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UNDERSTANDING U.S. INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA**

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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**COOPERATING WITH THE LION:
UNDERSTANDING U.S. INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA**

by

Brian J. Dunn

September 2019

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Emily L. Meierding
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
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1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE September 2019	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE COOPERATING WITH THE LION: UNDERSTANDING U.S. INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Brian J. Dunn			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This thesis considers the nature of power and influence in the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship. U.S. government policymakers in Ethiopia should consider the agency of the political elite in Ethiopia, as well as the domestic “levers of power” within the Ethiopian state. While the chief executive is the critical actor in Ethiopia, he is not immune from domestic and international pressures. The United States maintains an active and wide-reaching bilateral relationship with the Ethiopian government, its institutions, and its people. While American activities in Ethiopia generally contribute toward overall U.S. objectives, there are instances where influence does not always adequately consider Ethiopian agency and sovereignty. Furthermore, U.S. attempts at influence demonstrate varying degrees of effectiveness, but that engagement must expand for the United States to remain Ethiopia’s security partner of choice.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Ethiopia, security, policy, Africa, power, influence		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 133	
		16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

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**COOPERATING WITH THE LION:
UNDERSTANDING U.S. INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the nature of power and influence in the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship. U.S. government policymakers in Ethiopia should consider the agency of the political elite in Ethiopia, as well as the domestic “levers of power” within the Ethiopian state. While the chief executive is the critical actor in Ethiopia, he is not immune from domestic and international pressures. The United States maintains an active and wide-reaching bilateral relationship with the Ethiopian government, its institutions, and its people. While American activities in Ethiopia generally contribute toward overall U.S. objectives, there are instances where influence does not always adequately consider Ethiopian agency and sovereignty. Furthermore, U.S. attempts at influence demonstrate varying degrees of effectiveness, but that engagement must expand for the United States to remain Ethiopia’s security partner of choice.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
AU	African Union
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CT	Counterterrorism
CTFP	Combatting Terrorism Fellowship Program
CTPF	Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Forces
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HOA	Horn of Africa
IA	Influencing Agent
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
ODA	Official development assistance
ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PEPFAR	The United States President's Plan for AIDS Relief

PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PM	Prime Minister
PRC	People’s Republic of China
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM)
SHD	Strategic Health Diplomacy
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SMS	Short Message Service
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SSA	Security Sector Assistance
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
TPLF	Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
U.S.G.	United States Government
VoA	Voice of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisors, who provided countless hours of support and advice throughout the thesis process. Your commitment, expertise, and encouragement helped me immensely. I would also like to thank my wife, Robbie. Thank you for the support, motivation, and proofreading.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The cornerstone of American foreign policy in Africa since 9/11 has been in pursuit of counterterrorism (CT) objectives. The Horn of Africa is known for weak, corrupt, and repressive states. It is also considered fertile for the recruitment of Islamic extremists. Ethiopia, despite its own repressive tendencies and geographic proximity to tumultuous South Sudan and Somalia, has largely avoided the high-profile terrorist attacks in the region and is otherwise considered one of Africa's strongest states. The United States sees the Ethiopian military as a largely competent and capable partner force and supports Ethiopian peace-keeping operations in Somalia. However, the age of CT being the primary concern of the United States is beginning to pass.

The United States, as illustrated by the 2018 National Defense Strategy, now considers great power competition to be at the heart of its worldwide foreign policy objectives.¹ African issues are largely omitted in the 2018 National Security Strategy, yet China's expanding investment and influence in the region has prompted concerns of a new Cold War in the region.² During the last Cold War, Ethiopia and Somalia, as American and Soviet proxies, respectively, fought a bloody war with over 30,000 casualties.³ While the United States currently enjoys a favorable relationship with the Ethiopian government, increased Chinese assistance offers a viable alternative that could undermine American bilateral efforts. Is the United States successfully manipulating levers of power in Ethiopia to achieve its foreign policy objectives? This thesis evaluates the ways that the United States can achieve its foreign policy objectives, both in Ethiopia and the region, while Ethiopia's own geopolitical and economic realities shift under new domestic and international pressures.

¹ Jim Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy," n.d., 2.

² Zachary Karabell, "A Cold War Is Coming, and It Isn't China's Fault," *Foreign Policy*, accessed February 8, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/31/a-cold-war-is-coming-and-it-isnt-chinas-fault/>.

³ Gebru Tareke, "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (2000): 665, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3097438>.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Though the questions of U.S. aid effectiveness in Africa and the utility of security cooperation efforts have been studied, no academic literature has specifically addressed the ways that the United States aims its efforts in Ethiopia. As the United States shifts toward strategy for great power competition, a greater understanding of the opportunities and constraints for U.S. influence would increase the efficiency of future cooperation, thus improving the relationship while delivering benefits to the Ethiopians themselves. Furthermore, though the U.S.–Ethiopian relationship is unique, there are wider lessons about American influence in Africa as China and other global actors step-up their own attempts at influence.

One of these broader questions concerns U.S. relationships with repressive authoritarian regimes in Africa and elsewhere. Backlash from Jamal Khashoggi’s alleged murder has shown that both domestic and international groups grow increasingly critical of U.S.’ support for authoritarian regimes, though pragmatic geopolitical considerations win out under the current administration.⁴ Critics of the Ethiopian state, which is frequently condemned for repressive tendencies, have previously called for limits on U.S. security assistance and aid.⁵ Though the U.S. government (U.S.G.) has largely ignored criticism in both instances, questions of future cooperation linger. Thus, this research also speaks to the delicate balance of advancing security objectives in states known for authoritarian practices.

Aside from its practical applications, this thesis also enhances theoretical knowledge about great power influence in the developing world. Comparing the effects of U.S. and Chinese influence attempts in Ethiopia, where the latter are especially active, contributes to an understanding of international competition in Africa, and more broadly

⁴ Darlene Superville, “Trump Puts Saudi Arms Sales above Inquiry into Khashoggi Killing,” PBS NewsHour, June 24, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/trump-puts-saudi-arms-sales-above-inquiry-into-khashoggi-killing>.

⁵ Terrence Lyons, “Diaspora Lobbying and Ethiopian Politics,” in *Diaspora Lobbies and the US Government: Convergence and Divergence in Making Foreign Policy*, n.d., 166.

in the developing world. In comparing the methods and efficacy of both great powers' influence, we can learn which strategies succeed and which ones fail.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis evaluates the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia in an effort to see where U.S. policy is most likely to be successful and where it is least valuable. The secondary purpose of this thesis is to contrast U.S. efforts with those of China. In both cases, the effort analyzes how distinct policies are able to improve a state's influence over another sovereign country. Thus, the theoretical concepts of influence and power must be considered.

In this section, I begin by reviewing some of the main concepts related to international power and influence. I will then introduce mechanisms of influence derived from social psychology literature that can be useful to assess United States or Chinese influence in Ethiopia. Next, I will discuss the importance of understanding African agency through the lens of internal actors and aid structures. In the final section of the literature review, I discuss the steady and deliberate nature of U.S. foreign policy for Africa.

1. Defining Power and Influence

Realist international relations theory proposes that human nature is at the core of international politics. Morgenthau asserts that states are rational actors that pursue policies in their interest.⁶ He claims that historical evidence demonstrates that states (and their leaders) have and will pursue power.⁷ Morgenthau's explanation of power implies that there is a distinction between "those who exercise [power] and those over whom it is exercised."⁸ He also suggests that influence is different than power, in that power includes means to force another to comply.⁹ In contrast, Morgenthau considers influence as the

⁶ Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson, and W. David Clinton, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th ed (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006), 5.

⁷ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, 5.

⁸ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, 28.

⁹ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, 29.

ability to persuade rather than compel. To Morgenthau, political power only exists before violence takes place. Certainly, he acknowledges that the threat of violence is a key aspect of politics, but once a state crosses the threshold into physical violence the nature of the interaction has morphed from political to military or pseudo-military.¹⁰ In the context of the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship, both influence and power, as conceived by Morgenthau, are desirable outcomes for the United States.

Both people and states exercise power and exert influence in different ways. Morgenthau famously conceptualizes the most commonly accepted form of power, hard power. He argues that in “international politics in particular, armed strength as a threat or a potentiality is the most important material factor making for the political power of a nation.”¹¹ Crucially, hard power is not only the maintenance of a large or well-equipped military. Rather, hard power includes the capacity to sustain that military power, which usually requires a strong natural resource base, and capitalization of human capital, advanced technology, and other material wealth. Though this is clearly an important element when studying international relations, there are other compelling arguments.

Nye revolutionized scholarship by creating a new term: “Soft Power.” His metaphor for power is a case of tools, and from this perspective, the tools that do not require force are soft power. These tools include business partnerships, targeted news efforts, including public diplomacy, and cultural exchanges. Nye also suggests that “soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction.”¹² As Nye admits, governments may not be able to control the exact nature of culturally based soft power, but they can make more targeted efforts to exert soft power.¹³ In Ethiopia, the United States can pursue policies that involve either hard or soft power. However, Nye’s conclusions suggest that overusing hard power runs the risk of alienating the Ethiopian state and its people. While

¹⁰ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, 29.

¹¹ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, 29.

¹² Joseph S. Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (June 2004): 256, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20202345>.

¹³ Nye, 266.

hard power may benefit the United States in certain short-run situations, perceptions of the United States and its government also matter.

Though theoretically ambiguous, states can employ influence activities that do not neatly conform to hard or soft power. One such activity that is particularly popular with the current administration is economic sanctions. As well as the proverbial stick, powers can offer carrots in this economic realm. The United States and China heavily invest in the Ethiopian state, albeit through very different methods. In Africa generally, the United States typically works through official development assistance (ODA), while China tends to work through loans. Though observers criticize both methods, the extent and scale of China's loans worry many. Rosen observes that Grant Harris, an Obama era White House official, characterizes Chinese debt as "methamphetamines of infrastructure finance... highly addictive, readily available, and with long-term negative effects that far outweigh any temporary high."¹⁴

Security cooperation, another type of influence activity cannot be easily categorized as hard or soft power. Though generally military in nature, security cooperation in Africa tends to focus on developing partner capacity, including developmental assistance to improve the health and professional development of African forces.

2. Social Psychology of Influence and Power

Morgenthau and Nye are primarily concerned with the political dimensions of influence. Morgenthau attempts to clarify the underlying political factors in keeping, increasing, and gaining power. Nye seeks to expose his audience to a new understanding of power that does not involve the threat or use of force. However, approaching the topics from a social psychology perspective can clarify and disentangle some of approaches to influence. Social psychology further explains influence in another context, one that can be useful in Political Science. Building on French and Raven's 1959 groundbreaking social

¹⁴ Jonathan Rosen, "'China Must Be Stopped': Zambia Debates the Threat of 'Debt-Trap' Diplomacy," *World Politics Review*, accessed March 19, 2019, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/27027/china-must-be-stopped-zambia-debates-the-threat-of-debt-trap-diplomacy>.

psychology work, Raven further developed the most prominent model of power, interaction, and influence in 1965. This model is useful in exploring U.S. influence in Ethiopia.

Raven suggests that there are six key “bases of power.” They are: informational (not included on original list), reward, coercion, legitimate, expertise, and referent.¹⁵ These bases of power include both hard and soft power. Similar to Nye’s recommendation that states employ a mixture of hard and soft power, Raven suggests that different situations and challenges require different bases of power.¹⁶ Furthermore, though these bases of power seem permanent, the relationship between the influencer and influenced is complex and variable, therefore the methods of influence should reflect these changes.

I will briefly identify the key aspects of each base of power, as this theoretical framework will be used to analyze existing U.S. policies in Ethiopia. For clarity and consistency with Raven, I will henceforth use the terms “influencing agent” (IA) and “target” to describe the bases of power. Reward power is a transactional relationship where the IA offers a benefit to the target in order to reward compliance. Conversely, coercive power involves the threat of punishment for noncompliance. As Raven highlights, both coercive and reward power require surveillance, meaning that each power base is of limited value unless the IA can monitor whether the target is complying. The concept of surveillance between two sovereign states is particularly difficult, especially in scenarios of coercive power, as the target is motivated to obfuscate noncompliance.

The following bases of power do not require surveillance: legitimate, expert and referent. Legitimate power causes the target to comply because they feel they “should,” and because the target sees the IA as valid and justified in their request. Expert power occurs when the target believes the IA knows more and therefore the target should comply. Informational Power sees the IA persuading, without threat or offer of reward, the target

¹⁵ Bertram H. Raven, “The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence: Bases of Power,” *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 8, no. 1 (September 15, 2008): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2008.00159.x>.

¹⁶ Joseph S. Nye, “Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (August 2009): 161.

to change its course of action. Finally, referent power exists when the target emulates the IA because of the influencer's attractiveness, and therefore complies. That these types of power do not require surveillance is both important in theory but also in practice. Of particular concern for the study of the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship is that the United States may not be able to guarantee continued access to information on the progress or results of its efforts, especially any information that the Ethiopian state deems counterproductive. Thus, though there is no assurance of success, it might be preferable for the United States to pursue strategies that favor legitimate, expert, or referent power. Many of the elements of these methods, particularly those that require the target to respect the IA, evoke Nye. Nye mentions style, in the context of soft power, as the outward image of cooperation and mutual respect.¹⁷ Morgenthau also considers that the impact of political power is contingent on, among other things, “the respect or love for men or institutions.”¹⁸ Thus, both social psychology and international relations can prescribe actions that will yield the best results.

Influence between the IA and target does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, these attempts occur as part of a larger interaction between the two actors. Raven suggests that the likelihood of success varies considerably, often because of previous influence attempts.¹⁹ Ultimately, the choice of influence style will and should be case dependent and should assume that both the IA and the target have learned from previous experiences and probably changed. Acknowledging that the target wields power is in essence granting it agency. The following section will consider some of the unique aspects of African agency.

3. Agency and Structure

When considering the relationship between a hegemon and a relatively weaker state many are tempted to ignore the agency of the weaker party. The agency of African states

¹⁷ Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 268.

¹⁸ Morgenthau, Thompson, and Clinton, *Politics among Nations*, 28.

¹⁹ Raven, “The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence,” 9.

is considered weak, largely because of high dependency on foreign aid.²⁰ Fisher, while addressing both international structure and agency, compels scholars to reconsider the conventional wisdom that discounts African agency. Similar to Brown, he suggests that sovereignty plays a constitutive role in the interplay between Western aid agencies and their intended African recipient states.²¹ Savvy aid recipients, such as Ethiopia, have lobbied in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere to rally support for the causes that will accrue aid.²² According to Fisher, this is prime evidence of “African states securing agency in the international system.”²³ Thus, understanding who makes decisions in the Ethiopian government and why is a critical aspect of U.S. influence. Moreover, Brown and Fisher suggest that ignoring agency imperils the accuracy of academic work and its practical by-products. In this work on Ethiopia, this means we should understand that Ethiopia’s own interests and actions drive its own reactions, both at home and in the broader international system.

Some academics have started to recognize the benefits of considering African agency. However, according to Fisher, even the few scholars who recognize African agency tend to contradict those principles in their works.²⁴ He suggests that ignoring African agency is logical, because so many African states have relied “heavily upon loans and grants from Western donors to fund their budgets and upon training and support from Western militaries and defence departments to equip and train their security personnel.”²⁵ Nonetheless, studies that downplay the importance of African agency can miss important domestic and international dynamics. This thesis considers target-country interests and actions as a key determinant of foreign policy success.

²⁰ Jonathan Fisher, “Structure, Agency and Africa in the International System: Donor Diplomacy and Regional Security Policy in East Africa since the 1990s,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 13, no. 5 (December 2013): 538, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2013.849471>.

²¹ William Brown, “Sovereignty Matters: Africa, Donors, and the Aid Relationship,” *African Affairs* 112, no. 447 (April 1, 2013): 281–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adt001>.

²² Fisher, “Structure, Agency and Africa in the International System,” 544.

²³ Fisher, 544.

²⁴ Fisher, 540.

²⁵ Fisher, 541.

Fisher contends that confusion about agency and structure largely exists because of the complex and crowded nature of both internal and external stakeholders. Thus, internal dynamics are frequently overlooked. Therefore, this thesis takes seriously the internal mechanisms of the Ethiopian state. Certainly, the main actors are easily identifiable, especially in states like Ethiopia, where the party and chief executive are supreme. If the actors are the “who,” then the structure is the “why.” The international structure, particularly concerning aid, displays a complex and often opaque dynamic. Fisher highlights decisions where donations are made as evidence that the international system is not “clear-cut.”²⁶ Though donor country hesitation to discuss full rationale for choices is part of the problem, much confusion occurs because African states themselves have had an impact on the system.

4. U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory in Africa

The majority of the following thesis concerns U.S. attempts at influence in Ethiopia; thus, it is valuable to consider literature examining the broad contours of U.S.–Africa policy post-independence. Peter Schraeder has devoted considerable effort to tracking the history of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa since World War II. According to him, there are two key elements of the U.S.’ approach to Africa: low-prioritization and bureaucratic incrementalism. This section will briefly outline the evidence for both and propose how these characteristics could specifically affect the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship.

Schraeder and Rothchild both suggest that for the United States, Africa has been a low priority.²⁷ American interest in Africa decreased with the end of the Cold War.²⁸ Rothchild suggests that a major reason for this organizational disinterest in Africa stems from an uninformed and largely unconcerned American public.²⁹ Even during the Cold

²⁶ Fisher, 543.

²⁷ Donald S. Rothchild, “The U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory on Africa,” *SAIS Review* 21, no. 1 (2001): 205, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2001.0021>; Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change*, Reprinted 1996, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 31 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 49.

²⁸ Rothchild, “The U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory on Africa,” 179.

²⁹ Rothchild, 179.

War, the United States preferred to expend effort in a few areas in order to limit Soviet influence in the region. When possible, the United States abdicated authority in the region, suggesting that former colonial powers take the lead role in those nations.³⁰ When U.S. presidents did consider issues in Africa, it was not because the region itself was important, but rather because it was a new battlefield between the U.S. and USSR. A statement from the Kennedy administration best exemplifies this position: “We see Africa as probably the greatest open field of maneuver in the worldwide competition between the [communist] bloc and the non-communist world.”³¹ However, while this assertion suggests proactive U.S. involvement throughout the region, what actually occurred was reactionary U.S. engagement after the USSR involved itself on the continent.³²

U.S. disinterest and limited engagement during the Cold War was followed by considerable disengagement in the 1990s, precipitated by U.S. military casualties in Somalia. Even before the October 3, 1993, battle in Mogadishu, American public opinion did not support wide military objectives in Somalia. After the battle, opposition to U.S. military involvement increased, with 64 percent of respondents to a Roper Center for Public Opinion Research survey urging that U.S. troops be withdrawn.³³ The post-Somalia era saw the United States “sidelined” in conflicts throughout the region, from Rwanda to Sudan.³⁴ The above developments suggest that the United States is unlikely to favor influence efforts that require significant military operations involving U.S. forces, other than when absolutely necessary. That the executive branch of the American government fails to prioritize Africa changes the bilateral relationship. Generally, it reinforces an incrementalistic approach. It also changes which U.S. bureaucratic organization participates and how.

³⁰ Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa*, 15.

³¹ Schraeder, 15.

³² Schraeder, 15.

³³ Rothchild, “The U.S. Foreign Policy Trajectory on Africa,” 190.

³⁴ Rothchild, 192.

Schraeder suggests that bureaucratic politics best exemplifies the majority of U.S. foreign policy in Africa. Multiple U.S. stakeholder organizations each bring their own practices and mission objectives to the table in Africa. These organizations include the Department of State (DoS), the Department of Defense (DoD), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the executive branch. Each stakeholder has slightly different objectives, and these have varied alongside geopolitical shifts worldwide, including the end of the Cold War. These organizations' different objectives and capabilities mean that they each approach a given challenge with a different strategy. These strategies work to achieve the overall U.S. foreign policy goal while also highlighting their organization's unique capabilities. Dedicated support to preserving an organization's core-mission underlies the principles of bureaucratic politics.³⁵

Bureaucratic incrementalism also influences the U.S.–Ethiopia relationship. According to Rothchild the bureaucratic nature of the relationship favors “low-cost and low-risk” involvement. This bureaucratic “incrementalism,” as Schraeder describes it, implies a slow but steady progression of policies. Absent the most extreme influence from the executive branch, programs in Africa are therefore likely to continue amidst changes in administrations, even if overall strategies change. Therefore, in studying the bilateral relationship between the United States and Ethiopia, I will focus on those programs with a long history, as they are most likely to continue in the future, no matter the presidential administration. Rothchild suggests that pursuing a directive or invasive activist policy, one that seeks to radically and rapidly change the fundamental structure of the target state could threaten “Africa’s desire for autonomy and self-reliance.”³⁶ Activities in Africa must be justifiable to U.S. leadership and the American taxpayer.

³⁵ Morton H. Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2006), 26.

³⁶ Rothchild, 206.

C. ANALYTIC APPROACH

Analyzing U.S.G. efforts at influencing Ethiopia to achieve its foreign policy objectives is a complex undertaking. Therefore, this thesis utilizes an analytic approach which breaks the core question down into more manageable components.

1. State Interests

Every state's internal conditions and regional context affects how it behaves domestically and internationally. Though external pressures can modify a state's interest, those interests are not identical. Ethiopia's dedication to sovereignty could mean that all external pressure will be considered skeptically and pragmatically. To understand how Ethiopia's interests are modified by external factors we must first identify what its interests are.

2. Levers of Power

Governments are not unitary. Distinct actors within a government and its population work to achieve their own objectives within the state. The actors' importance within a state vary by issue. Any external actor, such as the United States or China, must understand which actors are useful to achieve their foreign policy objectives. Therefore, this thesis analyzes the domestic structure and levers of power in Ethiopia. This allows an academic analysis of current influence activities and provides practitioners an opportunity to analyze whether future influence activities are likely to yield successful results.

3. Influence Activities

The United States and China both hope to influence Ethiopia, and they have many influence activities and power mechanisms to help achieve their foreign policy objectives. To assess their relative impact, we must first identify which activities are taking place. Levers of power are still important in this discussion because a foreign government's influence activities may be misdirected towards a lever of power that has no clout to modify general state behavior.

