

Voting for an ethnic identity: procedural and institutional responses to ethnic conflict in Ethiopia

LAHRA SMITH

*African Studies Program, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service,
Georgetown University, Box 571042, ICC 305-I, Washington, DC
20057-1042, USA*

Email: Ls356@georgetown.edu

ABSTRACT

The literature on democratisation in diverse and divided societies suggests that procedural and institutional innovations can help create the conditions for democracy by adjudicating among groups with competing claims for recognition and inclusion. Some of the most critical assumptions about the relationship between ethnic identity and formal political institutions have been tested in Ethiopia since the early 1990s. Ethnic federalism is a unique and controversial attempt to account for the contested nature of ethnic identities in contemporary Ethiopian politics through a variety of mechanisms, including the use of a referendum to determine ethnic identity. In 2001 the Siltie people voted to separate from the Gurage ethnic group. With this political manoeuvre, the Siltie accessed greater levels of political power and greater resources, but also recognition under the constitutional arrangement as a distinct ethnic group. The Siltie case suggests that formal political institutions have a limited, though important, role in resolving contested citizenship claims. At the same time, it raises vital questions about the challenges of procedural solutions in the context of contested citizenship and democratic transition in sub-Saharan Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Early in 2001, voters in a poor, rural region of southern Ethiopia were presented with a unique referendum on ethnicity. The Siltie, previously considered a sub-clan of the Gurage ethnic group, were asked quite simply, ‘Are the Siltie Gurage or not?’ Their answer was overwhelmingly

that the Siltie were *not* Gurage. This unique exercise in voting for an ethnic identity is one of the most dramatic modern experiments in injecting direct political competition into what has traditionally been regarded as a social or cultural matter. It followed years of campaigning, both for and against Siltie separation, by members of both the ruling political party and opposition parties, and prompted debate and eventually arbitration at the highest political authority on questions of nationality in Ethiopia, the House of Federation, which ordered the referendum.

The complex and contested meanings underlying Siltie and Gurage identities, and 'the question of nationalities' in Ethiopia,¹ as the debate over ethnicity and inclusion is typically called, provide a fascinating real-life test of critical assumptions of theory and public policy with respect to ethnicity and political institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. Vesting a decision regarding the boundaries and content of ethnicity in the hands of ordinary citizens is a somewhat unusual political manoeuvre. Some would call it inherently democratic, since democratic procedures were followed and the results were accepted by all major parties. This is, for instance, the argument of Laitin and Reich's (2003) 'liberal democratic approach' to language policy. Others would decry it as the inappropriate politicisation of ethnicity resulting from the flawed and politically divisive institutional structures of ethnic federalism,² and sure to lead down a slippery slope to further ethnic conflict. Even the 'success' of the referendum itself can be contested: Was it successful because it was peaceful – no riots or clashes broke out at the time, or have done so up to the present? To what extent is a conflict simmering just below the surface? How are we to interpret the motives of the Siltie in pursuing this separation? What was the role of the ruling party in this process?³ Finally, how representative is the Siltie case of the conflict management potential of ethnic federalism?

The Siltie referendum is a critical test of the power-sharing potential of federalism in the context of ethnic conflict and contested identity claims. This paper asks several questions relevant to the situation in present-day Ethiopia, and to democratisation projects across sub-Saharan Africa: What is the connection between communal identities, particularly ethnic identities, and the formal political institutions which are designed to foster cooperation and create the enabling conditions for democracy? How successful are political institutions in adjudicating between the competing claims for recognition, inclusion and equality based on communal identities in multiethnic societies? The focus of analysis is the use of socio-political institutions for the purpose of creating a common sense of national citizenship among Ethiopia's disparate ethnic populations, and

for creating the conditions of dialogue and participation central to democracy.⁴ Conflicts over the most appropriate political institutions in a multiethnic state frequently indicate competing visions of citizenship, not just competing political interests. Different ethnolinguistic groups in Ethiopia have strikingly different visions of what a democratic Ethiopia should look like, and at least some of these conflicting visions represent distinct and competing institutional arrangements. A central claim of this study is that the failure of the present institutional arrangement in Ethiopia has been to resolve competing citizenship claims, while also arguing against the castigation of all forms of politicisation of ethnicity.

I begin by reviewing the role that citizenship is understood to have in democratisation processes, and the possible institutional remedies to multiple citizenship identities, particularly ethnic identity. I then analyse the constitutional and institutional features of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, which is arguably one of the most important cases of institutional innovation in Africa in the last 15 years. In the final section, the Siltie referendum of 2001 is described and the outcome assessed. The conclusion considers the limited potential of formal institutional models, and suggests other areas of policy intervention that may support or supplement institution-building exercises such as federalism.

CITIZENSHIP AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

The challenge of building democracies in multiethnic states has long been a point of meaningful debate among scholars and political leaders of Africa. Post-independence African leaders experimented with electoral and political party systems which they argued to be more appropriate to African contexts. More recently, scholars have suggested new institutional models for designing democracy in non-Western and highly diverse societies (Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1977; Reynolds 2002). For instance, in assessing the state of democracy in Africa, Joel Barkan (2002: 74) counts among the more optimistic outcomes the fact that there have been 'new experiments with federalism ... to enhance governmental accountability to the public and defuse the potential for ethnic conflict'. While there is some evidence that institutional arrangements such as federalism and other forms of power-sharing can foster cooperation, particularly among political elites, it is increasingly clear that institutions are context-bound, and the results of contemporary institution-building exercises are quite mixed. There are several cases where well-designed formal institutions have failed to meet the expectations of the designers (Laponce & Saint-Jacques 1997; Roeder & Rothchild 2005; Spears 2002).

More recently, scholars have argued that the citizenship lens is a more robust explanation for ongoing conflict and failed, stalled, or incomplete democratic transitions. The fact that there are different and competing forms of citizenship in the nation-state and in ethnic communities goes a long way in explaining the persistence of communal identities in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. At a minimum, citizenship is a legal and formal position based in law. It is the ultimate expression of a state's sovereignty, in that it alone has the right to define who is and who is not a citizen (Heater 1999: 80). Citizenship is central to the democratic principle of self-rule, and the distinction between citizens and subjects. Subjects of a state have no 'voice in the way in which political power is exercised', but citizens make laws and subject themselves to those laws through their own participation (Tully 2000: 213).

Citizenship also encompasses a set of rights and duties enjoyed by individuals, by virtue of their belonging to a particular national community. For some, 'citizenship requires ... a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession', as opposed to kinship and sentiment (Marshall & Bottomore 1991: 40). The concept of citizenship captures the essence of belonging to an organised political community to which one feels an allegiance (Beiner 1995). Therefore, in modern times, citizenship has been equated with national identity, while in the global and postmodern world, scholars increasingly emphasise citizenship understood as participatory, and less related to a national community or a juridical link to a particular state (Benhabib 1999; Martiniello 2002).

James Tully (2000: 215) has noted that the liberal view of citizenship as only a set of rights and duties is limiting, and that citizenship is better seen as 'an identity that members acquire through exchanging reasons in public dialogues and negotiations over how and by whom political power is exercised'. Tully's view of citizenship as the 'intersubjective and dialogical' engagement in the 'institutions of self-rule of a free people' points to the importance of recognition and participation of members of diverse citizen groups in the practice of politics (*ibid.*: 214). This view privileges the struggles over recognition rather than a particular end-goal of achieving a sense of belonging. Similarly, Charles Tilly (1995: 6) points to the fact that 'scholars have come to think of citizenship as a set of mutual, contested claims between agents of states and members of socially constructed categories: genders, races, nationalities and others'.

Citizenship is, therefore, conceptually tied up with equality, inclusion, representation and participation in democratic states. These more nebulous elements of citizenship constitute perhaps the greatest democratic

challenges for the multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial societies of the West, and a great deal of scholarly attention has been directed to these topics in recent years. Because of the types of groups and group conflicts in Western states, this has led some to call for 'differentiated citizenship', 'special representation rights', and other legal and institutional provisions recognising group-based rights (Kymlicka 1995; Young 1990).⁵

Increasingly, citizenship scholars have come to emphasise that citizens are members of, and often active participants in, two substantively different political communities, which are not able to extract similar obligations from or grant similar rights to their members. This view, referred to as 'dual citizenship' or the 'two publics' by Africanist scholars, is related to the more general theoretical distinction between two conceptions of citizenship (Ekeh 1975; Ndegwa 1997). The first, the liberal form of citizenship, focuses on citizenship as status, and holds that rights exist outside and prior to community, and are held by individuals because they are 'both logically and morally prior to the society and the state' (Oldfield 1990: 179).⁶ In contrast, the civic-republican form of citizenship tends to emphasise duties over status, and considers rights not as inherent but as acquired through civic practice and upholding obligations to the community. Because the community is primary, this view of citizenship associates the fulfilment of citizenship duties with the very identification as citizens (*ibid.*).⁷

It is generally agreed that in the West these two conceptions of citizenship have competed for prominence at different historical periods, or through the intellectual and political activity of scholars and political elites. Some argue that liberal individualism is ascendant in the West, though communitarians and others wish to reverse this trend because they point to a lack of social solidarity and social cohesion which is created when citizenship is understood as merely or even primarily as status (Etzioni *et al.* 2004; MacIntyre 1981; Oldfield 1990; Sandel 1982; Taylor 1995; Walzer 1983). There are also distinct historical and geo-political reasons why citizenship has developed differently throughout the world.

