up, potentially leading to a food crisis. All of these are potential issues and uncertainties brought by population growth. The recent severe locust plague in Ethiopia has made the food shortage problem of tens of millions of people worse.

### **3.2 Ethnic Federalism**

When it comes to ethnic federalism, I have to mention a concept, "ethnic". Ethnic can usually be understood from two levels: racial meaning and political meaning. To understand a nation from the racial sense, it is a group united according to the blood lineage of the ancestors, common cultural characteristics and historical experience,



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and the identity of the members is derived from heredity. Because religion and class identity are not the most important, national identity is the most important, and the main criterion of national identity is language. Ethiopia has been artificially divided into nearly 80 ethnic groups, so the author believes that this view does not apply to Ethiopia. (Selassie 2003)

To understand a nation in a political sense, it refers to all citizens in a country. If in a country, the racially diverse people gradually gain the consciousness of belonging to a whole, then it shows that the political ethnic can be constructed. There are usually two ways to construct political ethnics: the first is through long-term coexistence, different ethnic groups naturally produce a common sense of belonging; the second is that the stronger ethnic groups merge with the weaker ones. In fact, these two methods are often combined and used in the process of social development. Within the political ethnic framework, all citizens have the same rights and obligations, and its various components do not need to give up the national consciousness of their own origin. (Rychlík 1997)

In terms of federalism, the United States was also the first country in the world to establish a modern federal system, while Russia is the world's largest existing federal country. Furthermore, there are Canada, India, Brazil, Australia and Argentina and other countries who have also implemented the federal system, the current implementation of the federal system of 27 countries. So for Ethiopia, what is wrong

is not the system, but the context. A system that respects ethnic differences is reasonable and democratic. But the question is whether the national conditions of African countries are compatible with ethnic federalism. Ethiopia, like most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is a multi-ethnic country. There are about 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Among them, the Oromo ethnic group is the largest, accounting for nearly 1/3 of the country's total population. The Amhara ethnic group is the country's second largest, accounting for roughly 30 percent of the total population. And the Tigray ethnic group is the third largest, accounting for less than 7% of the country's total population. It is now the only opposition party in Ethiopia. The ruling party is the Oromo and Amhara-dominated Prosperity Party. As mentioned earlier, after the successful revolution in 1991, Ethiopia adopted a federal system of government, with states having independent legislative, executive, and judicial powers, as well as the power to secede from the Union. The Constitution provides that any state can secede from the federal government without the consent of the federal government. In other words, if Tigray asks for independence, the federal government should organize a referendum in Tigray within 3 years. As long as the majority agrees, Tigray can become independent without the need for federal approval. However, in 2020, due to the outbreak, the federal government announced in March that the parliamentary elections scheduled for August, as well as local elections in ten states across the country, would be suspended. However, despite the opposition of the federal government, Tigray State held local elections in September. The party won



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more than 98% of the vote in local elections held in Tigre state in September. The federal government declared that the state's election was unconstitutional and did not recognize it, which triggered a military conflict. Many observers believe that Ethiopia's federal arrangements between ethnic and state, which grant bigger ethnic groups the right to self-government, are the main cause of the increase in violence. (Teshome and Záhořík 2008)

For example, Ugandan scholar Mahmoud Mamdani claimed that ethnic federalism runs the "risk of pushing the country into ethnic conflict", while others have compared the possibility of a disintegration similar to Yugoslavia. (Mengistu and Vogel 2006)

Is it that Ethiopia shouldn't have chosen such a super-delegated and loose system of federalism? The author's answer is no. Ethiopia has implemented such a decentralized federal system for historical reasons. Due to the restriction of the plateau terrain, Ethiopia has always been full of tribes, and has not been completely integrated into one in history. Several large ethnic groups have strong military strength and self-governing habits. Therefore, a relatively loose federal system is more suitable for rallying all nations in a short period of time and avoiding civil wars, which has been widely recognized. However, while the federal system gave all ethnic groups full autonomy, it also left the hidden danger of future division. When the conflict cannot be resolved by negotiation, secession may become an option for the states.



