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(Re)claiming Finfinne? Violent Protest and the Right to Addis Ababa

Ethiopia has a history of civil war and armed struggle, however, urban protest remains a recent phenomenon. Armed struggle has in the past often been fought by rural residents and guerrilla movements against governments in power¹. Violent communal conflicts between ethnic groups in contemporary Ethiopia have also been documented², but have received relatively little attention until recently. One of the armed struggles for political emancipation have concerned the status of the Oromo, who are the biggest ethnic group and make up around 35% of Ethiopia's population.³ In recent years, the Oromo struggle has increasingly been fought in and around Addis Ababa [Finfinne in Afan Oromo], and Ethiopia's capital has seen an unprecedented rise in political protest and inter- and intra-ethnic tensions since 2015. The question of distribution of political and economic resources between the country's ethnic groups and concerning the ownership of Addis Ababa, which simultaneously is the country's capital and the seat of the Oromia regional administration, is not new. However, the fact that the Oromo struggle has finally reached the capital and the degree and extent of physical violence caused in Addis Ababa, has profoundly shaken many Addis Ababans.

Addis Ababa was chosen as the capital of Ethiopia in 1886 by Menelik II, thanks to its central location in the country and its moderate climate. Prior to this, the location was the home of different Oromo clans. As the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa became the seat of the national political institutions, as well as the center of the national economy and the hub of the private sector⁴. According to the last national census conducted in 2007, 47% of Addis Ababans were Amhara, 19.5 % Oromo, and 33.5% from other ethnic backgrounds⁵. The dominance of the Amhara among Ethiopia's rulers until 1991, and the ensuing overrepresentation among national political and economic elites, favored their relative overrepresentation among the Addis Ababa residents, as well as in other important urban areas⁶. The Amhara dominance in Addis has further fueled the grievances of the Oromo, who have felt excluded from their own regional capital and marginalized in the national political representation.

In recent decades, urbanization in Addis Ababa has been accompanied by high levels of structural violence⁷. Displacement of low income households from the city center and middle class suburbs⁸, the expansion of the capital into the surrounding Oromia regional state and the

¹ Berhe Aregawi, *A Political History of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (1975-1991)*, First Edition (Los Angeles: Tsehai Publishing Imprint, 2009).

² Boku Tache and Gufu Oba, "Policy-Driven Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 121 (September 1, 2009): 409–26. Tobias Hagmann and Alemmaya Mulugeta, "Pastoral Conflicts and State-Building in the Ethiopian Lowlands," *Afrika Spectrum* 43, no. 1 (2008).

³ Asafa Jalata and Harwood D Schaffer, *The Oromo Movement and Imperial Politics: Culture and Ideology in Oromia and Ethiopia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020); Getahun Benti, "A Nation without a City [a Blind Person without a Cane]: The Oromo Struggle for Addis Ababa," *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2002): 115–31.

⁴ Benti, "A Nation without a City [a Blind Person without a Cane]."

⁵ Population Census Commission Central Statistical Agency, "National Census of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa," Population Census (Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Agency, 2007), 25f. The census did not account for multiethnic backgrounds. In multiethnic families, until today, children are registered under the ethnicity of their father.

⁶ Population Census Commission Central Statistical Agency, "National Census of Ethiopia, Oromia," Population Census (Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Agency, 2007).

⁷ Yves Pedrazzini, Stéphanie Vincent-Geslin, and Alexandra Thorer, "Violence of Urbanization, Poor Neighbourhoods and Large-Scale Projects: Lessons from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia," *Built Environment* 40, no. 3 (October 19, 2014): 394–407.

⁸ Gezahegn Abebe and Jan Hesselberg, "Community Participation and Inner-City Slum Renewal: Relocated People's Perspectives on Slum Clearance and Resettlement in Addis Ababa," *Development in Practice* 25, no. 4 (2015): 551–62.

following conflicts over land⁹ as well as the rapidly rising levels of inequality are just some examples. However, while the process of urbanization has been violent, it has not been accompanied by rapidly rising levels of interpersonal violence linked to the urban way of life. Moreover, while the Oromo protests have been accompanied by substantial violence and destruction in urban areas in Oromia and bordering regions, Addis Ababa has remained a peaceful bubble. Outskirts of Addis Ababa that extend into Oromia region have seen rising violence since 2015, however areas within the formal boundaries of Addis Ababa have remained relatively untouched. Only in July 2020 did large-scale violent protests reach the center of the capital city, causing destruction and death.