4. Influence Analysis

Influence activities do not occur within a vacuum. Activities which are potent in one state may be ineffective in another. This occurs primarily as a result of the target state's interests. Furthermore, influence activities might even appear successful, but not work to alter the target state's behavior. Therefore, I consider the impacts of influence activities in Ethiopia and address whether influence activities have advanced either American or Chinese foreign policy goals.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis focuses on the period from 1991 until the present. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) assumed the central role in the Ethiopian government after a successful rebellion concluding in 1991.³⁷ In Ethiopia, the party is the state and vice versa. Thus, when considering the internal mechanics of the Ethiopian government, this thesis focuses on developments since 1991. This will isolate developments within the EPRDF and omit former regimes such as the Derg. As the literature suggests, the U.S. relationship with Ethiopia rapidly improved and changed following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. For consistency, this thesis considers U.S.–Ethiopian relations since 1991, despite most significant bilateral developments occurring since 2001.

Ethiopia's significant strategic location and unique imperial history make the state an intriguing subject. However, a long history of authoritarian repression and a notorious tight-hold on communications make studying Ethiopia challenging. For example, no single work analyzes the constraints on executive power in Ethiopia. The majority of the data analyzing the limits of executive authority in Ethiopia is therefore derived from books and academic journal articles. Analyzing the results of both United States and Chinese influence actions also require articles from academic journals, think tank studies, and domestic and international news. U.S. policy priorities are not explicitly delineated; however certain public records indicate the broad outlines of the U.S.–Ethiopian

³⁷ Terrence Lyons, "The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritarian Politics," n.d., 174.

relationship. The testimony of U.S. Ambassador-designees tends to condense the main stated objectives of the bilateral relationship.³⁸ Admittedly, this testimony only provides a snapshot in time; yet, if several concurrent testimonies are studied, we begin to see trends. This analysis also requires quantitative data from think-tank reports and some data from the organizations themselves (e.g., PEPFAR reports). United States Agency for International Development (USAID) data on development aid helps assess absolute amounts of aid and where this aid is directed, both in terms of types of projects and amounts committed and distributed.³⁹ Other institutional studies provide invaluable data; for instance the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s (SIPRI) data on arms transfers is comprehensive and reliable.⁴⁰ Independent think tanks mitigate the existing bias of using official data from U.S.G. organizations. Nonetheless, in many cases the U.S.G. data is the most applicable and likely the most accurate, or the only data available. I will be especially cautious when considering information such as “perceptions of the U.S.G. because of program X.” In these cases, I will explicitly highlight the limitations (and potential bias) of these data.

During this research I also conducted interviews with the former U.S. Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to Ethiopia, who was responsible for security cooperation with Ethiopia. The interviews provided information on the “what” of U.S. security programs in Ethiopia.⁴¹

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The next chapter, “Levers of Power,” identifies the structure and vulnerabilities of the government of Ethiopia. By identifying the possible “levers of power,” I am able to

³⁸ Donald E. Booth, “Statement of Donald E Booth Nominee to Be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee” (2009); Patricia M. Haslach, “Statement of Patricia M. Haslach Nominee to Be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee” (2013); Michael Raynor, “Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor Nominee to Be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee” (2017).

³⁹ “FAE: Data Query,” accessed February 21, 2019, <https://explorer.usaid.gov//query>.

⁴⁰ “SIPRI Arms Transfers Database | SIPRI,” accessed February 21, 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.

⁴¹ Per Naval Postgraduate School Institutional Review Board determination #2019.0074-DD-N

assess if the U.S.G. successfully targets vulnerabilities (soft spots). I highlight sectors of the government that are particularly immune to outside influence, because targeting these areas would be unlikely to be successful.

The third chapter, “U.S. Pursuit of Influence in Ethiopia,” begins by identifying the main goals of U.S. foreign policy in Ethiopia. It also highlights the “best case scenario” for the U.S.G. in Ethiopia. Furthermore, this chapter determines the main U.S. efforts in the country, showing what specific actions the U.S.G. is taking. Finally, this chapter evaluates whether these specific actions are successful. Success will mean effectiveness at that specific action, but also must mean working toward the overall “best case scenario” for U.S.–Ethiopian relations.

The fourth chapter, “Chinese influence in Ethiopia,” contrasts the efforts of the United States with the influence actions taken by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It considers the potential benefits for Chinese cooperation with Ethiopia, for both parties. Furthermore, this chapter analyzes the Chinese government’s attempts to expand its portfolio of influence activities, specifically into sectors typically associated with the West. I also consider the challenges China faces in their most active influence activities.

Finally, the conclusion addresses the overall trends based on the information from both the United States and the PRC. To focus this comparison, the conclusion addresses which state better achieves their goals, and which strategies are best aligned with the vulnerable levers of power identified in Chapter II. This conclusion also identifies possible areas for future study.

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II. LEVERS OF POWER

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the structure and nature of government and other political entities in Ethiopia. After an overview of Ethiopia's basic political system, I analyze its domestic "levers of power." To be considered an effective lever of power, these groups or individuals must be able to shape or constrain executive policies or actions. As with many of its African neighbors, Ethiopia's chief executive is the single most important lever of power. However, other groups and institutions have and will continue to shape Ethiopia's political future.

While Ethiopia's Prime Minister (PM) is indeed the state's most important actor, his political party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has been a dominant force on the political scene. The military is closely tied to the EPRDF and to the executive, and maintains significant authority in the state, though recent reforms have threatened that branch's political salience. Outside of the government, civil society protests have demonstrated the largest check on executive autonomy. Typically, the protests have occurred around parliamentary elections, despite the elections themselves being little more than a rubber stamp for continued autocratic governance.

This chapter addresses the first two components of my analytical approach to the overall research. In service of component one, this chapter considers Ethiopia's state interests. More broadly, this chapter also focuses on component two, levers of power. Ethiopia's domestic mechanics are more complicated than the African strongman trope where state decisions only enrich the political elite. For the United States and China, understanding that these are not the only levers of power within Ethiopia is necessary to better achieve their foreign policy goals. The Ethiopian state is at a point of significant change, and reforms may decentralize power, making other levers of power more influential than they have been for the last two decades. Therefore, identifying the levers of power and assessing their relative strength is practically and academically important.

1. Basic Political Overview and Government Structure

According to its 1995 constitution, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's government is specifically responsible for national defense, interactions with foreign governments, and "general policy of common interest and benefits."⁴² This last responsibility is vague and allows the central government considerable leeway in pursuing many economic and social policies. The government is parliamentary and is divided among nine member states, which are organized ethnically.

2. Structure of Politics in Ethiopia

Politics in Ethiopia have centered on a dominant coalition of parties created by a successful military revolution that overthrew the unpopular Communist Derg⁴³ in 1991. The name of this coalition of parties is the EPRDF. The EPRDF, though technically inclusive of other ethnic parties that united against the Derg has mostly been known for its Tigrayan faction, the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). The EPRDF pursued a system of Ethnic Federalism that accentuated ethnic divisions in Ethiopia, offering a counter to what they saw as previous Amharic domination. The EPRDF's pursuit of Ethnic Federalism permeated all elements of government and was enshrined in a 1995 constitution.

3. Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian government is designated a Federal Democratic Republic. Ethiopia is split into nine ethnically defined states, creating its ethnic federalist structure.⁴⁴ Ethnic federalism is worth special consideration because it is an extremely rare political system, and it is critical to the distribution of power within Ethiopia. The ethnic federal system formalizes territorial and ethnic divisions within the country, which often coincide with political divisions. Opinions of the system vary, with many outside observers asserting that

⁴² "Government Structure—Ethiopia," Ethiopian Government, n.d., <http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/government-structure>.

⁴³ Derg is Amharic for committee, and the government was known for a strong central committee

⁴⁴ "Government Structure—Ethiopia."

the system is dangerous in its “politicization” of the many ethnic divisions present in the state. Ethnic federalism in the Ethiopian context means that ethnically defined regions are allowed “self-determination” up to the point of secession. Theoretically, ethnic federalism assigns a great deal of power to regional governments, but in practice the trend has been toward increased centralization of power in the hands of the EPRDF.⁴⁵ In and of itself the system of ethnic federalism is not a lever of power, yet it underscores the structure and interactions within the government.

4. The EPRDF

The EPRDF is the core element of the Ethiopian government. The party came to power following a successful military insurgency and rebellion against the Communist Derg government in 1991.⁴⁶ It inherited an entrenched authoritarian state, and all its trappings.⁴⁷ The EPRDF is a strong lever of power in the Ethiopian state. The EPRDF is somewhat unique in its organization, as it is comprised of four constituent parties, reflecting some of the major ethnic groups. The TPLF, during conflict with the Derg, expanded from their own structure to incorporate their allies amongst different ethnic groups. These core four groups (now political parties) were incorporated incrementally, starting in 1989 and concluding in 1994.⁴⁸

The four parties are:

The Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)—This party is the remnants of the core revolutionary group that opposed the Derg government. Prime Minister (PM) Meles Zenawi, Ethiopian PM from 1995–2015 (his death), headed this party as well as the larger EPRDF.

⁴⁵ Lovise Aalen, *Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: The Ethiopian Experience 1991-2000*, Report / Chr. Michelsen Institute, R 2002:2 (Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2002), 1.

⁴⁶ Sarah Vaughan and Kjetil Tronvoll, *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, Sida Studies 10 (Stockholm: Sida, 2003), 25.

⁴⁷ Vaughan and Tronvoll, 25.

⁴⁸ Vaughan and Tronvoll, 115–16.

The Oromo Democratic Party (ODP)—This party represents Ethiopia’s largest ethnic group, the Oromos. Formerly called the Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO), it is headed by PM Abiy Ahmed. This party also has origins from the revolutionary struggle but was less represented in government following the revolution.⁴⁹

The Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM)—A political party connected to the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR). The region and political party are ethnically diverse and were headed by former PM Hailemariam Desalegn from 2002–2018. The SEPDM is currently headed by Muferiat Kamil. She has previously served in government as Minister for Women’s Affairs under PM Meles Zenawi.⁵⁰

Amhara Democratic Party (ADP—Political party connected to the Amhara Region. They are formerly known as the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM).⁵¹ The Amharic people historically ruled the Ethiopian Empire, despite only being a quarter of the total population.⁵² Nonetheless, this group’s historical supremacy makes it an important element of the overall EPRDF.

The strength of the individual parties that make up the EPRDF has varied over time. This indicates that no single individual or party is the central power and demonstrates the flexibility and resilience of the overall EPRDF. PM Abiy Ahmed’s appointment has increased the tensions between the ODP, of which he is a member, and the TPLF, which feels threatened by government reforms. The TPLF’s plans to depart the EPRDF will be discussed in a later section.

⁴⁹ “Oromo People’s Democratic Organization - About Us,” Oromo People’s Democratic Organization, n.d., <http://www.opdo.org.et/About%20Us.htm>.

⁵⁰ “Muferiat Kamil Elected as Chairwomen of Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM),” *Borkena* (blog), n.d., <https://borkena.com/2018/06/25/muferiat-kamil-elected-as-chairwoman-of-southern-ethiopian-peoples-democratic-movement-sepdm/>.

⁵¹ “Amhara Democratic Party Is the New Name for ANDM,” *Borkena* (blog), n.d., <https://borkena.com/2018/09/30/amhara-democratic-party-is-the-new-name-for-andm/>.

⁵² “Ethiopia,” CIA World Factbook, n.d., <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>.

5. Party Structure/Mechanics

Figure 1 indicates the party structure and format for the selection or election of committees and councils. Currently, the most influential of these bodies are the party central committees and the EPRDF Executive Committee. These councils inform state decisions as well as drafting, amending and adopting constitutions.⁵³ Put simply, no important federal decision could be made without the approval of either the executive or one of these councils. To illustrate the importance of the above, current Prime Minister Abiy was elected as chairperson of the OPD by his OPD central committee.⁵⁴ Thereafter, he was elected by the EPRDF council, where tacit TPLF support⁵⁵ elevated him compared to opponents from the other constituent parties.⁵⁶ The composition and balance of these groups has remained fairly constant.

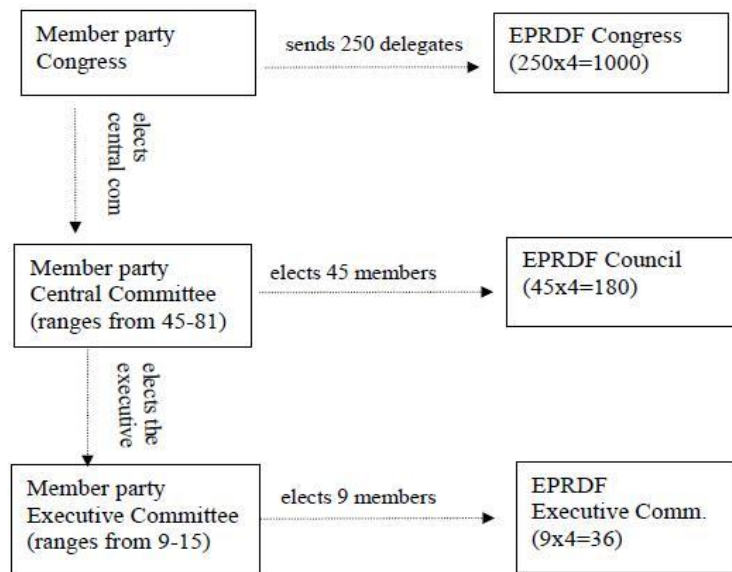


Figure 1. EPRDF Congress and Committee Structure⁵⁷

⁵³ “Government Structure—Ethiopia.”

⁵⁴ “Ethiopia: Dr. Abiy Ahmed tipped to become next PM,” *Journal du Cameroun* (blog), February 23, 2018, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/ethiopia-dr-abiy-ahmed-tipped-to-become-next-pm/>.

⁵⁵ The TPLF did not nominate a candidate for PM, thus making the competition between 3 candidates, with the TPLF bloc able to cast the deciding votes

⁵⁶ “Ethiopia,” February 23, 2018.

⁵⁷ Source: Sisay Zedagim, “EPRDF’s Leadership Structure and Election | Metekakat Review,” *Horn Affairs*, April 5, 2013, <https://hornaffairs.com/2013/04/05/ethiopia-eprdf-leadership-organs-election/>.

6. History of EPRDF and Ideology

The EPRDF's dominant nature vis-à-vis political opposition is the main feature of the political landscape in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, the structure of the EPRDF and its main constituent parties showcases the strengths and potential weaknesses of their brand of party control. The TPLF is the earliest and historically most important constituent group of the EPRDF. They formed in 1975 as a group of student movements originating at Addis Ababa University.⁵⁸ The TPLF originated as a means to secure an independent Tigray, the northern area of Ethiopia along the modern border with Eritrea. As the TPLF gained momentum it shifted and widened its political efforts.⁵⁹ Rather than pursuing separation, the TPLF seemed determined to restructure the Ethiopian state and allow greater representation of the Tigrayan in central government. This front was not the only resistance movement of its kind in Tigray, but it was best able to coopt or out-manuever its revolutionary rivals. The TPLF originally espoused Marxist-Leninist ideology but have since adapted to support policies generally considered left of center.⁶⁰ The party has shown remarkable tenacity against political opposition, and though we see ideological flexibility, economic development has been the constant *raison-d'être* for the party.

7. Fissures within the EPRDF—Ethiopian Eritrean War

Dynamics within the EPRDF and its constituent parties pose a threat to the long-term longevity of the EPRDF as ruling party. The most notable historical evidence of this occurred following the conclusion of the Ethiopian-Eritrean War between 1998 and 2000. In 2001, the TPLF core faction of the EPRDF was divided with regard to terms for ending the war. These deeply contested divisions caused significant fallout between members, compelling some TPLF dissenters to sit-out some Central Committee meetings. Doing so was disastrous for their individual political futures, as they were subsequently expelled from the party entirely.⁶¹ This exclusion on its own was significant, but also prompted the

⁵⁸ Vaughan and Tronvoll, *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, 113.

⁵⁹ Vaughan and Tronvoll, 113.

⁶⁰ Vaughan and Tronvoll, 113.

⁶¹ Vaughan and Tronvoll, 122.

EPRDF to purge those sympathetic to the dissenters. The leaders of the OPDO and the SEPDPF were subsequently ousted. Furthermore, thousands of party cadre were ousted.⁶² These extreme actions, though perhaps necessary to maintain power, weakened the TPLF and exposed cracks in the previously invulnerable faction of the EPRDF. Meanwhile, this event also shows that the EPRDF had started to develop an identity of its own, independent of its TPLF roots. Vaughn and Tronvoll note that the ouster “resulted in the alienation of some parts of the Tigrayan constituency, although most seem to have resigned themselves to the existing situation.”⁶³ While this division highlighted weakness, the party did not crumble, and in subsequent years went on to consolidate its position across broad swaths of society. This historical event is important because it sets the context for the current divisions within the EPRDF, revolving around PM Abiy’s reforms.

8. Current Political In-fighting and Future of EPRDF

The EPRDF is likely to maintain its grip on power through the next election cycle, whether the elections are free and fair or as flawed as in previous instances. Though they are likely to remain in power, the EPRDF stands to lose significant ground because of two recent and related developments. First, and most importantly, is the threat of the TPLF to leave the EPRDF.⁶⁴ Jane’s Information Group assesses that the TPLF is likely to depart the EPRDF before the scheduled 2020 parliamentary elections.⁶⁵ The main reason they plan to leave is because PM Abiy plans to reorganize the EPRDF into one single party, rather than as an alliance of four. This action is bold, and potentially weakens the EPRDF’s position vis-à-vis political opposition. Nonetheless, the choice is logical, as one aim of restructuring the EPRDF is to provide more equitable political power to other ethnic

⁶² Lovise Aalen and Kjetil Tronvoll, “The End of Democracy? Curtailing Political and Civil Rights in Ethiopia,” *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (June 2009): 203, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903065067>.

⁶³ Vaughan and Tronvoll, *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, 122.

⁶⁴ “TPLF Should Give an Ultimatum to EPRDF and the FDRE Government Sooner than Later,” Tigray Online, n.d., <http://www.tigraionline.com/articles/tplf-ultimatum-eprdf-fdre.html>.

⁶⁵ “Ethiopia Executive Summary,” Jane’s, n.d., https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/FG_1859920-NAFR?section=Ethiopia%20%3E%20Executive%20Summary.

groups, notably the Oromos, thereby addressing some of the political inequities that have caused popular unrest.

The EPRDF is a durable and powerful institution in Ethiopia. In the near-term the party and the PM will remain the primary actor in domestic affairs. While intra-party divisions should be carefully assessed, the adaptive nature of the EPRDF, and its demonstrated ability to tackle new challenges will make it the central element of the Ethiopian government for the near future.

B. EXECUTIVE BRANCH—PM AND PRESIDENT

The PM, by being connected at deep levels with the party's congress, is the ultimate authority in Ethiopia. As noted, the current PM is Abiy Ahmed, who assumed his responsibilities on the April 2, 2018.⁶⁶ Abiy Ahmed is an active reformist. Notably he is the first Oromo leader, and his appointment came at a time when the Oromo region was the heart of anti-government chaos.⁶⁷ Aside from serving as PM, he is also the head of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), one of the other constituent parties that make up the EPRDF. Prior to becoming PM, Abiy was a senior military intelligence figure, he even participated in the revolutionary struggle against the Derg. Though PMs are nominated by EPRDF central committees, there are very few checks on their authority, both within the party and from external actors. The PM is technically elected by the House of Representatives; however, as further sections will show, the legislature is ineffective and is a lightly veiled extension of the EPRDF. The PM is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and also appoints ministers for the rest of government.⁶⁸

A head of state exists in the form of the president. The current president is Sahle-Work Zewde, Ethiopia's first female president. She is a seasoned diplomat, with experience

⁶⁶ "Abiy Ahmed: The Man Changing Ethiopia," *BBC*, September 14, 2018, sec. Africa, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43567007>.

⁶⁷ "Abiy Ahmed."

⁶⁸ "The Executive—Ethiopia," accessed February 28, 2019, <http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/the-executive>.

in regional and international organizations.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, presidents in Ethiopia are figureheads who have very little responsibility for governance, and are constitutionally subservient to PMs.⁷⁰ Due to practical limitations in the current structure of government, President Zewde is not a significant lever of power. Put simply, since 1991, the PM has been the most important lever of power in the Ethiopian state. PMs owe their legitimacy to the political establishment but have considerable freedom of action and maneuver in all aspects of government.

C. LEGISLATURE AND JUDICIARY

1. Legislature

The Ethiopian parliament is bicameral, with its lower house (House of People's Representatives) directly elected by the population and its upper house (House of Federation) indirectly elected by state assemblies. In terms of responsibility, the lower house passes legislation while the upper house deals with federal issues and interprets the constitution.⁷¹ Both chambers are also technically responsible for electing both the president and the PM. However, the legislature, because of a history of electoral intimidation and dissent of political opposition has merely acted as a rubber stamp of approval for choices of the EPRDF's central committees.

Furthermore, consideration of the status quo for election management in Ethiopia exposes how the legislature fails to restrict executive authority. Parliament could be a more effective curb on EPRDF ambitions, but only after free elections and other state elements are reformed to discard biased appointments.

⁶⁹ "Who Is Sahle-Work Zewde, Ethiopia's First Female President?," Al Jazeera, n.d., <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/sahle-work-zewde-ethiopia-female-president-181027134726828.html>.

⁷⁰ "The President of the Republic—Ethiopia," accessed February 28, 2019, <http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/the-president-of-the-republic>.

⁷¹ "Ethiopia," n.d.

2. Judiciary

Local judicial systems in Ethiopia vary slightly by region, though they largely mirror the federal system. The federal judicial branch consists of the Federal Supreme Court, federal high courts and federal courts of first instance (district courts).⁷² The Federal Supreme Court is chaired by a president and vice president, both of whom are recommended by the PM and approved by the House of People's Representatives.