However, the nature of contested citizenship in sub-Saharan Africa is distinct from that of the West, both politically and historically. Rather than these two forms of citizenship – the liberal and the civic-republican – clashing and competing in the social and political realm at any given time, those writing about *dual citizenship* have argued that these operate simultaneously and compete within the individual and larger social community in the modern period. In this view, African citizens are members of two types of political communities in the same temporal and spatial world. The first is their civic-republican community, which is most often their ethnic

or communal group. This community demands participation and fulfilment of duties to the collectivity. But at the same time, these individuals are citizens of a modern nation-state, guided by a liberal conception of status and a focus on rights rather than duties.⁸ Modern constitutions and formal political practice vest citizens with a variety of rights that are individual and inherent rather than collective or earned (Heater 1999). The clash of identities represented by these two forms of citizenship is unresolved in modern political and social life.⁹ In his study of Kenyan politics, Ndegwa (1997: 613) concludes that central to the failed transition to democracy throughout the postcolonial period is that liberal and majoritarian institutions' 'presumption of autonomous individual actors is at odds with the reality of individuals fulfilling republican obligations to their subnational community'.¹⁰ Therefore, citizens may be most engaged in their civic-republican community, which, by its exclusion from formal political practice, is unable then to transform these community goods into public goods for advancing democracy. Put simply, dual citizenship is not supporting democratisation processes.

The framework of dual citizenship has been usefully deployed to explain a vast array of political dysfunctions which impede democratic consolidation in sub-Saharan Africa, such as political despotism, corruption, ethnic voting and even ethnic violence. More recent scholarship on formal citizenship laws points to the critical contribution of legal and institutional structures to democratisation processes (Herbst 1999). In the wake of political liberalisation, African leaders have sought to invoke nationalist sentiments, using citizenship laws to narrow the realm of political competition (Aminzade 2003; Whitaker 2005; Woods 2003). With respect to dual citizenship, Africanist scholars have also used the citizenship lens to explain stalled or failed democratic transitions (Mamdani 1996; Ndegwa 1997). Others have used dual citizenship identities to theorise the persistence of racial, class and ethnic identities despite the 'ascendancy of liberal constitutionalism' in these contexts (Halisi *et al.* 1998: 423). However, as the guest editors to a special volume on citizenship in Africa note, 'the tendency to overemphasize liberal citizenship with emphasis on legal-rational factors while ignoring populist and communitarian conceptions of citizenship' in sub-Saharan Africa is problematic, in part because it obscures the distinct ways in which citizenship is conceptualised in Africa, owing to the vagaries of history, culture and contemporary political practice (Halisi *et al.* 1998: 342).

With respect to ethnic identity in particular, Osaghae (2004: 229) goes so far as to claim that in the context of ethnic domination, ethnicity 'functions as a liberationist ideology, providing aggrieved groups a

pedestal for seeking redress and state reconfiguration'. Similarly, Lonsdale (2004: 75) in his normatively rich discussion of Kenyan politics, points to the paradoxes of ethnicity and politics in Africa, concluding that for Kenyans, 'their imaginations of ethnicity, too often destructive, can nonetheless be among their most fruitful sources of nationally active citizenship'. Increasingly, the view of long-time African and Africanist scholars alike is that the study of ethnicity must be approached in radically new ways to account for its democratic potential. It would seem that a theory of citizenship can facilitate the identification of critical citizenship questions relevant to contemporary African democratisation challenges. This must extend beyond formal legal or constitutional provisions relating to citizenship, and into the realm of democratic participation and democratic outcomes.¹¹

Citizenship provides a theoretical lens by which to accomplish a re-framing of ethnicity as positively experienced, enacted and as having potential for expanding and deepening democracy in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Citizenship also introduces questions of social solidarity which can be useful in explaining the failure of institutional reform packages to create the enabling conditions for democratic consolidation. In fact, citizenship is both a legal status and a practice, created by the actors – states and citizens (Tilly 1995: 9). The notion of contentious and engaged citizenship is almost entirely lacking in political analyses of African politics today. While there are certainly important cases where formal citizenship laws play an increasingly important role in restricting political participation by citizens, there are other countries on the continent where the competing notions of citizenship within and between groups and the state constitute barriers to democratisation efforts.¹² Rather than restricting our study of citizenship in Africa to formal, state-centric definitions of citizenship, there is a need to also consider citizenship as a 'set of mutual, contested claims between agents' as Tilly (1995) urged, widening our lens to look at popular claims to recognition and inclusion based on ethnicity.

What a number of contemporary scholars of diversity and multiculturalism theory in the West offer is a dynamic and optimistic view of the role of identity politics in supporting democratisation. Adopting and modifying this theoretical approach would radically change the pessimistic and defeatist tone of what is typically studied as 'ethnic politics' in the African context. It will, I argue, go a long way in explaining the persistence of ethnic and communal identities in Africa far better than we have done to-date, in line with the admonitions of scholars like Osaghae to 'mainstream' ethnic politics in studies of transitional democracies.¹³ One of the most important linkages between ethnic identity and political

outcomes in democratising states is citizenship. The democratic potential of dual citizenship in one country, Ethiopia, suggests that neither extreme of ignoring or reifying ethnicity in formal politics achieves the requisite balance needed to promote democratic consolidation.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO DUAL CITIZENSHIP: THE CASE
OF ETHNIC FEDERALISM IN ETHIOPIA

The analytical framework of citizenship is an innovative and compelling conceptual lens for studying the tensions between identification with the modern nation-state, and the various communal identities which persist and give citizens' lives meaning across Africa today. Yet this theoretical work remains somewhat divorced from the practical exercise of democratisation, understood as the process of deepening and strengthening democratic institutions and outcomes. Because of the normative and institutional preference for non-ethnic solutions to ethnic and communal diversity, empirical and theoretical work in sub-Saharan Africa has not adequately explored the relationship between dual citizenship as just described and formal political institutions.

There are competing perspectives on what might be the appropriate institutional forms to address the distinct challenges posed by dual citizenship, particularly in its ethnic form.¹⁴ A common response has been to de-legitimise membership in the civic-republican community, at least formally. This can be explained in part by the whole-scale adoption of Western models of governing by most African leaders at independence (Jackson & Rosberg 1986; Mamdani 1996). In many cases this was partially based on a belief that civic-republican citizenship was irrelevant or inappropriate for national citizenship identities in Africa. The imperatives of nation-building and national integration were almost universally understood to mean a shift from sub-national, ethnic or communal loyalties to nation-state loyalties (Elaigwu 1993). The dominance of one-party states across Africa was frequently justified on the grounds that it discouraged ethnic politics. It has also been convincingly demonstrated that time and again the formal or official policy and practice de-legitimising ethnicity facilitated its manipulation and deployment by savvy powerful ethnic actors in the political realm (Ndegwa 1997; Olukoshi & Laakso 1996). The post-independence African leadership frequently engaged in what has been called 'ethnic politics', including consolidating political and economic power in the hands of their own ethnic group. However, the explicit and formal practice has almost entirely been non-ethnic from independence up to the present time.¹⁵

Even if the tendency across most of sub-Saharan Africa has been to build explicitly non-ethnic political institutions, there is some precedent globally for building ethnic and communal identities into formal political structures. For the most part, this has been through a variety of supplemental political and social measures, notably affirmative action programmes, systems of proportional representation and reserved seats in legislative bodies based on ethnicity or other markers of communal identity, as well as various forms of regional autonomy or self-government rights for particular groups (Reynolds 2002; Roeder & Rothchild 2005).

Few states in the world, and none in sub-Saharan Africa, have taken the formalisation of sub-national or ethnic identities to the same level as Ethiopia. Like many other sub-Saharan African nation-states, Ethiopia's multiethnic composition has been a significant source of conflict in the modern period.¹⁶ Centuries of social inequality, most prominently manifested as ethnic inequality, emerged in the mid-twentieth century as one of the most critical political questions on the national agenda. Though never colonised by the Europeans, increasing internal politicisation and interaction with independence movements in other parts of Africa and movements for civil rights and equality in the United States and elsewhere facilitated the development of a movement for ethnolinguistic inclusion and equality in Ethiopia.¹⁷ This movement was not unlike independence movements in the rest of colonial Africa in pursuing a more democratic and inclusive political structure. Yet neither the modernising reforms of Haile Selassie nor the socialist agenda of the Derg were able to resolve the 'question of the nationalities' (Bahru 1991; Clapham 2002; Kidane 1997; Marcus 1994).

Therefore, after decades of state-driven centralisation and assimilation, Ethiopia embarked in the early 1990s on a controversial experiment with decentralisation and federalism explicitly organised along ethnic lines. Formally, the institutions of federalism are exciting African innovations in democracy and power-sharing. Even as ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is perceived as a uniquely African institutional solution to a persistent and vexing source of political conflict and instability, it raises pressing questions about the proper place for politicised ethnicity. Critics and hesitant supporters alike have watched the last decade of federalism in Ethiopia with great interest because of this. While receiving tentative support from Western countries such as the United States, there were many sceptics about ethnic federalism from the outset. They feared that the departure from commonly accepted political practice in Africa of non-ethnic political institutions was a grave mistake. Because of this, the

implications of the success or failure of ethnic federalism reach across the entire continent.