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Ethiopia is also one of Africa's least developed countries, with a rapidly rising population, as previously indicated. Therefore, it is in urgent need of economic development to relieve the population pressure. However, following Eritrea's independence, Ethiopia lost seaports and then became a land - locked country, which brought great negative impact on the circulation of capital and commodities.

Assuming that the Tigray region is independent, establishing a closer relationship with Eritrea, which is of the same race but also by the sea, or even merges into a country, will bring great benefits to the economic development of Tigray State.

Moreover, the long-term ruling Tigray elite once lost power, and now it has become the only opposition party with an difficult position. At this time, Tigray could only face the situation and find another way out. This is also the main reason why the Ethiopian government is eager to take military measures to prevent the state from becoming independent.

The original intention of Ethiopia to establish ethnic federalism was to improve ethnic relations, alleviate conflicts, and achieve political integration. However, the loose federal system is also encouraging the development of differences between nations, which will continue to generate contradictions and conflicts. Just like political marriages, they all started to build a country with a common beautiful ideal, but in the process of living together, they refused to assimilate and compromise. The lack of mutual understanding and trust between each other, and the arrangement of the federal system with national sovereignty and equal status between them did not

promote their views and goals to be closer to each other. With the accumulation of time, coupled with the economic exploitation policy of “internal colonization” by the authority, dissatisfaction and prejudice are increasing day by day. In the end, after the death of the strongman Meles who established this political marriage, all parties with insufficient national identity will inevitably choose to part ways.

#### Conclusion:

In Ethiopia, the mistake is not ethnic federalism. Ethiopia's historical problems are not confined to over-strong power concentration in the capital, but also to cultural marginalisation, assimilation and other thorny problems, as which ethnic language should constitute the Ethiopia's culture. Federal arrangements based on regional organizations alone cannot solve this critical issue and therefore cannot constitute a solution to the challenges of Ethiopia's diversification management.

Moreover, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's new government has initiated political liberalisation, released political prisoners and invited for return to Ethiopia the exiled opposition forces designated as terrorist groups. It should not be surprising that this change in political liberalization would lead to a surge in violence. Nor is this unique to Ethiopia, since political liberalization after dictatorship has a long history, often accompanied by internal and international conflicts. Furthermore, scholars who are skeptical of the Ethiopian federal system may have overlooked the wide support of Ethiopia's domestic democracy for the ethnic federal system. Ethnic federalism in

Ethiopia enjoys wide support. While it is difficult to pinpoint numerically, patterns of political mobilisation and mass protests indicate that the majority of the people fall into this category.(Gebreluel 2019)

Therefore, the idea of returning to a territorial federation or transition to a confederation is not feasible. Ethiopia's current problem is how to further promote national identity, the shortcomings of the federal arrangement need to be rectified, to achieve national stability as soon as possible, rather than throw the baby out with the bathwater.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EU'S APPROACH IN AFRICA

The EU's assistance to Africa has its features. The first is that EU aid comes with political and economic strings attached. From the economic perspective, for example, “Budget Support” aid is often attached with economic conditions. The Yaoundé Convention and the Cotonou Agreement make the reform of market economy and market liberalization an important basis for the distribution of aid. From the political perspective, for example, in the Yaoundé Convention, the first two Lomé Conventions and the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000, the EU required African recipient countries to make corresponding adjustment of state-market system. The conditions of the second generation of aid began in the late 1980s. For example, the Cotonou Agreement required African countries receiving aid from EU countries to carry out democratic, human rights and other institutional reforms, or to receive aid according to the performance of African countries in the utilization of resources.(Kangoye 2015)

Another characteristic of EU's aid to Africa is its strong ability to publicize aid policies. The official languages of African countries, the former colonial powers of European Union members, have European characteristics. The European Union has long used its member states' influence in Africa's official languages to promote its aid policies in a variety of ways. On this basis, the EU has the advantage of publicizing its aid concept and aid objectives, and it is convenient for the EU to seize the hearts of



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the African people and to shape itself into a benevolent giver. For example, the Lomé Convention promoted by the EU in African countries in the 1970s and the Cotonou Agreement in the early 21st century have been successfully implemented on a large scale in Africa and recognized by the African people. The EU's aid policy to Africa has been regarded as a model of North-South cooperation by African leaders with strong publicity ability.