The Ethiopian judiciary is not a lever of power, as it is currently an extension of the ERPDF power structure. Even a cursory analysis of the above judicial structure establishes how the ERPDF could manipulate the system to ensure party loyalty. Fiseha best explains the limits of the judiciary: "Ethiopia's judiciary has never had a separate institutional existence distinct from the executive. Since the time of the Emperor, then under the Derg, and now in current Federal Ethiopia, each government has set up its own version of the judiciary to suit its own purpose."⁷³

Constitutionally the judiciary is granted limited powers. However, there are two main problems. First, the constitution is typically applied selectively by the ERPDF, especially those rules that concern the separation of powers.⁷⁴ Second, and most surprisingly, the Ethiopian Constitution does not establish judicial constitutional review. Strikingly, this places Ethiopia alongside Cuba, North Korea, and Zimbabwe.⁷⁵ Instead, it vests these powers in the House of Federation, which, as previously discussed, are elected in an unfree way.

⁷² "Ethiopia."

⁷³ Assefa Fiseha, "Separation of Powers and Its Implications for the Judiciary in Ethiopia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (November 2011): 703, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.649576>.

⁷⁴ Fiseha, 706.

⁷⁵ Chi Mgbako et al., "Silencing the Ethiopian Courts: Non-Judicial Constitutional Review and Its Impact on Human Rights," *Fordham International Law Journal* 32, no. 1 (December 2008): 278.

D. ELECTIONS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES

General elections in Ethiopia elect members for the lower house of parliament, the House of People’s Representatives.⁷⁶ Though I have previously highlighted the limitations of parliament, poor performance at the polls would signal EPRDF weakness and could undermine their policies and legitimacy. While the legislature itself is not a lever of power, parliamentary elections accomplish more than filling those legislative seats: they can act as a scorecard for the government. Furthermore, elections are symbolically important, and globally visible. Protests in Ethiopia have often occurred shortly before or immediately after legislative elections. Thus, free and fair elections can be a lever of power in the Ethiopian state. While the majority of elections during the EPRDF’s tenure have been electorally questionable, those elections where the regime has allowed genuine political opposition have threatened their hegemony. Likewise, political opposition parties are unlikely to win at the ballot box, but through protest and violent demonstrations are able to alter government policies. No single political opposition party has been best suited to challenge the EPRDF.

1. Opposition Parties

As of November 2017, there were a staggering 81 opposition parties listed in Ethiopia.⁷⁷ This can be partially attributed to several factors. First, the system of ethno-federalism and the salience of ethnic identities and languages constrains transmission challenges, such as language. Furthermore, the long and repressive history of the EPRDF has created a plethora of disenfranchised groups. The government does not typically prevent the formation of new political parties, but occasionally uses Anti-Terrorism laws to censor their members or otherwise delegitimize them.⁷⁸ Thus party formation is

⁷⁶ Local elections also decide local and district government positions. However, these positions minimally effect the course of national policies.

⁷⁷ “Ethiopia PM Meets Opposition Parties, Promises Fair Elections,” *Reuters*, November 27, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics-idUSKCN1NW0Y1>.

⁷⁸ Hilary Matfess, “Analysis | So Ethiopia’s New Prime Minister Wants Real Democracy? Here’s What Has to Change First.,” *Washington Post*, September 7, 2018, sec. Monkey Cage Analysis <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/07/so-ethiopias-new-prime-minister-wants-real-democracy-heres-what-has-to-change-first/>.

relatively open, but the threat of government harassment has been a hallmark of the EPRDF government.

The greatest electoral threat to the EPRDF is from any coalition that could garner wide enough support to capture constituencies in several regions. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) is the most recent group to attempt such a move. It incorporates a variety of Ethiopian nationalist parties as well as some regional parties.⁷⁹ However, unless a significant faction of the EPRDF, such as the TPLF, defects to such a coalition, these coalitions are unlikely to unseat the EPRDF.

Elections

In many states, elections offer the people an opportunity to provide feedback to the sitting government or to press political leaders to take a state in a new direction. However, in other states elections are little more than affirmation of loyalty to long-seated autocrats. Alternatively, even if elections do not provide a realistic opportunity to unseat an incumbent, they act as a sort of governmental report card and can compel authoritarian regimes to change course. Holding elections, even when they are “choice-free” can benefit the most authoritarian states. Geddes et al. argue that elections can serve several purposes for an autocratic regime. Elections can inform the central party of local surrogate effectiveness, it can help assess the popularity of specific policies, and it can spur intraparty competition.⁸⁰ In Ethiopia, only the 2005 election posed a legitimate threat to EPRDF hegemony. However, the 2020 parliamentary election stands to also challenge the EPRDF.

Some elections in Ethiopia are little more than an opportunity for the EPRDF to reassure Western donor communities while maintaining a tight grip on control of the political sphere. Aalen and Tronvoll suggest that “Ethiopia is seen as a case which demonstrates how elections can be instruments of political control rather than devices of liberalisation.”⁸¹ Certainly there has been variation and evolution in the conduct of, and

⁷⁹ “7 Ethiopian Opposition Parties Formed Coalition,” *Borkena*, n.d., <https://borkena.com/2019/02/28/7-ethiopian-opposition-parties-formed-coalition/>.

⁸⁰ Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 16, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316336182>.

⁸¹ Aalen and Tronvoll, “The End of Democracy?,” 193.

reactions to, elections and opposition parties by the ruling EPRDF. However, broadly speaking, the trend since 1991 has been of the party apparatus consolidating power and minimizing electoral opposition. Aalen and Tronvoll split the period since 1991 into two sections: pre and post the Ethiopian-Eritrean War.

According to Aalen and Tronvoll, the general trend from 1991 until 2000 was the EPRDF allowing elections but carefully controlling their process and their results. Early elections reflected popular approval of the victorious rebel movement, while also demonstrating the extent that ordinary citizens disdained the brutally repressive Derg. Abbink suggests that “there is no doubt that post-1991 Ethiopia saw significant political institution building and that a public ethos of democracy emerged.”⁸² However, he concludes that the dedication to democracy was a case of “rhetoric not backed by practice.”⁸³ To secure favorable results, the party intimidated ‘hostile’ voters while simultaneously eroding the capabilities and outreach of opposition parties.⁸⁴

Before the 2005 parliamentary elections the EPRDF deliberately chose to allow the formation and space for political opposition. However, they never directly engaged with these opposition parties in debate, instead choosing to appear “above the fray.” The abundance of political parties ensured enough in-fighting within the opposition that no single party ever posed a significant threat to the EPRDF. Aalen and Tronvoll argue that “liberalization ahead of the 2005 elections would not entail any real challenge to its position, but instead had calculated that it could keep control in its own hands at the same time as profiting from an enhanced democratic image.”⁸⁵ No matter the rationale, the prospects of a free and fair election in 2005 set the stage for interesting political dynamics.

⁸² J. Abbink, “Discomfiture of Democracy? The 2005 Election Crisis in Ethiopia and Its Aftermath,” *African Affairs* 105, no. 419 (April 1, 2006): 174, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adi122>.

⁸³ Abbink, 174.

⁸⁴ Aalen and Tronvoll, “The End of Democracy?,” 193.

⁸⁵ Aalen and Tronvoll, 196.

2. 2005 Parliamentary Elections

The 2005 elections, and the state's apparent liberalization, were seen as an opportunity for true democratic change. Abbink notes that "the Ethiopian parliamentary elections of May 2005 were the most contested ever."⁸⁶ As other sections of this thesis will highlight, diverse groups regarded the 2005 elections as a rare opportunity to voice dissent or contribute to the social or economic development in Ethiopia. Aalen and Tronvoll outline the widespread optimism about the 2005 elections:

The positive conduct of campaigns and polling initially indicated that a fundamental change was taking place in Ethiopian political culture, because apparently there was a new acceptance for displaying public political dissent—an observation that led some scholars to label the elections as "founding," "formative" and "genuine" for true democracy in Ethiopia.⁸⁷

Abbink argues that the 2005 elections, despite initial optimism, were not the beginning of a shift in EPRDF conduct.⁸⁸ He further cites an empirical analysis that confirms that the electoral process was indeed an improvement, but was largely undermined by "some serious flaws, especially in the counting stage, [that] probably did not reflect the preference of the people under free-and-fair conditions."⁸⁹ Aalen and Tronvoll are even more critical of the elections, calling them "a liberalisation intermezzo in EPRDF's continuous efforts to stay in power."⁹⁰

Considering the political patterns of the EPRDF, regime turnover was impossible. Nonetheless, a strong electoral result could have compelled the regime to offer concessions to the parties that performed best. Indeed, the elections did compel the EPRDF to revitalize its efforts in many rural areas. Aalen and Tronvoll suggest that by grasping the obvious arguments of electoral fraud we might discount the significant efforts the EPRDF takes to

⁸⁶ Abbink, 176.

⁸⁷ Aalen and Tronvoll, "The End of Democracy?," 194.

⁸⁸ Abbink, "Discomfiture of Democracy?," 174.

⁸⁹ Abbink, 193.

⁹⁰ Aalen and Tronvoll, "The End of Democracy?," 194.

build grassroots support.⁹¹ They argue that EPRDF investment in the “kebeles,” or neighborhood administrations, was the key to success as the ballot-box during a 2005 parliamentary election.⁹²

3. EPRDF Lessons Learned from the 2005 Parliamentary Election

The conduct of the EPRDF in the run-up, and immediately after the 2005 elections suggest a miscalculation of popular discontent.⁹³ The state encouraged participation and liberalization without honestly considering the possibility that the will of the people was divergent from their own aspirations. However, the 2005 elections also demonstrate that the EPRDF was competent enough to read the writing on the wall that it was beginning to lose support from former strongholds. Aalen and Tronvoll cite an interview with a member of the TPLF to suggest that the party knew as early as one month prior to the election that they had lost support in rural areas.⁹⁴ The election also shows that the EPRDF was able to rapidly mobilize its base to dramatic effect. Aalen and Tronvoll note “the possible rigging of the count is not the major reason for the maintenance of EPRDF hegemony. The ruling party’s network of control through local administrative structures enabled it to pressurise many rural voters who make up 85 per cent of the Ethiopian population, to vote for it.”⁹⁵ Therefore, the party was able to work quickly to minimize potential damage from an invigorated political opposition. Aalen and Tronvoll are even more adamant about the results of political exclusion: “the current closure of space in the country may thus have a severely destabilising effect in the long run, and may ultimately challenge EPRDF’s ability to remain in power.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Aalen and Tronvoll, 197.

⁹² Aalen and Tronvoll, 197.

⁹³ Aalen and Tronvoll, 197.

⁹⁴ Aalen and Tronvoll, 195.

⁹⁵ Aalen and Tronvoll, 197.

⁹⁶ Aalen and Tronvoll, 194.

4. Post-2005 Elections—Looking at the 2020 Elections

If the 2005 parliamentary elections were a wake-up call, it was one that was received clearly by the EPRDF. In the near-term it is unlikely that the EPRDF will completely forget the disastrous results of liberalizing elections. Abbink notes that the possibility of re-democratization is not impossible, but increasingly unlikely.⁹⁷ However, he also concludes that “most observers... have now come to conclude that, in simple objective terms, the position of the incumbent government is seriously weakened despite its re-establishing some kind of order. There is no going back to things as they were before May 2005.”⁹⁸ These conclusions are complicated by PM Abiy’s political reforms (discussed below). Currently, it seems likely that the EPRDF will allow the same kind of electoral openness that occurred immediately preceding the 2005 elections. This will happen not because the party has forgotten, but because the regime has staked itself on its reform ideology.

E. CIVIL SOCIETY

Protest in Ethiopia is a significant lever of power in Ethiopia. To best demonstrate the nature of this phenomenon I will consider recent Ethiopian protests that have altered national policies and still color political and ideological dialogue.

1. 2015–2018 Protests in Oromia

Oromia is the region home to Ethiopia’s ethnic majority, the Oromos.⁹⁹ Throughout the majority of modern Ethiopian history, this ethnic group has been politically excluded from national politics. Though the exact origin of recent protests in the region is unclear, most analysts point to a combination of low-simmering grievances that finally erupted after the central government proposed an expansion of Addis Ababa’s city limits, at the expense of Oromo farmers. This economic grievance rapidly mutated to include more political demands, which were met by heavy-handed state repression. Other reasons for the

⁹⁷ Abbink, “Discomfiture of Democracy?,” 197.

⁹⁸ Abbink, 198.

⁹⁹ “Ethiopia,” n.d.

protest were maltreatment of ethnic Oromos by the security services and the police, economic disenfranchisement of the Oromo people, and government corruption.¹⁰⁰ By all accounts the protests were widespread, with some commentators even arguing that they became a “popular revolt.”¹⁰¹ The protests eventually spread from the Oromo region to the Amhara region, which is home to Ethiopia’s second largest ethnic group.

These demonstrations challenged the EPRDF’s authority, which contributed to a vicious cycle of greater repression and increased protests. Generally, the strong-armed policies of the central government sparked a legitimate political and security crisis in Ethiopia’s most populated region. Allo also argued that these protests were unique because for the first time the two largest Ethiopian ethnic groups, the Oromos and the Amharas, united against the central government.¹⁰²

The Party’s response was swift and brutal. The EPRDF initially cracked down against protesters as it had done in response to protests during the 2005 parliamentary elections. However, the widespread and continued nature of these protests eventually prompted a crisis within the EPRDF. When regime survival came into question, it became clear that drastic reforms needed to be offered to assuage the displeased protesters. PM Hailemariam Desalegn, who replaced longtime leader Meles Zenawi after his death, was forced to resign as a result of the protests. PM Abiy’s appointment placated most protesters.

2. Implications for the Ethiopian Government

The threat of future protests is a strong influence for PM Abiy to continue with his commitment to reforms. While the current political discourse is nowhere near its apex of 2015 to 2018, the base issues remain unresolved. Therefore, political protests are likely to return and expand if reforms fail to be implemented adequately. An aggravated Tigray

¹⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch | 350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor | New York, and NY 10118-3299 USA | t 1.212.290.4700, “Ethiopian Protests,” Human Rights Watch, n.d., <https://www.hrw.org/tag/ethiopian-protests>.

¹⁰¹ Mastewal Dessalew, “TPLF Hegemony Has Ended, but EPRDF Power Struggle Is Just Beginning,” *Ethiopia Insight* (blog), January 9, 2019, <https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2019/01/09/tplf-hegemony-has-ended-but-eprdf-power-struggle-is-just-beginning/>.

¹⁰² Awol K. Allo, “Why US Must Stop Enabling Ethiopia over Oromo,” CNN, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/09/africa/ethiopia-oromo-protest/index.html>.

could be home to future protests, if the TPLF does indeed depart the EPRDF. However, protests are unlikely to be successful unless groups can band together like the Oromos and Amharas did between 2015 and 2018.

F. MILITARY/SECURITY FORCES

The military in Ethiopia is a significant lever of power. Typically, the PM and the EPRDF central committees have been composed by former military members, especially in the transformative period immediately following the 1991 revolution. Though the importance of the revolutionary cadre is sure to wane as time goes on, the military has enshrined itself in the Ethiopian political scene. Current PM Abiy Ahmed, though too young to have substantially participated in the revolution, owes much of his current political success to his military career.¹⁰³ Abiy spent his formative years in the military institution, in varied capacities. However, the military's repressive tendencies flamed the ethnic tensions that threatened the regime's survival between 2015 and 2018. In response, Abiy began to institute reforms that restrained the security services while simultaneously freeing political prisoners. Thus, politically, PM Abiy has developed a complex relationship with the military establishment. The effect of Abiy's reform efforts on the military's political engagement are likely to be apparent before the 2020 parliamentary elections.

1. Historical Significance

The military is traditionally an important faction within the EPRDF. This importance has varied since PM Meles' 2012 death. The military as an institution is being restrained, mostly because of association with the repression in popular protests in 2016. Terrence Lyons, who studies the political outcome of post-war states, argues that successful rebel movements, especially from protracted rebellions, breed successful political parties. Lyons argues that this phenomenon occurs for two main reasons. First, the cohesion built by military experience is durable, and it can hold together a political party

¹⁰³ "The Rise of Abiy 'Abiyot' Ahmed | The Reporter Ethiopia English," The Reporter Ethiopia, n.d., <http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/article/rise-abiy-abiyot-ahmed>.

long after the insurgency itself. Lyons contends that “wartime conditions encouraged the development of cohesive leadership and models of administration of liberated territory that created models for managing relations with civilian populations.”¹⁰⁴ Second, a successful insurgency provides the subsequent political party a strongly perceived position of legitimacy.¹⁰⁵

The long counter-insurgency against the Derg from 1974 to 1991 provided combined military and political experience for the EPRDF.¹⁰⁶ The party employed political cadre within its military units to both maintain control and reinforce ideological backing.¹⁰⁷ The military, which originated as a largely ethnically Tigrayan entity, adjusted to the EPRDF’s model of Ethnic-Federalism by reducing its proportion of ethnic Tigrayans. Nonetheless, the Tigrayan veterans of the revolutionary struggle filled the majority of the influential positions in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF).

2. Current Composition and Roles

Unlike many militaries in the region, the ENDF maintains a strong capacity for countering external threats. Participation in regional peacekeeping efforts likely satisfy Ethiopian desires for a professionally developed and established military as well as securing Ethiopia’s “neighborhood.” Jane’s Information Group specifically notes the ENDF’s “considerable battlefield experience and reputation for toughness.”¹⁰⁸ The ENDF is a primarily land-focused force, though thawing relations with Eritrea has opened up the possibility of the reemergence of an Ethiopian Navy.¹⁰⁹ Though the rapprochement with Eritrea has reduced the threat of interstate conflict, estimates from Jane’s Defence Budgets

¹⁰⁴ Terrence Lyons, “Victorious Rebels and Postwar Politics,” *Civil Wars* 18, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 171, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2016.1205562>.

¹⁰⁵ Lyons, “The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritarian Politics,” 171.

¹⁰⁶ Lyons, 173.

¹⁰⁷ Lyons, “Victorious Rebels and Postwar Politics,” 167.

¹⁰⁸ “Ethiopia—ARMED FORCES,” Jane’s IHS, n.d., <https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/ethis100-nafr>.

¹⁰⁹ “Ethiopia, France Sign Military, Navy Deal, Turn ‘new Page’ in Ties,” *Reuters*, March 13, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-france-idUSKBN1QT2W3>.

office suggests a continued level of funding for the foreseeable future.¹¹⁰ This apparent level of funding is notable, when one considers the budgetary fallout of the 2000 peace agreement with Eritrea. In the decade following that agreement Ethiopian defense spending was reduced by approximately 50%.¹¹¹ Why the Ethiopian government maintaining its defense budget despite the detente with Eritrea (their largest security threat) is unclear, though it could be a means to placate political unrest from military elite.

Senior ranks in the ENDF are typically skewed to ethnic Tigrayans, which matched the political representation of the EPRDF following the military revolution that ended in 1991. PM Abiy's reforms have altered the composition of senior ranks of the ENDF, mostly to the benefit of ethnic Oromos.¹¹² The reforms in the military sector have thus far focused on reducing corruption while balancing the ethnic composition of the overall forces. The decision to "de-ethnicize" lower ranking positions is counter to the "ethnic stacking" practiced by many other African states. Harkness suggests that so called ethnic stacking is a significant impediment to democratization. Therefore, because the Ethiopian state has deliberately avoided ethnic stacking, it is less likely to experience a successful coup d'état.¹¹³ Furthermore, this decision improved the diversity and recruiting possibilities for the ENDF. Though these reforms are unlikely to drastically reduce overall military capacity, they have prompted response from the disaffected groups (discussed below).

3. Current Challenges Because of the Military

Recent ethnic protests have deteriorated the popular perception of the military and highlight the dangers of brutal military repression. Ethiopian protests form a sort of vicious cycle, as the more protests occur, the more repression is required to maintain control.

¹¹⁰ "Ethiopia—ARMED FORCES."

¹¹¹ "Ethiopia—DEFENCE BUDGET OVERVIEW," Jane's IHS, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/ethis090-nafr>.

¹¹² "Ethiopia—ARMED FORCES."

¹¹³ Kristen A. Harkness, "The Ethnic Army and the State: Explaining Coup Traps and the Difficulties of Democratization in Africa," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 4 (June 2016): 610, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714545332>.

Recent developments in Ethiopia suggest that the executive is more powerful than the military authority. As part of PM Abiy's reform actions, he has ordered the arrest of over sixty defense officials.¹¹⁴ While many have been accused of corruption, AP reporting suggests that others were arrested for the brutal tactics the military used against protesters.¹¹⁵ This crackdown demonstrates that the PM is able to maintain the loyalty of his top generals while managing the reforms necessary for the state apparatus to exist. Not all elements of the military institution have been as easy to reform.

In October of 2018 more than 200 soldiers marched to the PM's office demanding to be heard.¹¹⁶ Though their supposed grievances included wages and military organizations, most commentators argue that the main reason for this mutinous action was related to the substantial military reforms that PM Abiy has undertaken. Jane's argues that the mutiny "indicate [s] deterioration in the rank-and-file's observances of the ENDF's chain of command, as the soldiers appealed directly to the prime minister over their grievances, rather than through official channels."¹¹⁷ PM Abiy's commitment to reforming the military institution, despite the obvious threat to his personal political future, aims to accomplish two goals. First, the PM hopes to reign in the military whose repressive actions eroded popular support for the EPRDF. Second, it supports his efforts to reinvigorate the ethnic Oromos segment of the military institution. Ultimately, this shows that even if PM Abiy is able to reorganize the upper echelons of the military, lower-ranking members still pose a political (or even security) threat to the executive.

¹¹⁴ Elias Meseret, "Ethiopia Arrests 63 Suspected of Rights Abuses, Corruption," AP NEWS, November 12, 2018, <https://apnews.com/09863def4f734e79bbecc6b3b09c8202>.

¹¹⁵ "Ethiopia Arrests Ex-Head of Army Firm in Crackdown on Security...," *Reuters*, November 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics-idUSKCN1NI1AN>.

¹¹⁶ "Short-Lived Mutiny Indicates Deteriorating Ethiopian Military Chain of Command, but Ruling Coalition Will Likely Remain in Power," Jane's IHS, n.d., https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/FG_1156193-JIWK.

¹¹⁷ "Short-Lived Mutiny Indicates Deteriorating Ethiopian Military Chain of Command, but Ruling Coalition Will Likely Remain in Power."

