

Critical Comparative Analysis on the Models and Challenges of Nation-State Building Trajectories: The Case of Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Nation-state building as an “architectural metaphor” is a measure or an action taken by a state or government to unite various groups and ethnic identities to form one common national identity or national fellowship. For at least three thousand years, Ethiopia have been passed through the processes of nation-state building, and has claimed statehoodship states. All in all, the Ethiopia’s nation state-building dynamics can be dominantly divided in to three models: imperial model (pre-1974); socialist model (from 1975-1991) and federal model (since 1991) . In this research article, the selected review of relevant literature is conducted in exploring, and hence , comparatively analyzing these three consecutive regimes of Ethiopia in its dominant history of nation state building trajectories.

Keywords:-*Ethnicity; nationalism; nation state; nation state building.*

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual discussion and practice of nation state-building has got popularity in the post WW II period. For some scholars and practitioners, nation state building is considered as circular and long term process, which is defined by the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of public structures for efficient delivery of public goods (Galata, 2016). For others, nation-state building as an “architectural metaphor” is a measure or an action taken by a state or government to unite various groups and ethnic identities to form one common national identity or national fellowship (Østerud; 1991; Harris, 2012; Ishwor, 2020).

For at least three thousand years, Ethiopia have been passed through the processes of nation-state building, and has claimed statehoodship states (Galata, 2016; Medahine, 2021). All in all, the Ethiopia’s nation state-building dynamics can be dominantly divided in to three models: imperial model (pre-1974); socialist model (from 1975-1991) and federal model (since 1991) (Markakis, 2011). Under different systems of government, imperial the imperial model (pre-1974) and socialist model (from 1975-1991) nation state building is defined by “centralist-unitary”, in which cultural assimilation and integration of multi-ethnic groups being pursued by successive regimes (ibid).

Inspite of the country has subsequently achieved external legitimacy, its internal process of nation state building has failed to be crystallized. For the claimed three thousand years, the governments or The rulers of the country haven’t managed to forge a single cohesive nation state or national identity. Various ethnic groups or identities have been antagonistic and repeling towards each other to date (ibid). Nation-state building discussions in Ethiopia cannot move forward without the multi-ethinig groups coming to an agreement on the necessity of coexisting within the Ethiopian state and introducing a workable formula for how power is to be acquired and within what bounds it should be exercised. A breakthrough in connecting narratives and historical accounts is desperately needed. To hammer out and identify intersections and contradictions around the political history of the nation and competing narratives, peaceful discussions are necessary at the national level. The breakdown of law and order and even the collapse of the nation appear to be alarming possibilities if such a course is obstructed or not pursued by the stakeholders (ibid, Medihane, 2021).

The conceptual , theoretical and practical aspects of nation-state building is too broad, and hence this paper ephasises to critically expore only approaches of and challenges of nation state bulding trajectories in the case of Ethiopia, which are the moss pressing research issues to my observation. At the same time, I reviewed that adequate critical analysises haven’t been conducted on those issues. But, due to time limitations, I selectively

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reviewed the most relevant sources such as books, articles and other documents.

VARIOUS CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND NATION- STATE BUILDING

Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity or ethnic identity is commonly defined as a collection of people that share similar cultural and linguistic identities, which makes one ethnic group distinct from others. A certain ethnic group shares similar way of life, culture, language and boundary that makes the group very distinct from the other ethnic groups or identities in the surrounding environment. However, it is important to understand the existence of very minor cultural dissimilarities within the group itself (Yang, 2000). However, ethnicity or ethnic identity is an elusive concept usually referring to ethnic attributes that can be manipulated for social and political purposes. The shared identities such as color, language, religion, common myth of descent and psychological makeup are double faced and subjective, and hence they can't be objectively measured (Heywood, 2007; Thomson, 2010)

