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# Ethiopia

## THE 100% ELECTION

*Leonardo R. Arriola and Terrence Lyons*

**Leonardo R. Arriola**, associate professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of *Multiethnic Coalitions in Africa: Business Financing of Opposition Election Campaigns (2012)*. **Terrence Lyons**, associate professor of conflict resolution and director of the PhD program at George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, is the author of *The Puzzle of Ethiopia: From Rebel Victory to Authoritarian Politics, 1991–2015 (forthcoming)*.

The results of Ethiopia's 24 May 2015 parliamentary elections confirm that authoritarian rule will persist in Africa's second most populous country for the foreseeable future. The long-ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) claims to have won—together with six allied parties—every seat in parliament.<sup>1</sup> By doing so, the EPRDF has not merely signaled that the political status quo will continue; it has effectively announced the start of a new era in which participation in political life will be completely restricted to its own members and allies. For the first time since the EPRDF's rise to power in 1991, not one opposition or independent parliamentarian will sit in the 547-seat House of Peoples' Representatives. This shift represents a hardening of authoritarian rule in Ethiopia.

The EPRDF regime has its origins in the protracted civil war that began in 1974 and ended in 1991, when ethnic-based liberation fronts defeated Mengistu Haile Mariam and his brutal military regime. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), headed by Meles Zenawi, led the insurgency and came to power with a high level of solidarity, considerable experience in administering liberated zones in the country's north, and the legitimacy earned from winning the war.

In the final years of the war, the TPLF formed the EPRDF as a coalition aimed at bringing armed wings from outside the Tigray homeland in the far north of the country into a new postwar regime. The exigencies of transforming itself from a rebel movement into a national government

compelled the TPLF to find ways to incorporate the many diverse ethnic groups<sup>2</sup> in the country while also retaining its hierarchical structure.<sup>3</sup>

To that end, the TPLF facilitated the establishment of the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and later the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) so that they could function as constituent parties of the EPRDF in the country's three largest regions (Amhara, Oromia, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, respectively). Ethiopia's other regions are also governed by ethnoregional parties. The EPRDF considers these parties to be affiliates, however, rather than constituent members of the coalition. The allied parties have no representation in the EPRDF's Executive Committee, the most important decision-making body in Ethiopia. The TPLF remains today the dominant party within the EPRDF.

In one of its first acts after seizing power, the EPRDF constitutionally restructured the Ethiopian state into a federation of ethnically defined regions. Rather than emphasizing national unity, the EPRDF boldly—some say recklessly—chose to construct a political system on the basis of static, ascriptive categories. The 1994 Constitution institutionalized political power on the basis of ethnicity, as the country's new administrative regions (its nine regional states) correspond to putative ethnic homelands, each with its own legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The impact of this new dispensation has been profound. It has upended the old social hierarchy that had favored northern highland groups such as the Orthodox Amhara and Tigrayans and marginalized the Oromo and other largely Islamic groups in the southern lowlands.

Not only has the EPRDF provided opportunities for the country's various ethnic communities in national power structures, it has also granted them a degree of autonomy. Although the constituent and affiliated parties that govern the regional states still rely on the center for resources and security, they also control their own substantial bureaucracies and budgets. It is not the EPRDF as a national coalition that controls the regional institutions and resources, but rather its constituent and affiliated ethnically defined parties. The regional states are more than mere conveyor belts that transmit the wishes of the center; they have well-developed political infrastructures and are the day-to-day face of the state for most rural Ethiopians.

What compelled the EPRDF to organize a total electoral victory in 2015? It did so in part because of political threats that it has been facing over the past decade. After the shock of the 2005 elections, in which opposition parties won nearly a third of parliamentary seats, the regime stepped up its efforts to harass opponents, using both legal and extra-legal means. In the run-up to the 2015 election, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) refused to allow opposition candidates to register for parliamentary races in several constituencies. The govern-

ment's security forces also allegedly used coercion to prevent opposition supporters from holding rallies or reaching polling stations in certain areas.