4. What to Expect in the Future

Individual aspects of the military institution and the powerful former military faction of the EPRDF are complex. Some aspects suggest that the state apparatus has benefited from a proud military tradition. However, the further we get from 1991, the less influential the TPLF military bloc will be in the political affairs of Ethiopia. Despite reforms, former revolutionary fighters still comprise the top echelons of the military establishment. As long as this is the case, the executive is somewhat threatened by the military institution. PM Abiy's military heritage is emblematic of the military bloc's power, even if the military itself may be vulnerable to reform. I suspect that minor events such as the 2018 mutiny will continue, especially if PM Abiy continues his reform efforts. Just as the military has an effect on politics, political maneuvering is likely to affect the military. If PM Abiy continues to disenfranchise the TPLF faction in the run-up to the 2020 elections it may further strain the relationship between the executive and military leadership, though this frustration is unlikely to boil over into a true coup-d'état.¹¹⁸

Though not a coup of the central government, a June 2019 regional coup highlights the fragile relationship between the military and the ethno-federal political system. In this regional coup, the Amhara's regional president was killed by a militia allegedly loyal to the region's former security chief, who was recently released from prison as a part of PM Abiy's political reforms.¹¹⁹ The regional coup underscores the important role that the military plays in Ethiopian politics but also demonstrates that ethnic identity, which was a key rationale for the coup, is a significant source of insecurity in Ethiopia. The disenfranchised military factions that have lost out as a result of Abiy's reforms find themselves in an interesting position. Clearly, some have chosen violent action to protest what they see as injustice. Paradoxically, these coups and limited mutinies reinforce the PM's position that the military must be reformed. The Ethiopian Army is traditionally the

¹¹⁸ "Short-Lived Mutiny Indicates Deteriorating Ethiopian Military Chain of Command, but Ruling Coalition Will Likely Remain in Power."

¹¹⁹ David Lewis and Dawit Endeshaw, "'Dozens' Killed in Foiled Ethiopia Coup Attempt: Regional Government," *Reuters*, June 26, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-security-idUSKCN1TR1AL>.

most important branch, due to the nature of conflict in the region. Ethiopia's general officers, especially those with revolutionary roots are the most influential group within the military.

G. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

The Ethiopian economy is remarkably strong, especially considering its regional context. The World Bank suggests the Ethiopian economy's growth was nearly double that of the regional average.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the Ethiopian economy is diverse. However, despite consistent growth, much of the Ethiopian population remains in poverty.¹²¹ World Bank figures estimate GDP at \$783 per capita.¹²²

The Ethiopian economy's strength is evidence that state-directed development can quickly transform a state. However remarkable that growth has been, PM Abiy and others have decided that the public-sector focused development must transition to the private sector.¹²³ This privatization could make Ethiopia more globally competitive and relieve the pressure of limited foreign exchange reserves.¹²⁴ Generally the Ethiopian economy is split between agriculture (35%), industry (25%), and services (40%).¹²⁵ Ethiopia's focus on infrastructure projects, mostly funded by external debt, has created a shift away from agriculture.

The Ethiopian state derives power from its capacity to provide economic development. This singular focus on development, and the formidable results displayed, allows the executive branch unusual leeway in domestic affairs. Nonetheless, the state understands that to achieve its lofty economic goals it must enlist support, both

¹²⁰ "World Bank Ethiopia Overview," Text/HTML, World Bank, n.d., <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>.

¹²¹ "World Bank Ethiopia Overview."

¹²² "World Bank Ethiopia Overview."

¹²³ Witney Schneidman, "Ethiopia: Africa's next Powerhouse?," *Brookings* (blog), March 26, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/03/26/ethiopia-africas-next-powerhouse/>.

¹²⁴ "World Bank Ethiopia Overview."

¹²⁵ "Ethiopia—Market Overview | Export.Gov," Export.gov, n.d., <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Ethiopia-Market-Overview>.

domestically and externally. Therefore, economic entities other than the central government, such as outside investors and international organizations that coordinate development efforts do exercise influence on the executive and the EPRDF. PM Abiy specifically acknowledges the role of economic success to subdue divisive political tensions that could be the greatest threat to regime survival: “When you grow, you don’t have time for these communal issues.”¹²⁶

1. Historical State Actions

To accomplish economic development all previous post-1991 regimes pursued specific programs to increase prosperity for its core constituency, the rural poor. Recent actions by PM Abiy suggests a new economic focus on the disaffected urban populations, which were the heart of the anti-government protests that forced previous PM Hailemariam Desalegn’s resignation.¹²⁷ Notable prior government plans include the 2006 Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and the 2010 Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).¹²⁸ The government is currently on its second iteration of the GTP, GTPII. Though perhaps overly optimistic, results have been noteworthy. Pilling and Barber argue that “for nearly 15 years, the economy had been growing at more than 10 percent annually, according to official statistics. Even if overstated, growth has propelled a nation long associated with famine from an \$8bn minnow at the turn of the century to an \$80bn economy that has surpassed Kenya as the biggest in east Africa.”¹²⁹ Though the state certainly made significant economic strides in the last two decades, many observers

¹²⁶ David Pilling and Lionel Barber, “Ethiopia’s Abiy Ahmed: Africa’s New Talisman,” *Financial Times*, February 21, 2019, 3, <https://www.ft.com/content/abe678b6-346f-11e9-bb0c-42459962a812>.

¹²⁷ Ahmed Soliman and Abel Abate Demissie, “Can Abiy Ahmed Continue to Remodel Ethiopia?,” Chatham House, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/can-abiy-ahmed-continue-remodel-ethiopia>.

¹²⁸ Tewelde Gebresslase Haile, “Comparative Analysis for the SDPRP, PASDEP and GTP of the FDR of Ethiopia,” *Global Journal of Business, Economics and Management* 5, no. 1 (November 14, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjbem.v5i1.61>.

¹²⁹ Pilling and Barber, “Ethiopia’s Abiy Ahmed,” February 21, 2019, 2.

contend that PM Abiy faces an uphill challenge to keep the Ethiopian economy growing.¹³⁰

2. Likely Future Actions/Problems

Though growing the economy is a challenge that requires both domestic and external support, the EPRDF is the gatekeeper who coordinates all efforts. The process was more directly controlled and focused on the public sector during PM Meles Zenawi's tenure.¹³¹ By privatizing some sectors, PM Abiy hopes to regain the substantial economic momentum of the past two decades. However, he does not discard all state intervention in the economic process: "The economy will grow naturally, but you have to lead it in a guided manner."¹³² In practical terms, this is manifested by the PM leading delegations around the world to court international investment and reduce fiscal burdens.¹³³ Abiy has been active with European partners, but has also recently attempted to attract investment from Gulf and Middle East states.¹³⁴ In March 2019, the French government pledged 100 million Euros to improve Ethiopia's economic foothold, meanwhile several French companies, including shipper CMA-CGM, telecom giant Orange, and agri-food group Soufflet have either signed or agreed on deals.¹³⁵ What makes all of these discussions possible is PM Abiy's reformist discourse. French President Emmanuel Macron best describes this sentiment: "We are here in a friendly country where we want to strengthen and build a new page in our common history... Since you became prime minister our vision [of Ethiopia] has profoundly changed."¹³⁶

Though PM Abiy has gone far and wide to garner support is notable, the most important single state for Ethiopia's economic prospects is China. Between 2006 and 2015

¹³⁰ Schneidman, "Ethiopia."

¹³¹ Pilling and Barber, "Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed," February 21, 2019, 2-3.

¹³² Pilling and Barber, 4.

¹³³ Pilling and Barber, 3.

¹³⁴ Pilling and Barber, 3.

¹³⁵ "Ethiopia, France Sign Military, Navy Deal, Turn 'new Page' in Ties."

¹³⁶ "Ethiopia, France Sign Military, Navy Deal, Turn 'new Page' in Ties."

Chinese entities loaned over 13 billion dollars.¹³⁷ In fact, PM Abiy’s impetus to court non-Chinese investors may be because of “Beijing’s waning enthusiasm for the region’s fastest-growing economy.”¹³⁸ According to Aglionby and Feng, the reason for Chinese reticence is mostly economic, both an acute concern for dwindling foreign exchange reserves and Ethiopia’s debt distress, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has labeled as “high.”¹³⁹

3. Overall Considerations

International economic actors are unlikely to challenge the EPRDF or executive for mainly economic reasons. Primarily, the status quo of a strong central state has managed to protect foreign investments from the turmoil that is endemic to the region. Nonetheless, the EPRDF has pinned its success on maintaining the steady economic growth that was common for the last 15 years. Therefore, the executive will be likely to keep historically profitable sectors of the economy booming while still searching for external investors to expand future growth opportunities. Domestic industry, in particular the construction sector, has been a key element of economic growth. Thus, this sector is likely to be favored and have a greater capability to exert influence over the executive. Though the state has a robust economic team that makes policy, the executive has acted and is likely to continue to act as the central decision-making node.

H. THE ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA

The scale of the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States is immense. Lyons estimates that there are 73,000 Ethiopian-born residents living around the United States.¹⁴⁰ When one includes U.S.-born children of these Ethiopian-born residents, the diaspora population rises to almost 500,000.¹⁴¹ The diaspora is a pervasive player on the political

¹³⁷ Emily Feng and John Aglionby, “China Scales Back Investment in Ethiopia,” *Financial Times*, June 3, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/06b69c2e-63e9-11e8-90c2-9563a0613e56>.

¹³⁸ Feng and Aglionby.

¹³⁹ Feng and Aglionby.

¹⁴⁰ Lyons, “Diaspora Lobbying and Ethiopian Politics,” 166.

¹⁴¹ Lyons, 166.

sphere in Ethiopia. Many of the characteristics that propelled many Ethiopians to leave also makes them more likely to attempt to influence domestic Ethiopian politics. However, in their current form they are unlikely to strongly affect executive or EPRDF use of power.

Certainly with a group this large there is considerable variation in political participation and political goals. Lyons concedes that “most diaspora organizations and media focus on cultural, professional, and economic self-help initiatives rather than partisan politics.”¹⁴² To Lyons and Sheffer, that the majority of the Ethiopian diaspora is “conflict-generated” is a critical distinction.¹⁴³ To Lyons “conflict-generated” means the groups are “characterized by traumatic memories and important symbolic ties to the homeland.”¹⁴⁴ According to Lyons, the effect of this heritage is an all-or-nothing hard line approach. When politically active, the Ethiopian diaspora employs a variety of tactics to achieve its goals. The challenge for such a large diaspora community is developing a cohesive set of goals, a factor complicated by Ethiopia’s multi-ethnic composition.

During the run-up and aftermath of the 2005 contested parliamentary elections the role of the diaspora was accentuated. In this period, the diaspora acted as a conduit for activities that ordinary Ethiopians could not achieve. For instance, the diaspora raised funds, hosted political debates, provided forums for party building, participated in policy discussions with U.S.G. funded think-tanks, and even directly lobbied the U.S.G. The results of all these efforts have been limited, particularly when the diaspora tries to affect U.S. policy, especially after the brutal crackdown following the 2005 elections. Lyons succinctly notes that “opportunities for the diaspora to influence politics in Ethiopia by lobbying the U.S.G. or by directly engaging in politics as it did in 2005 have closed.”¹⁴⁵ Their other efforts, such as fund raising and an avenue for political discussion, is the diaspora’s greatest opportunity.

¹⁴² Lyons, 167.

¹⁴³ Gabriel Sheffer, “The Effects of Diasporas’ Nature, Types, and Goals on Hostland Foreign Policies,” in *Diaspora Lobbies and the US Government: Convergence and Divergence in Making Foreign Policy*, n.d.; Lyons, “Diaspora Lobbying and Ethiopian Politics.”

¹⁴⁴ Lyons, 164.

¹⁴⁵ Lyons, 179–80.

The Ethiopian government has an office specifically concerned with diaspora affairs, which demonstrates the state's understanding of their potential importance. Nonetheless, present decision making is seldom influenced by diaspora opinions. One area for future attention is the potential for the diaspora's influence to magnify in the run-up to the scheduled 2020 parliamentary elections.

I. MEDIA

The media is not currently a lever of power that can constrain executive or EPRDF political supremacy. Though some of the factors that support this conclusion relate to deliberate actions by the ruling party, some other factors relate to the cultural limitations and institutional dynamics such as limited funding, education, and access for independent journalists. Overall, harsh repression of critical voices and slanted “development journalism” characterized the EPRDF media approach for almost thirty years. Now, new voices for reform are being given an opportunity to thrive, in no small part, as an effort to attract international investment and improve the lives of ordinary Ethiopians. While media currently does not act as a “Fourth Estate” that constrains executive power in Ethiopia, empowered independent journalists could start to change the status quo. These voices will have to contend with a culture of respect for authority, limited resources, access, and reach.

1. Structure of the Press in Ethiopia

A central factor to the ineffectiveness of Ethiopian media, whether public or private, is the literacy rate: 36%.¹⁴⁶ There are seven newspapers in Ethiopia, two of which are state-owned.¹⁴⁷ Newspaper readership is estimated at an abysmal .465%, and much of that is concentrated in the capital, Addis Ababa.¹⁴⁸ Internet penetration stands somewhat better, at 15.4%, but as shown below there are severe restrictions on critical information

¹⁴⁶ Melisew Dejene, “The Role of the Private Print Media in Post-Socialist Ethiopia: Views from Government, Opposition Politicians, Academics and the Private Press,” *Global Media Journal* 7, no. 2 (n.d.): 143.

¹⁴⁷ “Ethiopia Profile,” *BBC*, September 23, 2018, sec. Africa, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13349401>.

¹⁴⁸ “The Fading Press | The Reporter Ethiopia English,” The Reporter Ethiopia, n.d., <http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/content/fading-press>.

passing through that medium.¹⁴⁹ Radio and television are therefore the most important media platforms. As of September 2018, there are four television stations, one of which is state-owned. There are five main radio stations, most of which are connected either officially or unofficially to the state media apparatus.¹⁵⁰ Unfortunately no data exists on viewership or listenership totals.

2. **EPRDF Media Policy**

The EPRDF employs multiple tactics to shape the media sphere in Ethiopia. By maintaining a monopoly on power in the country since 1991 the EPRDF has enjoyed free reign to develop a state media that is tightly controlled by the party while creating conditions inhospitable for critical media actors to engage.

There are three main themes of EPRDF public media policy. First, the state attempts to monopolize communications to its core constituency: the rural masses. These efforts focus on the radio medium. Second, the state attempts to improve elements of professional public journalism only in areas where this professionalism will not erode support or expose government shortcomings. Third, the state uses legal mechanisms to constrain critical private journalism.

The first strategy, motivating the masses, remains critical to government communications policy. Likewise, the EPRDF still considers radio an essential medium to stay relevant to its mainly rural constituency. Other than Radio Ethiopia, the state broadcaster, the EPRDF manages several radio stations through their affiliate organizations in the respective regions.¹⁵¹ The state is unflinching in its quest to dominate the radio medium. It grants licenses sparingly, and even then, favors companies that employ journalists with pro-government stances.¹⁵² The EPRDF also cracked down on many

¹⁴⁹ “Freedom of the Net Ethiopia 2018,” Report, Freedom House, November 1, 2018, 1, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/ethiopia>.

¹⁵⁰ “Ethiopia Profile.”

¹⁵¹ Nicole Stremlau, “The Press and the Political Restructuring of Ethiopia,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (November 2011): 721, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642526>.

¹⁵² Stremlau, 721.

forms of critical media. One of the stations targeted was the U.S.G.-funded Voice of America (VoA) Amharic language station. According to Reuters its services were jammed for at least three weeks.¹⁵³ Despite these efforts, Stremlau argues that “international broadcasters such as [VOA] from the United States and Germany’s Deutsche Welle remain major competitors, despite attempts to curtail reception.”¹⁵⁴ Dugo suggests that because the state is able to effectively jam the well-resourced VoA services we should understand the regime is even better suited to block poorly-resourced domestic stations.¹⁵⁵ Altogether, the EPRDF considers competition radio stations a significant threat, and state radio stations as their main connection to the citizenry.

The second strategy focuses on public print media, which directly targets the political elite.¹⁵⁶ The tenor of public media in Ethiopia is best described as “development journalism.” This means that the regime hopes to frame state journalism in terms of economic development. Skjerdal suggests that in Ethiopian development journalism “the journalist is seen as an active change agent, rather than as a passive reporter. The aim is to bring about ‘rapid national change’. In stimulating development, the journalist is requested to focus on positive success stories. Critical coverage is less emphasized.”¹⁵⁷ The state’s application of this policy creates a barrier for professional state journalists. In addition, it deteriorates the critical thinking abilities of the Ethiopian population.

The third strategy of the Ethiopian state to control the official narrative is through repression and intimidation. Though the Ethiopian constitution promises freedom of the press, this has never been realized. Especially following the reality check of an

¹⁵³ “VOA Starts Ethiopia Satellite Service after Jamming,” *Reuters*, March 23, 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-voa-idUSLDE62M1DJ20100323>; Stremlau, “The Press and the Political Restructuring of Ethiopia,” 721; Habtamu Dugo, “Violence Against Free Media and Knowledge Dissemination in Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Mechanisms of Restrictions on Information Flow,” *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 9, no. 10 (December 2016): 400.

¹⁵⁴ Stremlau, “The Press and the Political Restructuring of Ethiopia,” 721.

¹⁵⁵ Dugo, “Violence Against Free Media and Knowledge Dissemination in Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Mechanisms of Restrictions on Information Flow,” 400.

¹⁵⁶ Stremlau,

¹⁵⁷ Terje S. Skjerdal, “Development Journalism Revived: The Case of Ethiopia,” *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 32, no. 2 (July 2011): 66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2011.578879>.

unexpectedly contested 2005 parliamentary election, the Ethiopian government tightened its legal framework to repress dissent in the media. Two main legal frameworks have been most exploited to restrict critical press. The first is a 2005 criminal code that specifies restrictions on communication deemed “obscene,” even including criticism of government officials.¹⁵⁸ The second framework is a 2009 antiterrorism law. The above laws allowed the state an unprecedented freedom of action to restrict critical journalism. The laws allow state surveillance of media and opposition, prohibits Skype and other Voice over Internet Protocol systems, and denies citizens and organizations the ability to circumvent the state-owned and operated telecommunication service Ethio Telecom.

Laws and taxation have also allowed the state to eliminate all but the state-managed printing press, the Berhanena Selam Printing Press. This forces publishers to relinquish their works to state review. Therefore, the state retains the capability to directly censor critical works. The most criticized application of these new laws is the state’s detention of journalists. The 2017 Freedom House Freedom of the Press report notes that Ethiopia is the “fifth-worst jailer of journalists in the world and the second worst in sub-Saharan Africa.”¹⁵⁹

New media is also restricted. In 2006 the regime blocked several websites and even entirely blocked cellular short message service (SMS).¹⁶⁰ The regime has continued this practice during popular protests as recently as February 2018. A part of what allows the regime to pursue these controversial measures is the implicit cooperation from their technology partners.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ “Freedom of the Press in Ethiopia 2017,” Report, Freedom House, April 27, 2017, 2, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/ethiopia>.

¹⁵⁹ “Freedom of the Press in Ethiopia 2017,” 1.

¹⁶⁰ I. Gagliardone, “New Media and the Developmental State in Ethiopia,” *African Affairs* 113, no. 451 (April 1, 2014): 294, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adu017>.

¹⁶¹ “Freedom of the Net Ethiopia 2018.”

3. Organizational and Economic Limitations

Organizational and economic factors also contribute to an unmotivated and uncritical Ethiopian media. Dirbaba and O'Donnell highlight a “lack of newsroom resources, controls imposed by media managers and editors, unhelpful editorial policies and work procedures, censorship, and poor pay and conditions.”¹⁶² Some of these dynamics exist absent government interference, but they support government objectives of curbed criticism. Low pay and poor working conditions further reduce incentives for a robust media system. This dynamic is especially true for jobs in independent media, where a greater personal risk is compounded by low financial and professional rewards. A Freedom House Report on Internet Freedom suggests that economic challenges limit the viability of independent online media. They suggest that “fear of government pressure dissuades local businesses from advertising with politically critical websites.”¹⁶³

4. What to Expect in the Future

All eyes should be on Ethiopian media in the run-up and during the 2020 parliamentary elections. PM Abiy Ahmed, a noted reformist, has called for and implemented drastic reforms, especially with regard to the imprisonment and torture of journalists. A CNN report claims that Ethiopia no longer has any journalists in prison, a stark contrast to the situation in 2016.¹⁶⁴ This change is promising for the future of the journalistic profession and for improved access to reliable information for Ethiopian citizens. The real test of Ethiopia's new-found commitment to an open media will be how freely licenses for radio are distributed. Based on similar relaxations of controls on internet blogging I suspect that the state will slowly accept outside voices over Ethiopian airwaves. The press is unlikely to act as a lever of power toward executive power in the

¹⁶² Birhanu Dirbaba and Penny O'Donnell, “Silent Censor: The Influence of Authoritarian Family Socialisation on Professional Journalism in Ethiopia,” *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 17, no. 7 (October 2016): 924, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884915585961>.

¹⁶³ “Freedom of the Net Ethiopia 2018,” 7.

¹⁶⁴ Farai Sevenzo, “Abiy Ahmed: The Ethiopian Prime Minister Who Captured Africa's Imagination,” CNN, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/12/31/africa/abiy-ahmed-ethiopia-2018-analysis-intl/index.html>.

near future, though overall political reform efforts by PM Abiy may increase its importance in the long term.

J. CONCLUSIONS

Ethiopia, as demonstrated by the unprecedented rapid appointment of PM Abiy, is at a political crossroads. Though the government is large and well connected with most elements of Ethiopian society, the very political reforms necessary to ensure regime survival have caused deep divisions within the once-invulnerable EPRDF. Institutional inertia will still favor the status quo of a powerful executive and wide-reaching political power. Nonetheless, the military elite, with their close revolutionary ties to the EPRDF, will continue to exert influence on the PM.

Outside of the government, upcoming 2020 parliamentary elections will be a true test of PM Abiy's control of the government. Though favorable results for the EPRDF are all but guaranteed, there is a significant chance of a resurgence of popular protest if ethnic groups perceive their relevance fading. Critical voices already question the long-term feasibility of Ethiopia's brand of Ethnic Federalism. The subtle progress made toward an independent media and revitalized political opposition could be eliminated if PM Abiy senses serious party vulnerability. In all likelihood, despite mounting ethnic tensions and occasional violent outbursts, the EPRDF will weather this storm as it has numerous others during its almost 30-year history.