In this chapter we seek to contribute to understanding this recent rise in urban contestation, through the lens of how ordinary people make sense of it. We analyze how Addis Ababans perceive and react to the violent protests in the capital city, focusing in particular on the protests following the killing of the singer Hachalu Hundessa on the 29th of June 2020. We analyze the (dis)continuities between the armed Oromo struggle and recent protests, highlighting how protest is rooted in continued contestation of the 1991 political settlement and how current protests are discursively framed as ‘outsiders attacking Addis Ababans’. Addis Ababans’ reactions to the protests give us an insight into how they view what the Oromo protests are about. These insights defy simple categorization either as a shift of the Oromo struggle from the bushes to the street, or as purely ethnic violence.

We proceed as follows. First, we introduce the case of Addis Ababa and the qualitative data that underlies our analysis. Next, we place the analysis in the context of existing literature on violent protests in war-affected societies. As a background to the recent violent protests, we then trace the development of the Oromo protest movement. Our analysis of the 2020 protests then follows, focusing on three aspects: Intergroup dynamics in Addis, perceptions about the participants in the protests, and the self-defense mechanisms adopted by city residents. We conclude by highlighting how our findings relate to broader research on violent protests.

Case selection and methodology

Studying violent protests in Addis Ababa is interesting for several reasons. First, Ethiopia’s capital city has been characterized by low levels of physical violence both by regional standards, as well as in comparison to other urban areas in Ethiopia. Second, the recent violent protests in Addis Ababa allow for shedding light on the complexities of conflict and do not readily fit established theories. While literature on conflict has noted a shift ‘from the bushes to the streets’, recent violence in Addis Ababa has emerged alongside more conventional armed struggle, not replaced it. Moreover, while recent conflict in Ethiopia has often been framed in ethnic terms, in Addis Ababa, it has pitted Oromo protesters against Addis Ababa’s multi-ethnic population (including Oromos). Additionally, a high level of ‘opportunistic violence’ has characterized recent protests in Addis, requiring nuancing of the general tendency opposing ‘outsiders to residents’. Finally, fault lines in the violence have been unclear, with government forces both (directly and indirectly) supporting and fighting violence and where the conflict has opposed people to the government, people to people and government to people.

The case of Addis Ababa underlines the importance of capturing the complexities of urban protests, which often escape more generalizing theories, and points towards the necessity of ‘studying conflicts from within’ to capture the dynamics that are not visible to outsiders but key for understanding the conflict. This calls for in-depth study and an ethnographic approach. While protests in the public sphere can be observed, understanding the ways in which people make sense of, participate in or disengage from such events, often requires studying and

⁹ Abebe Gizachew Abate, “The Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan and the Oromo Claims to Finfinnee in Ethiopia,” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 26, no. 4 (August 30, 2019): 620–38.

understanding that which is not visible for the public eye. This in turn often means the need for long term fieldwork and the creation of trust and interpersonal relationships to discover that what is not visible in the formal public realm and to capture people's personal experiences¹⁰.

The data we draw on for the chapter was collected during 26 months of fieldwork in Addis Ababa, conducted between October 2015 and December 2020. The data consists of over two hundred formal interviews with citizens, civil society organizations and government officials, informal conversations and observations, policy documents and social media monitoring. While our empirical focus is on events in July 2020, interviews and observations from this broader body of observations and interview data inform the analysis and its contextualization. Such in-depth empirical insight is key given that, despite recent political reforms, Ethiopia remains a country under authoritarian rule, where dissemination of information is tightly controlled by the state. The Oromo protests have on several occasions led to complete or partial internet shutdown¹¹, rendering the collection of first hand personal accounts even more important to reflect on and contrast the official political narrative of events.