As granted, ethnicity is conceived as the foundation of nationalism. But, nationalism is one of the most disputed and controversial concepts in social sciences. This is due to the fact that the concept is heavily linked not only with ethnic identity but also with the ideological, political, religious, racial and socio-economic emotional attachments. It could be described as a double-edged sword that represents two ideological divides; domination and struggle for freedom. This implies that nationalism arouses strong feelings—for some, which is tantamount to discrimination and antagonism, but for others nationalist sentiment creates solidarity and stability that are the preconditions for freedom (Hoffman and Graham, 2009). In this context, nationalism in everyday language is understood with two connotations roughly; one being positive and the other being negative. While the positive connotation designates the nationalists' struggle for democracy, self-determination, political legitimacy, social integration, civil religion, solidarity, dignity, identity, cultural survival, citizenship, patriotism, and liberation from alien rule; the negative connotation is understood in relation to militarism, war, irrationalism, chauvinism, intolerance, homogenization, forced assimilation, authoritarianism, parochialism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide (ibid).

Though there are various forms of nationalism (such as state, economic, cultural, etc...), ethnic nationalism is the most common and dominant form of nationalism. The concept of ethnic nationalism has controversial and elusive since there is still no consensus among different scholars and researchers. Abbink (2009) defined ethnic/ethno nationalism as the claim for an independent political recognition. This could be either within an existing state or by realizing its own sovereign state. Hence, the clue of self-rule and self-determination are the essential concepts that are used as crucial points in conceptualizing ethno nationalism. Supporting the explanation of Abbink, Allahar (2010) reinstated ethnic or ethno nationalism as an "ideological claim, or a social movement seeking to make such a claim, of self-determination and sovereignty".

Nation-State Building

The conceptual discussion and practice of state-building has got popularity in the post WW II period. In spite of scholars and practitioners have agreed on the general understanding of nation state building, they have been differently defined from different perspectives. Relevant to this paper, let me discuss some of the alternative but interrelated conceptualizations of nation-state building.

For some scholars and practitioners, nation state building is a circular and long term process, which is defined by the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of public structures for efficient delivery of public goods (Galata, 2016).

For others, nation-state building as an "architectural metaphor" is a measure or an action taken by a state or government to unite various groups and ethnic identities to form one common national identity or national fellowship. The "architectural metaphor" also designates the political process uniting and defining various groups and ethnic identities under one country to share common socio-economic, cultural and political destinies (Østerud; 1991; Harris, 2012; Ishwor, 2020). Ishwor (2020, P.) elaborated;

Nation-building is the process whereby a society of people with diverse origins, histories, languages, cultures and religions come together within the boundaries of a sovereign state with a unified constitutional and legal dispensation, a national public education system, an integrated national economy, shared symbols and values, as equals, to work towards eradicating the divisions and injustices of the past; to foster unity; and promote a country wide conscious sense of being proudly united, committed to the country and open to the continent and the world. Nation-building is constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state.

Nation state building as a circular process and architectural metaphor is a process that integrates the disparate groups, peoples and nations together. It aims at the socio-economic, cultural and political unification of those

various groups, peoples, nations and ethnic identities within the state to create politically stable and viable nation state in the long run.

Harris (2012) defined nation state building in the context of the modern state's principle of popular rule. According him, one of the defining natures of legitimate political authority in modern states is connected to the principle of popular or majority rule. Hence, nation state building is the process through which the majorities are constructed, in which their socio-economic, cultural and political ideas represent the national identity. But, As Galata (2016) illustrated, building unity can be realized without undermining diversity through the carefully negotiated terms among the various groups, peoples, nations and ethnic identities. In this case, vertically all the constituent groups of a nation state develop shared perception and belongingness and horizontally there could be symmetric relations.

Comprehensively, nation state building is conceptualized as the process of consolidating the state-society relations and enhancing capacity of the state to function (one or two other citations; DFID, 2010). State-society relations imply the process of creating the psychological attachment of the citizens to the physical state and the government. Nation state building as the of process enhancing capacity of the state to function is based on strengthening governmental institutions or institutional buildings, political settlement among elites, survival and legitimacy functions (citations).