This domestic context indicates that the United States and China should anticipate a potential decentralization of power in accordance with PM Abiy's reforms. This decentralization presents challenges and opportunities. China's focus on the executive has yet to limit its influence effectiveness, but failure to adapt to Ethiopian changes could disadvantage China's influence in the long run. Meanwhile, the United States is well situated to capitalize on potential decentralization because of its wide-ranging influence activities. However, at this critical juncture, the United States would be best served if it continually monitors and adapts to the dynamic political environment. The following chapter considers U.S. influence activities and policy objectives in Ethiopia.

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III. UNITED STATES' PURSUIT OF INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA

A. INTRODUCTION

The United States has and will continue to attempt to influence states, including Ethiopia, to better achieve its own objectives. In some cases, exerting such influence may be seen as infringing on sovereignty, while on other occasions it can be seen as a welcome bilateral action. For the United States, navigating this delicate political maneuver is particularly challenging with Ethiopia. Ethiopia's self-perception as a high-capacity government, built on its unique imperial history (largely unblemished by colonial interference) makes sovereignty a core feature of government. Furtado and Smith best describe the nature of interstate relationships with Ethiopia: "One of the implications [of Ethiopia's unique history of strong independent governance] is that the act of entering into relations with aid donors tended to be seen by Ethiopians at the time, and still is, as a meeting of equals."¹⁶⁵ While this may frustrate the United States, one should note that all states hoping to influence Ethiopia must contend with the same hesitancy on the part of the Ethiopian government.

The nature of the Ethiopian government and people, which occasionally is an impediment to cooperation, also provides the United States unique opportunities. The Ethiopian government, at times brutal, repressive, and autocratic, is also singularly focused on its vision for the development.¹⁶⁶ The Ethiopian elite, unlike many of its neighbors, is less interested in personal financial gain compared to delivering political promises based on development.¹⁶⁷ Be it in terms of security, economic development, or healthcare, the United States must focus and act on areas of mutual interest to best influence the Ethiopian government. While cooperation outside these parameters is possible, and in some cases

¹⁶⁵ Xavier Furtado and W. James Smith, "Ethiopia: Retaining Sovereignty in Aid Relations," in *The Politics of Aid: African Strategies for Dealing with Donors*, ed. Lindsay Whitfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 131.

¹⁶⁶ Furtado and Smith, 144.

¹⁶⁷ Furtado and Smith, 144.

necessary (where values do not intersect) such interaction is likely to generate resistance based on perceptions of impinged sovereignty.

In terms of my overall analytic approach, this chapter reinforces earlier discussions on state interests. Here, both American and Ethiopian interests are delineated. I also incorporate the third and fourth analytical components: “influence activities” and “influence analysis.” This chapter identifies American interests in Ethiopia and assesses U.S.G. influence in that country. Three main influence considered are: security cooperation, economic cooperation, and humanitarian assistance. I will note where the United States is and is not successful, while providing explanations and suggestions where U.S. influence could be improved.

Overall, the United States has successfully engaged with Ethiopia, despite Ethiopian esteem for sovereignty. The United States has remained a consistent partner with the Ethiopians, maintaining a diverse portfolio of influence activities. U.S. influence activities have consistently engaged Ethiopian political leadership, the military, and health sectors. The United States has been particularly effective at highlighting the benefits of security sector partnership, working closely with the Ethiopian military to achieve mutual foreign policy objectives in the region. Furthermore, the United States’ diversified portfolio means it could quickly adjust to the shifting power dynamics identified in Chapter II.

B. U.S. INTERESTS IN ETHIOPIA—OVERVIEW

The United States has four key interests in Ethiopia: state stability, human development, a strong economy, and promoting democracy and human rights. A stable Ethiopian state is the primary U.S. interest. The United States has looked upon Ethiopia as a stalwart ally in a region that is generally characterized by fragile states, especially Ethiopia’s neighbors Somalia, South Sudan, and recently Sudan. Through prioritizing security and stability, the United States has at times deemphasized governance and rule of law, with specific reference to human rights violations committed by the EPRDF. The Senate confirmation testimonies of the last three U.S. Ambassadors to Ethiopia have each underscored the security partnership between the states, yet acknowledge regime

shortcomings with regard to human rights and democratization.¹⁶⁸ The strategic location of Ethiopia and the state's willingness and ability to act as a regional CT partner and regional leader in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are consistently highlighted as successes by U.S. Ambassador-designees. These activities align with the United States' broader military goals in the HOA, including minimizing the capabilities of violent extremist organizations and developing security in Somalia, preferably under the auspices of local states.¹⁶⁹ Sustaining the 2018 momentum regarding the détente of the persistent Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict is a core security interest of the United States.

The United States also maintains an interest in the human development, both in economic and health terms, of the Ethiopian people. Current U.S. Ambassador Michael Raynor's testimony emphasizes that U.S. interest in human development (specifically health, education, food security and economic growth) is neatly aligned with that of the Ethiopian government.¹⁷⁰ To the United States, investments in human development will pay long-term dividends in stability and countering the currents that could undermine regional security. In financial terms, human development projects are the most expensive set of U.S. activities in Ethiopia but are consistent with overall U.S. budgetary programming in Africa.

Third, the United States would prefer a robust Ethiopian economy. The United States recognizes the exceptional recent growth of the Ethiopian economy vis-à-vis its neighbors and the entire East African region. The U.S.–Ethiopian economic relationship can best be described as skewed toward Ethiopian exports in primary commodities, especially coffee.¹⁷¹ However, PM Abiy's commitment to economic privatization has

¹⁶⁸ Haslach, Statement of Patricia M. Haslach Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Booth, Statement of Donald E Booth Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Raynor, Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas D. Waldhauser, "United States Africa Command Posture Statement" (2019), 11.

¹⁷⁰ Raynor, Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

¹⁷¹ "Ethiopia—Agoa.Info—African Growth and Opportunity Act," accessed June 16, 2019, <https://agoa.info/profiles/ethiopia.html>.

sparked renewed U.S. interest in investment in Ethiopia.¹⁷² The Ethiopian regime also emphasizes the importance of the economy, considering economic growth the panacea that could cure all other domestic woes.¹⁷³

Finally, the United States is interested in promoting democracy and good governance in Ethiopia. As previously mentioned, this interest waxes and wanes depending on regional circumstances, especially security. However, widespread political protests within Ethiopia prove that governance issues unresolved threaten the security and stability so highly valued by the United States. Ambassador Raynor concedes that the reasons for political protests in Ethiopia are complicated but suggests that they are “rooted in popular desires for greater political freedom and civil liberties.”¹⁷⁴ Thus, we should expect a renewed U.S. emphasis on democratization in Ethiopia.

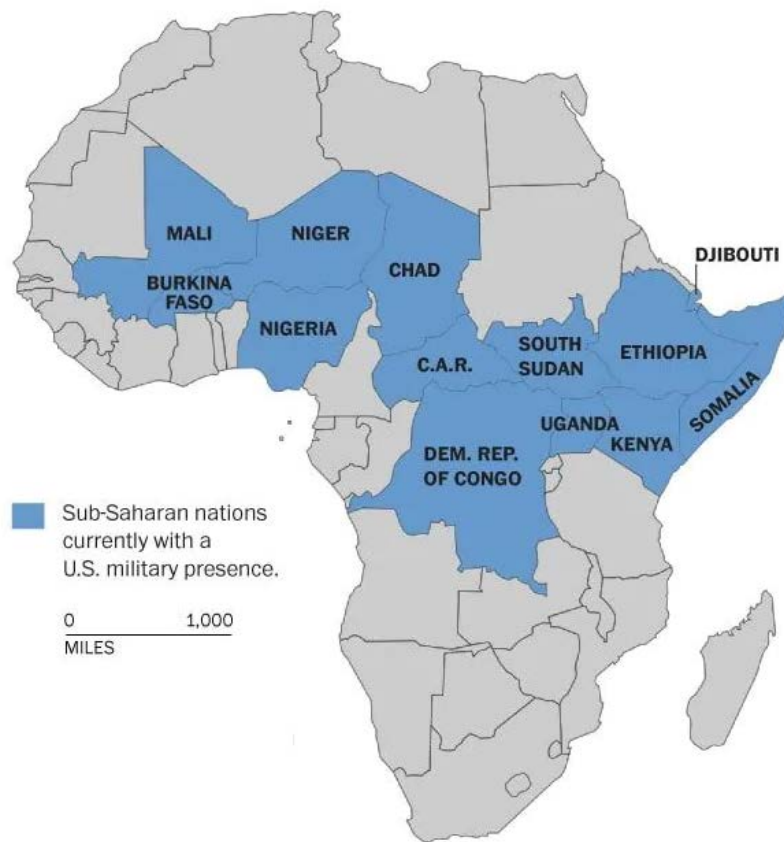
Ethiopia peacefully transitioning toward a more representative democratic government while maintaining both external and internal stability is the best-case scenario for the United States. Ideally, Ethiopia would continue as an active Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Troop Contributing Country (TCC). While human development is an important standalone goal of U.S. policy, the U.S.G. mostly sees underdevelopment as an impediment to stability and security. Therefore, the U.S.G. hopes to mitigate underdevelopment a means to an end of a more stable partner. Economically, the United States would like to capitalize and allow American companies to compete as the Ethiopian government pushes toward privatization. The DoD’s best-case scenario in Ethiopia would include improved Ethiopian capacity to handle security concerns in the HOA. Furthermore, the DoD would prefer unfettered access to Ethiopia for transient military personnel and equipment. Access and overflight are especially important in Ethiopia because of the geographic position of the only permanent U.S. military facility in Africa, Camp

¹⁷² “U.S. State Department Hosts ‘Ethiopia Partnership Forum,’” U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, May 17, 2019, <https://et.usembassy.gov/u-s-state-department-hosts-ethiopia-partnership-forum/>.

¹⁷³ David Pilling and Lionel Barber, “Ethiopia’s Abiy Ahmed: Africa’s New Talisman,” *FT.Com*; *London*, February 21, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2184329011/citation/B720978AF1544F7PQ/1>.

¹⁷⁴ Raynor, Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Lemmonier in Djibouti. Figure 2 demonstrates that Ethiopia lies in a critical position between U.S. forces in Djibouti and the primary areas of interest for the DoD in Africa. The United States clearly maintains a security presence in countries other than those depicted in Figure 2; however, the highlighted states are currently or recently involved with American CT objectives. Based on this context, expanded access to Ethiopian airfields for U.S. aircraft would be tremendously valuable, due to the dearth of reliable locations elsewhere near Camp Lemmonier.



Adam Taylor and Laris Karklis/The Washington Post

Figure 2. Sub-Saharan African Nations with U.S. Military Presence¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Source: Adam Taylor, “MAP: The U.S. Military Currently Has Troops in These African Countries,” *Washington Post*, May 21, 2014, sec. WorldViews, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/05/21/map-the-u-s-currently-has-troops-in-these-african-countries/>.

C. INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

The following sections will address specific actions that the U.S.G. has pursued in Ethiopia. Part 1 will consider U.S. influence activities in the Security Sector. Part 2 will consider U.S. influence activities in the healthcare sector. Part 3 considers U.S. influence activities pertaining to economic cooperation and assistance.

1. Security Sector Assistance

U.S. Security Sector Assistance (SSA) programs vary by funding and execution authority. The system is complex but can be condensed to consider two broad SSA types. Though they both might be managed within a country by the same personnel (typically DoD), they derive their authorities from separate legal authorities: Title 10 and Title 22.¹⁷⁶ Title 10 programs are funded and administered by the DoD. Conversely, Title 22 programs are funded and administered by the DoS, but often executed by DoD personnel.¹⁷⁷ Prior to 2001 almost all SSA was administered through Title 22 authorities. This distinction is important because specific programs under one authority may be subject to additional legal scrutiny. The scope of Title 10 programs greatly increased worldwide under the auspices of the Bush administration's CT paradigm, but this transformation is especially evident in Africa.

a. Activities

The United States primarily uses reward and expert power in its efforts to influence Ethiopia in the security arena. Varying levels of aid since 2001 constitute the “carrots” that the United States thinks will motivate Ethiopia to pursue policies that support U.S. efforts. Despite Ethiopia's proud military heritage, it understands that it can learn from and emulate U.S. CT efforts. The United States desires that Ethiopia act as a competent regional military force that can “police its neighborhood.”

¹⁷⁶ Referring to Sections of the aggregated US Legal Code

¹⁷⁷ *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 39.0 (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio: Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies, 2019), 1–1.

The U.S.G. engages in many types of SSA in Ethiopia. Figure 3 breaks down different programs' funding levels. The Section 1206 Train and Equip Authority is the United States' most expensive single program in the entire portfolio. This program exists to support training Ethiopian forces to field a more effective and professional fighting force but, as a Title 10 mechanism, can be used in a fairly versatile fashion. One of the specific goals for 1206 funding is likely to be the development of ENDF capacity to field forces for United Nations (UN) PKOs.

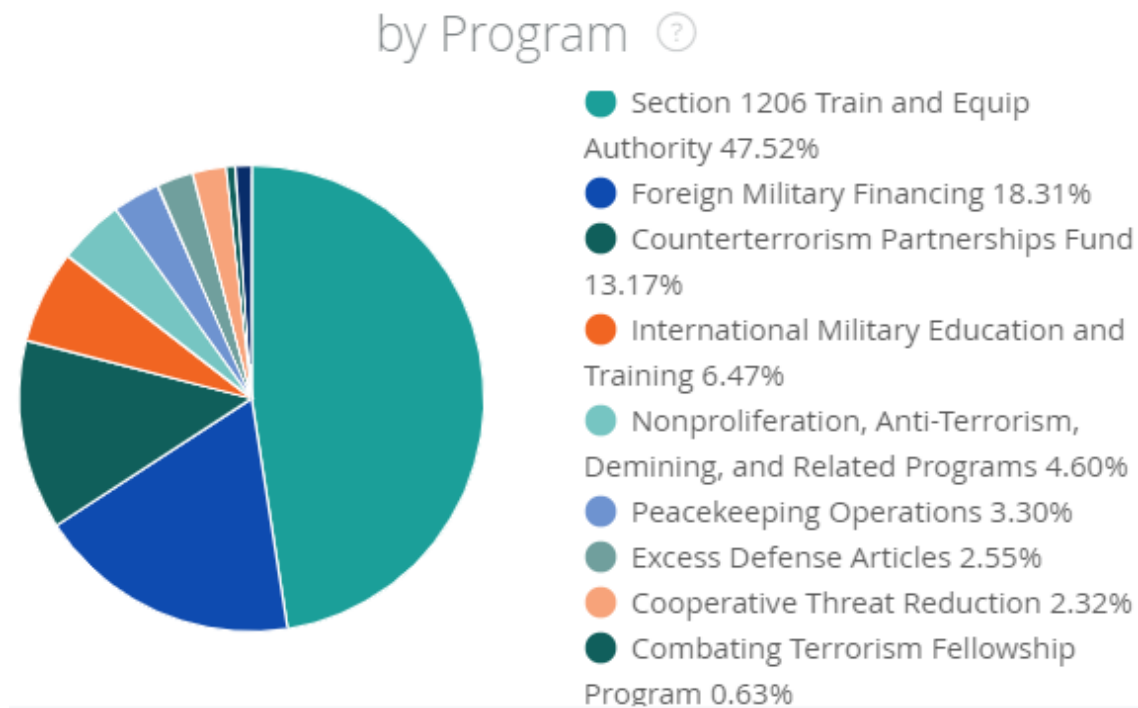


Figure 3. Overall U.S. Security Aid to Ethiopia from 2001–2018¹⁷⁸

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is the next-largest program by percentage of funding. This is a Title 22 mechanism in which the United States pays for American equipment for a foreign military. The financial levels of FMF remained fairly constant between 2008 and 2016. The high cost of FMF programs propel this category above less expensive, but more common programs that focus on individual training. FMF, the U.S.’

¹⁷⁸ Source: “Data | Security Assistance Monitor,” accessed February 14, 2019, <https://securityassistance.org/data/program/military/Ethiopia/2001/2019/all/Global/>.

primary method for transferring arms to Ethiopia has only supplied 2.8% of Ethiopia's arms since 2001. In absolute terms, this has amounted to \$46M of arms sold by the United States.¹⁷⁹ Instead, Ethiopia has largely imported arms from former Communist states, most notably Russia, which is typical in Africa. Although Ethiopia appears to have ceased purchasing Russian arms in 2010, it continues to purchase weapons of similar type and origin from China and Ukraine.¹⁸⁰

The third largest bilateral SSA program by funding level is International Military Education and Training (IMET). This Title 22 program is one of the mainstays of U.S. SSA. IMET programs typically train individuals from the target nation in various U.S. schools and centers.¹⁸¹ IMET itself is not one school or training program; rather it is the mechanism that allows the U.S.G. to organize and pay for foreign military students to train and learn in the United States. The United States hosts Ethiopian military students in a variety of global programs through IMET provisions. The funding for IMET programs, though reductions were threatened, has remained mostly stable in recent years. IMET and other individual training programs work toward creating stability and security in the long-term. Therefore, they are consistent with overall influence activities promoted by the U.S.G.. These education programs typically emphasize professionalism and create long-term relationships between Ethiopians and Americans.

The United States also provides SSA to Ethiopia via other mechanisms. In addition to the typical bilateral programs mentioned above, Ethiopia receives funding from a DoS initiative called the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism. This initiative, administered by the DoS' Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, focuses on security sector institutions with East African states. This Title 22 program is therefore consistent with the United States' overall vision and objectives for Ethiopia. Another source of security assistance is the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), under the authority of Title 10. The purpose of CTFP is to train partner security

¹⁷⁹ "SIPRI Arms Export Data," accessed February 14, 2019, http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_values.php.

¹⁸⁰ "SIPRI Arms Export Data."

¹⁸¹ *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 1–4.

and defense officials (typically mid and senior level) by organizing and funding various engagement events related to CT.¹⁸² Another program, unfortunately titled the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) is tied more directly to concrete capabilities and operations against terrorists. This program was proposed and implemented by the Obama administration.¹⁸³ However, domestic U.S. opposition, especially with regard to CTPF usage to support Syrian opposition, has prompted the Trump administration to make significant cuts to the program.

Another program listed in Figure 3 is Excess Defense Articles. This program is contained within the broader Foreign Military Sales (FMS) umbrella but is handled uniquely. Unlike a typical Title 22 FMS program, where a recipient country selects and buys (with their own money) specific military materiel or training, the Excess Defense Articles provisions allows the United States to transfer out-of-service equipment to approved recipients. This equipment is either sold at a reduced rate or is transferred via a grant, on a case-by-case basis.¹⁸⁴ A recent transfer of several C-130E transport aircraft to the Ethiopian Air Force was accomplished using the “Excess Defense Articles” provision. The United States justified this transfer by emphasizing the aircraft would be used to resupply and transport its regional PKOs and assist in humanitarian operations.¹⁸⁵ Although this program is typically funded by the recipient country, the United States can, in certain circumstances, fully fund the transfer. This is likely what occurred in the Ethiopian C-130E program.

¹⁸² “Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) | The Official Home of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency,” Defense Security Cooperation Agency, n.d., <https://www.dsca.mil/programs/combating-terrorism-fellowship-program>.

¹⁸³ Joe Gould, “Trump Budget Proposal Slashes Obama’s Counterterror Partnerships Fund,” Defense News, August 8, 2017, <https://www.defense news.com/congress/2017/05/23/trump-budget-proposal-slashes-obama-s-counterterror-partnerships-fund/>.

¹⁸⁴ David Adams et al., *The Management of Security Assistance*, ed. Gregory W. Sutton, 27th ed. (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH: Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, 2007), 1–7.

¹⁸⁵ “US Government Delivers C-130 Aircraft to Ethiopia,” United States Africa Command, June 14, 2018, <https://www.africom.mil/media-room/article/30912/u-s-government-delivers-c-130-aircraft-to-ethiopia>.

Overall, between 2001 and 2018, almost two-thirds of U.S. SSA funding originated from the DoD.¹⁸⁶ This distribution is consistent with the general trend of increased funding of the DoD at the expense of the DoS. However, this shift also signals a change of responsibility. While programs are still nominally coordinated with the DoS, their oversight capacity is diminished. Such a shift might advance regional DoD objectives at the expense of the U.S. DoS' country plans for Ethiopia.

Since 2001 the United States has spent over \$142M on various security assistance items and programs in Ethiopia.¹⁸⁷ However, the United States spends nearly five times as much on neighboring Kenya, and almost ten times as much in Somalia.¹⁸⁸ It stands to reason that funding a formerly failed state, such as Somalia, is expensive; therefore, that explains that state's level of funding. It is less clear why the United States spends less in Ethiopia than Kenya, when both have played an active role in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other regional PKOs.

According to Colonel T. Bruce Sweeney, former U.S. Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to Ethiopia, two factors contribute to the minimal weapons transfers from the United States. First, the United States does not supply more weapons because of the Ethiopian regime's human rights issues. Second, Ethiopia is interested in maintaining internal materiel compatibility.¹⁸⁹ This factor is particularly critical for the expensive and technologically complex military equipment that the United States is known to provide, such as aircraft and armored vehicles. To the Ethiopian government, replacing some of its Soviet-style weaponry with U.S. or NATO-specification weapons would create operability challenges that are greater than the perceived benefit of this new equipment.¹⁹⁰ This suggests that although the United States is interested in training Ethiopian forces, at the moment it seems apathetic in becoming the primary arms supplier to the Ethiopian

¹⁸⁶ "Data | Security Assistance Monitor."

¹⁸⁷ "Data | Security Assistance Monitor."

¹⁸⁸ "Data | Security Assistance Monitor."

¹⁸⁹ Colonel T. Bruce Sweeney, Interview with Colonel Bruce Sweeney, March 7, 2019.