The carrot and stick model is the way that most donor countries give aid to recipient countries. The EU usually persuades African countries to accept their aid conditions by means of sanctions and even canceling aid commitments. Ethiopia is no exception. The EU's aid to Africa cannot be denied, but this progressive shift in relations is also one that the EU should now begin to make in real earnest.

#### **4.1 OVERALL EU STRATEGY TO ETHIOPIA**

Escalating clashes erupted in early November 2020 between the Federal Government and security forces in the Tigray area. Tens of thousands of Ethiopians fled the conflict and hundreds of thousands in the dire humanitarian situation sought shelter in Sudan. Thousands are believed to have died and hundreds of thousands have been forced from their homes as a result of the ongoing conflict in Tigray. More than 68,000 have fled to neighboring Sudan.(EuropeanCommission 2021) In other parts of the country, outbreaks of ethnic violence and extreme weather continue to force people to flee their homes.



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In addition to the humanitarian needs resulting from the current conflict, Ethiopia has long faced extensive humanitarian needs. This is owing to a slew of interconnected challenges, many of which are exacerbated by ethnic conflicts and climate change. Nearly 20% of Ethiopia's population requires food assistance. Ethiopia is currently suffering the largest desert locust infestation in 25 years, in addition to mounting food shortages and soaring food costs linked to the coronavirus pandemic.(EuropeanCommission 2021)

Ethiopia announced its first coronavirus case in March 2020. The pandemic has put a tremendous amount of burden on already frail health systems that have limited resilience to shocks. Cholera and other epidemic outbreaks continue to be a serious public health concern, owing to poor living circumstances, insufficient water and sanitation infrastructure, and poor health and hygiene practices.

More than 800, 000 refugees from Ethiopia, most of whom rely on humanitarian help for their basic necessities, are mostly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. Since 2017, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and numerous other nations have been forcibly deported over 400,000 Ethiopian migrants, along with many unaccompanied minors.(EuropeanCommission 2021, reliefweb 2021) Long-term aid for refugees and displaced communities in Ethiopia continues to be provided by the EU. However, the EU's political attitude towards the current situation in Ethiopia is beginning to show some reservations.(EuropeanCommission 2021)

## 4.2 EU aid to Ethiopia : Carrot

### 4.2.1 Aid to the Tigray War

The EU granted around €53.7 million for humanitarian programs in Ethiopia in 2021, including €11 million intended for the Tigray region. The EU supports the provision of life-saving assistance to internally displaced persons displaced by conflict or natural disasters. The EU provides protection, food aid, safe water, shelter, basic necessities, nutritional assistance and health care, disease prevention and education. Following the commencement of the Tigray war in November 2020, the EU provided €6 million for Ethiopian refugees from nearby Sudan to respond to their emergent humanitarian needs and mobilized €18.8 million further for humanitarian emergency relief for Ethiopia sufferers from the Tigray crisis. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism, setting up four base camps at the request of the UNHCR, has been put intended to support humanitarian activities to protect Sudanese Ethiopian refugees.