Strengthening governmental institutions is the technical process of institutional buildings of the nation state. Political settlement is the creation of common understanding among elites to organize political power which serves the shared interests and beliefs of the society. Sometimes, it may go beyond elites and embraces the larger society. Survival functions are the basic functions are necessary in consolidating the authority of the state and building confidence of the citizenry on the state or government such as maintaining security of the state and the people. Legitimacy functions are extra functions that the society anticipates from the state or government such as efficient delivery of public services, good governance, and other services such as health, education, infrastructure; employment pro-grams; personal safety and access to justice to the society by institutions of the government (ibid).

Rokkan (1975) provided a comprehensive conceptualization of nation state building process by dividing it in to four phases. Phase- I is a territorial control, in which Through authority, administration, taxes, and communication, the center or state power permeates its outer boundaries and achieves political, economic, and cultural unification at the elite level. This occurs when networks of local power holders "do a number of deals, establish a variety of cultural ties, and build a number of institutions for the extraction of resources for common defense, for the maintenance of internal order and the adjudication of disputes, for the protection of established rights and privileges, and for the basic infrastructure requirements of the economy and the polity. A an extension of Phase I, Phase II is the process of Cultural Standardization, in which the larger masses are brought into the political system or cultural integration. It represents the process of creating a national state, in which culture is standardized. In this phase, minorities are being assimilated as a result of language and cultural standardization via the instrumentality of conscription in the armies, schools, and other institutional mechanisms. Particularly, the emergence of mass media opens up new avenues for direct communication between the central elite and the localized populations of the peripheries and fosters a widespread sense of identification with the entire political system in the process of cultural standardization.

Phase II is Political Participation, in which the masses (including the periphery and lower social classes) will be entitled of citizen rights, franchised and encouraged to actively participate in territorial political system through establishing or established opposition political parties. Phase IV is Redistribution is th final stage of nation state building which reprints the expansion of the administrative apparatus of the territorial state, the growth of redistribution agencies, the construction of public welfare services, and the development of national policies for the equalization of economic conditions, negatively through progressive taxation, and positively through transfers from the better-off strata to the poorer or from the richer to the backward regions (ibid).

The instruments or measures of nation state building are communications, economical networks, school systems, and military services, flag and national rituals or holidays. 'The attractiveness and effectiveness of such measures for national state building depends on how deep the shooting trenches are that divide the different social groups from one another'. The degree of the diversities and fragmentations that exist among the constituent groups of a nation state is the determiner of the effectiveness of those instruments of nation state building (Other two citations; Galata, 2016).

THEORIES OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND NATION-STATE BUILDING

Due to the multi-faceted and complex nature of the concepts of ethnicity or ethnic identity, scholars, intellectuals, and politicians have reflected different conceptualizations (Ozkirimli, 2010). There are several theoretical

perspectives or approaches regarding the nature, and development of ethnicity or ethnic identity. Some scholars (like Abbink, 2009; Ozkirimli 2000) listed out that the most common theoretical perspectives of ethnicity or ethnic identity are grouped into four; primordialist, instrumentalist, constructivist, and integrative.

Primordialism assumes that ethnicity or ethnic identity is a given or natural. Primordialists believe that ethnicity or ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the historical experience of human beings to the point of being practically a given as identification of individuals (Geertz, 1973). They expounded that ethnicity or ethnic identity is the product of natural and irrational emotional attachments to blood, race, language, religion, region, etc. Hence, the sentiment is conceived as naturally inherited from ancestors, eternal and unchangeable .

Constructivism perspective is traced from the fields of anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political science in the early periods of the 1960s (Abbinik, 2009). According to constructivists, ethno nationalism is not natural; rather it is the product of ideology. Ethnic identity is conceptualized as an institutional or ideological manifestation. This perspective basically argues that, the ongoing process of economic integration and social reconstruction has led to the creation of a set of common cultural values, and consequently the possibility of various ethnicity or ethnic affiliations (ibid). This perspective provided simple solutions to individuals who are both confused and unsecured due to their identity crisis (ibid).