¹⁹⁰ Sweeney.

government. Furthermore, Ethiopians seem uninterested in acquiring American equipment. Another possible reason for American hesitation, though less compelling, is that lobbying by the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States limits U.S.G. support to an allegedly authoritarian regime.¹⁹¹

The C-130E program provides an interesting window into U.S. influence activities in SSA. First, the aircraft in question are not the cutting-edge equipment more typical of U.S. FMS. Instead, these are older and cheaper aircraft, but can provide the Ethiopian Air Force a capability they currently lack. Furthermore, if used properly, these aircraft can facilitate improved capability in regional PKOs, which is one of the United States' overall goals in Ethiopia. The aircraft type's explicit "transport" type also makes the program less likely to be used inappropriately. The C-130E transfer will require considerable resources and effort from the ENDF to successfully maintain, which is a potential program pitfall. It is unclear that this program has compelled the Ethiopian regime to change its behavior, though the necessary training that would make these aircraft usable could be conditionally tied to regime or military behavior. This provides a future opportunity for the United States to turn this program into additional access. Additional training and maintenance equipment could provide justification for greater U.S. access in Ethiopia.

SSA programs in Ethiopia were cut after 2016, likely due to the Obama and Trump administrations' disapproval of the regime's human rights violations and general authoritarian tendencies. These cuts' likely effects on Ethiopian state stability are ambiguous. However, Watts finds that decreasing FMF-that is reducing "free" arms transfers-can yield a more stable state, although he acknowledges that this result is not as statistically significant as the relationship between military education programs and stability.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Lyons, "Diaspora Lobbying and Ethiopian Politics."

¹⁹² Stephen Watts, "Identifying and Mitigating Risks in Security Sector Assistance for Africa's Fragile States," Product Page, 2015, 12, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR808.html.

b. Influence Analysis

The United States enjoys a relatively high return on security sector investment in Ethiopia. It modestly contributes to a professional military in areas where both states can find cooperation beneficial. While this relationship does not grant the United States *cart blanche* to dictate policy priorities or accommodate large numbers of American troops, it is nonetheless a valuable investment.

The United States' SSA influence activities in Ethiopia have had varying levels of success. The United States can and does find areas to influence in the security sector. The United States is most successful when it exploits significant overlap in interests with the Ethiopian government. Such overlap is most obvious in both nations' interest to eliminate CT threats (Al Shabaab), and other activities which generally stabilize the Horn of Africa (HOA).

One area of mutual interest was Ethiopian participation in UN PKOs. Ethiopia has mobilized 18,322 forces since 2001.¹⁹³ In 2013, Ethiopia was the 4th largest contributor (by number of troops) worldwide, and the greatest in Africa.¹⁹⁴ In 2018, Ethiopia became the world's greatest UN TCC.¹⁹⁵ While many of these forces have been used in close proximity to Ethiopia, several have been deployed further afield, including in Liberia, Central African Republic, and Cote D'Ivoire. In the same period (2001–2018) Ethiopia has participated in six UN PKOs, frequently manning several simultaneously.¹⁹⁶ U.S. SSA has improved the Ethiopian military's capabilities in these PKOs. For example, Colonel Sweeney identified a DoD program to equip the ENDF with radios allowed Ethiopian ground forces and increased capability for command and control in Somalia.¹⁹⁷ Such a

¹⁹³ "Data," Vito D'Orazio, accessed February 14, 2019, <http://www.vitodorazio.com/data.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Scott Firsing, "Thinking through the Role of Africa's Militaries in Peacekeeping: The Cases of Nigeria, Ethiopia and Rwanda," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 21, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2014.894685>.

¹⁹⁵ Tomas F Husted et al., "Sub-Saharan Africa: Key Issues and U.S. Engagement," n.d., 8.

¹⁹⁶ "Data."

¹⁹⁷ Sweeney, Interview with Colonel Bruce Sweeney.

project demonstrates an ideal situation for the United States. It was able to jointly identify a need, provide for that need, and improve the partner effectiveness.

It is nonetheless difficult to determine whether Ethiopian participation is due to United States influence, Ethiopian internal policy, or some combination of each. Though convenient to suggest that Ethiopian participation was a direct result of U.S. influence, the evidence is uncertain. It is most likely that Ethiopia had its own political and security justifications for participating in these PKOs. As Firsing suggests “developing countries often contribute troops owing to the financial opportunity this activity presents for the country, the military institution and the individual troops.”¹⁹⁸ Ethiopia also understood domestic stability benefits by participating in AMISOM. Zimmerman suggests that Ethiopians are still involved in Somalia because they see it as bringing order to their neighborhood.¹⁹⁹

If stability in Somalia is one of the ultimate goals of U.S. influence, however, the results are concerning. Before participating under the auspices of AMISOM, Ethiopia was largely successful in the unilateral military defeat of the Union of Islamic Courts, the predecessors to Al Shabaab.²⁰⁰ Though this unilateral effort was militarily effective, it was unsustainable in the long-run, based on the need for much greater investment and involvement than Ethiopia alone could provide. Likely because of this realization, Ethiopians joined the broader efforts of AMISOM.²⁰¹ The effectiveness of UN PKOs in Somalia has come into question, and some cite Ethiopian participation as a destabilizing factor. Most troubling, Ethiopian forces have been accused of perpetrating war crimes.²⁰² Zimmerman and others have highlighted this argument, articulating that some Ethiopian

¹⁹⁸ Firsing, “Thinking through the Role of Africa’s Militaries in Peacekeeping,” 47.

¹⁹⁹ Katherine Zimmerman et al., “US Counterterrorism Objectives in Somalia: Is Mission Failure Likely?,” *Critical Threats*, March 1, 2017, <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/us-counterterrorism-objectives-in-somalia-is-mission-failure-likely>.

²⁰⁰ “Air Raid Kills Somali Militants,” *BBC*, May 1, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7376760.stm>.

²⁰¹ Zimmerman et al., “US Counterterrorism Objectives in Somalia.”

²⁰² Jeffrey Gettleman, “Somalia and Ethiopia Are Accused of War Crimes,” *The New York Times*, August 13, 2007, sec. Africa, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/13/world/africa/13cnd-somalia.html>.

forces are perceived as occupiers, rather than liberators.²⁰³ Furthermore, in 2016, a large contingent of Ethiopian forces were withdrawn to deal with domestic unrest in Oromia.²⁰⁴ Zimmerman contends that this troop withdrawal has afforded Al Shabaab to recapture lost territory.²⁰⁵ Thus, even when the United States may consider Ethiopian participation a success of its own, its participation should not be taken for granted, and the conduct of its forces should be a persistent cause of concern.

The United States has also been less successful in compelling ENDF forces to behave professionally. This misbehavior had ramifications in Somalia and during Ethiopian domestic protests in the Oromo and Amhara regions. In the short term, U.S.G. security policy has done little to help or hinder this situation. It is unclear whether IMET or any other long running professionalization programs did anything to prevent the security services and military from violently cracking down on protesters. According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), relatively low cost IMET programs can generate significant results. They argue “having a core group of well-trained, professional leaders with firsthand knowledge of America will make a difference in winning access and influence for our diplomatic and military representatives.”²⁰⁶ IMET garnered consistent funding in Ethiopia until 2018, where it was increased by 45%.²⁰⁷ Increased funding is likely a result of PM Abiy’s appointment and commitment to reform.

Karlin suggests that, to bolster U.S. influence and to improve the effectiveness of target military, the United States take a more active role in personnel decisions with a target military.²⁰⁸ She notes that in historical cases where this happened, SSA efforts were bolstered. Due to the delicate bilateral relationship between the United States and Ethiopia,

²⁰³ “A Loveless Liaison,” *The Economist*, April 3, 2008, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2008/04/03/a-loveless-liaison>.

²⁰⁴ Zimmerman et al., “US Counterterrorism Objectives in Somalia.”

²⁰⁵ Zimmerman et al.

²⁰⁶ *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 1–4.

²⁰⁷ “Data | Security Assistance Monitor.”

²⁰⁸ Mara E. Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*, First edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

however, DoD should be cognizant of perceptions of overreach. Ethiopian military reforms initiated by PM Abiy afford the United States an opportunity to delicately broach this subject. The United States should see reform as an opportunity to encourage the ENDF to pursue best policies while eliminating adverse practices.

U.S. SSA may have been more successful in preventing terrorism in Ethiopia. Although terrorism plagues neighboring states, Ethiopia has suffered very few large-scale terrorist attacks on its soil. Ethiopia routinely shares CT information with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), including access to evidence and witnesses.²⁰⁹ Thus, the U.S.G. seems more capable of engendering positive relationships on specific tasks, such as CT, while less likely to convince an authoritarian regime to democratize.

The Ethiopian state is on-track to claw-back from the internal security and stability setbacks associated with political upheaval in the Oromo and Amhara regions. In the short-term U.S.G. security policy has done little to help or hinder this situation. It is unclear whether IMET or any other long running professionalization programs did anything to prevent the security services and military from violently cracking down on protesters. According to a report by Stephen Watts (RAND), decreasing education and training programs such as IMET may decrease state stability.²¹⁰ Decreasing funding for IMET programs, though a political option, threatens the long-term U.S.–Ethiopia bilateral relationship and should be avoided. Colonel Sweeney emphasized that the Ethiopian government has not reacted negatively to the reductions in other SSA programs.²¹¹

One of the United States’ main security objectives in the region, having African nations supporting African PKOs, has been achieved through Ethiopian participation. However, the United States seeks to motivate Ethiopia to participate in such operations, and therefore security cooperation hopes to improve PKO effectiveness, and continue Ethiopian participation, regardless of initial motivation. Just for United Nations (UN)

²⁰⁹ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2017,” accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2017/>.

²¹⁰ Watts, “Identifying and Mitigating Risks in Security Sector Assistance for Africa’s Fragile States,” 12.

²¹¹ Sweeney, Interview with Colonel Bruce Sweeney.

support, Ethiopia willingly supporting many PKOs directly bolsters AFRICOM strategic objectives of African nations providing the security solutions for African problems. Furthermore, participation in PKOs for participation's sake is not the ultimate goal of AFRICOM's "African Solutions to African Problems".

One area of mutual interest was Ethiopian participation in UN PKOs. Furthermore, the United States identified areas where they could mitigate some of the challenges faced by the Ethiopian military.

Access is another essential goal of U.S. influence in Ethiopia. Colonel Sweeney notes that Ethiopia has a history of limiting U.S. personnel or aircraft to stage out of Ethiopia.²¹² He notes that Ethiopia's concern with sovereignty and proud national tradition drive these actions, and the United States should not expect unlimited access to airfields or other staging areas. Rather, the United States should anticipate limited access, either by time or by geographic area, in Ethiopia. U.S. influence have improved these conditions, but policymakers should expect middling progress in this endeavor.

Ethiopia's sovereignty concerns are not limited to the United States. All foreign governments face the same skepticism and difficulties with regard to expanding general cooperation. The United States is most likely to enjoy better access when it can demonstrate the mutual benefits of cooperation.²¹³ The C-130E program may afford the United States a renewed opportunity to broaden American access in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, progress is likely to be slow in regard to U.S. access.

c. Future SSA Funding Challenges and Opportunities

Several whole-of-government factors may modify the U.S.—Ethiopia security relationship. The first is the DoD's increased funding under the Trump Administration. The second is the Administration's proposed DoS budget cuts.²¹⁴ The third is the paradigm

²¹² Sweeney.

²¹³ Sweeney.

²¹⁴ Robbie Gramer and Colum Lynch, "Despite Pompeo's Call for 'Swagger,' Trump Slashes Diplomatic Budget," *Foreign Policy*, n.d., <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/11/trump-federal-budget-steep-cuts-to-state-department-foreign-aid-development-diplomacy-pompeo/>.

shift away from CT and toward Great Power Competition. The first two factors are subject to Congressional approval. Historical precedent indicates that the DOS will not lose funding. In both 2018 and 2019 Congress maintained a constant DoS budget despite significant cuts proposed by the administration.²¹⁵ The DoD, however, is likely to continue to receive elevated funding, though some domestic projects may undercut some of the available funds for its international programs. The paradigm shift away from CT has yet to be quantified in terms of allocations for programs, DoD or otherwise.²¹⁶

Meanwhile, Ethiopia's recent reforms afford an opportunity for increased activities and funding between the DoD and the Ethiopian military. The situation in Ethiopia is unique and dynamic, but another case study is illustrative of improved possibilities. The overall bilateral relationship between the United States and Tunisia drastically improved following the Arab Spring in 2011, particularly in the security realm. The Obama administration's 2015 declaration of Tunisia as a "Major Non-NATO Ally" paved the way for increased training opportunities, equipment loans, and financial assistance for American defense articles.²¹⁷ Additionally, United States military assistance to Tunisia doubled since the Arab Spring in 2011.²¹⁸ The implications for PM Abiy's Ethiopia are striking. The government could stand to receive a considerable amount of equipment and training if it so desires. However, Ethiopia and Tunisia are very different states, contending with a different set of domestic and regional challenges. Ethiopia is less likely to request the same military equipment that Tunisia received, for reasons mentioned below. For reasons of sovereignty and pride it is also less likely to accept elevated levels of American

²¹⁵ Lynch.

²¹⁶ Except with CTPF, but this cut is likely just a reorganization of funds, not a true reduction in CT funding.

²¹⁷ "Designation of Tunisia as a Major Non-NATO Ally," U.S. Department of State, n.d., //2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/07/244811.htm.

²¹⁸ "US Increases Military Aid to Tunisia," *The Economist*, n.d., <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1772256561&Country=Tunisia&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Political+stability&cu=1&pid=70776391&oid=70776391>; Sam Kimball, "Tunisia's Getting More Guns Than Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, n.d., <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/21/tunisia-getting-more-guns-than-democracy/>.

forces for unspecified amounts of time.²¹⁹ Thus, the United States should act cautiously, by only funding and equipping programs that Ethiopia and the United States both deem important in improving security and stability.

Despite low per-program costs, the long gap between execution and pay-out might make IMET programs a target for budget cuts. However, based on the United States' long-term goals and objectives in Ethiopia, including access, overflight and state stability, IMET funding should be safeguarded. The ENDF highly values the strategic partnership and training opportunities that IMET programs create. These programs are particularly effective because they come during a period of Security Sector Reform. Thus, the United States should capitalize on Ethiopian desire and low relative costs and expand its IMET programs in Ethiopia.

2. Medical and Humanitarian Assistance or Strategic Health Diplomacy

Another key component of the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia is medical and humanitarian assistance. The United States sees HIV/AIDS and other medical crises as threats to security and stability, and inhibitors of overall development. In this realm, like in the security sector, the United States hopes to improve Ethiopian capacity, with an underlying assumption that improvements in the humanitarian sector will yield improvements in overall stability. Participating in many of these programs can also enhance the quality of life for many individuals.

Some could argue that medical and humanitarian aid could be considered a reward or gift, acting as a form of leverage for other policy areas. However, reducing humanitarian and medical aid for misbehavior in other sectors, such as governance, is likely to precipitate two outcomes, neither of which are in the United States' interest. First, and most importantly, reducing aid as a penalty for noncompliance is likely to decrease stability and

²¹⁹ Sweeney, Interview with Colonel Bruce Sweeney.

quality of life for many Ethiopians. As long-term stability and security is the United States' primary goal in Ethiopia, the implications of cutting humanitarian and medical aid are obvious. Second, as discussed by Raven, such retaliatory action would color subsequent relations between the two parties.²²⁰ Ethiopia is likely to perceive the action as coercion and may resent overall U.S. influence.²²¹

a. Key Influence Activities

In a comparison of all donor countries, Ethiopia receives its greatest bilateral development aid from the United States.²²² The health sector is the most significant sector of that overall aid allotment. In absolute terms, the United States has provided Ethiopia with over \$3 billion over the last fifteen years for HIV/AIDS projects and approximately \$200 million per year for other healthcare projects. The U.S.G. values Strategic Health Diplomacy (SHD) as a means to improve lives around the world while still “advancing [U.S.] national interests, making other countries more stable and the U.S. more secure.”²²³ Therefore, SHD, while very much focused on tangible health improvements, should be justifiable to U.S. taxpayers. Aside from the pure healthcare goals, SHD aims to create goodwill, improve conditions for trade, and develop more resilient states built on stable foundations.²²⁴ The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is one funding stream that the United States uses to resource specific SHD projects.

SHD programs the U.S.G. has pursued in Ethiopia include healthcare infrastructure, training programs, and exchanges. One example of an infrastructure project is the

²²⁰ Raven, “The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence,” 9.

²²¹ Raven, 8.

²²² “Remarks: Ambassador Raynor Highlights U.S. Company's Interest in Ethiopia's Health Sector,” U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, April 4, 2019, <https://et.usembassy.gov/21405/>.

²²³ Tom Daschle and Bill Frist, “The Case for Strategic Health Diplomacy: A Study of PEPFAR,” November 6, 2015, 7, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/library/the-case-for-strategic-health-diplomacy-a-study-of-pepfar/>.

²²⁴ Daschle and Frist, 7.

Shashemene Outpatient Center.²²⁵ This \$3.6 million project was funded by PEPFAR and is a rare example of a U.S. infrastructure project in Ethiopia. Most U.S. SHD investment finances training, medicine, and other less-visible projects.²²⁶ These efforts contribute to human development, which in turn creates a more stable and secure Ethiopia.

The United States' SHD in Ethiopia involves multiple power mechanisms, including informational and expert power. As previously discussed, there is also an element of reward power associated with these projects. However, since the reaction to cancelling programs altogether would be extremely damaging, the United States is now effectively locked in to providing them. Thus, in reality, the programs may not function as a reward.

b. Influence Analysis

The United States sees improvements in SHD as a means of improving the security and stability of Ethiopia. Health challenges tend to be one of Ethiopia's most significant impediments toward achieving higher levels of human development. U.S. influence activities are providing improved quality of life for many Ethiopians and are therefore contributing toward a more stable future. According to USAID, since 1990, U.S.G. SHD has saved millions of lives, reduced child mortality by 66%, and significantly reduced the chance of death from malaria, tuberculosis, or HIV.²²⁷ The required financial investment is extreme, but so are the results. Nonetheless, U.S. influence is less obvious with this investment. Although, in general terms, U.S. SHD has improved living conditions, it is difficult to concretely link specific U.S. measures to measurable nation-wide outcomes. As a result, the U.S.G. derives less prestige from these investments.

²²⁵ "Remarks by Ambassador Michael Raynor at the Outpatient Department Inauguration," U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, March 4, 2019, <https://et.usembassy.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-michael-raynor-at-the-outpatient-department-inauguration/>.

²²⁶ "Remarks."

²²⁷ "USAID Ethiopia Country Profile" (USAID, 2018), https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Ethiopia-Country-Profile_Oct-2018.pdf.

In addition, not all of the U.S.G. efforts in SHD are considered positive. Lee and Izama conclude that “while PEPFAR has been relatively successful in saving the lives of HIV/AIDS patients, our findings suggest that it may have done so at the cost of weakening the capacity of the state health system.”²²⁸ Thus, PEPFAR typically produces favorable health outcomes but any targeted aid program can weaken indigenous state institutions that would normally deal with the problem that aid is attempting to fix. Given the U.S. objective of enhancing Ethiopian capacity, this program’s potential to deteriorate local capacity is concerning. However, the U.S. emphasis on developing Ethiopian healthcare professionals shows its commitment to addressing this shortfall.²²⁹ The United States should continue to prioritize increasing Ethiopian capacity in this sector.

Daschle and Frist demonstrate that PEPFAR also improves the United States’ political capital with ordinary Ethiopians. Figure 4 shows changes in public opinion of the United States between 2007 and 2011. PEPFAR states consistently hold the United States in a higher regard than the global average. Public opinion can be a useful facilitator of American influence activities. Positive perceptions about the United States allow the U.S.G. more options in future interactions and allow the U.S.G. more flexibility in pursuing new or different influence activities in Ethiopia. Daschle and Frist also underscore further PEPFAR successes, notably worker output, human development, and recipient countries’ Sustainable Economic Development Assessment scores.²³⁰ The decline in HIV/AIDS prevalence in militaries is an even more concrete success of PEPFAR, and this directly enhances DoD efforts to build partner capacity.²³¹

²²⁸ Melissa M. Lee and Melina Platas Izama, “Aid Externalities: Evidence from PEPFAR in Africa,” *World Development* 67 (March 2015): 67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.10.001>.

²²⁹ “U.S. Investments Improve Skills of Nearly 50,000 Ethiopian Health Workers,” U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, April 4, 2019, <https://et.usembassy.gov/u-s-investments-improve-skills-of-nearly-50000-ethiopian-health-workers/>.

²³⁰ Daschle and Frist, “The Case for Strategic Health Diplomacy,” 15–16.

²³¹ Daschle and Frist, 17.

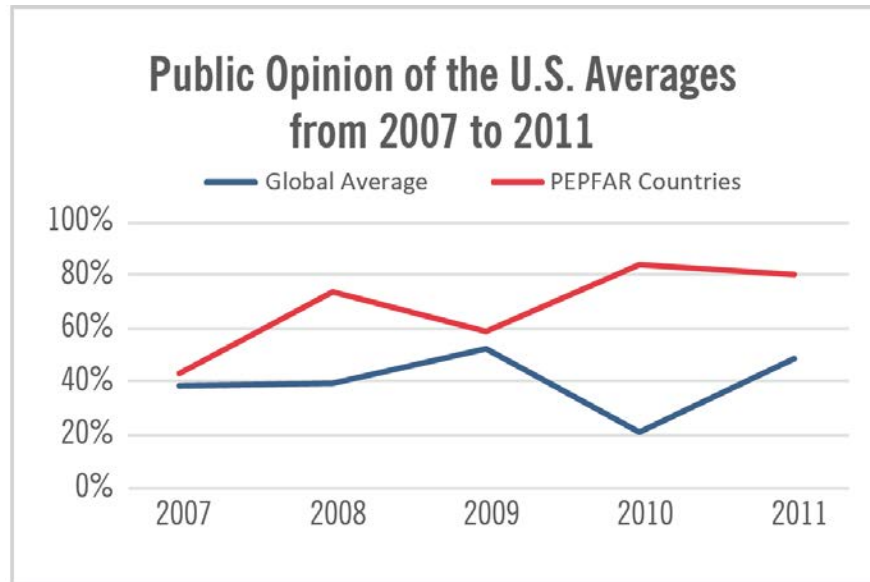


Figure 4. Public Opinion of U.S. in PEPFAR Countries²³²

Previous and current decreases in PEPFAR funding threaten the success of these programs, both in medical terms and in terms of perceptions of the United States. According to Health Policy Plus, which is associated with both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and PEPFAR, reduced funding threatens to reverse the substantial progress in preventing and treating HIV/AIDS.²³³ As long as the U.S.G. values long-term stability in Ethiopia, it should continue to prioritize PEPFAR programs and avoid the Trump administration’s proposed cuts.