Yet opposition forces—long riddled with ideological and ethnic cleavages—also failed to unite their parties into a viable, cohesive alternative to the EPRDF. The Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJ), the successor to the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), which won more than a hundred parliamentary seats in 2005, not only splintered but also refused to coordinate with the Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia (Medrek), the country's other main opposition coalition. The new Semayawi (Blue) Party that emerged in 2012 after a series of large protests in Addis Ababa also chose to compete independently rather than coalesce with other opposition parties.

Economic conditions have buoyed the EPRDF's political position. The regime has been able to claim credit for the economic transformation of both urban and rural life over the past decade. With growth rates at twice the regional African average, large segments of Ethiopian society have attained a level of economic stability, if not prosperity, unprecedented in the country's modern history.<sup>4</sup> The EPRDF leadership sees its close economic cooperation with China, Ethiopia's largest trading partner, as central to this economic transformation. Not only does China serve as a political and economic model, but the regime has come to rely on Chinese credit and investment for the country's infrastructure expansion (including roads, railways, and hydroelectric plants) and incipient industrialization (such as the country's first car factory). There are signs, however, that economic growth may be slowing, and Ethiopia recently asked the international community for emergency food aid for 8.2 million of its 99.5 million people. If the economy falters, the EPRDF will face more hard-to-manage challenges.

In any case, the total electoral victory in Ethiopia has little to do with the condition of the opposition or the state of the economy. After all, the opposition certainly did not need to see a 100 percent victory to understand that the EPRDF is committed to staying in power. The international community seems little interested in the state of democracy in a key state supporting global counterterrorism policies. Rather, the EPRDF sought to demonstrate its political supremacy in 2015 for reasons related to internal party dynamics. In short, the EPRDF was sending an unambiguous message to its own rank-and-file: Despite the unexpected death in 2012 of longtime prime minister and EPRDF founder Meles Zenawi, the EPRDF would continue to function as it always has, regulating access to public office from the top down. It also communicated to the party's cadres that defection is fruitless: There are no political alternatives to the EPRDF.

Meles's death represented an existential crisis for the EPRDF. Ruling parties in Africa's authoritarian states rarely survive the death of

their leaders, often fragmenting or fading away instead, as new leaders seek to establish themselves at the center of power. Meles had served as prime minister since 1995 and as the EPRDF's head since its founding in 1991. Over time, his authority within the EPRDF became largely uncontested. Indeed, an internal split within the TPLF leadership in 2001 had enabled Meles to further concentrate authority in his own hands.<sup>5</sup> He resolved that crisis by dismissing nearly half the TPLF's central committee and arresting two influential TPLF veterans—namely, the chief of staff of the armed forces and the president of Tigray region. Leaders of the OPDO and SEPDM were also expelled from their parties for aligning with Meles's opponents. Meles's sudden death therefore created a leadership void that could not easily be resolved, even after his successor Hailemariam Dessalegn was installed as prime minister through established succession rules. But the fact that the EPRDF has held together in the wake of Meles's death speaks to its institutionalization as a strong political organization with links running from the capital to the smallest villages.

Nonetheless, the EPRDF's retrenchment strategy will produce its own challenges for long-term political stability. With the complete expulsion of all opposition from the formal political arena, the regime may find that discontent increasingly will be channeled into social movements or spontaneous protests (as is already happening among disaffected groups such as Ethiopian Muslims and ethnic Oromos) that may not be mollified by promises of economic development. But the more pressing, though perhaps less obvious, challenge for EPRDF leaders will be to satisfy the growing demands of lower-level party cadres who were recruited with the promise that their patience and loyalty would be rewarded with career advancement within government and the EPRDF. If unmet, those demands may eventually transform the ruling party from a disciplined national organization into the kind of patronage-based alliance of ethnic factions seen in many other African countries.

