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Citation

Tessema, Y. N. (2020, May 7). *Political discourses and the securitization of democracy in post-1991 Ethiopia*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/87603>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Issue Date: 2020-05-07

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Political Discourses and the Securitization of Democracy in Post-1991 Ethiopia

Propositions

1. Ethiopia's post-1991 political transition was a failure.
2. Discursive narratives from security and democracy perspectives are defining elements of the failure of the TPLF/EPRDF post-1991 doctrine.
3. A process of securitization/desecuritization of issues can be very consequential for the type of politics that accompany it, and for the democratization process itself.
4. In particular, the securitization of issues in the political and societal sectors, raises the level of concern in politics or political processes that are transitioning to democracy, and where the political elites are highly divided and the characteristics of normal politics are absent, as is the case with post-1991 Ethiopia.
5. The EPRDF's promised political freedoms and democracy have not matched up to the success of its economic reforms, leaving the country in a precarious situation, with the period from 2016 to the present marked by political unrest of unprecedented magnitude.
6. The EPRDF's conceptualization of its discourse on democracy and its practice has resulted in a particular type of politics in which security and democracy are linked, giving rise to a legitimacy crisis for the political process of post-1991 Ethiopia.
7. The opposition also actively engages in securitizing politics as evidenced in their discursive narratives on democracy.
8. The discourses of the Pan-Ethiopianist opposition political forces radically oppose the democratization discourse of the ruling EPRDF and seek the forceful removal of the latter and the reversal of its 'New Ethiopia' project as a condition to democratize the country.
9. The ethno-nationalist political discourses are, in most cases, diametrically opposed to the Pan-Ethiopianist assertions and to that of the ruling TPLF/EPRDF party.
10. The interaction of the discourses of both the ruling and opposition parties seems to have resulted in an exceptional type of politics – politics of the extraordinary – in which all the actors understand politics mainly in terms of security, leading to the use of violence; this has negatively impacted on the possibility for the emergence of normal politics (bargain, compromise et cetera) and, this seems to be the major explanatory factor for the political impasse facing the country.
11. In Ethiopia we have developed a practice in which engaging in killing one another can lead to a democracy, but foreign visitors are rarely a target.