Overall, the effects of U.S. SHD influence activities have been mixed. As previously stated, the medical realities are stark: PEPFAR works to reduce HIV/AIDS deaths and improves the lives of those living with the disease. In terms of engendering goodwill among everyday Ethiopians, the program has achieved moderate success. As noted above, the projects improve public attitudes towards the United States. However, they do not garner the same domestic and international media attention as other prestige

²³² Source: Daschle and Frist, 13.

²³³ “Ethiopia’s Emerging HIV Financing Gap: The Need for Increased Domestic Funding” (Health Policy Plus, November 2018), 2–3, http://www.healthpolicyplus.com/ns/pubs/10265-10479_HIVFinancingEthiopia.pdf.

projects (including infrastructure projects completed by the People’s Republic of China). The United States should continue its efforts in SHD but attempt to better “advertise” its SHD-related accomplishments, so that their effectiveness is recognized locally. The U.S.G. must also do a better job of expressing the benefits of SHD to the American taxpayer, in order to maintain the considerable momentum and results that its programs have created.

3. Economic Influence

The Ethiopian economy is a great source of the state’s prestige but is also a great cause for domestic concern. As discussed in Chapter II, the EPRDF stakes its legitimacy on providing strong economic opportunities for its citizens. GDP growth is a metric of particular interest to the state. The United States also is interested in Ethiopia maintaining and growing a robust economy, for the purpose of averting instability and insecurity. The United States sees economic development as an opportunity to reduce the stressors which contribute to long term domestic unrest.

Most of the U.S.–Ethiopia economic relationship is between private American companies and their Ethiopian private counterparts or state- owned enterprises (SOEs). The United States’ lack of SOEs makes the relationship somewhat incongruent. Thus, because the U.S.G. has few formal channels to direct its own companies’ business dealings, it is necessarily limited in the way it can influence overall American investment in Ethiopia. However, because the regime has staked its success on economic development, the United States can apply some pressure to the EPRDF.

a. Influence Activities

Historically, the Ethiopian economy has been concentrated in the public sector.²³⁴ However, PM Abiy has promoted a shift toward privatization. This adjustment affords economic opportunities and incentives for both the United States and Ethiopia. PM Abiy has actively courted foreign investment in Ethiopian business.²³⁵ The United States has

²³⁴ Jon Harald Lie and Berouk Mesfin, “Ethiopia: A Political Economy Analysis Ethiopia,” June 20, 2018, 23.

²³⁵ “Ethiopia, France Sign Military, Navy Deal, Turn ‘new Page’ in Ties.”

approached privatization in Ethiopia vigorously, as evidenced by programs such as the Ethiopia Partnerships Forum. This forum, held in May 2019, brought together 400 Ethiopian business leaders with U.S.G. representatives to discuss bilateral trade and other economic issues.²³⁶ Thus, while the U.S.G. is unable to force its private businesses to invest in Ethiopia, it is attempting to encourage their participation.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is another avenue for the United States to encourage American investment in Ethiopia. The MCC is an officially funded program that administers U.S. foreign assistance to select states. The MCC's unique approach emphasizes rigorous and transparent country selection criteria, assessing a broad range of policies.²³⁷ The MCC publishes scorecards that measure both economic policy as well as governance and other social indicators. Some examples of the economic indicators that the MCC consider are "Land Rights and Access" and "Inflation."²³⁸ Ethiopia currently meets 8 of the required 20 criteria to be eligible for an MCC compact (agreement).²³⁹

For states that do not meet the criteria, the MCC can implement an MCC "Threshold Program" that is designed to provide assistance so a state can comply with more selection indicators.²⁴⁰ On March 1, 2019, the MCC announced Ethiopia's eligibility for the Threshold Program.²⁴¹ Ambassador Raynor noted that "this opportunity would not be possible without the concrete steps the Ethiopian government has already taken toward democratic and economic reform. It's a strong expression of the United States' confidence in the Ethiopian government's determination to fully achieve its reform agenda, and of our

²³⁶ "U.S. State Department Hosts 'Ethiopia Partnership Forum.'"

²³⁷ "About MCC," Millennium Challenge Corporation, n.d., <https://www.mcc.gov/about>.

²³⁸ "MCC Who We Fund Ethiopia Scorecard," Millennium Challenge Corporation, n.d., <https://www.mcc.gov/who-we-fund/scorecard/fy-2019/ET>.

²³⁹ "MCC Who We Fund Ethiopia Scorecard."

²⁴⁰ "Threshold Program," Millennium Challenge Corporation, n.d., <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/story/story-cbj-fy2015-threshold-program>.

²⁴¹ "Millennium Challenge Corporation Visits Ethiopia to Discuss New Program to Advance Economic Growth," U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, March 1, 2019, <https://et.usembassy.gov/millennium-challenge-corporation-visits-ethiopia-to-discuss-new-program-to-advance-economic-growth/>.

commitment to support the Ethiopian government in ensuring the reforms are successful and sustainable.”²⁴²

The Threshold Plan creates further opportunities for the U.S.G. to influence Ethiopia. Specifically, the MCC can stipulate economic liberalization conditions, which the U.S.G. sees as a mutually beneficial opportunity. Ethiopia has traditionally been reluctant to allow donors to drive policy changes; it can and does limit direct donor influence on policy-making by restricting access to certain economic areas.²⁴³ The Ethiopian government imposes these limits both to reduce outside influence on policy changes and also to motivate foreign governments to contribute with direct budget support, rather than to simply finance foreign activities. The United States could leverage Threshold Plan participation upon access to key policy-making venues.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is another U.S. economic influence activity in Ethiopia. AGOA grants certain African countries preferential trade agreements in certain duty-free sectors, in order to stimulate their economies.²⁴⁴ Not all African states are admitted into the program and the United States uses the program to reward states with which the United States maintains a positive relationship. Ethiopia’s participation in the AGOA program indicates its willingness to “play by American rules.” The United States could threaten access to AGOA as a way to obtain leverage. However, as with other development-focused projects, the greatest impacts of suspending the program would be felt by middle- or lower-class Ethiopians.

b. Influence Analysis

Despite the limited range of economic influence activities available to it, the U.S.G. has been moderately successful in shaping Ethiopia’s economic sector. The U.S.G. believes that economic liberalization, which its activities support, provides Ethiopians the greatest

²⁴² “Millennium Challenge Corporation Visits Ethiopia to Discuss New Program to Advance Economic Growth.”

²⁴³ Furtado and Smith, “Ethiopia: Retaining Sovereignty in Aid Relations,” 148.

²⁴⁴ “About the African Growth and Opportunity Act,” African Growth and Opportunity Act, n.d., <https://agoa.info/about-agoa.html>.

opportunity for economic development. However, U.S. influence activities have done little outside the economic sector to grant the United States greater leverage in other sectors. Had the Ethiopian government chosen to eschew American economic involvement in favor of other investors (such as China), U.S. economic influence could be considered a failure. The United States can consider its efforts a moderate success because the Ethiopian government has expressed continued interest in economic programs tied to conditionality. While the progress needed to attain an MCC compact would be concrete proof that U.S. influence activities are successful, Ethiopia's acceptance in the threshold program demonstrates an important first step.

It is unlikely, however, that Ethiopia's commitment to market privatization was only a result of U.S. influence. It is also unlikely that the United States' economic influence activities played a significant role in PM Abiy's reforms, targeting corruption and violent repression. The end result is nonetheless in-line with the U.S.G.'s overall interest in Ethiopian economic prosperity as a driver of general stability. By eagerly showing interest in Ethiopian businesses, the United States is poised to remain a robust trade partner with Ethiopia. The Ethiopian economy's recent signs of deceleration are concerning, and it is unclear if Ethiopia can regain the momentum its growth trajectory. To prevent a slowdown, the U.S.G. must continue programs that provide incentives to Ethiopian economic sectors, such as AGOA and the MCC.

Even if it maintains these programs, the United States' economic activities are unlikely to generate a large amount of influence in Ethiopia because it is not one of the country's biggest trading partners. In terms of both imports and exports, China is far more active than any other country in Ethiopia.²⁴⁵ Realistically, the U.S.G. is unwilling and unable to change this status quo. Nonetheless, the United States can and should maintain influence in shaping Ethiopia's shift toward a private market. Promoting U.S. businesses' investment in this market will widen the connections between the states, thus strengthening

²⁴⁵ "OEC - Ethiopia (ETH) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners," The Observatory of Economic Complexity, n.d., <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/eth/>.

the bilateral relationship. Disengaging stands to economically and politically benefit the U.S.' strategic competitors.

D. CONCLUSION

The U.S.G. hopes to improve state security and stability in Ethiopia. This foundational objective colors the many activities the United States pursues. While PM Abiy's reforms have complicated this objective, they also provide an increasing opportunity for American involvement. The United States successfully capitalizes on a shared security vision. Interests are aligned, allowing the United States flexibility and leverage. SSA fosters ties between the United States and the Ethiopian executive and military. This connection has served the interests of both states and provided the central connection for the past 15 years.

Other U.S. influence activities develop influence in Ethiopia. Health sector cooperation, dependent on expert power, broadens American influence activities outside of the traditional executive and military realms. However, influence activities in the economic sector are limited and stagnant. The United States' limited toolkit in the economic sector, especially when compared to China, decreases American influence. The next chapter will consider China's interests and activities in Ethiopia. Though their greatest connection depends on shared economic interest, new programs indicate China's aspirations for greater overall influence.

Ethiopian agency limits foreign influence. Meanwhile, shifting Ethiopian political dynamics muddles assessments of U.S. activities and their results. However, despite these challenges, American influence activities have set a solid foundation for an enduring relationship. Nonetheless, U.S. practitioners and policymakers should continually analyze the program effectiveness of ongoing and proposed activities. Such reassessment is especially important considering current political developments, and the opportunities they create.

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IV. CHINESE INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA

A. INTRODUCTION

The official relationship between Ethiopia and the PRC began in 1971.²⁴⁶ While it was not the first interaction between the states, that meeting between Haile Selassie and Mao Zedong is emblematic of their current relationship. During this meeting the PRC and Ethiopia agreed on trade deals, economic agreements, and technical cooperation.²⁴⁷ Such cooperation continues today, and has expanded since 1995, to the benefit of both states.²⁴⁸

The narrative of China's malign, wide-reaching influence in Africa is well-worn. Such discussion omits the diversity of capacity and varying perceptions of sovereignty within Africa's 54 states. Unlike some of its neighbors, Ethiopia is uniquely suited to withstand China's more predatory tactics while extracting benefits for the Ethiopian people, its government, and the EPRDF.²⁴⁹ Ethiopia does see China as one important, though not exclusive, source of investment and trade. Shinn argues that China is Ethiopia's "most important bilateral economic partner."²⁵⁰ The Ethiopian government also fashions itself uniquely capable of executing China's "alternative development model."²⁵¹ The United States should recognize that Ethiopia can and will seek such advice and investment in part because it is not tied to Western political conditionality.²⁵²

This chapter, like the previous chapter, supports the "state interests," "influence activities," and "influence analysis" components of my analytic approach. China has profited by developing mutual interests in the economic sphere. This connection and

²⁴⁶ David H. Shinn, "Ethiopia and China: Two Former Empires Connect in the 20th Century," *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 8, no. 1 & 2 (2014): 151.

²⁴⁷ Shinn, 151.

²⁴⁸ Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia: Authoritarian Affinities and Economic Cooperation," *China Perspectives* 2012, no. 2012/4 (December 7, 2012): 62.

²⁴⁹ Cabestan, 62.

²⁵⁰ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 149.

²⁵¹ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 60.

²⁵² Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 160.

emphasis on development has established connections between the Ethiopian and Chinese executives. Such cooperation has been fruitful, but China's concentration of effort in this sector means its influence is limited in other sectors. As political dynamics shift, and the importance of the executive wanes, the Chinese will have to rapidly adapt its activities to maintain influence.

This chapter considers the relationship between China and Ethiopia. First, I will introduce why China is interested in influencing Ethiopia. Thereafter I analyze conventional Chinese influence sectors: infrastructure and economic cooperation. Next, I will consider unconventional sectors: military cooperation and humanitarian assistance. These sectors are particularly interesting because they are more typically associated with Western diplomacy efforts, especially of the United States. Finally, I consider the unique challenges that China faces in Ethiopia.

B. WHY DOES CHINA INTERACT WITH ETHIOPIA?

Despite the country's dearth of the mineral wealth, China has many reasons to pursue a strong relationship with Ethiopia. As Cabestan argues, "Chinese motivations in the country are not mainly economic: Ethiopia is not among the group of major suppliers of raw material to the 'workshop of the world'; above all, the motivations are diplomatic, strategic, and even ideological."²⁵³ Diplomatically, China hopes to have its agenda supported in international forums by as many partners as possible. Strategically, the PRC hopes to protect its considerable human and physical infrastructure in the region. A stable Ethiopian state is a key avenue for protecting China's many citizens in the region. Ideologically, the Chinese seek to legitimize their state system, even if they do not hope to directly export it. Though its goals are wide-reaching, China's normal toolkit of infrastructure, too-good-to-be-true loans, and cultural exchanges are on full display in its relationship with Ethiopia. Table 1 summarizes China's primary goals and methods in Ethiopia.

²⁵³ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 62.

Table 1. Chinese Goals in Ethiopia

Sector	Primary Goal	Methods
Diplomatic	Develop support for Chinese policies at multilateral forums	Infrastructure projects, Loans, Grants
Economic	Open Ethiopian market to Chinese products, improve Ethiopian exports to China	Infrastructure projects, Special Economic Zones, trade deals
Ideological	Highlight benefit of “China Development Model”	Non-Interference, Development Assistance, Loans, Grants, Infrastructure Projects
Strategic	Stability/Security for Chinese personnel and investments	Military assistance and arms sales, telecommunications assistance, direct involvement (as a last resort)

China hopes to achieve its diplomatic goals by maintaining an amiable relationship with Ethiopia. China’s primary diplomatic goal in Ethiopia is to sustain the government’s continued support for the One China Policy. The One China Policy supports the PRC’s dominion over Taiwan, which it views as a breakaway province. China has been succeeded in this goal, as statements by former PM Meles demonstrate: “Ethiopia strongly opposes any external force’s attempts to destroy China’s national unity and create hatred among Chinese nationalities.”²⁵⁴ China’s secondary diplomatic goal is to empower the Ethiopian government as a regional stalwart. Ethiopia is seat of the African Union, one of the multilateral forums that China depends upon for legitimacy. China’s appreciation for the institution is evident in its \$200 million grant to construct a new conference center in Addis Ababa.²⁵⁵ The African Union project achieves two objectives for China. First, it demonstrates China’s commitment to that organization, which it hopes will continue

²⁵⁴ Shinn, “Ethiopia and China,” 157.

²⁵⁵ Shinn, 150.

support for Beijing's diplomatic efforts, as indicated above. Second, the conference center builds the prestige of Ethiopia. Bolstering Ethiopia's regional reputation is valuable to China because it sees Ethiopia as a stabilizing force.²⁵⁶

China derives legitimacy for its system, one where an authoritarian state with a tightly controlled economy can achieve tremendous economic development. This ideological connection was particularly effective with strongman PM Meles Zenawi. Meles, who seized power in 1991 eschewed the former regime's Marxism in favor of an almost entirely development focused agenda and ideology. He never meant to fashion the Ethiopian state in China's image, but sought the same economic growth associated with China's ascendance. He also demonstrated similar propensities to jail dissidents, monitor citizens and eliminate political opposition: hallmarks of China's Communist Party. Finally, Meles' devotion to tackling corruption and achieving economic development made him an ideal exemplar of state-led development. China hopes that a blossoming Ethiopian economy and population will demonstrate the benefits of engaging at all levels with the PRC and of adopting a state-led development model.

Though Cabestan deemphasizes Chinese economic motives in Ethiopia, there are some benefits to Chinese industries and economic interests. China recognizes the value of a robust economic relationship with Africa's second-most populous state, and one of the continent's fastest growing economies. Primarily, China hopes to open the Ethiopian market to Chinese products, services and companies. China also imports leather, sesame, coffee, and some textiles from Ethiopia.²⁵⁷ While these products are desired, none are essential to the Chinese. Nonetheless, China's drastically increased imports of Ethiopian sesame indicates an economic area of mutual interest.²⁵⁸ Ethiopia's first special economic zone, discussed below, also helps "China's own economic restructuring, allowing less competitive and labor-intensive industries that are becoming increasingly more

²⁵⁶ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 56.

²⁵⁷ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 156.

²⁵⁸ Malancha Chakrabarty, "Ethiopia-China Economic Relations: A Classic Win-Win Situation?," *World Review of Political Economy* 7, no. 2 (2016): 231, <https://doi.org/10.13169/worlrevipoliecon.7.2.0226>.

competitive in the Chinese domestic market, such as textiles, leather goods, and building materials, to move offshore.”²⁵⁹

China also hopes to safeguard its citizens and sizeable investments in Ethiopia. One case best exemplifies China’s challenge in this area. In 2007, a separatist group in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia attacked a small oil exploration site, killing nine Chinese employees and 65 of the Ethiopian soldiers tasked with defending the area.²⁶⁰ This situation highlighted China’s need to protect its citizens and investments in the region. It is likely that this incident spurred China’s active role in evacuating its citizens from Yemen during conflict escalation in 2015.²⁶¹ China’s military asserted that it was the first time that it used its Navy to evacuate foreign nationals in addition to its own citizens.²⁶² Nonetheless, a strong Ethiopian state capable of exerting power throughout its territory is in China’s interests.

C. CONVENTIONAL INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

China’s familiar African influence toolkit is employed in Ethiopia. Infrastructure and economic projects blend China’s expertise with Ethiopia’s seemingly never-ending demand for development. China successfully leverages the appeal of mutually beneficial programs to persuade the Ethiopian government to approve massive infrastructure programs, at times without a formal bidding process. Such tactics causes frustration, but the Ethiopian regime’s devotion to development has prevented it from substantially pushing back against China, its favored infrastructure partner. The following section will outline China’s main programs in this indispensable portion of its global toolkit.

²⁵⁹ Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, “Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy” (RAND Corporation, 2014), 39.

²⁶⁰ Shinn, “Ethiopia and China,” 158.

²⁶¹ “Yemen Battle Prompts Chinese Rescue,” *BBC News*, April 3, 2015, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32173811>.

²⁶² “Yemen Battle Prompts Chinese Rescue.”

1. Infrastructure

China's most visible contribution to the Ethiopian government and people is infrastructure projects. Cabestan highlights the strategy for a typical Chinese infrastructure project in Ethiopia: "the two governments together choose [a project and] a Chinese company wins the bid following a call for tenders; the projects are financed by Chinese banks with commercial loans guaranteed by the government and often at concessional terms."²⁶³ The Chinese companies who carry out the projects typically hire Chinese labor for any skilled activities and import Chinese materials (in some cases due to a lack of Ethiopian equivalents). Occasionally, Ethiopians are hired in low-paid and low-skill jobs or in other marginal administrative roles.²⁶⁴ Despite occasional questions of quality, such projects draw admiration from ordinary Ethiopians and top elements of the Ethiopian government. Shinn highlights then-PM Meles' comments that "China has been playing an irreplaceable role in our economy. It has unparalleled contribution towards funding infrastructure activities."²⁶⁵ This comment may have been used to secure future Chinese investment; however, most scholars agree that infrastructure projects do indeed engender goodwill.²⁶⁶ The three main categories of Chinese infrastructure project are: (1) Roads, (2) Hydroelectric Dams, and (3) Telecommunications. These projects are valuable to Ethiopians while also affording Chinese SOEs valuable contracts and employing thousands of Chinese citizens.

As in many other African states, Chinese companies are active in developing road infrastructure. According to Cabestan, the Chinese are currently building approximately 80% of Ethiopian roads.²⁶⁷ A Chinese company is also responsible for the Addis Ababa Ring Road, a conspicuous vanity project in Ethiopia's capital.²⁶⁸ Shinn attributes Chinese companies' competitiveness in the bidding process to government soft loans that

²⁶³ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 57.

²⁶⁴ Chakrabarty, "Ethiopia-China Economic Relations," 240.

²⁶⁵ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 160.

²⁶⁶ Shinn, 153.

²⁶⁷ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 58.

²⁶⁸ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 153.

specifically benefit Chinese state owned or private companies. Such practices do not directly affect the United States, who rarely participates in the sector, but have disadvantaged American allies Japan and South Korea, who have been unable to successfully bid for infrastructure development projects.²⁶⁹

Chinese companies have also been instrumental in Ethiopian efforts to increase power generation and distribution capability, primarily through hydroelectric dams. 46% of Chinese development assistance is directed to energy supply and generation projects.²⁷⁰ Such projects include dams, wind turbines, and power lines. In absolute terms, this means that China has devoted \$1.66 billion towards Ethiopian energy projects between 2000 and 2012. According to Chakrabarty, China's Export-Import Bank funds five of Ethiopia's 10 current energy generation and supply projects.²⁷¹ Even in the cases where the Export-Import Bank has not funded the energy projects, Chinese companies are the implementers.²⁷² China differentiates itself in these projects through its no-questions-asked approach. It funds and carries out these projects despite widespread environmental, humanitarian, and political criticism.²⁷³

Large Chinese telecommunications firms have found unequal access to that sector in Ethiopia. Some important projects in this sector include widening access to mobile telephones, expanding internet connectivity, and upgrading or generally improving existing telecommunications infrastructure. The Chinese telecommunications company Huawei, recently benefited from a Chinese loan to Ethiopia, worth \$834 million.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁹ Shinn, 153.

²⁷⁰ Chakrabarty, "Ethiopia-China Economic Relations," 238.

²⁷¹ Chakrabarty, 239.