### Legitimacy Through Development

One of the key ways in which the EPRDF seeks to derive legitimacy is by reducing poverty through state-directed development. The regime explicitly rejects the concept of liberal democracy in favor of “revolutionary democracy” and the construction of a “developmental state,” reflecting the Marxist-Maoist ideological training of the regime's founding leaders. Meles Zenawi claimed that “the neoliberal paradigm [was] a dead end incapable of bringing about the African renaissance, and that a fundamental shift in paradigm” was needed if African states were to become developmental. The developmental state, as articulated by Meles, establishes the “single-minded pursuit of accelerated development” as the state's *raison d'être* and the party's source of legitimacy.<sup>6</sup>

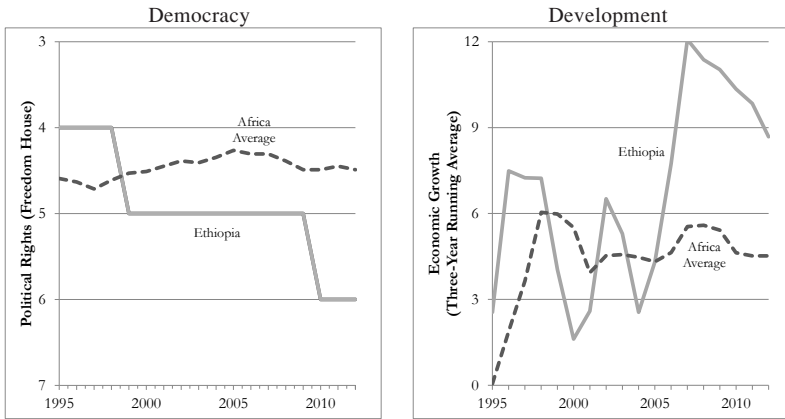
In campaigns and public speeches, EPRDF leaders argue that their economic policies are essential to promote peace and development, thereby casting regime critics as chauvinistic warmongers and greedy “rent seekers” who stand in the way of realizing the “Ethiopia rising” narrative. Poverty is an existential threat and, according to the EPRDF, only its top-down five-year development plans can move Ethiopia toward middle-income status. As long as the developmental state continues to perform in ways that benefit the masses, says the EPRDF leadership, the regime is legitimate and even “democratic” (as measured by orderly mass participation).

The regime’s modernization language emphasizes technology-driven development and top-down planning led by state-designated elite experts. Economic governance therefore mirrors the country’s hierarchical political structures. This kind of “high modernism” is most evident in showpiece projects such as massive road-building initiatives or the controversial Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam near the border with Sudan, which will be Africa’s biggest hydropower plant once it is completed. The EPRDF emphasizes “service delivery” as a key indicator of its success in transforming Ethiopia into a developmental state. Citizens are thus viewed as consumers of government services and participants in noncompetitive electoral processes rather than as agents of their own political development.

The EPRDF claims that it has created a political system that delivers what Ethiopians want: broad-based participation and pro-poor economic growth. This emphasis on development over democracy can be easily seen when one compares the country’s robust economic growth to its declining political rights (as measured by Freedom House on a scale 1 to 7, with 7 being the worst). The left panel of Figure 1 below shows political-rights scores for Ethiopia and the average for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa from 1995 to 2015; the right panel shows economic-growth rates during the same period. Ethiopia’s trajectory on both measures contrasts sharply with that of the rest of the continent. Attacks on civil society and the opposition have hampered democratization across much of sub-Saharan Africa, but few countries have experienced as severe an erosion in political rights as Ethiopia has without experiencing either a military coup or a civil war.

Ethiopia has held parliamentary elections regularly since 1995. But the EPRDF’s use of state resources and repression, coupled with boycotts by weak opposition parties, left the overwhelming majority of Ethiopian voters without any meaningful choice during the first decade of multiparty elections. The 2005 balloting, however, gave voters meaningful political options for the first time in the country’s history. Two large opposition coalitions competed against the EPRDF and actively campaigned across the main regions of the country. According to official results, the combined opposition increased its number of seats in

**FIGURE 1—ETHIOPIA'S RECEDING DEMOCRACY AND RISING DEVELOPMENT, 1995–2012**



parliament from 12 to 172 (31 percent of the 547 seats). This startling outcome represented a rebuke to the EPRDF and had real potential to constitute an important advance in democratization.