The instrumentalist approach conceptualized ethnicity as flexible, dynamic, and variable value, in which both the content and boundaries of ethnic affiliation changes according to circumstances (ibid; Yang, 2000). It assumes that ethnicity or ethnic affiliation hasn't fixed boundaries; rather it is a collective entity that changes according to the changing circumstances. In addition, individuals are not assigned permanently to an ethnic group, but they can be members of more than one at the same time as long as they are benefiting socio-economically and politically. Generally speaking, instrumentalists insisted that ethnicity is a ploy to promote economic interests. The individuals are ready to change ethnic group membership as long as they get a better ethnic group that suits and maximizes their sense of security and economic interests.

The integrated approach of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism is mainly a synthesis of the central points of primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalist theories. As Yang (2000) expounded, this theory provides a comprehensive understanding of ethnicity or ethno nationalism by combining the central arguments of the three perspectives. Hence, the basic assumption of integrated approach is that, ethnicity and ethnic nationalism is moderately natural, socially constructed and interest driven.

Nation-state building is the action and process of uniting various ethnic groups or identities in to one unified national identity or fellowship. There are the two dominant theories that describe and analyze the action and process of nation state building; the nation state theory and state-nation theory (Ishwor, 2020). The nation-state theory was developed in European intellectual tradition and, hence leveled as Europe centric theory. This theory conceptualized nation as "a large body of people united by common descent, history, language, ethnicity, race, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory". When a nation of people has an independent state of their own it is often called a nation-state. Hence, nation state building is a creation of from which the great majority of its subjects shares the same culture and is conscious of it. It is characterized by the machining up of the pre-existing cultural boundaries of the nation with political boundaries (one citation may be with additional idea; Ishwor, 2020). "The Kurds are a nation without a State, but France, Germany, and Japan are examples of nation-states" (Ishwor, 2020).

State-nation theory was developed in the intellectual movement of the Nepalese Society and hence known as Nepal centric theory. This theory conceptualized state as an entity that has independent and sovereign geopolitical legitimacy. By creating mutual coordination of diverse species, castes, languages, cultures, sects, communities, and geographical areas collectively creates nation. Here the definition of "nation" is determined from the point of view of state. Therefore, in the "state-nation" nation is taken as ends whereas state is means (two other citations with possible explanations; Ishwor, 2020). "The best example of state-nation is Nepal, India and USA which were formed on the basis of state-nation theory and from the coordination of diverse species, castes, ethnicity, languages, cultures, sects, communities, geographical areas" (Ishwor,2020).

NATION-STATE BUILDING IN ETHIOPIA

Approaches

The ontological origin of the the nation state of current states of Africa is associated with the arrival of European colonialism. The colonial powers brought forcibly together a variety of groups that under normal circumstances might not have constituted political units called nation-states. This configuration inevitably gave rise to the nation state building comprising numerous groups of varying ethnic, linguistic, and cultural pedigrees (Redie,2011). However, the nation state building of Ethiopia, which avoided European colonization, has its own particularities in Africa (Yohannes, 2019).

Given the different interpretations and narratives of the history of its existence as a polity, it is difficult to have authentic and comprehensive understanding of the trajectories of nation building processes in Ethiopia. The process of Ethiopian nation state building and consolidation and the justifications given to it have been contested for different political interests and motives (additional citations Galata, 2016). All in all, the Ethiopia's nation state-building dynamics can be dominantly divided into three models: imperial model (pre-1974); socialist model (from 1975-1991) and federal model (since 1991) (Markakis, 2011). Under different systems of government, imperial the imperial model (pre-1974) and socialist model (from 1975-1991) nation state building is defined by "centralist-unitary", in which cultural assimilation and integration of multi-ethnic groups being pursued by successive regimes (ibid).one paragraph explanation