### 4.2.2 Assistance to the locust plague in Ethiopia: addressing food shortages

The EU has managed to collect of €74 million in humanitarian and development funding in response to recent desert catastrophe to cope with pests, alleviate food scarcity and give a livelihood to pastoralists and farmers concerned. Previous droughts and coronavirus pandemics have reduced incomes, forcing farmers to sell livestock to raise money for food and even to cut back on meals. As food stocks deteriorated, most of the affected communities were left to survive on whatever food was available on



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the market, depleting their limited savings. Now, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), backed by €2 million in humanitarian support from the European Union, is providing multi-purpose cash grants to selected families in affected areas, such as Dubruk.(EuropeanCommission 2021)

#### 4.2.3 On Coronavirus epidemic prevention and control

Given the challenges posed by the pandemic, the humanitarian project funded by the European Union in Ethiopia adapts and introduces new measures to secure the safety of beneficiaries and employees and also provides life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable communities. Actions already focused on health will continue to support local health centers in providing healthcare and epidemic control. The ongoing efforts of the Ethiopian Ministry of Health complement these activities. Furthermore, the EU supports early detection and reaction measures by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Ethiopia.(EuropeanCommission 2021)

Furthermore, humanitarian aid in African countries, which is critical to the humanitarian needs and fragile health systems, is being provided by the European Commission for EUR 100 million. The funds will be allocated at least €14 million to support vaccination campaigns in East Africa for the most vulnerable people.(EuropeanCommission 2021)



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### 4.3 EU aid to Sudan due to the situation in Ethiopia

Despite the world's hopes that political reforms in Sudan will lead to a better future, the situation in Sudan is already dire. The country still faces the effects of decades of mismanagement, prolonged conflict, poor basic services, frequent natural disasters and economic recession. The Tigray crisis in Ethiopia has led to an influx of refugees into Sudan. Ethiopia's Tigray war is adding to Sudan's woes. The EU has made an outstanding contribution in supporting aid organisations in delivering life-saving relief assistance to the most vulnerable populations. (EuropeanCommission 2021)

It is estimated that more than 7 million people in Sudan are facing food shortages and need humanitarian assistance. According to UNICEF, about 2.7 million children and 1.9 million mothers are suffering from severe malnutrition, a life-threatening disease. (UNICEF 2021) In addition, more than 850,000 people have been affected by desert locust swarms and torrential rains and floods. In September 2020, the Nile River rose to its highest level in 100 years, destroying more than 111,000 homes and forcing the government to declare a three-month state of emergency. By the end of March 2021, more than 70,000 Ethiopian refugees had crossed the border into the Sudan, fleeing the conflict in the neighbouring Tigray region.(UNICEF 2021)

In 2021, the EU provided a total of €52 million in humanitarian assistance to the Sudan, mainly for food aid and nutritional health care. Since 2011, the EU has mobilized more than €659 million in life-saving assistance for the urgent situation in



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Sudan. In particular, at the end of 2020, after the outbreak of the Tigray conflict in Sudan's neighbouring Ethiopia, a large number of Ethiopian refugees fled to Sudan,(UNICEF 2020) making the already fragile refugee camps in Sudan even more vulnerable. The European Union has mobilized €6 million in emergency aid to help provide life-saving assistance to Ethiopians affected by the conflict in Tigray. The EU supports refugee reception areas through registration, reception and basic services, such as health care, water, sanitation and hygiene.

By 2020, the European Union has launched two humanitarian aid bridge flights to help aid supplies and humanitarian workers reach people in need in Sudan, when traffic restrictions were hampering commercial flights. (TRITHART 2019) In response to floods and the arrival of Ethiopian refugees, the EU's civil protection mechanism was successfully activated and a base camp was set up to accommodate humanitarians. (EuropeanCommission 2020)

The EU will provide humanitarian aid to promote vaccination campaigns in African countries with €100 million by 18 May 2021 in critical humanitarian needs and in vulnerable health systems.(EuropeanCommission 2021) At least €14 million of the financial resources will go toward vaccination campaigns for East Africa's most vulnerable people.