Instead, the 2005 election ultimately represented a historic lost opportunity. Some opposition leaders refused to accept the results, claiming that massive fraud had denied them outright victory, and announced a boycott of parliament. Subsequent opposition demonstrations were put down brutally by state security forces, leaving nearly 200 dead. The regime arrested many top opposition leaders, as well as an estimated 30,000 alleged opposition supporters.<sup>7</sup> Thus the 2005 election period, which had begun with considerable excitement that peaceful change was possible, ended with the closing of political space and the criminalization of dissent.

Rattled by the extent of popular support for the opposition in both urban and rural areas, the EPRDF responded by using the levers of state power and its considerable organizational capacities to dominate all aspects of political life. Immediately after the election, prosecutors kept top opposition leaders in court for treason and people identified as opposition supporters lost access to government services and jobs. The EPRDF continued to flex its muscles by conducting a massive recruitment drive that expanded its membership nationwide from 760,000 in 2005 to 6 million by 2010 and 7.5 million in 2015.<sup>8</sup> The links between party membership and access to land, fertilizer, higher education, and civil-service jobs resulted in a virtual merger of the party and the government.

As Simegnish Mengesha details elsewhere in this issue, the regime has sought to muzzle its critics by adopting laws aimed at eliminating independent media and civil society institutions. The 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, for example, broadly defines terrorism, estab-

lishes sentences of up to twenty years for published statements judged to encourage acts of terrorism, and authorizes intelligence services to conduct surveillance over the Internet. The law has been used to arrest many independent journalists and to make public discussion of major public-policy issues a dangerous activity. The law's key provisions are vague, and Ethiopia's judicial system lacks both the capacity and the independence to serve as a check on government abuse of the law. The Charities and Societies Proclamation that went into effect in 2010 restricts organizations working on human rights, democratization, and conflict resolution from obtaining more than 10 percent of their budget from foreign sources, leading to the collapse of virtually every nongovernmental organization working on these issues.

While the government clamps down on civil society and the media, ruling-party leaders emphasize the regime's ability to mobilize the masses. Party-run organizations, rather than independent civil society groups, serve as the key mechanisms for articulating public interests and political socialization. Getachew Reda Kahsay, a new member of the TPLF's Central Committee, said in a recent interview, "It is only through broad based participation" that Ethiopia can achieve "good governance."<sup>9</sup> Participation is therefore valued, but it does not entail a meaningful role for citizens in the selection of the country's top decision makers. This sentiment was echoed by the NEBE when it announced that the 2015 polls were "characterized by high voter turnout and orderly conduct of the Election Day proceedings." Voters may have had little choice at the polls, but by the regime's metric the election was "free, fair, peaceful, credible, and democratic."<sup>10</sup>

## **The Post-Meles Transition**

When Meles died in 2012, many observers anticipated significant and perhaps destabilizing change. Meles's eulogies emphasized his individual brilliance and his personal role in bringing development to the modern Ethiopian state.<sup>11</sup> Whereas past leadership transitions in Ethiopia had been settled with the barrel of a gun, after Meles's death the EPRDF moved Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, a Protestant and ethnic-Wolayta Southerner without military experience, into the top leadership spot without public drama or fuss. The EPRDF proved to be more than just a front for Meles's personal rule; it showed itself to be a remarkably effective political organization in both reach and cohesion.<sup>12</sup>

Despite a smooth succession, the regime still faces potential instability on several fronts. Among the EPRDF's constituent parties, there is competition over the most powerful positions in both the coalition and the government, as well as over the distribution of resources to the main regional states. This jostling has intensified since Meles's death. His own TPLF, the smallest but always the dominant party, fears losing its role as