The data collection on the Hachalu protests was facilitated by the Centre for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy in Addis Ababa. The data was collected by one of the authors and a CARD affiliated researcher, as part of a bigger joint research project. While one of us is an international long-term resident in Addis Ababa, the other one is Ethiopian Addis Ababan. Our position as researchers and Addis Ababans has facilitated our work, but also posed limits regarding access to and work with study participants. Although we both have ethnically and socially mixed social circles containing individuals supporting the Oromo protests and those contesting their legitimacy and their means, none of us has personal relationships to individuals who have participated in the Oromo protests in Ethiopia. This has allowed us to conduct observations in different parts of the city and interview Addis Ababans from different backgrounds and featuring a wide range of different opinions on the topic, capturing their understanding of the protests. However, we did not capture the perspective of the protesters or individuals living in areas bordering Addis Ababa. The data collection was further complicated by the Covid pandemic, which necessitated major adjustments of data collection procedures to ensure the safety of participants¹².

Violent Protests in War-Affected Societies

Recent years have seen an increasing attention to protests in societies affected by war. Due to their symbolic salience and political importance, cities are often at the center of contestation over post-war societal order.¹³ A general association has been identified between armed conflict and urban social disorder.¹⁴ At the same time, systematic study of violence patterns in Africa indicate a shift in violence from rural to urban areas, and from conventional armed struggle to

¹⁰ Monique Skidmore, "Secrecy and Trust in the Affective Field: Conducting Fieldwork in Burma," in *Women Fielding Danger: Negotiating Ethnographic Identities in Field Research*, ed. Martha Knisely Huggins and Marie-Louise Glebbeek (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

¹¹ accessnow.org/keepiton-ethiopian-government-must-end-arbitrary-internet-shutdowns/

¹² Camille Louise Pellerin, "Securitisation of Development Research under Covid-19 - Fieldwork (Dis)Continuation and Ethical Dilemmas," <https://cfee.hypotheses.org/7528>, *Un Oeil Sur La Corne* (blog), September 29, 2020.

¹³ Annika Björkdahl and Ivan Gusic, "The Divided City – a Space for Frictional Peacebuilding," *Peacebuilding* 1, no. 3 (2013/09/01 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2013.813172>; Scott A Bollens, *City and Soul in Divided Societies* (Routledge, 2012); Ivan Gusic, *Contesting Peace in the Postwar City: Belfast, Mitrovica and Mostar* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

¹⁴ Halvard Buhaug and Henrik Urdal, "An Urbanization Bomb? Population Growth and Social Disorder in Cities," *Global Environmental Change* 23, no. 1 (2013).

less organized forms of violent contestation, often erupting in connection to elections or other political shifts.¹⁵

In some cases, a decline in rural-based rebellion thus appears associated with an increase in urban contestation including violent protests. For instance, Golooba-Mutebi and Sjögren suggest that a combination of effective counterinsurgency and changes in the political system have contributed to a shift in patterns of violent opposition in Uganda, from rural to urban areas.¹⁶ Following a similar logic, Thomson argues that a changing opportunity structure in the aftermath of war can increase the likelihood of violent urban contestation.¹⁷ His argument focuses specifically on the window of opportunity to contest the political order directly after conflict terminations resulting in government defeat. However, others have made more general arguments about the linkages between armed conflict and urban protest. For instance, Büscher draws attention to the way that armed conflict produces and shapes urban growth, in turn giving rise to new forms of conflict in the city.¹⁸ Some studies have connected urban protests in postwar contexts specifically to urban restructuring and neoliberal peacebuilding.¹⁹ Others focus more broadly on the opportunity structures for mobilization in the urban context, including the presence of large groups of unemployed youth.²⁰

Violence taking place in a war-affected society tends to large degree to be connected to the macro conflict and its main actors.²¹ Localized conflicts over issues like local land rights – including urban land conflicts – often feature distinct dynamics yet are closely intertwined with ‘master’-level societal cleavages.²² To understand violent protest in war-affected societies, it therefore becomes necessary to unsettle the dichotomized dividing line between war and peace. Whereas the signing of a peace agreement and cessation of large-scale violence often marks the shift from war to peace, reality is much more messy.²³ In the case of Ethiopia, the civil war against the Dergue which ended in 1991 was followed by numerous low-intensity regional-based insurgencies, as well as interethnic conflicts in different parts of the country. This resonates with the broader finding that the formal end of war often leaves some issues unresolved, whereas new conflicts arise over the terms of the settlement.²⁴ Different forms of power sharing are frequently used in postwar settlements to accommodate the interests of former warring parties and prevent a resurgence of armed war, but may generate adverse

¹⁵ Clionadh Raleigh, "Urban Violence Patterns across African States," *International Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (2015).