There are some harsh critics of the EU, but it is fair to say that the EU has made a significant contribution in neighbouring Sudan while demanding that Ethiopia open direct aid access. It has facilitated the humanitarian assistance to Sudan and provided equal assistance to refugees from Ethiopia who came to Sudan. In this regard, it is undeniable that the EU is fulfilling its promise to make world a better world.

#### **4.4 EU's political response and measures to the conflict in Tigray : Stick**

##### **Sanctions and Pressure**

According to a March 2021 news report, the European Commission may add the Ethiopian federal authorities and other institutions that are obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Tigray region to the EU sanctions list. Brussels said on March 10, 2021 that it would consider adding people who violate international humanitarian law to the EU sanctions regime's list.

Under the Magnitsky Act, the EU already has a law that allows visa bans and asset freezes for 12 categories of human rights abusers. The Magnitsky Act is unofficially named after a deceased Russian dissident. These include crimes against humanity, slavery, extrajudicial killings, human trafficking and sexual violence. But it was not clear whether violations of humanitarian law would be included in category 13 of the bill, or whether the European Commission was considering a new legal instrument.

Janez (Lengarčič), the European Union's crisis commissioner, concluded in a wide-ranging discussion on humanitarian assistance.(NIELSEN 2021)



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The area has been riven by fighting since November amid reports of atrocities by warring factions. The United Nations High Commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, expressed further alarm at the clashes. She noted credible reports of “serious violations of international human rights” by all concerned. These include the Ethiopian Defence Forces, the People's Liberation Front of Tigray, the Eritrean Armed Forces, the Amhara Regional Forces and affiliated militias. She then said that if nothing was done, such violations could continue with impunity. (EuropeanCommission 2020)

In fact, the humanitarian situation in the country was already dire before the crisis, with the European Commission providing more than €44 million in humanitarian aid in 2021. However, the escalating conflict in Tigray has created additional humanitarian needs. If the opening of humanitarian access only helps refugees in need, then the Ethiopian federal government should not stand in the way. But the problem is that if humanitarian corridors are opened, it will also make it easier for the perpetrators of the Tigray conflict and war criminals to escape through them. This is one of the issues the EU needs to take into account. (EuropeanCommission 2021)

### **The cancellation of the Election Observation Mission**

There is a Chinese idiom called “Fu Di Chou Xin,” which literally means pulling firewood from a burning fireplace. That is an apt metaphor for the European Union's move to cancel its election observer mission.



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On May 3, 2021, in Brussels, the High Representative Josep Borrell issued a statement saying that despite all efforts made by the European Union, in view of the parliamentary election on June 5, 2021, it failed to reach an agreement with the Ethiopian authorities on the key parameters for the deployment of the EU election observation mission. The deployment must cancel the task because the conditions are not met. Election observation mission is the cornerstone of EU's support for democracy, and it is also the EU's support for the legitimacy of Ethiopia's election. When the federal government needs the support, the EU puts forward the reasons for not participating, such as something that is key for the security of EU observers, in the context of a challenging security environment.

On 4 May 2021, the day after the cancelation of the election observation mission by the European Union was issued, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, “Ethiopia has learnt with disappointment”, that its Elections Observation Mission in Ethiopia had been cancelled by the European Union. The original statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reads, “*AT A TIME WHEN THE TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN ETHIOPIA HAS MADE HUGE STRIDES EMPLOYING THE LATEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES, QUESTIONING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF ITS SERVICES IS NOT A CONVINCING REASON TO TAKE THE HASTY DECISION OF CANCELLING THE MISSION'S DEPLOYMENT*”. (MOFA) (addisstandard 2021)



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Even though it is interesting to note that the two sides have totally different opinions about this. However, it is an indisputable fact that the EU has provided more than €20 million to the Ethiopian National Election Commission (NEBE) to prepare for these elections. However, Ethiopia also showed that these factors were not the focus of debate in previous elections. Then, the reason must not be that the requirements of the EU observer mission have become higher, but that the EU does not want to participate in this election. At the same time, it has expressed its strong position that the government is committed to free, fair and democratic elections and is committed to continuing to cooperate with all interested parties in this goal. While external observers can contribute value to improving the quality of the electoral process, they are not necessary or necessary to prove that the elections are credible. This tough attitude should surprise the EU.