Federalism in Ethiopia is structured ethnically, at least on paper. Most of the largest regional states under the federal system are ethnically delineated and primarily mono-ethnic.¹⁸ A few others have two main ethnic groups and at least one is multiethnic, the Southern region, with at least 45 groups. City-states are considered distinct (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa).¹⁹ The Constitution (1995: art. 46) explicitly states that Regions should be delineated based on 'the settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the people concerned'.²⁰ The preamble to the Constitution vests power in ethnic groups, by opening with the words: 'We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia'. Similarly, Article 8 states that sovereign power 'resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia', through their elected representatives and 'their direct democratic participation'. While recognising a variety of individual rights, the Ethiopian constitution takes the radical position that political power resides with ethnic and nationality groups. This unique formalisation of communal identity as the basis for formal citizenship in Ethiopia has vast political implications (Abbink 1997; Minasse 1996).²¹ Ethnic federalism is a radical departure from the Western model which constructs citizenship on a liberal/civic/individual foundation. In this view, ethnic federalism is a framework for constructing a constitutional and political role for dual citizenship as discussed above.

Ethiopia provides the ideal setting for study of the intersection of ethnicity, citizenship and political institutions, since its federal experiment, now entering its second decade, has had mixed outcomes. Certainly Ethiopia is more democratic and less politically violent today than it was prior to the introduction of federalism. For instance, Ethiopia has moved from 'not free' in Freedom House's categorisation to 'partly free' in the years since the new regime took control and the constitutional framework developed. Despite serious charges of ruling-party dominance, and growing problems of human rights violations, it is hard to argue that political or social repression under the EPRDF is at the same level as during previous regimes. In some cases, the specific institutions of the federal arrangement have arbitrated ethnic conflict peacefully. Closer inspection reveals that at least some of these institutional successes were incomplete or flawed. In other instances, violent low-level ethnic conflict persists, and the formal institutions have been either underutilised or ineffective in promoting a peaceful resolution to some communal conflicts. More recently, the 2005 national and regional elections have led most thoughtful scholars to conclude there has been a significant

tightening of control by the ruling party and a deterioration of democratic gains.²²

Generally, assessments of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia based on various indicators of democracy have focused on four types of flaws in the federal arrangement: ruling-party dominance (Aalen 2002; Medhane & Young 2003; Samatar 2004), resource and human capacity shortages (Keller & Smith 2005; J. Young 1999), the persistence of authoritarian traditions (Merera 2003), and the politicisation of ethnicity (Mesfin 2003; Poluha 1998). Each of these has some role in terms of explaining the incomplete democratic transition in the country. Most scholars cite a mixture of these variables in their assessments of Ethiopian democracy today. Almost all of them take a national approach in analysing the impacts of ethnic federalism, whereas this study focuses on a specific and local ethnic conflict and the way in which the institutional and procedural parameters provided by the 1995 Constitution addressed it. In the next section, I consider the case of the Siltie and Gurage, to assess the role of the institutions of ethnic federalism in arbitrating between two ethnic groups with competing visions of both ethnic and national citizenship identities.

ETHNIC SELF-DETERMINATION: THE CASE OF THE SILTIE AND GURAGE ETHNIC GROUPS

The granting of constitutional rights to 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples', rather than to individuals, inherently makes the boundary-drawing exercises between ethnic groups highly politicised. The most controversial section of the Ethiopian Constitution, Article 39, which grants to all of the country's constituent 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' the right to self-determination 'including the right to secession', is arguably more about rights to ethnic self-determination than rights to secession, though the symbolism of the secession provision is profound.²³ In the April 2001 referendum mentioned at the start of this paper, members of the Siltie ethnic group voted overwhelmingly in favour of declaring themselves a distinct 'nationality' or ethnic group. In addition to being an administrative and political move to separate the Siltie from the Gurage group of which they were previously a part, the referendum is a fascinating test of the role of institutions in managing conflict, promoting democratisation, and arbitrating between disparate identity groups. Other ethnic groups have tried to do the same, but not all attempts have resulted in the hoped-for grant of self-determination rights.

Background to the referendum

Located in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples regional state (SNNPR), the Siltie are predominantly Muslim, and are economically poorer and less likely to migrate than the *Sebat Bet* Gurage, who live to the west.²⁴ Few studies of the Siltie people have been completed, though political and administrative changes in recent years are likely to lead to more focused research on them.²⁵ In the modern period, the Siltie were considered a sub-clan of the Gurage ethnic group (Shack 1966). Though the Gurage were understood as a loose collection of related clans, the term Gurage came to be operative at the national level, and subsumed the identities of ethnic groups which were distinct in certain ways, and some of which had little interaction with others.

The commonalities among Gurage groups include high levels of political fragmentation, the cultivation of *ensete* or false banana, and cultural factors such as housing patterns. The so-called sub-clan distinctions mark off different languages, dialects and religions, in addition to other social and cultural characteristics. Bahru Zewde (2003: 20, 21) notes that the three categories of the Gurage were formed largely on the basis of linguistic studies, and that ‘in spite of the strong tradition of their common identity, these are mutually unintelligible categories’. Similarly, Grover (2003: 95) has pointed out in his study of the 1994 Ethiopian Census that ‘Gurage is not a single language but at least five languages.’

One of the most important early studies of the Gurage was an ethnographic study of one group of the Gurage, who are now referred to as the *Sebat Bet* (seven houses) or seven clans of western Gurage, comprising the Chaha, Ezha, Geyto, Muher, Ennemor, Akilil and Walani-Woriro (Shack 1966). Under the imperial administration, the Gurage formed their own *awraja*, within which there were three politico-administrative divisions – Chaha, Walani and Selti (*ibid.*: 37). Since then, several scholars have contradicted or clarified some of the assumptions and assertions made in this early work.²⁶

In addition to ethnographic and political counter-claims to the notion of a pan-Gurage ethnic identity, linguists have also re-assessed the relationships between the languages and dialects of the so-called Gurage languages. Early scholarship designated as Gurage some ‘fourteen “tribal” divisions in the Gurage cluster ... each comprising a number of politically independent clan chiefdoms, [and] further distinguishable on the basis of the language or dialect spoken by each tribal unit’ (Shack 1974: 94). Recent scholarship, rather than ignoring significant linguistic and politico-territorial differences, has corrected the historical tendency

to cluster the Gurage linguistically. Hudson (1994: 692) notes twelve to fifteen recognised varieties, 'within which six or seven languages and/or dialect clusters may be distinguished, in three distinct groups', the northern (Soddo), western (Chaha) and eastern. He also notes that the 'eastern Gurage languages are more divergent from western and northern Gurage languages than, for example, Amharic is from Tigrinya' (*ibid.*: 692).²⁷

The history of linguistic and ethnographic contributions to the construction of a pan-Gurage identity is only part of the story. More recently, John Markakis (1998: 130) has developed these insights in his argument for the 'contextual, multidimensional and fluid' nature of ethnic identity through a brief study of Gurage ethnic-identity formation. He argues that the clan (*bet*) provides the primary source of identity for the western *Sebat Bet* Gurage, territoriality (*ager*) for the Soddo or Kistani Gurage, and religion for the Siltie-speakers of the east. In fact, Markakis concludes that historically there was no people who self-identified as Gurage, and that the Siltie-speakers would traditionally have identified themselves as 'Muslims' (*ibid.*: 131), something consistently confirmed in focus groups throughout Siltie in 2003 (L. Smith 2005). What is significant for our purposes is Markakis' conclusion that, while the notion of a cohesive and united entity known as Gurage did not come from within those groups who were classified as such, it suited the Gurage to develop this 'pan-Gurage universe'. This was useful both to expand social networks in urban areas, and to provide the Gurage with political and economic currency when dealing with Ethiopian imperial authorities (Markakis 1998: 134).

It is surprising that the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and later, the EPRDF, unproblematically built ethnic federalism on ethnographic work of the Derg regime. This is a little-known fact, buried in the 1994 Census, nowhere mentioned in early TGE proclamations, the 1995 Constitution or other related government policy statements such as the National Education and Training Policy (NETP 1994), and never discussed by supporters or opponents of the federal arrangement. In fact, the EPRDF, despite a stated interest in the self-determination of all nations and nationalities in the country, has done little to contribute to either scholarly or public discussion on the content and nature of ethnic group identities. In the case of the Siltie, by using ethnic categories from previous regimes, the EPRDF itself laid the groundwork for the contentious issue of Siltie self-determination. In this, the work of the Derg's Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN) represents the most systematic and thoughtful attempt to conceptualise and standardise the terms and categories of ethnicity and language in Ethiopia. This is recognised in the

1994 Census, which explicitly attributes the ethnic and linguistic categories it uses to those that were created by the ISEN.²⁸

The politics of self-determination for the Siltie

Scholarly research, state and nation-building imperatives, and a historic lack of precision with regard to defining ethnic or linguistic group, all colluded to create a murky and ambiguous terrain for ethnic federalism in Ethiopia. It is of little surprise that earlier regimes, particularly that of Haile Selassie, had intentionally subverted the clear development of indicators of ethnolinguistic identity and categorisation. The nationalist vision of modern Ethiopia has always been of one dominant culture, unified not only territorially but culturally. On the other hand, despite the contribution of the ISEN's work, especially the preparation of the *Almanac* of ethnic groups on which the present-day institutions of ethnic federalism rest, there had yet to emerge clear criteria for determining ethnic group boundaries, nor was there a procedure for arbitrating disputes or contested claims. The Siltie pursuit of recognition as a distinct 'nationality' under ethnic federalism has resolved *procedurally*, if not politically, essential political and constitutional questions.