¹⁶ Frederick Golooba-Mutebi and Anders Sjögren, "From Rural Rebellions to Urban Riots: Political Competition and Changing Patterns of Violent Political Revolt in Uganda," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 55, no. 1 (2017/01/02 2017).

¹⁷ Henry Thomson, "Conflict Termination, Signals of State Weakness and Violent Urban Social Disorder in the Developing World," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 4, no. 2-3 (2019).

¹⁸ Karen Büscher, "African Cities and Violent Conflict: The Urban Dimension of Conflict and Post Conflict Dynamics in Central and Eastern Africa," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018/04/03 2018). See also Jo Beall, Tom Goodfellow, and Dennis Rodgers, "Cities and Conflict in Fragile States in the Developing World," *Urban Studies* 50, no. 15 (2013/11/01 2013).

¹⁹ Patrick Bond, "Globalisation/Commodification or Deglobalisation/Decommodification in Urban South Africa" *Policy Studies* 26, no. 3-4 (2005/09/01 2005).

²⁰ Raleigh; Josjah Kunkeler and Krijn Peters, "'The Boys Are Coming to Town': Youth, Armed Conflict and Urban Violence in Developing Countries," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 5, no. 2 (2011).

²¹ ; Gabriella McMichael, "Rethinking Access to Land and Violence in Post-War Cities: Reflections from Juba, Southern Sudan," *Environment and Urbanization* 26, no. 2 (2014/10/01 2014).

²² Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of Political Violence," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (2003).

²³ See e.g. Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

²⁴ Sabine Kurtenbach, "The 'Happy Outcomes' May Not Come at All – Postwar Violence in Central America," *Civil Wars* 15, no. sup1 (2013/12/04 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.850884>; Martin Ottmann, "Peace for Our Time? Examining the Effect of Power-Sharing on Postwar Rebellions," *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 5 (2020/09/01 2019).

consequences. For instance, power sharing along ethnic lines may reinforce intergroup polarization, and territorial power sharing (also termed vertical power sharing) may lay the foundation for further autonomy demands and secessionist struggle.²⁵ The Oromo protest movement and its relation to Ethiopia's postwar political settlement can be discussed against this backdrop.

The Oromo Struggle and the Question of Finfinee

Since the integration of Oromia into the Ethiopian Empire, Oromo political movements have struggled for the political, social and economic emancipation of the Oromo and the restoration of control over resources in their region²⁶. While this has at times taken the forms of armed struggle, the rise of Oromo studies in academia²⁷, Oromo music and art²⁸, as well as non-violent protests for example among teachers and students testifies to the diversity of the Oromo struggle²⁹.

In the Oromo struggle, the question of whether to seek increased regional autonomy or increased power at the national level, has been a long-running bone of contention.³⁰ One of the key actors of this struggle, the Oromo Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), launched an armed campaign for independence in the early 1970s. In 1991, after the overthrow of the Marxist military junta, the Dergue, the OLF initially participated in the political settlement laying the foundations for the contemporary Ethiopian polity. The political settlement brought the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), an umbrella group of ethnic based parties, dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), into power.³¹ However, as the TPLF elite tightened its grip over national power and violated the promise of power sharing between and self-determination of Ethiopia's different ethnic groups, the OLF soon returned to armed resistance. Since the early 1990s, it has been waging a largely low-intensity armed conflict against the EPRDF regime. At the same time, local ethnic conflicts have pitted Oromo against other groups, such as the Amhara, Gumuz and Somali.³²

The question of the ownership of Addis Ababa has been central to Oromo movements. With its dual role as national and regional capital, Addis Ababa in theory serves both the citizens of Ethiopia and, regarding their regional affairs, the citizens in Oromia. Scholars in Oromo studies have held that the Oromo have been unable to access resources in the capital and have been displaced in the process of urbanization and the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia region³³. Research has also pointed at the ways in which the expansion of Addis Ababa has led

²⁵ Christof Hartmann, "Territorial Power Sharing and the Regulation of Conflict in Africa," *Civil Wars* 15, no. sup1 (2013/12/04 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.850891>; .

²⁶ Asafa Jalata, "The Emergence of Oromo Nationalism and Ethiopian Reaction," *Social Justice* 22, no. 3 (61) (1995): 165–89.