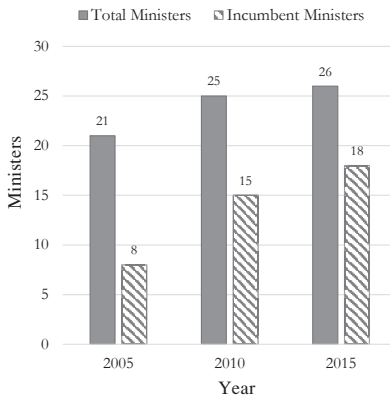
the EPRDF's senior partner. The OPDO, which is the largest of the parties and represents the country's most populous region, is demanding a larger share of government positions. Hailemariam's SEPDM, meanwhile, hopes to capitalize on its leader having become prime minister to increase its control of key government and party positions. In order to keep all the constituent parties at the table after Meles's death, Hailemariam was compelled in 2013 to name three new deputy prime ministers—one from the ANDM, one from the OPDO, and one from the TPLF.

The power-sharing arrangement among the EPRDF's constituent parties is most evident in its top body, the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee makes the most important policy decisions and communicates them through the party hierarchy down to the village and even subvillage level. While the four regional constituent parties represent populations of vastly different sizes—the population of Oromia is more than six times the population of Tigray—each is equally represented in the Executive Committee, whose 36 members are divided so that the ANDM, OPDO, SEPDM, and TPLF each have nine members.<sup>13</sup>

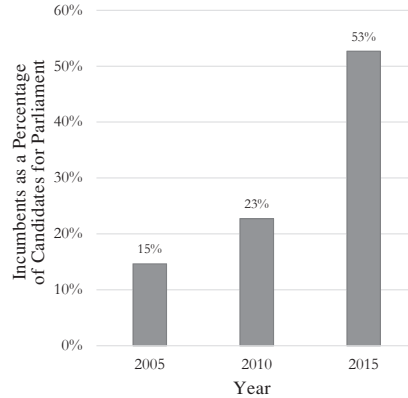
Since the 2015 party congresses, the party executive committees have followed the longtime practice of reelecting a number of incumbents to the EPRDF Executive Committee, while also bringing in some new members. There has been considerable continuity among Executive Committee members, with most having served previously at some point. Eleven of the 36 members of the current Executive Committee are new—two from the SEPDM, and three each from the others. This is roughly the same rate of change that occurred after the 2013 and 2010 party congresses.<sup>14</sup> Some informed observers have suggested that there remains considerable turmoil within the TPLF in the wake of Meles's death, prompting the retention of stalwart veterans from the period of armed struggle as well as the promotion of Getachew Assefa, head of the National Intelligence and Security Services, to the Executive Committee in 2015.

Hailemariam's government appointments since the 2015 elections reflect the continued importance placed on ethnic balancing in the distribution of power. Unlike the EPRDF Executive Committee, cabinet positions are allocated in proportion to the demographic weight of the respective constituent parties. Hailemariam's first cabinet gives 8 positions to the OPDO (31 percent), 7 to the ANDM (27 percent), 7 to the SEPDM (27 percent), 2 to the TPLF (8 percent), and 2 to affiliated parties from the country's peripheral regions (Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambela, and Somali). The ethnoregional composition of Hailemariam's 2015 cabinet is virtually identical to that of the cabinets formed by Meles in 2005 and 2010. The most prestigious portfolios are likewise distributed evenly among the main ethnicities. In Hailemariam's first postelection government, following a pattern set by Meles himself, an ethnic-Silte Southerner (SEPDM) is minister of defense; an Amhara

**FIGURE 2—EPRDF'S EXPANDING POSTELECTION GOVERNMENTS**



**FIGURE 3—EPRDF'S GROWING RELIANCE ON PARLIAMENTARY INCUMBENTS**



*Note:* There are 547 seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives. Excluded from this calculation are the 23 seats from Somali Regional State.

(ANDM) is minister of federal affairs; an Oromo (OPDO) is minister of finance; and a Tigrayan (TPLF) is minister of foreign affairs.