Despite some precedence for a political designation which was pan-Gurage in content, the Siltie mobilised early in the transitional period to receive status as a separate Nationality. This is attributable to several factors worth considering here, including change and continuity in administrative and political categories of ethnic groups, and evolving social relations among Gurage groups, and nation-wide. The position of Siltie ethnic group members with regard to their earlier designation as Gurage is unclear. Some indicate that the experience of subjugation and exploitation under Emperor Menilek united the Siltie with their Gurage neighbours. 'They saw themselves as the same because of this mistreatment' (interview #85). The Siltie experienced military conquest and similar processes of labour displacement caused by their unequal incorporation into the Ethiopian empire to the Gurage, though they tended to remain more rural and considerably poorer than the Gurage. There are also historic patterns of interaction between the groups, particularly in border towns and regions. Yet in these same areas where Siltie came into contact with Gurage and Hadiya, they were also more likely to become aware of their difference, as they were often referred to as *not* Gurage or Hadiya by members of those ethnic groups (interview #85).

Even prior to the referendum and the separation, the Siltie pushed for the use of their own nationality language in their own administrative

districts (*woredas*). At a symposium on the question of language policy, the Siltie decided in about 1992/93 to use their own language, and informed the Gurage zone administration (interview #67).²⁹ This was facilitated in part because the Siltie language was one of the languages of the Derg's literacy campaign, and therefore more educational materials were available in the language (interview #54).

Today, most agree that unequal development was a primary impetus for Siltie separation. It was argued that the location of Welkite, the Gurage zonal capital town, was too far away, and the isolation meant that the Gurage Zone government was not adequately addressing the development needs of the Siltie (Markakis 1998; interview #67). When the economic development gains did not materialise, resentment built against Gurage leadership, and a sense of distinct Siltie suffering emerged. A political organisation called the Siltie Gogot Democratic Party was formed in the early 1990s, calling for separate Siltie representation and self-administration based on the claim that the Siltie were a distinct nationality. Later, there was a split and a new party, the Siltie Peoples Democratic Unity Party (SPDUP), was formed. Shortly thereafter, anti-separation Siltie formed the Siltie Gurage Peoples Democratic Movement, apparently funded by a wealthy Siltie merchant (Markakis 1998: 142). Finally, the Gurage themselves mobilised to oppose the separation and the Gurage Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Movement (GPRDM), which controlled the Gurage zonal government, used its power and influence to work against the separation.³⁰

The political wrangling was played out in the early years over questions of ethnography and identity. The distinctions between the Gurage groups, including particularly the Soddo Gurage and the Siltie, were important from the very beginning of the federal arrangement. During the initial stages of designing and building ethnic federalism, only two *Sebat Bet* Gurage representatives attended critical early meetings of the Transitional Government (TGE), and intra-group representation concerns led to the development of procedures for determining which of the three main Gurage sections (east, west, north) would represent the 'Gurage' on the two seats they were allotted on the Council of Representatives. Particularly after the establishment of the EPRDF affiliate, the GPRDM, the splits between these groups became political, with the first important conflicts between Soddo Gurage in the north and their Oromo neighbours, known as the Soddo Jida.³¹ Somewhat later, but still early in the transitional period, the Siltie began to agitate for separate status, based primarily on their Muslim identity, distinct language and relative underdevelopment.³²

The early period of Siltie mobilisation was characterised by attention to developing local ethnographies and a unified discourse of Siltie identity, followed by what could be called a civil-society building phase.³³ This involved the creation of associations and, eventually, political parties that could advance Siltie interests in the political realm. A short time later, these Siltie political parties began to pursue legal and constitutional recognition of the Siltie ethnic group, an unprecedented move in Ethiopian political history. The constitutional provisions of ethnic federalism concern themselves directly with questions of self-determination of ethnic groups, requiring the establishment of procedures for groups to be delineated as such, thereby qualifying them for self-determination. Because the constitutional and institutional framework attached primary political importance to ethnic groups, determining ethnic group boundaries emerged as a pivotal political exercise, and the Siltie case became the test for claims to autonomy and distinct identities. Until this point, it is unclear how groups were designated as separate ethnic groups or not. The ambiguous legal nature of ethnic group specifications, however, could not continue, since the distinctions between groups involved tremendous political and economic resources, not to mention social status. As one EPRDF document itself states, ‘without resolving such nationality issues the building of a stable democratic society and progress in the political and economic life of the people cannot materialise’ (EPRDF n.d. 2: 1). Interestingly, the position of the Party was that ‘in most cases there was no ambiguity in the ethnic identity of the people of Ethiopia ... [but] that there has occurred one case which has special attention’ – the case of the Siltie people (*ibid.*: 1).

At this point, a petition was made to the House of Federation by those in favour of separation for the Siltie. The decision of the House of Federation initially was that this matter must be handled at the regional level, if at all possible.³⁴ Thereafter, a meeting was organised in the town of Butajira in 1997 with representatives from various parts of the Siltie community.³⁵ Rival political parties were present, as were regional and zonal officials of the dominant party, the EPRDF/GPRDM. A resolution at the end of the meeting opposed separation and the matter was considered closed by the ruling party (Markakis 1998). But there is strong evidence that the ruling party’s position against the separation inhibited free discussion and nullified the decision of the group assembled. As one respondent noted, ‘the people did not feel free because the EPRDF was campaigning strongly that the separation was wrong’ (interview #85). The EPRDF’s own report on the matter concluded that ‘the fact that EPRDF took a position on the matter threw doubt on the sincerity of the ballot to

many observers ... This made the Butajira conference and its outcome undemocratic' (EPRDF n.d. 2: 2).

The initial position of the EPRDF was that the Siltie were indeed part of the Gurage ethnic group. According to one respondent close to the process, the feeling of the EPRDF was that they were the same people, only speaking different languages, and that they would 'evolve as Gurage ... [Whereas] the population [of Siltie] as a whole is more inclined to see themselves as different' (interview #85). But even the ruling party acknowledged that the Siltie people had a distinct language, and since language was a primary designator of ethnic group identity under the ISEN studies which were foundational to the boundaries of ethnic federalism, it could not resolve this anomaly.³⁶ Therefore, the party admitted that they 'mishandled' the matter from the start. The EPRDF report on the matter states that the party 'failed to appreciate the rise of nationalism and misconstrued this trend, fearing it might lead to the break-up of the Guraghe people ... At the start of the campaign the EPRDF took a defensive position. It felt it had to take a stand on the identity of the Siltie and therefore supported the unity of the Guraghe people as one body. EPRDF has always struggled for the unity of people but in this instance this support was misplaced' (*ibid.*: 2).

This 'recognition' by the EPRDF appears to have allowed or at least facilitated the legal process undertaken by separatist opposition political parties, particularly the SPDUP. Once the matter was brought before the House of Federation the second time, it was sent to the Council of Constitutional Inquiry, which is tasked by the Constitution to consider in depth any issues relating to the nations and nationalities, and make a recommendation to the House of Federation for a vote.³⁷ Their recommendation, in 1999, demonstrates that the Council saw the constitutional issues at hand to be two-fold: (1) 'According to the FDRE Constitution, who has the power to decide about the identity of a given group of people?'; and (2) 'What procedure should be followed to do that?' (House of Federation, n.p.).³⁸ In the Council's decision is therefore to be found the most explicit procedural answer to the political question of determining ethnic identity under the new federal arrangement.

Since the Council understood the Siltie case as an issue of self-determination, particular provisions of the Constitution were considered for their relevance. Articles 39(4), 47(3), 52(2), 62(3) were considered to be most relevant to the 'question of identity' (*mannennat teyyaqe*). The recommendation of the Council was that 'a demand for the determination of identity must be entertained by the Council of the State where the issue is

raised' because of the requirements of Article 52(2). But 'if there is a procedural irregularity or complaint that the issue was not resolved in accordance with the constitution; or if there are similar reasons, or if the group and the state council do not agree, the case will be submitted to the House of Federation for a final decision' (*ibid.*). However, Article 39(5) was seen to have some bearing with respect to determining the procedures for the group to make their wishes known. In particular, the 'State Council to which the case is submitted is expected to conduct research that is cognizant of the conditions under Article 39(5) and then present the case for referendum. For the referendum to be democratic and fair, the members of the group which has raised the demand must participate directly, and the process should be free and held by a secret ballot' (*ibid.*). The use of a referendum as the procedural answer was argued to be provided for by Articles 39(4), and 47(3) of the Constitution, which relate to secession and statehood, respectively.

As provided by the Constitution, this recommendation went for a vote by the House of Federation, which supported the Council's recommendation. Thus, the historic decision of the House of Federation was that the Siltie had made a sufficient case for their status as a distinct 'Nationality' to at least have the right to a referendum on the matter. The question on the ballot was simply: 'Are the Siltie Gurage or not?'. A referendum held on 1 April 2001 in the Siltie area and other places where the Siltie lived resulted in a vote of over 99% for the separation of the Siltie from the Gurage. Siltie residents in Addis Ababa were reported to have taken to the streets to 'express their happiness on the results of the referendum' (*Addis Tribune* 13.4.2001).