²⁷ Asafa Jalata, "The Struggle for Knowledge: The Case of Emergent Oromo Studies," *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1996): 95–123.

²⁸ Allo Awol, "The Poetics and Politics of Oromo Resistance," *OpenDemocracy* (London, United Kingdom: OpenDemocracy, June 22, 2015).

²⁹ Habtamu Dugo, "The Powers and Limits of New Media Appropriation in Authoritarian Contexts: A Comparative Case Study of Oromo Protests in Ethiopia," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 10 (November 1, 2017): 48–70.

³⁰ Terje Østebø and Kjetil Tronvoll, "Interpreting Contemporary Oromo Politics in Ethiopia: An Ethnographic Approach," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14, no. 4 (2020).

³¹ Berouk Mesfin, "Rebel Movements in Ethiopia," in *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa*, ed. Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar (Springer, 2017).

³² UCDP, "Ucdp Conflict Encyclopedia," (Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Uppsala University, 2020).

³³ Benti, "A Nation without a City [a Blind Person without a Cane]."

to the marginalization of Oromo culture, language and norms and the destruction of social networks and traditional economic life in and around the capital city³⁴.

The expansion of Addis Ababa into the Oromia regional state on several occasions led to violent conflicts between the indigenous Oromo and the Addis Ababa residents. The formulation of the Addis Ababa Master Plan eventually sparked protests by the Oromo youth in 2015³⁵. While opponents of the plan held that it formalized the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia regional state³⁶, it was officially meant to coordinate planning and service provision between the Addis Ababa city administration and the surrounding Oromia zone³⁷. However, the centralized planning process and top-down communication provoked resistance. The protests spread and triggered the declaration of two subsequent states of emergency in 2016 and 2017 and eventually forced the ruling coalition EPRDF to adopt reforms in 2018. Abiy Ahmed became the first Oromo to be elected Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Following his coming into the office, Abiy promoted reforms, including inviting previously illegal opposition parties back into the country. A separate peace agreement was signed between the OLF and the Ethiopian government in August 2018³⁸.

Timeline: Oromo protests

2014: Plans for expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromo farmland sets off protests in Ambo, Nekemte, Jimma and other parts of Oromia.

2015: General election, Master Plan Protests in November reach areas on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, e.g. Alem Gena

2016: Protests erupt in August, including a protest in Addis Ababa on Mesquel square, protests at Irecha in Bishoftu, state of emergency, violent repression of protests, sources estimate between 90 and 600 killed by security forces, mass arrests, protests spread to Amhara regional state and others

2017: State of emergency

2018: Sustained wave of anti-government protests in Oromia & other regions. April: Abiy Ahmed comes to power. August: OLF leaders return to Ethiopia and are greeted with a mass manifestation in central Addis; reports of ethnic violence against participants in the mass demonstrations

2019, October: Violent protests starting in Addis spread across Oromia, mainly urban areas, leaving at least 86 people dead.

2020, July: Protests following assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, at least 239 people died, ethnically & religiously targeted killings, crack-down by the government, protests by the diaspora

Parts of the Oromo youth movement, called the qeerroo movement,³⁹ that had been instrumental in bringing Abiy into power, turned against him progressively. According to some factions of the qeerroo, Abiy abandoned the Oromo cause and did not sufficiently advance an Oromo political agenda. They also contested Abiy's discourse of 'Ethiopia first', striving for more power to and autonomy for the Oromo. At the heart of this contestation lies the enduring conflict over the postwar political settlement which established the federal system. Abiy and

³⁴ Abate, "The Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan and the Oromo Claims to Finfinnee in Ethiopia."

³⁵ Jan Záhofík, "Reconsidering Ethiopia's Ethnic Politics in the Light of the Addis Ababa Master Plan and Anti-Governmental Protests," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 8, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 257–72.

³⁶ Yonatan T. Fessha, "Intergovernmental Cooperation, Divided Societies and Capital Cities: The Case of the Ethiopian Capital," *Verfassung in Recht Und Übersee* 53, no. 1 (2020): 12–29.

³⁷ World Bank, "Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Enhancing Urban Resilience," City Strength - Resilient Cities Program (Washington: World Bank Group, July 2015).

³⁸ Jon Temin and Yoseph Badwaza, "Aspirations and Realities in Africa: Ethiopia's Quiet Revolution," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 3 (July 10, 2019): 139–53.