Hailemariam's government appointments also reveal two potential signs of the EPRDF's vulnerability. The first concerns the size of the cabinet, which has increased by ten ministers (more than 50 percent) since 2000. Hailemariam's 2015 cabinet has five more ministers than Meles's 2005 cabinet. In this respect, the EPRDF appears to be abandoning the practice of forming lean, technocratic governments, leaning instead toward larger governments inflated with patronage appointments that are made to satisfy specific constituencies.

The second sign of vulnerability relates to incumbency. As Figure 2 illustrates, the EPRDF is increasingly relying on ministers held over from previous governments. In Hailemariam's 2015 cabinet, 69 percent of ministers are holdovers from the preelection cabinet. By contrast, only 38 percent of ministers in Meles's first post-2005 cabinet had served in the preceding government. Hailemariam's retention of so many experienced ministers could be a signal of policy continuity, particularly with regard to Meles's personal vision for Ethiopia's development. Yet such reliance on ministers appointed by his predecessor suggests that Hailemariam's ability to assert himself as a leader in his own right—and to form his own government—remains constrained by intracoalition politics.

The EPRDF's growing reliance on incumbents was evident in its choices for 2015 parliamentary candidates as well, and reflects a strategy of retrenchment. In a marked departure from previous elections, when more than 75 percent of ruling-party MPs would be rotated out of parliament, in 2015 the EPRDF allowed most of its incumbent parliamentarians to run again. Figure 3 shows just how drastic a shift this was. Even in 2010, when the EPRDF won more than 95 percent of seats in the House of

Peoples' Representatives, less than 23 percent were incumbents. In 2015, this figure more than doubled to 53 percent.<sup>15</sup> This means that more than half the parliament that was elected with Meles in 2010 will still be in place in 2020. The increased reliance on incumbents is found in all four EPRDF constituent parties: in the ANDM, 64 percent in 2015 versus 12 percent in 2005; in the OPDO, 58 percent in 2015 versus 12 percent in 2005; in the SEPDM, 43 percent in 2015 versus 11 percent in 2005; and in the TPLF, 74 percent in 2015 versus 26 percent in 2005.

This retrenchment strategy is sending two political messages that are meant to induce the continued loyalty of EPRDF members: 1) The EPRDF leadership intends to carry on with the political and programmatic agenda set by Meles, and 2) defection from the EPRDF is not an option since the ruling party remains the gateway for offices and resources even without Meles at its helm. The shift toward an incumbency bias may also be intended to shore up the EPRDF by keeping more seasoned politicians on hand.<sup>16</sup>

Although this strategy may succeed in keeping the regime stable for the time being, it risks engendering frustrations among the lower ranks over time. If 2010 levels of candidate rotation had remained in place in 2015, at least 166 new EPRDF officials would have won seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives and enjoyed the benefits of working in Addis Ababa with its attendant authority and resources. Instead, those midlevel leaders who did not move up to parliamentary positions are now blocking lower-level leaders who also aspire to advance. With top-level positions increasingly occupied by incumbents, frustrations among mid- and lower-level leaders will build.

The degree to which new EPRDF members are elected to parliament in a given election cycle tells us something about the extent to which organizational incentives can enforce loyalty and prevent breakaway factions. Before the 2015 election, when relatively few incumbents were allowed to run for a second parliamentary term, midlevel members of the EPRDF saw considerable scope for promotion, and ambitious members therefore had an incentive to remain loyal to the party. In this respect, the move toward retaining a larger share of incumbent MPs, particularly if replicated at lower levels of the political system, will likely lead to greater dissatisfaction among those whose career aspirations are not met. Party members who expect to become parliamentarians as part of their normal career path within the EPRDF are now effectively being told to lower their expectations. If this dynamic persists, younger party members may increasingly opt to challenge their leaders over the rules governing nominations to elected offices.