The economic, political and administrative results have proven significant for the Siltie people. Moving from the status of several woredas within Gurage Zone, the Siltie now have their own Zone, with the attendant resources and direct access to higher levels of administration. Officials at zone administrative offices, some of whom had previously performed their duties for the Siltie area from the Gurage Zone offices in Welkite, reported that the location in Worabe, which is inside the Siltie area, and the greater financial resources, were both tangible signs that the referendum had given the Siltie a greater share of the political and economic power that they needed and deserved. By late 2003, a number of new government and private buildings were under construction along the main road. Several self-help organisations with links to urban entrepreneurs were advertising their work in schools, as well as other poverty-alleviation and development projects. A large mosque was under construction just as one entered Worabe from the north.

Echoing the words of the EPRDF report, though presaging them, the Council concluded that the important constitutional principle 'is that the group itself is the decision-maker. Thus, the House of Federation and the State Council's role should be seen in light of that' (House of Federation). This historic decision of the House of Federation and the outcome of the Siltie referendum mean that future decisions about who is an ethnic group and who is not will be decided procedurally according to processes somewhat similar to those for secession and statehood, notably a referendum of the people concerned (Baylis 2004).

It is worth noting a few critical political issues raised by the outcome of the Siltie case, as well as the House of Federation decision and the EPRDF's role in this. First, the Siltie were successful in using existing constitutional provisions and institutional processes to advance their claim. This success in a country with such a short history of democracy is itself monumental. The EPRDF concludes that this is because the Siltie are a distinct nationality, and that their inclusion with the Gurage was quite uncommon in Ethiopia. According to the party report, most ethnic groups are already properly identified (EPRDF n.d. 2: 1). The validity of this assertion will only be proven as other groups come forward (or do not come forward) claiming self-determination and identity rights.³⁹ But the precedent that this case has created, beyond the most obvious answer to procedural matters relating to identity questions, is for peaceful and democratic use of formal institutions and the Constitution to resolve the stickiest questions of ethnic identity. Champions of procedural democratic processes would probably regard the Siltie case as a vindication of their argument for vote-centric conflict resolution processes.

Second, the role of the EPRDF *vis-à-vis* opposition parties is important. While the tone of the EPRDF's internal report on the matter seems genuinely contrite, it is clear that the party has tremendous influence in determining the outcome of such matters. It is also certain that the position it takes on the claims of any particular group will have a powerful role in determining the outcome. The party initially did not consider the Siltie people distinct, despite their unique language, discrete territorial boundaries and differential development levels. But it is not entirely clear that the EPRDF only changed its official position on this as a matter of political opportunism, since it could be argued that their change in stance was a reflection of democratic deliberation. Party members seem to have come to recognise the will of the Siltie people in this process, and shifted their party line in accord with it. And this despite resistance from powerful Gurage within the party, a fact only implicitly acknowledged in the

EPRDF report, but which surely must have weighed heavily on the EPRDF in the process of revising its stand.

Both the Siltie and the Gurage people are represented in the House of Peoples' Representatives through the Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) of the EPRDF coalition.⁴⁰ There are several registered opposition groups, including the SPDUP, the Selti Nationality Democratic Movement⁴¹ and the Gurage People's Democratic Front, as well as some minimal support for the larger 2005 opposition parties, the Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD). The opposition, which led the initial campaign for separation of the Siltie people, expressed resentment at not being able to capitalise on the gains of the referendum in terms of their own political standing. The EPRDF won in all four electoral constituencies in Siltie Zone by over 80%. The CUD ran candidates in only two of four, and the UEDF in only one. The SPDUP held a Parliamentary seat in 1995, but lost it in the 2000 elections and did not win it back in 2005. The position of the party is clear from a party statement dated 10 October 2002, which asserts unequivocally that 'members of the party now ruling the Siltie zone were openly saying there was no nation called "Silte" and they were strong opponents of the movement towards identity recognition ... Unlike their past utterances, now only for the sake of holding power they bear the name Siltie, and are roaming around to avenge their yesterday's loss' (SPDUP, 2).

The SPDUP, pivotal in preparing the documentation of the case to the House of Federation, feels that the party was successful in pursuing its first objective, the 'identity case', but has yet to achieve its second, which is for the Siltie 'people to fully govern themselves' (interview #90). There is clear resentment towards the EPRDF for their about-face on the matter, which enabled them to maintain popular support in the Siltie zone in the 2000 and 2005 elections. But unlike the substantially more acrimonious debates between the ruling party and the opposition generally, the Siltie case is different in that the EPRDF took the unusual step of changing its position on an issue in large part because it realised how widespread and popular it was, and also because the basis for the continued inclusion of the Siltie within the Gurage was not based on the principles central to ethnic federalism, notably language identity.⁴²

Third, it is interesting that the position of the EPRDF was initially focused on the 'unity of Ethiopian peoples', and therefore considered the Siltie to be part of the Gurage. One respondent close to the issue said that, while unity could not be forced, the party has long been of the view that 'the people do not want disintegration and they do not want their own

mini-states. They have common interests and the same problems' (inter-view #85). This is quite a different view from that claimed by the EPRDF's opponents, who cast the regime as interested either in eternal divisions as part of its divide-and-rule strategy, or in breaking up the country completely. By grounding its initial opposition to the Siltie separation in the complex question of unity versus separation, but still being willing to acquiesce when it was clear that popular opinion was not with them, it could be argued that the EPRDF bolstered democracy. I am not saying here that there may not be elements of a divide-and-rule strategy as claimed by opponents from minority or formerly oppressed ethnic groups. This may well be true and there is certainly evidence elsewhere to suggest it. However, the claim that the EPRDF is interested in the perpetual disintegration and perhaps dissolution of the country seems unfounded. In the early days of ethnic federalism, it struggled with the contradiction between upholding constitutionally protected rights to self-determination and maintaining the unity of the country at the most basic level. Sometimes it has come down in favour of 'unity' – particularly, it would seem, when 'unity' as a political principle coincided with retaining a firm hold on central power.⁴³



The Siltie referendum is an interesting test of some critical assumptions of procedural and institutional models of linguistic and ethnic justice. The question of ethnic identity was central, and was subjected to political contestation through a process of meetings, petitions to government entities, constitutional interpretation, and eventually, a referendum. Critically, it was a peaceful process, remarkable in light of the tensions surrounding ethnicity and language in the country.

While the peaceful outcome thus far seems to confirm the usefulness of a political contestation model for handling language decisions, this conclusion may be premature. The role of the EPRDF leadership in handling the Siltie case may have been the cause of the peace, not the referendum process itself. Interviews and data analysis suggest that the EPRDF made a calculated decision to support the Siltie position, perhaps to undermine the power of the Gurage, or perhaps in response to perceived threats to peace by the Siltie if they chose to do otherwise.⁴⁴ Either way, the resolution to the matter came only after the EPRDF supported the Siltie position, which was done using the administrative processes such as the Council of Constitutional Inquiry, an institution firmly under EPRDF control. Even more telling is the success with which the EPRDF has since

undermined the power of the Siltie political opposition. Perhaps because the EPRDF took the supporting position, most members of the zonal administration are EPRDF members, not opposition, and were reluctant to discuss the role of the opposition parties in the referendum process. The opposition party confirmed its marginalisation in the wake of the referendum.

Significantly, the Siltie may be the only case of the peaceful use of formal political institutions to resolve competing ethnic group claims in Ethiopia. Consideration of the failures – ethnic conflicts which might qualify for institutional resolution, but either have not been pursued or have not been successful in resolving the conflict – provide an even more complex picture of how formal institutions are an incomplete solution to the conflicts of identity between ethnic groups.⁴⁵ In other work, I provide specific examples, such as the Sidama conflicts in 2002, the ongoing Oromiya–Somali border disputes, and the violence in Gambella in late 2003 (L. Smith 2005).

For each of these three examples, there are myriad others. Rather than being just a few discrete conflicts based on ethnic identity, there are in fact quite a number of dissimilar and low-intensity conflicts across the country. While I have suggested elsewhere that there are considerable implications of not including the Gurage in the referendum process, the relatively successful resolution of the Siltie case to date reflects an exception to the rule, rather than the standard by which ethnic federalism can be judged. In part it is the rarity of such peaceful and institutionalised responses to ethnic disputes, no matter how great the level of political violence that precedes them, that makes the Siltie case important. However, the peaceful resolution does suggest the potential for institutional and legal processes to resolve disputes, rather than deepening and strengthening conflict. In Ethiopia, the House of Federation and the Council of Constitutional Inquiry are powerful democratic institutions as yet entirely underutilised.

Ethnic federalism is a unique effort to harness the democratic potential of dual citizenship identities in Ethiopia. It has been a mixed project, as we have seen. The institutions have in some cases peacefully and conclusively arbitrated and managed conflicts, particularly ethnic conflicts. At times, the institutions have demonstrated a surprising flexibility in resolving ethnic conflicts, as the Siltie case illustrated. Rather than hardening ethnic claims, the House of Federation and the Council of Constitutional Inquiry in particular have been pivotal tools of creative and democratic management of contested identity. Yet, in a number of other cases, these institutions have not been utilised at all, and in other cases, they have not been

so successful. In part, these failures result because the institutions have not been merged with the process of social discourse over and about the nature and terms of democratic citizenship in the contemporary Ethiopian state.