²⁷² Chakrabarty, 239.

²⁷³ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 58.

²⁷⁴ Jordan Link, "How Huawei Could Survive Trump -- What Do We Know About Huawei's Africa Presence?," Washington Post - Monkey Cage, June 10, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/10/what-do-we-know-about-huaweis-africa-presence/?noredirect=on>.

Similar to other loan-backed projects, this telecommunications deal is expected to allow Huawei to “edge out competitors.”²⁷⁵

Moreover, the ZTE Corporation has already cornered the sector for over a decade, mainly as a result of the Ethiopian government’s stranglehold on it, via the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation.²⁷⁶ It is likely that the relationship with the ZTE Corporation has also facilitated authoritarian actions by the Ethiopian regime. The government’s efforts to monitor and track dissidents, block signals from Voice of America and Deutsche Welle, and cut off access to cellular, internet, and messaging services requires the sophisticated technical capacity provided by the Chinese.²⁷⁷

Despite these benefits to the regime, the low quality of the infrastructure has prompted the Ethiopian government to seek outside assessment, helping the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation devise better regulations and project requirements. Such interaction demonstrates the Ethiopian government’s commitment to pragmatism but should not be seen as Ethiopia snubbing Chinese investment. It is likely that, in the near term, Chinese influence in the telecommunications sector will remain considerable, due to Chinese government assistance to Chinese companies and the long-term relationship between the Ethiopian government and companies such as Huawei and ZTE.

China has been extremely successfully at achieving its economic goals in Ethiopia, as a direct result of its efforts in the infrastructure sector. Chinese SOEs and private enterprises successfully leverage their technical expertise, regional experience, and exceptional supply chain to accumulate Ethiopia’s largest contracts. In many cases these contracts are funded by the Chinese government itself, which further supports Chinese companies’ bids. These costly projects provide the backbone of the Sino-Ethiopian diplomatic relationship. As Nantulya argues, Chinese infrastructure projects are embraced

²⁷⁵ Link.

²⁷⁶ Cabestan, “China and Ethiopia,” 59.

²⁷⁷ Shinn, “Ethiopia and China,” 159–60.

by African leaders, who view such cooperation as a demonstration that they are considered equals at the table.²⁷⁸

While Chinese infrastructure projects are widely welcomed, there are two main areas that diminish their effectiveness at enhancing China's influence and achieving its foreign policy objectives. The first is China's preference for using Chinese labor and companies, while the second is perceptions of poor-quality Chinese products flooding the Ethiopian market. Neither complaint drastically reduces Chinese attractiveness in the economic sector, but both demonstrate the potential pitfalls of widespread economic interaction, especially when the economic balance is so skewed.

Chinese enterprises are often the only companies allowed to bid on projects and, in most cases, Chinese labor is favored or used exclusively. Cabestan argues that, as of 2012, Chinese laborers in Ethiopia totaled at least 100,000.²⁷⁹ The majority of these laborers are working on the Chinese infrastructure projects. This high number of outside laborers frustrates locally under or unemployed Ethiopians. China has yet to modify its practices in Ethiopia to address these criticisms. Nonetheless, Chinese investment is still deemed worthwhile by most Ethiopians, especially the political elite.

Another common criticism of China's economic influence in Africa pertains to the quality and scope of Chinese products saturating local markets. In Ethiopia this criticism applies to activities at all levels, from consumer items to large infrastructure projects.²⁸⁰ Former PM Meles famously dismissed such criticism of Chinese goods, stating that the "price is good. The bulk is good. So, they compete with other foreign goods, and they compete with domestic goods as well. Who wins the competition? It is the product."²⁸¹ Nonetheless, the literature reflects that all elements of Ethiopian society have been at least

²⁷⁸ Paul Nantulya, "Grand Strategy and China's Soft Power Push in Africa" (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, August 30, 2018), 2–3, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/grand-strategy-and-chinas-soft-power-push-in-africa/>.

²⁷⁹ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 61.

²⁸⁰ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia"; Nantulya, "Grand Strategy and China's Soft Power Push in Africa," 3.

²⁸¹ Seifudein Adem, "China in Ethiopia: Diplomacy and Economics of Sino-Optimism," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 1 (April 21, 2012): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2012.0008>.

occasionally dissatisfied with Chinese products and projects. A perception of low-quality products diminishes China's influence in Ethiopia and the region. Cheap prices will still make Chinese products popular, but consumers at all levels may still prefer the more expensive quality goods from other suppliers. However, it is likely that the Chinese products may edge out competitors with their low prices, eventually becoming the only option for some products.

2. Economic Cooperation

China sees in Ethiopia immense market potential, and a China-like state structure amenable to Chinese investment. Both states depend on robust SOEs and expend strong central economic control. Ethiopia, with its singular devotion to economic development, sees China as an example to be emulated and as a potential market.²⁸² However, bilateral trade heavily favors China, which has been a source of consternation amongst the Ethiopian elite.²⁸³ This trade deficit, though perhaps expected, has prompted Ethiopian state involvement, including requesting the Chinese expand duty-free imports for certain Ethiopian products.

Though Ethiopian-Chinese trade typically favors China, a growing Chinese market for sesame seeds has propelled that industry in Ethiopia. That product, Ethiopia's primary export to China, has seen dramatic growth since 2004.²⁸⁴ Sesame is now one fifth of Ethiopia's total exports, at the expense of coffee whose share of Ethiopian exports dropped to one third.²⁸⁵ Such a shift demonstrates the confluence of interest and capability between the two states. This move satisfies Chinese demands for increased sesame, which has grown due to a domestic decline in production. Furthermore, it creates the perception that both states can benefit from bilateral trade, which reduces tensions over the states' overall trade deficit. China has also attempted to reduce these tensions by enlarging its list of

²⁸² Elsje Fourie, "China's Example for Meles' Ethiopia: When Development 'Models' Land*," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 3 (September 2015): 311, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X15000397>.

²⁸³ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 156.

²⁸⁴ Chakrabarty, "Ethiopia-China Economic Relations," 231.

²⁸⁵ Chakrabarty, 231.

eligible Ethiopian duty-free items.²⁸⁶ The aim of such preferential treatment was to aid Ethiopian products on the Chinese market. However, while this trade agreement is an improvement from the Ethiopian perspective, it is unlikely to substantially reduce the trade imbalance.

China has also encouraged the Ethiopian government to create a special economic zone, a tool that China itself historically used to generate considerable foreign direct investment.²⁸⁷ These zones are delineated geographic areas targeted to generate foreign investment through advantageous tax incentives and ready-built infrastructure. The Ethiopia Eastern Industrial Zone, located a short distance from Addis Ababa, was financed by the Chinese Export-Import Bank and private Chinese companies and was constructed by several Chinese firms.²⁸⁸ As of 2012, despite being open for business to any investors, only Chinese businesses had invested.²⁸⁹ As Hanauer and Morris contend, while the special economic zone benefits some Ethiopians, it also provides relief to Chinese businesses looking to relocate offshore.²⁹⁰ While the Ethiopia Eastern Industrial Zone is only one data point, its existence demonstrates Ethiopian openness to Chinese investment, and more importantly, development strategies.

Despite the normally cordial relationship, the Ethiopian government has also pushed back in some trade disputes. One such occasion saw Ethiopian authorities return \$13 million of Huawei telecommunications equipment, which had been imported without approval.²⁹¹ Such push back indicates that sovereignty still matters to the Ethiopian government, even in the economic sector.

²⁸⁶ Shinn, “Ethiopia and China,” 156.

²⁸⁷ Deborah Bräutigam and Xiaoyang Tang, “‘Going Global in Groups’: Structural Transformation and China’s Special Economic Zones Overseas,” *World Development*, Economic Transformation in Africa, 63 (November 1, 2014): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.10.010>.

²⁸⁸ Bräutigam and Tang, 83.

²⁸⁹ Bräutigam and Tang, 83.

²⁹⁰ Hanauer and Morris, “Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy,” 39.

²⁹¹ Shinn, “Ethiopia and China,” 156.

D. UNCONVENTIONAL INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

In the following section I will consider efforts in unconventional sectors, in terms of typical Chinese influence activities. Forays into military cooperation and development assistance display China's emerging tactics in unconventional sectors. These activities are uncharted territory for the Chinese, but well-worn for many Western states, especially the United States. These programs are limited in scope and effectiveness, yet their existence demonstrates adaptive thinking by the Chinese government.

1. Military

Chinese military engagement in Ethiopia exists but is limited. Such interaction is welcome in Ethiopia, despite Chinese military support to Eritrea during the Ethiopia–Eritrea border war that concluded in 2000.²⁹² China in fact supplied both sides of the conflict, with total arms sales of \$1 billion, despite a UN arms embargo.²⁹³ Currently, the Chinese supply artillery and some light troop vehicles to the ENDF.²⁹⁴ Ethiopia is likely to continue to seek arms from China, as they are largely compatible with their current equipment and available.

Shinn highlights another rare aspect of the Chinese relationship with Ethiopia. The Chinese embassy maintains a military attaché in Ethiopia, unlike at most of its African stations. Funding such a posting indicates China's dedication to maintaining a strong bilateral military relationship. Furthermore, the Chinese security services conduct military exchange visits and train a few Ethiopian officers.²⁹⁵ Nonetheless, China's military influence in Ethiopia is limited and is likely to remain so in the near-term.

²⁹² Shinn, 151.

²⁹³ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 55.

²⁹⁴ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 160; Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 55.

²⁹⁵ Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 160; Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 55.

In terms of accomplishing Chinese goals in Ethiopia, its military cooperation programs are moderately effective. At one level, participating in military exchanges, and hosting Ethiopian forces for training demonstrates willingness and commitment to a long-term relationship. China's arms sales are likely a function of convenience and economic opportunity. Chinese weapons could be used by the ENDF to maintain law and order within its borders, which is in China's interest. Thus, despite China's moderate level of military cooperation in Ethiopia, the PRC is unlikely to become Ethiopia's security partner of choice in the near term. Its military cooperation is more likely to facilitate diplomatic goals and open the door for expanded programs in the future.

2. Development Assistance

China's expansion in this sector is limited and experimental. To put their efforts into perspective, in 2006, China's aid only amounted to 0.14 percent of aid received by Ethiopia.²⁹⁶ Data on the projects are limited, though Cabestan specifically mentions the agricultural and medical sectors.²⁹⁷ However, Chinese forays in the humanitarian assistance and aid sectors reflects a greater understanding of Ethiopian needs and desires, and a willingness to employ new tactics to improve the bilateral relationship.

China has also used Ethiopia to introduce new soft power programs in the humanitarian assistance sector. In one such case, China's nascent equivalent of the U.S. Peace Corps sent 12 volunteers to Ethiopia, in its first foray into Africa. These activities do not currently threaten the equivalent Western programs. However, the United States must recognize that as "emerging donors" increase their assistance, Western conditionality and intrusions to sovereignty will become less tenable long-term practices.²⁹⁸ Chinese assistance is likely to grow, especially if Chinese domestic growth remains consistent. However, I do not expect this assistance level to approach or match large budget Western

²⁹⁶ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 60; Shinn, "Ethiopia and China," 155.

²⁹⁷ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 60.

²⁹⁸ Ngaire Woods, "Whose Aid? Whose Influence? China, Emerging Donors and the Silent Revolution in Development Assistance," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November 1, 2008): 1220–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00765.x>.

aid levels in Ethiopia in the near-term. Cabestan suggests Chinese development assistance is more akin to medium donors, such as Canada and Italy.²⁹⁹

China's new emphasis on development assistance is largely an ineffective element of its overall influence campaign. As indicated by the program's extremely limited budget, this may be by design. China still considers infrastructure projects as the programs most effective at accomplishing its goals but may use development assistance to counter common perceptions that see those infrastructure projects as predatory. By demonstrating Chinese generosity, the regime hopes to reinforce perceptions that the Chinese model can be admired, if not emulated.

E. CONCLUSION

Despite the confluence of interest between China and Ethiopia, some of China's actions draw criticism. These challenges should be considered setbacks and lessons learned and should not be over-emphasized. The Sino-Ethiopian relationship is strong and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. The states have found a way to achieve some of their own goals by cooperating. Ethiopia receives highly desired investment. China gains a positive reputation, broadens its diplomatic alliances, and relieves some domestic labor pressures.³⁰⁰ Furthermore, Ethiopia sees developmental lessons in the Chinese experiences, and thus emulates certain Chinese policies. Thus, Ethiopia values China's expert power, meaning it values the technical expertise China demonstrates and hopes to develop a similar system. Moreover, during periods of heightened authoritarianism, Ethiopia depends on investment and cooperation from an understanding China. In these periods, the perceived limitations of Western assistance become more evident, highlighting the attractiveness of the "Chinese model." Cabestan highlights the results of Ethiopia's 2005 crackdown on political opposition, where the EU provisionally suspended aid.³⁰¹ Such a reduction was mostly symbolic, but nonetheless provided China with an opportunity to be seen as a reliable "non-interference" partner. Chinese influence in Ethiopia is mostly

²⁹⁹ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 60.

³⁰⁰ Adem, "China in Ethiopia," 155.

³⁰¹ Cabestan, "China and Ethiopia," 61.

distinct from typical American projects. While some new methods have wandered into traditional U.S. influence activities, the limited nature of these projects makes them more curious than concerning.

The United States must recognize the attractiveness of China's efforts in Ethiopia, rather than dismiss them as predatory. Furthermore, where it wishes to compete it should identify and value its strong areas, such as the quality of its products and embrace of Ethiopian labor and enterprise. In some sectors, such as large infrastructure projects, the United States will not be able to compete with Chinese influence. In such cases, the United States must acknowledge that such investment can contribute towards the stability, security and prosperity of the Ethiopian people, which is its main objective in Ethiopia. Furthermore, criticizing Sino-Ethiopian cooperation without offering reasonable alternatives stands to antagonize the Ethiopian government.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

This thesis addressed the impact and effectiveness of U.S. influence in Ethiopia. To do so, I analyzed the state of current internal levers of power within the Ethiopian state. I concluded that the EPRDF and Executive Branch are most important, but that those levers are vulnerable to both domestic and international pressure. Furthermore, the very composition and nature of the EPRDF coalition is shifting, the results of which have yet to fully develop. Next, I considered the main goals of the United States in Ethiopia. I then considered its efforts in its three most active areas of influence: SSA, economic cooperation, and SHD. Finally, I investigated China's primary interests in Ethiopia. I followed up by analyzing Chinese influence activities and their effectiveness. While China's methods conform to its conventional expertise, notably large-scale infrastructure projects and economic partnership, I found that China has explored influence activities more typically associated with western powers.

I employed an analytic approach that focused on four primary components. First, state interest clarified the objectives of both the IA and target states, explicitly delineating their individual or mutual interests. Levers of power emphasized the diverse set of actors which shape the trajectory and actions of the Ethiopian state. Influence activities identified which influence activities the IAs used in Ethiopia. Finally, influence analysis considered the effectiveness of these activities in developing overall influence.

The United States should be confident that its influence activities and continued engagement with Ethiopia have allowed it to exert influence. Ethiopian agency, and a historical commitment to sovereignty, has at times limited American influence. However, the same notions of sovereignty and commitment to Ethiopian interests has similarly affected all foreign governments. Furthermore, shifting political dynamics means that the United States is best poised to create connections with a wider range of Ethiopian actors. In this effort, the United States' broad portfolio of influence activities allows it greater flexibility to assess newly empowered Ethiopian levers of power and target them

accordingly. China's emphasis on developmental projects has created a strong shared economic interest. This mutual interest has prompted Ethiopia to support China's diplomatic goals, one of China's key policy objectives. However, China's almost exclusive emphasis on infrastructure and economic partnerships decreases its opportunities to capitalize on Ethiopian political developments.

B. SPECIFIC FINDINGS

1. Targeting Levers of Power

During my analysis of Ethiopia's internal power levers, I discovered that the foundations that led to EPRDF regime longevity are showing signs of dramatic change. Key elements of EPRDF power are beginning to shift. In particular, the change from the TPLF being the core of the party especially has significant long-term implications. Furthermore, as demonstrated by PM Abiy's appointment after a long period of civil unrest, the Ethiopian people have the capacity to change and influence their government. They currently tolerate the EPRDF because it still maintains the broadest political base, across many of Ethiopia's ethnic groups. Whether intentional or not, the EPRDF's pursuit of ethnic federalism fostered an environment where every subsequent political party would be based on a single ethnic group. Only the widespread 2018 protests saw opposition parties from different ethnic groups coalesce, and even in that case such cooperation was limited. Nonetheless, until opposition groups widen their appeal and broaden their membership, the EPRDF will likely remain the primary political force in the country. Even the TPLF's departure, painful as it might be, will not erode overall EPRDF electoral success.

Policy implication

This information suggests that the United States should continue to support influence activities that empower everyday Ethiopians. American influence has typically solidified the ties between the U.S.G. and the executive and military, but programs that target everyday Ethiopians might yield successful results in the future. Nonetheless, despite cracks within the formerly invincible EPRDF, its political primacy should not be underestimated. The EPRDF will likely remain in power through the 2020 parliamentary

elections, but we should expect continued and occasionally severe civil disturbances (or other outbursts such as the Amhara regional coup) in the electoral run-up. PM Abiy's reforms have fostered a much-needed space for political debate and have reduced the government's worst repressive tendencies. These measures could be reversed if the EPRDF decides regime survival is at stake. However, the United States could reinforce the positive steps the Abiy regime has pursued by tying reforms to expanded economic and development assistance.

2. Influencing Ethiopia's Regional Security Role

While assessing U.S. influence in Ethiopia, the state's commitment to developing regional security was immediately evident. Ethiopia consistently demonstrates a desire to secure its own neighborhood and maintain a professionally competent and advanced military. Its government would likely pursue action in the region (Somalia and South Sudan) with or without the support of external actors. Only significant domestic upheavals have compelled Ethiopian security forces withdrawals from regional peacekeeping efforts. Despite its internal motivation for regional stability, the Ethiopian government does appreciate the expanded capabilities and effectiveness derived from security assistance programs, especially from the United States. Ethiopia also highly values its sovereignty.

Policy Implication

The United States should realize that it can do little to compel the Ethiopian government to participate in a regional PKOs. The United States should format requests and consider security actions based on the understanding that maintaining sovereignty is a critical component of Ethiopia's agenda. Despite this limitation, Ethiopian and American security interests have trended similarly over the last 15 years. Where there are areas of mutual interest, such as CT in Somalia and PKO in South Sudan, the United States should identify limitations of the ENDF and work together with the Ethiopian government to develop solutions. In some cases, this may mean transferring American equipment, and in others it might mean bilateral training. Nonetheless, the United States must understand that cooperation will only be accepted where it benefits the Ethiopian government. At a symbolic level, the United States should structure its dialogue in ways that convince the

Ethiopian government that they are a valued partner that deserves an equal seat at the table. Even with a strong and positive relationship, the Ethiopian government will not give the United States carte blanche to operate as it wishes within Ethiopian territory.

3. Foreign Influence and Ethiopia's Economic Development

Ethiopian leaders have derived continued legitimacy by sustaining remarkable economic growth and development. American efforts to obtain influence by supporting Ethiopia economically are less effective than their Chinese equivalents. Though the U.S.G. understands the Ethiopian government's focus on growth, the economic tools with which it operates are less direct than China's. China's expansion of Ethiopian duty-free exports illustrates that it both understood Ethiopia's concerns and was willing to address them. Ethiopia sees Chinese infrastructure projects as vital to achieving its ambitious economic objectives. The Chinese government leverages its unique infrastructure expertise, supply networks, and frequent loans to ensure China is the infrastructure partner of choice. As long as the Ethiopian government sees mutual benefit, as it does with many Chinese initiatives, it will continue to court Chinese investment.

Policy Implication

Despite indications of domestic dissatisfaction with Chinese projects, the Ethiopian government will continue to welcome Chinese investment. The United States must understand Ethiopia's pragmatic approach to this situation. Should any state display the same level of interest and investment as China, it would be welcomed enthusiastically. Realistically, the United States will not attempt to compete with China in the expensive large-scale infrastructure projects that garner Ethiopian regime prestige. Any U.S. complaints directed at the Ethiopian government for accepting Chinese assistance are likely to fall upon deaf ears. U.S. efforts, alongside its western allies, especially in the SHD sector, are very well received and demonstrate those state's commitment to the Ethiopian people.

4. China's Expansion of Influence Activities

Within the last 15 years, China has tentatively expanded its influence activity portfolio. The scale of this expansion indicates such activities are best considered experimental. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian government has willingly welcomed such activities. Though these activities are nonconventional for the Chinese, they have prominently featured in Western engagement. They could allow China an opportunity to provide an alternative to Western assistance and conditionality. However, China's tepid acceptance of these new sectors undermines any potential benefits.

Policy Implication

The United States should monitor the scale and effectiveness of nonconventional Chinese influence activities. American activities' longevity should not be seen as immutable influence. Instead, the United States could learn from Chinese attempts and determine the limitations and possibilities of Chinese activities.

C. GAPS IN RESEARCH AND AREAS FOR FUTURE STUDY

My research indicated that far more scholarship has been devoted to China's influence in Ethiopia than to western states' influence, including the United States. General Sino-pessimism, as well as China's rapid onslaught of African engagement is responsible for the ample scholarship on Chinese influence. Meanwhile, it is unclear why data gathering for U.S. activity was so difficult. Unlike for Chinese influence studies, no single text provided a comprehensive review of most American programs. Though I have gathered information on some of the U.S.' activities, the field would benefit from a more thorough examination.

Another area that demands further investigation is China's use of unconventional influence activities in Ethiopia. Unfortunately, most of the data I used for my study of this phenomenon was limited to 2014 and earlier. A greater understanding of these programs' specific objectives and results could help explain and predict China's future regional strategies.

Finally, academic literature trails current political trends within the EPRDF, especially the TPLF's decision to withdraw from the wider organization. Such a discussion is needed because scholarly agreement consistently emphasized the importance of that bloc's influence. It is unclear whether the TPLF's departure will mean another party will assume a primary role, such as Abiy's ODP, or if the EPRDF will radically transform. Thus, focused attention on this topic could contribute to an improved understanding of the future nature and structure of the EPRDF.

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