It is unclear how the EPRDF can resolve the inherent contradiction that it has created over the past decade. While it claims to have increased its membership nearly tenfold since 2005, the number of positions that it can offer to lower-level cadres seeking to build a career within the

EPRDF apparatus or the state bureaucracy will remain relatively limited. The demand for such advancement will only grow as the country continues producing an ever-larger number of university graduates,<sup>17</sup> many of whom believe that they must become party members in order to secure a job in either the public or private sector. For now, employment in the public sector remains their most attractive option because, despite the country's rapid growth in recent years, there are still too few private-sector jobs.<sup>18</sup>

In the long run, the EPRDF's political monopoly could bring it more harm than good. The disparity between what the ruling party *promises* its swelling ranks and what it can *deliver* may encourage the very rent-seeking behavior that regime leaders have long identified as an obstacle to the country's development. If the EPRDF is unable to guarantee jobs for its members, it may increasingly seek to satisfy them by allowing them to use party-based relationships to secure access to other opportunities.

The World Bank's 2012 report on corruption in Ethiopia notes that perceptions of party-member favoritism are widespread.<sup>19</sup> Because the state plays a leading role in directing economic development, and many sectors remain heavily regulated, party members routinely gain preferred access to markets or special treatment in procurement. Indeed, despite Ethiopia's reputation for being less corrupt than other African countries,<sup>20</sup> its most recent ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index indicates that public-sector corruption in Ethiopia is on par with that of countries such as Gabon, Liberia, and Malawi.<sup>21</sup>

During his visit to Ethiopia in July 2015—just two months after the EPRDF and its allies won every seat in parliament—U.S. president Barack Obama twice referred to the country's government as “democratically elected.” Such official assessments obfuscate the strength of authoritarian rule in Ethiopia and misunderstand the role that elections play in Ethiopia and countries like it. Elections in authoritarian regimes are a means for demonstrating the ruling party's dominance and assuring the loyalty of its members, particularly those who most often undermine authoritarian regimes—frustrated leaders *within* the ruling party who are contemplating breaking away and challenging the regime. In Ethiopia, an election victory of 100 percent of parliamentary seats sends the message to potential rebels that there is only one game in town and that to imagine otherwise would be futile.

Given the results of Ethiopia's 2015 general election, we cannot expect the transition from Meles Zenawi to Hailemariam Dessalegn to lead to political liberalization in the near or medium term. Hailemariam's management of the EPRDF has been entirely in line with the actions of his predecessor over the previous decade. Moreover, the regime continues to repress the opposition, to unceasingly harass private media, and to restrict civil liberties. If anything, the transition has demonstrated the resilience

of the EPRDF as an organization that can effectively contain the fissiparous pressures typically associated with multiethnic political alliances. The regime is thus unlikely to be threatened by an internal coup.

The one positive change that may eventually emerge from the post-Meles transition is the institutionalization of fixed executive terms along the lines of what is practiced in Mozambique or Tanzania, where entrenched ruling parties limit the number of terms that can be served by individual leaders. The original Metekakat (renewal) policy that Meles announced for reforming the EPRDF in 2009 included provisions for retiring senior party members through age as well as term limits. Coupled with the established norm of ethnic balancing at the upper levels of the EPRDF and the cabinet, the constituent parties of the ERPDEF, particularly the OPDO, may ramp up their demands for a premiership that rotates among them. In light of Ethiopia's tumultuous political history, even such a limited move toward constraining executive power would be a welcome development.

## NOTES

1. Ethiopia has a bicameral parliament: Members of the upper house, the House of the Federation, are chosen by the state councils, while members of the lower house, the House of the Peoples' Representatives, are popularly elected every five years. In addition to the 501 seats won by the EPRDF in the May 2015 elections, the following EPRDF-allied parties won seats: The Somali People's Democratic Party won 24 seats; the Benishengul Gumuz People's Democratic Party won 9; the Afar National Democratic Party won 8; the Gambela People's Unity Democratic Movement won 3; the Harari National League won 1; the Argoba People Democratic Organization won 1. The National Election Board postponed the election in Bonga until June, when the EPRDF took that seat as well.