The long last nationalist movements organized and marched under the banner of their own national identity within the framework of self-determination, have had an eager to be rid of resentful memories of the fallen older and its dead projects-centralized unitary system and nation building in 1990 (Assefa, 1993). The fact that the post 1991 Ethiopian socio-economic and political developments have been influenced by its pre 1991 ones, the nation state building approach is defined federal democratic governance, in which emphasize has been given to addressing historical inequalities and injustices among the nations and nationalities. The ethnic model has been rigorously advanced by the new power holders in Ethiopia since 1991, where the country is formally reconstituted on an ethnic basis. The foundation upon which the EPRDF's state building strategy is built is the recognition and institutionalization of ethnic identity with special emphasis given to the historically oppressed nations, nationalities and peoples. Ethiopia followed a new state building strategy focusing on two things: protecting the identity and rights of nations, nationalities and peoples and ensuring the unity of the Ethiopian state (ibid; Redie, 2011).

Millennia process of country, Ethiopian is unfinished nation state. As Daniel (2014) investigated, the country only fulfilled the first and second phases of Rokkan's (1975) model of nation-state building (Phase I- territorial control and Phase II- Cultural Standardization). In the process of the country's nation state building trajectories, 'series of bargains are conducted and a variety of cultural bonds are established'. The country has built institutions that are meaningful in the extraction of resources for common defense, maintenance of internal order and order, and the adjudication of disputes. Elementary infrastructures are built for the survival of the polity and the economy integration of multi-ethnic groups and the polity. Larger masses from multi-ethnic groups are brought into the system through conscription of armies, schools, and other national institutions. The standardization of Amharic language and the Amhara (to some extent Tigray) culture through school system and assimilation of minorities has created shared feelings of national identities.

As Dagnachew (2018) illustrated, nation - state building in Ethiopia has a domino effect of intermingling, blood transfusions and adoptions for centuries for Millennia. Individuals in the country forced to identify identities according to their situations. They easily transcend prevailing boundaries and change their identities accordingly. There have been intermarriage, assimilation, adoption and the identity is built and developed through long-term coexistence and shared life experiences across ethnic groups as the result of the nation state building process of the country (Assefa, 1993; Bantayew, 2021; and Tezera, 2021).

Challenges

States of the world have been created in the different processes and trajectories of nation state building processes. Amid the different processes and trajectories, if there anything they have in common; different groups and multi-ethnic groups have given up their identity markers such as culture, language, and psycho-logical makeup in favor of the political dominant group that could be represented as the shared or national identity. In the context of post-colonial African context, the nation state building processes and trajectories of most of the states has been through the highly centralized unitary model that forced multi-ethnic groups to be integrated into a certain dominant ethnic identity or to sustain their own identities. In most cases, multi-ethnic groups have failed to sustain their original African identities while they have inhibited incomplete nation state formation that have invariably and dominantly characterized by the authoritarian, undemocratic, and ethnocentric governments that have consistently experiencing ethnic based tensions and conflicts. The same scenarios have been experienced in the processes and trajectories of nation state building in Ethiopia (Galata, 2016; Daniel, 2014).

For at least three thousand years, Ethiopia have been passed through the processes of nation-state building, and has claimed statehoodship states. But, in spite of the country has subsequently achieved external legitimacy, its internal process of nation state building has failed to be crystallized. For the claimed three thousand years, the governments or The rulers of the country haven't managed to forge a single cohesive nation state or national identity. Various ethnic groups or identities have been antagonistic and repelling towards each other to date (ibid).