To sum up, are sanctions and pressure really the most effective way for Ethiopia today? Some analysts pointed out that the pressure from the West to stop Ethiopia's military operations and talk with the TPLF may backfire and undermine the stability of the country. Such sanctions are bound to force Ethiopia to return its political space to the now dissolved TPLF. However, whether this is a fundamental solution to the conflict is not certain. Some experts said that the West has used the crisis of Tigray conflict to punish Ethiopia to curb China's influence in Ethiopia.



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This theory reminds the author that at the recent United Nations Security Council, Beijing vetoed the resolutions of the United States and Europe on sanctions and condemnation of Ethiopia in the Tigray crisis. As we all know, China's direct investment (FDI) in Ethiopia has reached 4 billion US dollars, and the bilateral trade volume has increased to 5.4 billion US dollars. The EU's continued pressure on Ethiopia may not turn into Ethiopia's compromise, but force Ethiopia to be more inclined to associate with other more trustworthy friends.

#### **4.5 Challenges and Opportunities for EU: Choice of teammates**

As mentioned above, some critics have judged that EU and US sanctions and pressure on Tigray is designed to force Ethiopia to reduce its ties with China in order to further reduce China's influence over Ethiopia. But the result now seems to have been the opposite, rather like shooting oneself in the foot. It has never been an easy choice for the EU whether to regard China as an adversary or a friend. For example, the EU has just signed an investment cooperation agreement with China and started to impose human rights sanctions on China. Years of effort on both sides went up in smoke. But when it comes to aid to Africa, the EU and China should not be rivals, but partners. China and the European Union are the main sources of aid funds in the African continent. Both sides have been effective in providing aid to Africa, but both have some shortcomings in aid efficiency. At the same time, they can learn from each other.

In other words, the EU is not the only option for Africa right now, nor for Ethiopia.

China's assistance to Ethiopia has attracted worldwide attention. China's growing

influence in Ethiopia should be a spur to the EU's progress, not a drag. "China's increasing role in Ethiopia – and Africa more largely – comes at a time of increasing disenchantment with Europe on the Africa side." (Hackenesch 2011)

The EU has always been committed to the image of EU's "Normative power". (EU 2016) Jackson and Manners both believe that the reference to normative power implies the ability to frame what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. However, while Manners emphasizes an actor's ability to define the "normal," Jackson emphasizes the legitimacy of definitions of the "normal."

(Jackson 1975, Manners 2002) With the rise of normative powers, "exemplars," like the European Union, are attempting to provide a one-of-a-kind model for international interaction. (Kavalski 2013) Thus, the formulation of what is "normal" is as much about power relations as it is about specific agendas. A distinct feature between normative power and other power is how it manages asymmetric connections; normative power is no military or merely economic power, but a power that operates by concepts and ideology, another form of delegation. (Diez 2005, Tocci 2008)

Jackson pointed out "tolerance" as a key aspect of normative power. (Jackson 1975) Normative power should be marked by "the act of terminating the intention to evaluate the behavior of others", thus contributing to a series of specific "expectations by others for a normative actor's conduct". (Jackson 1975) Striving for identity is crucial for normative power, which requires some degree of voluntary acquiescence



from partner countries. Therefore, different from the relationship between big powers, the relationship between normative forces is, in essence, dialogical. Normative forces do not intervene in the affairs that constrain the behaviour of others, but share practices with other actors. (Kavalski 2013)

Normative power should “emerge as a power in context,” which is dependent on the interaction types in specific situations rather than being an inherent element of actors. In other words, the emergence of normative power is related to the inter-subjective environment in which the doer lives. The rise of “normative power” can be understood simply as “an effort to seek approval”.(Kavalski 2013)