2. According to Ethiopia's 2007 census, the country's ethnic breakdown is 34.5 percent Oromo, 26.9 percent Amhara, 6.2 percent Somali, 6.1 percent Tigray, and 4 percent Sidama, with a number of others making up the remainder. The country's religious breakdown is roughly 43.5 percent Ethiopian Orthodox, 33.9 percent Muslim, 18.6 percent Protestant, 0.7 percent Catholic, and 2.6 percent traditional religions.

3. Terrence Lyons, "The Importance of Winning: Victorious Insurgent Groups and Authoritarian Politics," *Comparative Politics* 48 (January 2016).

4. In 2014, Ethiopia's real per capita GDP grew 7.8 percent, while the average rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 2.5 percent; in 2015, growth is projected to be 6.2 percent and 2.0 percent, respectively. See IMF, "Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa—Navigating Headwinds," April 2015, Table SA1, "Real GDP Growth," 73, [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/afri/eng/pdf/sreo0415.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/afri/eng/pdf/sreo0415.pdf).

5. The TPLF split occurred after other members of the party began criticizing Meles's handling of the war with Eritrea in 1998–2000.

6. Meles Zenawi, "States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Developmental State," in Akbar Noman et al., eds., *Good Growth and Governance in Africa: Rethinking Development Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140.

7. Leonardo R. Arriola, "Protesting and Policing in a Multiethnic Authoritarian State: Evidence from Ethiopia," *Comparative Politics* 45 (January 2013): 152–53.

8. Ethiopians are members of the constituent parties rather than members of the EPRDF, with the exception of party members from Addis Ababa, the multiethnic capital city.

9. Mikiyas Tesfaye, "Still Zeroing in on Good Governance," *Addis Fortune*, 9 September 2015, <http://addisfortune.net/interviews/still-zeroing-on-good-governance>.

10. Ethiopian News Agency, "NEBE Announces Final Election Results," 22 June 2015, [www.ena.gov.et/en/index.php/politics/item/993-nebe-announces-final-election-results](http://www.ena.gov.et/en/index.php/politics/item/993-nebe-announces-final-election-results).

11. Alex de Waal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs* 112 (January 2013): 148–55.

12. Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

13. Each constituent party has regular party congresses that elect party central committees, the central committees elect party executive committees, and the executive committees elect the 36-member EPRDF Executive Committee.

14. A partial exception is 2013, when 6 of the 9 OPDO members on the EPRDF Executive Committee were new.

15. The rate of incumbency in 2015 is surprisingly consistent across gender—54 percent of male MPs were retained, as were 50 percent of women MPs. The EPRDF did increase the proportion of women among parliamentarians from 27 percent in 2010 to 36 percent in 2015.

16. This strategy may also signal the regime's reliance on "reliable" party stalwarts to help manage constituencies perceived as restive or problematic. For example, given the protests organized by Ethiopian Muslims over the past three years, it is unsurprising that the rate of unopposed EPRDF candidates was more than twice as high in Muslim-majority constituencies (27 percent) as in the rest of the country (13 percent).

17. The expansion of higher education has been a central pillar of the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

18. George West, "Ethiopia's Higher-Education Boom Built on Shoddy Foundations," *Guardian*, 22 June 2015, [www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jun/22/ethiopia-higher-education-universities-development](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jun/22/ethiopia-higher-education-universities-development). Bewket Abebe, "Education Gaps Responsible for Poor Graduate Employability," *Addis Fortune*, 14 July 2013, <http://addisfortune.net/columns/education-gaps-responsible-for-poor-graduate-employability>.

19. Janelle Plummer, *Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia: Perceptions, Realities, and the Way Forward for Key Sectors* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2012).

20. The strength of that reputation is implied in the special statement issued by Transparency International in 2014 to underscore that Ethiopia was, in fact, not the least corrupt country in Africa. Available at [www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency\\_international\\_data\\_shows\\_ethiopia\\_suffers\\_from\\_high\\_levels\\_of](http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency_international_data_shows_ethiopia_suffers_from_high_levels_of).

21. The Corruption Perceptions Index measures perceived levels of public-sector corruption. The index is available at [www.transparency.org/cpi2014](http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014).