There are several reasons that thwarted for the processes and trajectories of nation state building of the country. First and for most, the development of nation state building has been cyclically expanded by “sheer military means” that hasn’t geared in creating shared national sentiments or identities among the multi-ethnic groups of the country (Daniel, 2014). As Clapham (2000: 5) argued, the Ethiopian “*experience of continuous warfare at most only partially replicated the state-consolidating processes that it had promoted in Europe...Most warfare was in essence cyclical rather than developmental. ...and ideologically, from mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, it did not foster the growth of any national’ sentiments [or shared socio-economic, cultural and political identities].*”

From Clapham’s argument, we can infer that fact that Ethiopia as an empire have been created, maintained and consolidated its sovereign existence strictly by force, the necessary political developments that are pertinent to the nation state building project process have not occurred. The country have been birthed and kept alive by “naked force” and remained as its only “sustainer” under all system of governments, referring for all the Markakis’s three models of government of Ethiopia; the imperial model (pre-1974); socialist model (from 1975-1991) and federal model (since 1991). Even in the currently ethnically-based system of government, whatever rights of self-rule and self-determination of ethnic groups are granted by ‘constitution’, neither group rights nor individual liberties are upheld by the present rulers. Force and coercion is still being used as the force of integration and instrument of administration rather than uniting by the peaceful, deliberative, and consensus based integration of those multi-ethnic groups in to the nation state formation (Daniel, 2014).

Daniel (2014) and Galata (2016) investigated that the militaristic process of nation building of Ethiopia wasn’t progressive by its nature in all regimes or systems of government. It has’t been developmental and supported by “political settlement”, in the sense that it couldn’t create common or mutual understandings among elites in particular and the whole societies at large. The Ethiopian nation-state builders have never opted for political, economic and cultural unification among elites of the multi ethnic groups of the country. They couldn’t have forged genuine bargains or compromises with elites in accommodating the various the interests and beliefs of the multi-ethnic groups of the country.

By building the confidence of the citizenry on their government, survival and legitimacy functions of governments play a crucial role in consolidating the authority of the state in general and the nation state building process in particular. But, the inability or ineffectiveness of state builders in securing the survival and legitimacy functions have been consistently challenges for the consolidation of nation building in Ethiopia (Galata, 2016). The state builders of the country couldn’t fulfill the basic functions of (which are essential for its survival) state that have to do with the security of the state and the people. The legitimacy functions or the expected functions that the society anticipates from the state such as the efficient delivery of public services, good governance, and other services such as health, education, infrastructure; employment programs; personal safety and access to equality and justice to the society by institutions of the government haven’t been provided meaningfully (Galata, 2016; Yohanes, 2019).

The ethnification of politics and the political settlement that emerged in post 1990 to date have adversely undermined both the spirit and institutionalization of nation state building trajectory of the country (Yohanes, 2019). According to EFDR constitution (1994) of Article (8), ‘*All sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia*’; and Article (39) ‘*Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to selfdetermination, including the right to secession*’. The Articles implies that the Ethiopian people as a unified entity can’t be the builders and power owners of the state, which has the negative implication on nation state building process of the country. They have spread disintegration, animosity, ethnic rivalry.

The constitutional set up inherently and the mal practices of ethnic politics have caused seriously contradictory and divisive political and historical narratives among the elites. In the post 1990 period, organizational and mobilization strategy of both the ruling coalition (EPDRF) and the opposition parties or groups are defined by the mutually rejectionist and exclusionary agendas regarding in every aspects of the country’s move (Medihane, 2021). The tensions, rivalries and senses of political and economic marginalization has grown among the multi-ethnic groups of the country manifested inter-ethnic violent outbreaks (Yohanes, 2019).

Parallel to the ethnification of the Ethiopian post 1990 politics, toxic ethnic hatred that fueled by the social and ethnicised media outlets is unsympathetically thwarting the nation state building process of the country, at the level of disintegrating or unmaking Ethiopia as statehood (one author Yohannes, 2019). ‘In Rwanda, radio programs such as Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines spread much of the toxic hatred that fueled the country’s genocide. The same is happening in Ethiopia’ (Yohannes, 2019:3). Organizations (both political and civic) largely remain ethnically based and media outlets are being controlled by ethnic elites that widely

contrasting agendas that play a destructive role on the nation building process of the country. Social media appears similarly capable in spreading untruths and ethnic barbs in Ethiopia (ibid).