Formal political institutions are limited, though vital, in resolving contested citizenship claims. They provide outlets for mediation and resolution, and they can structure the rules of political bargaining but, in many cases, they are bypassed or underutilised. Institutions are also limited in their effectiveness if they do not have mechanisms which recognise the commitments placed on African citizens by their civic-republican communities. In Ethiopia, there are a number of reasons for this. Certainly, party dominance is the primary one. Human and financial capacity variation between ethnic communities and the general lack of resources country-wide are additional factors. Critically, the lack of democratic dialogue in Ethiopia is a fundamental weakness of the present political system. While this may be facilitated by the party leadership, it pervades Ethiopian society. The responses of parents are typical: 'We were told to teach our children in X language.' 'Yes, we were called to a meeting. At the meeting, we were told of the new language policy.' This is not social discourse or democratic dialogue. It is the use of local political and administrative institutions for information dissemination and policy enforcement developed at higher levels. It does not reflect genuine citizenship participation or dialogue, and the results are just the kind of apathy and disempowerment of citizenry that one hears in discussions of politics in Ethiopia.

Important steps have been taken in recent decades to advance citizenship in Ethiopia. Formal, legal citizenship has been extended to all. Critical issues such as land ownership and ethnic equality were pushed into public discourse and onto the policy agenda. Though citizenship remains contested today, there is at least a public language whereby all Ethiopians can express their identities and help to re-frame the vision of the Ethiopian state. The 1995 Constitution and the institutions of ethnic federalism, however incomplete their application, provide a powerful foundation on which to build an increasingly inclusive and engaged citizenry. Though institutions are limited in arbitrating conflict, they can provide linguistic and procedural parameters for political competition regarding contentious issues such as ethnicity. Bolstering these formal institutions with informal (and formal) social discourse, through public democratic education in particular, as well as grassroots community development, will create avenues for Ethiopian citizens to activate democratic obligations from their communal identities into positive gains for the democratic polity.

NOTES

1. The Amharic word *beher* is generally translated as ‘nations’, and can also be translated as ‘ethnic groups’. *Gossa* is the word for tribe, though it is not commonly used today. The 1995 Constitution opens with the words: ‘We, the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia’. The terms ‘nationalities’ and ‘ethnic groups’ are used interchangeably throughout this text.

2. Ethnic federalism refers to the constitutional arrangements granting ethnic groups in Ethiopia rights to self-determination, including some form of self-government. In this, Ethiopian federalism is similar to other federal states in its grant of some meaningful self-government to constituent political units, but distinct in that the basis for regional state delineation is primarily ethnic identity.

3. The general argument, tested through the Siltie case, is that the ruling party has consistently pursued a policy of divide-and-rule when it comes to ethnic groups. For instance, in her consideration of the Wolaitta, Vaughan (2006) argues that the EPRDF pursued a policy ‘of actively “remoulding” or “melding” an existing set of ethnic identities’. As in the Siltie case, these actions were met with intense resistance, forcing the EPRDF to retreat from its position original position of group ‘unity’. Both cases provide evidence not of a policy of perpetual fragmentation, but of a flawed attempt at encouraging ethnic consolidation on the part of the ruling regime.

4. Keller (2005) conducted one of the first studies of ethnic identification in the country, and his findings suggest that members of different ethnic groups attach somewhat varying levels of identification in their ethnic identity *vis-à-vis* their national identity as Ethiopians.

5. This debate over citizenship as inclusion and recognition in the West is extensive; illustrative perspectives are offered by Barry 2001; Huntington 2004; Tully 1995.

6. The paradigmatic statement of contemporary liberal theory is Rawls 1971.

7. There are several different ways of distinguishing between citizenship models. The classic is Marshall & Bottomore’s (1991) three forms of citizenship: civil, political and social. Halisi *et al.* (1998) add libertarianism to the two categories of citizenship listed here. In his work on American citizenship, Rogers Smith (1988: 232) proposes a third form of citizenship in the American context, which he terms ‘ethnocultural Americanism’. Ronald Beiner (1995) distinguishes between communitarian and republican forms. The most common approach is to conceive of two primary forms of citizenship as I have outlined here.

8. Berman *et al.* (2004), drawing on the work of John Lonsdale, distinguish between ‘moral ethnicity’, which is the web of social obligations that define rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to the group, and ‘political tribalism’, which refers to the external relations between ethnic groups and the state, and in which groups bid competitively against each other and the state for access to resources and political control. The problem with this arbitrary separation of citizens’ identities into internal and external is that it does not necessarily explain as well as Ekeh’s ‘two publics’ why ethnicity is so destructive in its inter-group, ‘external’ form, and less so in its in-group, ‘internal’ form.

9. C. R. D. Halisi’s (1999) study of South Africa is by far the most important assessment of the liberal-republican distinction and its relevance to African political thought and political development.

10. Mahmood Mamdani (1996: 18) extends this to argue, in part, that colonialism created a bifurcated state with ‘two forms of power under a single hegemonic authority. Urban power spoke the language of civil society and civil rights, rural power of community and culture. Civil power claimed to protect rights, customary power pledged to enforce tradition.’ Richard Sklar (1999) takes a distinct approach to the mixture of formal state power and customary or traditional power, focusing on the positive democratic potential of traditional authority in his concept of ‘mixed government’.

11. There is also a rich theoretical and empirical literature which debates the primordial versus constructed nature of ethnic identities (see Gil-White 1999 for a fascinating counter-argument). This present study shifts the analytical focus to citizenship, as just discussed. It should be clear, however, that I take a generally constructivist approach to ethnicity, never assuming that ethnic groups are discrete, bounded or homogeneous. The premise of this study is that ethnic identities are fluid, situational and contested (Chandra 2001; Eriksen 2002). I seek to analyse the interplay between group definitions of ethnicity (by elites and citizens alike), and the political institutions of the state, in this case, ethnic federalism and vote-centric mechanisms for managing ethnic differences.

12. For instance, the labelling of political opponents as ‘foreigners’ in countries such as Côte d’Ivoire and Zambia is an increasingly common tool for narrowing the realm of political competition (Whitaker 2005; Woods 2003). Here I am arguing that *in addition* to these studies, we need to consider the contested citizenship claims of various ‘identity groups’ on the continent, and citizenship as practice, not just legal designation.

13. I am not, however, saying that ethnic groups are inherently or intrinsically egalitarian or more democratic. It is widely noted that they are often hierarchical, conservative and socially traditional. This has important ramifications for women and other groups within the group (see Berman *et al.* 2004; Shachar 2001).

14. See the introductory chapter of Berman *et al.* 2004 for a brief summary of some institutional responses to ethnic pluralism in sub-Saharan Africa.

15. Kenya is the classic example of this, where both Presidents Kenyatta and Moi were able to mobilise specific ethnic communities to support them politically, at the same time that they were officially denouncing ethnicity as a politically divisive and anti-nationalist sentiment (Ndegwa 1997). Similar evidence can be found across Africa.

16. By all accounts Ethiopia is a highly diverse country, with at least 73 distinct ethnolinguistic groups.

17. Known as the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM), this movement had many sources and many directions, which fall outside the scope of this study. The ESM was the intellectual and political foundation for the movement for greater ethnolinguistic equality and inclusion in Ethiopia (Bahru 1991; Balsvik 1985; Keller 1988, 2005; Ottaway & Ottaway 1978).

18. I refer to the states in the federation as 'regions' or 'regional states', since this is the most common translation for the Amharic word *kilil* used in the Constitution and in everyday discourse.

19. Primarily mono-ethnic states include Somali, Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya and Afar. Explicitly multi-ethnic states include Harar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPR).

20. However, there are problems with calling the system *ethnic* federalism, since in reality all states are ethnically mixed, and it is unclear how the federal system really guarantees any rights to ethnicity through the territorial principle (see the contributors to Kymlicka & Patten 2003, especially May and Reaume). Ethiopian federalism cannot be said to be a pure form of either principle, since the Constitution grants rights based on personality, and in some cases, has upheld rights to members of an ethnicity or linguistic group outside the territory of their ethnolinguistic group. However, this has been done sporadically and inconsistently, and there is arguably a greater protection of constitutional rights to ethnicity and language in the territory of one's ethnic group.

21. There are also specific provisions related to language use and development, particularly those in Articles 5 and 39.

22. The elections themselves have been thoroughly covered by Abbink 2006, Harbeson 2005, Lyons 2005, and L. Smith 2007.

23. This is a somewhat complicated argument that takes me a bit off topic, but briefly, Article 39 stipulates an 'unconditional right to self-determination' for members of ethnic groups ('Nations, Nationalities and Peoples') 'including the right to secession'. It is the secession provision that generates the most controversy, while I argue that the most interesting and relevant provision is that relating to self-determination.

24. The Gurage are known in modern Ethiopian history as successful businesspersons who are highly mobile. Even in remote parts of Ethiopia, shop owners and business people tend to be Gurage. This is far less true for the Siltie (see Bahru 2003; Markakis 1998; Worku Nida 2000).

25. Important studies of the Sebat Bet Gurage include Shack 1966, and Gebreyesus 1991; of the Soddo/Kestane Gurage by Fekadu 1972; and of the Azernet Berbere Siltie by Abraham Hussein & Habtumu Wondimu (1994), which is discussed below. See also Sherif Leri 1985.