So going back to the European Union's policy toward Africa, the EU has also been advocating changing the relationship between donors and recipients into an equal cooperative relationship with African countries. Then changing the strong image should not be just a slogan. As well as building a “normative force”, the EU should turn its attention to finding ways that African countries can agree on and accept. (Bialasiewicz 2011) It was not easy to change the “stereotype” of the EU's conditional political orientation of aid to Africa, such as human rights, democracy and good governance. Now the EU's attitude towards Ethiopia has “disappointed” the Ethiopian federal government.(DW 2021) So at least for now, the EU's claim that it wants a new



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orientation of “partnership” with Ethiopia and even other African countries is still unconvincing.

Understanding normative power requires attention to three elements: principle, action and impact. According to the above three elements, China's aid model to Africa means can be called a normative power actor as well, because it uses the normative power according to these factors. Thus, the “normal” in global society is associated with intentional interaction, conveying the ultimate evaluation of the actions of others and the willingness to participate in common practices (Kavalski 2013). Therefore, normative power is not only a “rule-based governance”, but also a “relational governance” (Qin 2011). Normative power is not to impose a certain order on others, but to make other actors participate in the practice together (Kavalski 2013). As Ian Manners has noted, the ability to define what is “normal” in world politics is ultimately the most powerful force. The EU's pursuit of different existences, different norms and different policies is in effect a redefinition of what constitutes a “normal” part of international relations. The concepts of “pooling of sovereignty” are different from current national and international relations, the relevance of the transnational European Parliament, the need for democratic conditionality and the promotion of human rights are the fundamental standards of the EU. (Manners 2002) But aid with no strings attached is what Ethiopia or even all the African countries need most. The sanctions mentioned above, and the decision to cancel the mission, are, to some



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extent, an act of interference of their local governance. So it is not surprising that Ethiopia, which desperately needs a stable regime, is disappointed by the EU's "rule-based governance



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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

There is still no sign of a ceasefire in the Tigray conflict. However, the author is delighted to see the progress of EU aid. To convince Ethiopia and even Africa that the EU's determination to have equal relations requires the EU to take more practical actions as soon as possible. The handling of the humanitarian aid needs caused by the Tigray conflict and the political support needed by the federal government may be an excellent opportunity for the EU to build an equal relationship. As it is mentioned in the "Global strategy of EU" in June 2016 written as "We must now swiftly translate this vision into action." (EU 2016)

From the UN Security Council resolution held on May 20, 2021, we can find some references for the EU to deal with Ethiopia. The Security Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of "understanding the cause". The Security Council recognizes that regional and sub-regional organizations have a better understanding of the region and play an essential role in understanding the root causes of conflicts in the region and promoting the prevention and resolution of conflicts.(EU 2016) It encourages the UN and African regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular the African Union, to strengthen their cooperation, rally the international community to work together to eliminate the root causes of conflicts and help African countries to promote post-epidemic reconstruction.(中华人民共和国外交部 2021)

The success of Rwanda's experience tells us that western practices of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries are ineffective for fragile countries.(Behuria and Goodfellow 2016) What economically backward countries need is an iron-fisted political leader. The state does not blindly encourage ethnic differences and emphasizes ethnic integration. For Rwanda, which has experienced heavy losses, only the government's national policy of engaging in economy is a good policy for the fragile country and benefiting the country and the people.(Ansoms 2005) (Ansoms 2011) This is one of the stable development directions of Africa. Perhaps this does not apply to Ethiopia, but respecting Ethiopia's freedom to choose its own development path is an important way to stabilize the situation in Ethiopia as soon as possible. As a supporter of Africa, China said at the UN Security Council that it “will continue to speak up for Africa at the UN and urge all parties to respect the sovereignty of African countries, respect the development path chosen by African countries independently and respect the rights of African countries to participate in international affairs on an equal footing”.(中华人民共和国外交部 2021) This can also be a reference for the EU in its diplomatic attitude towards Ethiopia and even Africa.