Generally, the expectation that people can come together, forge a cross-ethnic association for broader social, economic and political change on a non-communal basis is simply not occurring in Ethiopia. There is a lack of shared meanings at the national level. Instead, violent ‘contentions’ between identities is persisting (Two common authors; Yohannes, 2019). The violence currently unfolding in the country is a more acute stage of internal conflicts that have bedeviled it from its inception. In the worst cases, university students we are assumed to be the ‘brain of the state’ have not been spared from ethnically inspired murders. Among the nine legal administrative regions of the country, in Oromia, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul regions that constitute more than half of the country’s population, there is still a strong sense being conquered, assimilated, marginalized and relegated to the periphery of Ethiopian history. A sense of political and economic marginalization forms the basis upon which some of the zones and regions like demand their own exclusive political space. As federal units, they want the right to control over resources found within their jurisdictions, but this has the effect of marginalizing other groups living within regions who ‘don’t belong’ (Yohanes, 2019).

Nation-state building discussions in Ethiopia cannot move forward without the multi-ethnic groups coming to an agreement on the necessity of coexisting within the Ethiopian state and introducing a workable formula for how power is to be acquired and within what bounds it should be exercised. A breakthrough in connecting narratives and historical accounts is desperately needed. To hammer out and identify intersections and contradictions around the political history of the nation and competing narratives, peaceful discussions are necessary at the national level. The breakdown of law and order and even the collapse of the nation appear to be alarming possibilities if such a course is obstructed or not pursued by the stakeholders, as well as the beginning of war in November 2020 (ibid, Medihane, 2021).

SUMMARY

Ethnicity or ethnic identity is commonly defined as a collection of people that share similar cultural and linguistic identities, which makes one ethnic group distinct from others. A certain ethnic group shares similar way of life, culture, language and boundary that makes the group very distinct from the other ethnic groups or identities in the surrounding environment. However, it is important to understand the existence of very minor cultural dissimilarities within the group itself. However, ethnicity or ethnic identity is an elusive concept usually referring to ethnic attributes that can be manipulated for social and political purposes.

The conceptual discussion and practice of nation state-building has got popularity in the post WW II period. For some scholars and practitioners, nation state building is considered as circular and long term process, which is defined by the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of public structures for efficient delivery of public goods. For others, nation-state building as an “architectural metaphor” is a measure or an action taken by a state or government to unite various groups and ethnic identities to form one common national identity or national fellowship. Rokkan (1975) provided a comprehensive conceptualization of nation state building process by dividing it in to four phases; Phase- I is a territorial control, Phase II, Cultural Standardization, Phase III is Political Participation, Phase IV is Redistribution resources of the nation state.

For at least three thousand years, Ethiopia have been passed through the processes of nation-state building, and has claimed statehoodship states. All in all, the Ethiopia’s nation state-building dynamics can be dominantly divided in to three models: imperial model (pre-1974); socialist model (from 1975-1991) and federal model (since 1991). Under different systems of government, imperial the imperial model (pre-1974) and socialist model (from 1975-1991) nation state building is defined by “centralist-unitary”, in which cultural assimilation and integration of multi-ethnic groups being pursued by successive regimes (ibid).

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Yirga Alemu Mengie is an accomplished educator and researcher from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He currently serves as the Dean of Students, lecturer, and researcher. With a Bachelor's degree in History and a Master's degree in Social Anthropology, Yirga brings a rich interdisciplinary perspective to his work. He has been dedicated to teaching since a young age, fostering an engaging learning environment that encourages students' critical thinking and intellectual growth.

Yirga's most fulfilling experience lies in the classroom, where he inspires and empowers students to explore their potential. As a committed advocate for academic excellence, he actively contributes to research in critical comparative analysis on the models and challenges of nation-state building trajectories: The case of Ethiopia, aiming to advance knowledge and understanding within the field. Through his work, Yirga strives to make a meaningful impact on the academic community and beyond