26. For instance, Fekadu Gadamu's (1972: 3) dissertation on the Soddo Gurage and the Alemgana-Walamo Road Construction Association provided a critical counter-argument to the developing ethnographic and historiographic representation of a pan-Gurage identity. Fekadu's argument was that the Gurage do not form one cohesive society, and that many of the 'generalizations and conclusions [of Shack] do not apply to the Soddos'.

27. Shack (1974) reviews the classifications of Gurage-speakers given by various scholars of the time. Significantly for our point, all agree on the separation of an eastern (prominently including Siltie) and a western cluster distinction.

28. For more on the ISEN, and in particular its publication *ISEN 1986*, and a historical comparison of the Ethiopian Census with respect to Siltie and Gurage identities, see L. Smith 2005.

29. Government structure under the federal arrangement proceeds as: Federal government – Regional state government – Zone – *Woreda* – *Kebelle* (local level). A *woreda* is roughly equivalent to a district. Prior to the 2001 referendum, the Siltie were spread across several *woredas* within Gurage Zone. There is now a Siltie Zone with several *woredas*.

30. GPRDM is the Gurage arm of the EPRDF umbrella.

31. This involved the call for the Oromo of the region, known as the Soddo Jida, to be included as part of the new Oromiya regional state government, rather than part of Gurage zone in SNNPR, despite the close connection between Oromo and Soddo Gurage in this area (see Markakis 1998: 140–1).

32. Markakis (1998: 143) also summarises the claims to separation from the Kabena of northwestern Gurageland, and the Wollene of northern Gurageland. At least one Siltie respondent noted the conflict over the Wollene in interviews in 2003, though it appears that the Wollene are for the time being considered part of the Siltie. The Kabena are still administered by Gurage Zone, though they are the only *woreda* of Gurage Zone to be teaching in their nationality language, while the rest of Gurage zone uses Amharic as the medium of instruction (interview #58).

33. In particular, Siltie from the Azernet Berbere area, who were contributors to the important Gurage Road Development Association but had not reaped the expected development benefits from the association's work, formed their own association. This association sponsored a report which was to be written by two university professors. There were some who wanted the report to focus on the Siltie people as a whole, while others pushed for the study of the Azernet Berbere people only. This is in part because of the distinct identity development of the Azernet Berbere Siltie, who are the most rural and remote of the Siltie. Azernet Berbere was administered as part of Hadiya region under Haile Selassie and the Derg. This is where Siltie identity developed most distinctly, since the Azernet Berbere Siltie were the most removed from the Gurage.

34. Since the Constitution is clear that Nations and Nationalities, through their Regional state governments, have the right to self-administration, there were questions of authority, particularly whether the House of Federation is the first instance court in such cases. It was determined that the right of self-administration (self-government) made this question one on which the Regional Council should make a decision, as provided for by the Constitution. The House of Federation would only become involved if the regional government could not make a decision in two years, or if the plaintiffs were unsatisfied with the regional government decision (interview #23).

35. Butajira is a town in what is now Gurage Zone, but on the road to Worabe, bordering the new Siltie Zone. It is considerably closer to the Siltie region than Welkite, the capital of Gurage Zone, which is on another main road. The importance of proximity should not be underestimated, as access to decent roads between towns can make all the difference in the perception and realisation of development objectives.

36. The EPRDF report (n.d. 2: 2) cites three reasons for the 'growing nationalism' of the Siltie people: a distinct language, a clearly defined territorial boundary, and the 'absence of a strong local economy'.

37. Articles 61–68 of the Constitution specify the role of the House of Federation, particularly its mandate to 'interpret the Constitution' through the organisation of the Council of Constitutional Inquiry for all 'issues relating to the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to self-determination, including the right to secession' (1995 Constitution: Article 62).

38. Of necessity, I use an unofficial copy of the Siltie case, and a translation done by a senior law student at Addis Ababa University.

39. There are at least two similar cases which have gone before the House of Federation for a decision. Both relate to 'questions of identity' somewhat similar to the Siltie case and both petitions invoke the findings of the Siltie case as most relevant to their own petitions. The Denta Budem Kinchichila Peoples and the Bahrewerq Mesmes Nation both petitioned the Council of Constitutional Inquiry in separate petitions in early 2000. Both petitions noted that they must 'be recognized either as a Nation, Nationality or People so that it can enjoy those rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples enshrined in the Constitution'. Both sought intervention from the CCI based on lack of 'appropriate response' from the regional governments.

40. The South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) was formed in 2003 from constituent ethnically based political parties throughout the Southern region, making it an umbrella party within an umbrella party (*The Reporter* 27.8.2003).

41. As with many newly written languages, the Siltie language has not been thoroughly standardised and spelling variations are common. 'Siltie' is the standard spelling by the Zonal Administration, while 'Selti' is the spelling given by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) for this political party.

42. It is, of course, impossible to say conclusively whether the EPRDF or the opposition enjoy more popular support. The EPRDF dominated in the 2000 and 2005 Parliamentary elections in Siltie Zone. The opposition claims that the ruling party uses threats and bribes (interview #90). At least one zonal official seemed to suggest that there is widespread support for the opposition parties (interview #67).

43. The *Wagagoda* language incident and the subsequent break-up of North Omo zone is another example of this (Vaughan 2006).
44. It is interesting to note that the Gurage voted strongly anti-EPRDF in the 2005 elections, while much of the rest of the Southern region was either mixed or more strongly pro-EPRDF. This supports the assessment of the Siltie referendum, but also points to the systematic nature of the 2005 vote.
45. Baylis (2004: 570) has an interesting discussion of Oromo claims for self-determination as a counter-example to the Siltie case. I agree with her that the Siltie and Oromo cases are different in both the character of the disputes and the identity of groups involved, but I think there are better examples than the Oromo question which one might expect to have found institutional resolution, but which in fact have not.

REFERENCES

- Aalen, L. 2002. 'Ethnic federalism in a dominant party state: the Ethiopian experience, 1991–2000'. MA thesis, Chr.Michelsen Institute, Bergen.
- Abraham Hussein & Habtamu Wondimu. 1991. *The Culture and History of the Siltie-speaking People of Azemet Berbere* (in Amharic), Addis Ababa: Bole Publishers.
- Abbink, J. 1997. 'Ethnicity and constitutionalism in contemporary Ethiopia', *Journal of African Law* 41, 2: 159–74.
- Abbink, J. 2006. 'Discomfiture of democracy? The 2005 election crisis in Ethiopia and its aftermath', *African Affairs* 105, 419: 173–99.
- Aminzade, R. 2003. 'From race to citizenship: the indigenization debate in post-socialist Tanzania', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38, 1: 43–64.
- Bahru Zewde. 1991. *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855–1974*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Bahru Zewde. 2003. 'Systems of local governance among the Gurage: the *Yajoka Qicha* and the *Gordana Sera*', in Bahru Zewde & Pausewang, *Ethiopia*, 17–28.
- Bahru Zewde & S. Pausewang, eds. 2003. *Ethiopia: the challenge of democracy from below*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Balsvik, R. B. 1985. *Haile Sellassie's Students: the intellectual and social background to revolution, 1952–1977*. East Lansing, MI: African Studies Center, Michigan State University.
- Barkan, J. D. 2002. 'The many faces of Africa: democracy across a varied continent', *Harvard International Review* 24, 2: 72–7.
- Barry, B. M. 2001. *Culture and Equality: an egalitarian critique of multiculturalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Baylis, E. A. 2004. 'Beyond rights: legal process and ethnic conflicts', *Michigan Journal of International Law* 25, 529–602.
- Beiner, R. 1995. *Theorizing Citizenship*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Benhabib, S. 1999. '"Nous" et "Les Autres": the politics of complex cultural dialogue in a global civilization', in C. Joppke & S. Lukes, eds. *Multicultural Questions*. Oxford University Press.
- Berman, B., D. Eyoh & W. Kymlicka, eds. 2004. *Ethnicity & Democracy in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Chandra, K. 2001. 'Cumulative findings in the study of ethnic politics', *APSA-CP* 12, 1: 7–11.
- Clapham, C. 2002. 'Rewriting Ethiopian history', *Annales d'Ethiopie* 18: 37–54.
- Constitution. 1995. 'Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia', Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Publishers.
- Ekeh, P. P. 1975. 'Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: a theoretical statement', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, 1: 91–112.
- Elaigwu, J. I. 1993. 'Nation-building and changing political structures', in A. A. Mazrui & C. Wondji, eds. *Africa since 1935*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Eriksen, T. H. 2002. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.
- Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). n.d. 1. 'Concluding local elections', unpublished paper.
- EPRDF. n.d. 2. 'Constitutional Right: the question of identity', unpublished paper.
- Etzioni, A., D. Volmert & E. Rothschild. 2004. *The Communitarian Reader: beyond the essentials*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Fekadu Gadamu. 1972. 'Ethnic associations in Ethiopia and the maintenance of urban-rural relationships, with special reference to the Alemgana-Walamo road construction', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London.
- Gabreyesus Hailemariam. 1991. *The Gurague and Their Culture*. Los Angeles, CA: Vantage Press.
- Gil-White, F. J. 1999. 'How thick is blood? The plot thickens ... : if ethnic actors are primordialists, what remains of the circumstantialist/primordialist controversy?' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, 5: 789–820.
- Halisi, C. R. D. 1999. *Black Political Thought in the Making of South African Democracy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Halisi, C. R. D., P. J. Kaiser & S. N. Ndegwa. 1998. 'Rethinking citizenship in Africa: guest editors' introduction: the multiple meanings of citizenship – rights, identity and social justice in Africa', *Africa Today* 45, 3/4: 337–49.
- Harbeson, J. W. 2005. 'Ethiopia's extended transition', *Journal of Democracy* 16, 4: 144–58.
- Heater, D. B. 1999. *What Is Citizenship?* (Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Herbst, J. 1999. 'The role of citizenship laws in multiethnic societies: evidence from Africa', in Joseph, *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, 267–83.
- Horowitz, D. L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- House of Federation, Parliament of Ethiopia. 2001. 'Siltie Identity Determination Case, HTMF 15/4013/1', Addis Ababa: unpublished.
- Hudson, G. 1994. 'Gurage studies: collected articles by Wolf Leslau', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, 4: 692–3.
- Hudson, G. 2003. 'Linguistic analysis of the 1994 Ethiopian census', *Northeast African Studies* 6, 3: 89–107.
- Hudson, G. 2004. 'Languages of Ethiopia and languages of the 1994 Ethiopian census', *Aethiopia* 7: 160–72.
- Huntington, S. P. 2004. *Who Are We? The challenges to America's national identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN). 1984. *Excerpts from Documents of the Founding Congress of WPE on the People's Democratic State and the Nationalities Question*. Addis Ababa: ISEN.
- ISEN. 1986. *A Brief Almanac of Ethiopian Nationalities* (in Amharic). Addis Ababa: ISEN.
- Jackson, R. H. & C. G. Rosberg. 1986. 'Why Africa's weak states persist: the empirical and the juridical in statehood', in A. Kohli, ed. *The State and Development in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 259–82.
- Joseph, R. ed. 1999. *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Keller, E. J. 1988. *Revolutionary Ethiopia: from empire to people's republic*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Keller, E. J. 2005. 'Making and remaking state and nation in Ethiopia', in R. R. Laremont, ed. *Borders, Nationalism and the African State*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 105–58.
- Keller, E. J. & L. Smith. 2005. 'Obstacles to implementing territorial decentralization: the first decade of Ethiopian federalism', in Roeder and Rothchild, eds. *Sustainable Peace: power and democracy after civil wars*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 265–91.
- Kidane Mengisteab. 1997. 'New approaches to state building in Africa: the case of Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalism', *African Studies Review* 40, 3: 111–32.
- Kymlicka, W. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship: a liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. & A. Patten, eds. 2003. *Language Rights and Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laitin, D. D. & R. Reich. 2003. 'A liberal democratic approach to language justice', in Kymlicka & Patten, eds. *Language Rights and Political Theory*, 80–104.
- Lijphart, A. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: a comparative exploration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Laponce, J. & B. Saint-Jacques. 1997. 'Introduction: institutions as problem-solvers', *International Political Science Review* 18, 3: 233–6.
- Lonsdale, J. 2004. 'Moral and political argument in Kenya', in Berman *et al.*, *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 73–95.
- Lyons, T. 2005. 'Ethiopia in 2005: the beginning of a transition?' *CSIS Africa Notes*, 25.
- MacIntyre, A. C. 1981. *After Virtue: a study in moral theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mamdani, M. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. London: James Currey.