A stable Horn of Africa is what the Ethiopian people and the Ethiopian federal government both want, and it should also be what the EU wants, if the EU does not want a new wave of refugees. If you think from this angle, the changes that the EU should make are clearer.(Abbink 2021) A more informed, balanced and responsible approach is urgent for the EU. The EU should treat the information from both warring

parties with caution, understand the concept that “TPLF” is not the Tigray people, and make a prudent judgment. At the same time, the EU should no longer judge the current situation based on its previous experience with the leaders of the former Ethiopian government. The current TPLF is not a successor to Meles' government. In addition, the EU should help Ethiopia fundamentally solve the economic model of sustainable development. For example, EU can support a rational approach to the blue Nile dam (GERD) issue and do not judge the side of Egypt on this, which will be of great help to Ethiopia.

According to the current world situation, EU's aid to Africa will not stop because of the slow development of African countries or the conflicts that still erupt on the African continent. In today's increasingly interdependent and demanding world, the development of the EU cannot be separated from the stability and prosperity of the developing countries. With the emergence of global problems such as terrorism and illegal immigration, foreign aid has also become an important means to maintain world peace and regional stability. Therefore, the EU's aid to Africa will definitely continue. The crux of the problem is how to implement the aid under the new conditions. Ethiopia's problems cannot be solved by aid alone. It will take a long time to get out of the backward predicament.(Deng and Zartman 2011) The success of EU's aid policy has yet to be tested for a long time. For the EU, the most important point is to truly regard Ethiopia as a partner. A sincere and good neighboring policy can be a

cure to fundamentally solve the problem of refugee flows. However, if the EU persists in its attitude towards the current situation in Ethiopia, it may just be shooting itself in the foot. Perhaps the origin of the new wave of refugees flowing to Europe will be from the Horn of Africa.



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The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has led Ethiopia for close to three decades as a core party within the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition. Various ideological claims permeated the consolidation of power by the TPLF, which now seems to be questioned by the new leadership in the EPRDF. This article locates the critical junctures in the history of the party and analyses how those junctures relate to power concentration rather than to ideological shifts as purported by the party. It argues that the circumstances surrounding the 'shifts' in ideologies by the TPLF show that ideologies were used to consolidate power within the party and later impose domination at the state level. A thorough investigation of the ideological history of the TPLF is crucial as Ethiopia seems to be standing at a critical ideological crossroad. Through a deep hermeneutic interpretation, the article concludes that leftist ideological threads such as a focus on vanguard rule, party-directed economy, and Stalinist understandings of ethnicity run throughout the ideological shifts of the TPLF. The article synthesizes the cosmetic ideological shifts in the context of a pragmatic

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在20世纪90年代初的民族主义浪潮中,苏联、南斯拉夫和捷克斯洛伐克三个原社会主义阵营的民族联邦制国家相继解体。本文以捷克斯洛伐克联邦为例,从捷克人与斯洛伐克人民族认同与国家认同的变迁、民族性格的差异、相互认知和成见以及对共同国家的不同看法等角度,揭示民族心理作为一种内在的精神力量对联邦主体相互关系的发展以及联邦国家的命运产生的重要影响。

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苏联、南斯拉夫和捷克斯洛伐克三个社会主义联邦制国家,以主要的民族区域为联邦主体,本意是要保证各民族的平等。但在实际上,它们都在不同程度上存在着大小民族不平等、不同质民族不平等、事实上的民族裂痕为表面上的平等所掩饰等现象。分属不同文化,受不同大国影响,复杂的历史恩怨大大地弱化了联邦制下的各民族对同一国家的认知程度。更为重要的是,它们

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在国家结构上是联邦制,可在政治制度上却是高度集权的苏联模式,一党政治 ...

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