- Marcus, H. G. 1994. *A History of Ethiopia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Markakis, J. 1998. 'The politics of identity: the case of the Gurage in Ethiopia', in M. A. Mohamed Salih & J. Markakis, eds. *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 127–46.
- Marshall, T. H. & T. Bottomore. 1991. *Citizenship and Social Class*. Concord, MA: Pluto Press.
- Martiniello, M. 2002. 'Citizenship', in D. T. G. Goldberg & J. Solomos, eds. *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- May, S. 2003. 'Miscoceiving minority language rights: implications for liberal political theory', in Kymlicka & Patten, *Language Rights and Political Theory*, 123–52.
- Medhane Tadesse & J. Young. 2003. 'TPLF: reform or decline?', *Review of African Political Economy* 30, 97: 389–403.
- Merera Gudina. 2003. *Ethiopia: competing ethnic nationalisms and the quest for democracy, 1960–2000*. Addis Ababa: Shaker Pub.
- Mesfin Woldemariam. 2003. 'Where will the present path take us?', *Vision 2020: whither Ethiopia?* Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Economic Association, ms.
- Minasse Haile. 1996. 'The new Ethiopian constitution: its impact upon unity, human rights and development', *Suffolk Transnational Law Review* 20: 1.
- Ministry of Education, Transitional Government of Ethiopia. 1994. 'National Education and Training Policy (NETP)', Addis Ababa, unpublished report.
- Ndegwa, S. N. 1997. 'Citizenship and ethnicity: an examination of two transition moments in Kenyan Politics', *American Political Science Review* 91, 3: 599–616.
- Oldfield, A. 1990. *Citizenship and Community: civic republicanism and the modern world*. New York: Routledge.
- Olukoshi, A. O. & L. Laakso. 1996. *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and University of Helsinki.
- Osaghae, E. E. 2004. 'Political transitions and ethnic conflict in Africa', *Journal of Third World Studies* 21, 1: 221–40.
- Ottaway, M. & D. Ottaway. 1978. *Ethiopia: empire in revolution*. New York: Africana Pub. Co.
- Poluha, E. 1998. 'Ethnicity and democracy: a viable alliance?', in M. A. Mohamed Salih & J. Markakis, eds. *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 30–41.
- Rawls, J. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Reaume, D. G. 2003. 'Beyond personality: the territorial and personal principles of language policy reconsidered', in Kymlicka & Patten, *Language Rights and Political Theory*, 271–95.
- Reynolds, A. 2002. *The Architecture of Democracy: constitutional design, conflict management, and democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- Roeder, P. G. & D. S. Rothchild. 2005. *Sustainable Peace: power and democracy after civil wars*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Samatar, A. I. 2004. 'Ethiopian federalism: autonomy versus control in the Somali region', *Third World Quarterly* 25, 6: 1131–54.
- Sandel, M. J. 1982. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shachar, A. 2001. *Multicultural Jurisdictions: cultural differences and women's rights*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shack, W. 1966. *The Gurage: a people of the ensete culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Shack, W. 1974. *The Central Ethiopians: Amhara, Tigrigna and related peoples. Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Part IV*. London: International African Institute.
- Sherif Leri. 1985. 'A history of the Silti community in Addis Ababa: a study in rural-urban migration', Senior Thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- Siltie People's Democratic Unity Party (SPDUP). 2002. 'Party Statement', unpublished.
- Sklar, R. L. 1999. 'African politics: the next generation', in Joseph, *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, 165–77.
- Smith, L. 2005. 'Voting for a Nationality: ethnic identity, political institutions and citizenship in Ethiopia', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Smith, L. 2007. 'Implications of the 2005 elections for Ethiopian citizenship and state legitimacy', *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 3, 1 (forthcoming).
- Smith, R. M. 1988. 'The "American creed" and American identity: the limits of liberal citizenship in the United States', *Western Political Science Quarterly* 41: 225–49.
- Spears, I. 2002. 'Africa: the limits of power-sharing', *Journal of Democracy* 13, 3: 123–36.
- Taylor, C. 1995. *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. & A. Gutmann. 1994. *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Tilly, C. 1995. 'Citizenship, identity and social history', *International Review of Social History* 40, 3: 1–17.
- Tully, J. 2000. 'The challenge of reimagining citizenship and belonging in multicultural and multinational societies', in C. McKinnon & I. Hampsher-Monk, eds. *The Demands of Citizenship*. New York: Continuum, 212–34.
- Tully, J. 1995. *Strange Multiplicity: constitutionalism in an age of diversity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vaughan, S. 2006. 'Responses to ethnic federalism in Ethiopia's southern region', in D. Turton, ed. *Ethnic Federalism: the Ethiopian experience in comparative perspective*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 181–207.
- Walzer, M. 1983. *Spheres of Justice: a defense of pluralism and equality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Whitaker, B. E. 2005. 'Citizens and foreigners: democratization and the politics of exclusion in Africa', *African Studies Review* 48, 1: 109–26.
- Woods, D. 2003. 'Rent-seeking and ethnic conflict in Ivory Coast', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, 4: 641–55.
- Worku Nida. 2000. 'Fanonet: ethnohistorical notes on the Gurage urban migration in Ethiopia', *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Activist Association* 28, 2–3: 43–73.
- Young, I. M. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Young, J. 1999. 'Along Ethiopia's western frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in transition.' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37: 321–46.

Newspapers (published in Addis Ababa)

Addis Tribune; The Reporter.

Interviews

- Interview #23: Official, House of Federation, Addis Ababa, February 2003.
- Interview #54: Official, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNPR) Regional Bureau of Education (REB), Awassa, June 2003.
- Interview #58: Official, Gurage Zone Education Office (ZEO), Welkite, September 2003.
- Interview #67: Official, Siltie Zone Education Office (ZEO), Worabe, October 2003.
- Interview #85: Politician, Addis Ababa, November 2003.
- Interview #90: Representative, Siltie People's Democratic Unity Party (SPDUP), Addis Ababa, December 2003.