³⁹ Qeerroo in Afan Oromo means 'youth'. The movement is part of the Oromo struggle for political freedom.

his newly established Prosperity Party⁴⁰ have taken a more integrationist position, emphasizing a shared national identity and de-emphasizing ethnicity and regionalism.⁴¹ According to some qeerroo, Abiy's new position does not account for the historical marginalization of the Oromo and the fact that the so called national culture of Ethiopia, heavily relies on Amhara national, cultural, religious and language traditions. This has deepened rifts within Oromo politics, both among the qeerroo and Oromo political elites.⁴² Some Oromo activists and politicians acknowledge the power gains of the Oromo at the helm of Ethiopian national politics and support Abiy's discourse, whereas others claim that all advancement has been lost due to Abiy's centrist position.

While the qeerroo movement emerged independently from the OLF, there exist some indications of connections between the two movements. Government media reports suggest that the OLF has capitalized on the qeerroo protests to recruit young fighters⁴³. Although increasingly OLF flags are being carried at protests staged by the qeerroo, the OLF flag is also the standard Oromo resistance flag. Moreover, as both the OLF as well as the qeerroo movement are characterized by internal divisions and conflicts⁴⁴, one should not make generalizing statements about the movements and their respective connections

Throughout the Oromo protests, Addis Ababa's borders have regularly been closed, turning it into a bubble of calm in the middle of the protests, with only its outskirts outside of the city borders being affected. However, in July 2020, protesters entered Addis Ababa, following the assassination of the Oromo singer and political icon Hachalu Hundessa. The protests turned violent, leading to mass destruction of public and private property as well as causing lives lost. While the protests were triggered by Hachalu's assassination, they also took on a broader significance. As one interviewee put it:

*The qeerroo, they were told that all resources of Addis Ababa belong to the Oromo. They want to control Addis Ababa. They also came for revenge of Hachalu. They want to claim Addis Ababa using every opportunity. Hachalu's death was such an opportunity.*⁴⁵

Intergroup dynamics in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is a multiethnic city; however, according to the most recent census, nearly half of the Addis residents were Amhara⁴⁶. The relative overrepresentation of Amhara in Addis has affected violent protests in the capital on several levels: First, the Amhara dominance in Addis has fueled grievances among the Oromo, making it a target of the qeerroo movement. Second, the relative overrepresentation of Amhara in Addis, has affected how residents perceive and react to the Oromo protests.

Amharic remains the administrative and working language in the capital. Consequently, some have held that it has become 'Amharised'. Most non-Oromo in Addis, as well as Oromo

⁴⁰ The Property Party (PP) was established in December 2020 by Abiy. The party is the successor to the ruling coalition EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) and breaks with the tradition of ethnic federalism, merging coalition members into a unitary party. It is based on a merger between three out of four coalition members from Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations regional states. It further includes one national party each from the following regions: Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Somali and Harar.

⁴¹ Østebø and Tronvoll.

⁴² See e.g. ICG, "Keeping Ethiopia's Transition on the Rails."; Østebø and Tronvoll.

⁴³ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 12th and 13th of July 2020 and 18th of August 2020, summary from government news reporting.

⁴⁴ TerØstebø and Tronvoll.

⁴⁵ Interview with resident from Sarbet, 15th of December 2020

⁴⁶ Population Census Commission Central Statistical Agency, "National Census"

born and raised in Addis Ababa only speak Amharic, despite living in Oromia regional state. An Oromo resident explained for example:

My kids don't speak Afan Oromo. They understand English better [laughs sadly]. That's what they learn. At school no one teaches them Oromo and at home we only speak Amharic⁴⁷.

The Oromo in Addis who are established metropolitan citizens mostly do not identify by their ethnicity. Social networks in the capital are mixed and Addis Ababans, contrary to citizens in many other parts of the country, often identify as 'Ethiopian', rather than by their ethnicity. A mixed-Oromo resident explained why he thought that ethnicity in Addis Ababa was a redundant concept:

In Addis Ababa it's hard to have a system based on ethnicity. Many have several ethnicities. I'm from four or five different tribes. I had to ask my dad what ethnicity I am from. My mother and my father have two different ones. And even they are mixed. When they did the census like ten years ago, they asked us for our ethnicity. I had to ask my dad. I didn't think it was important. Now my dad is not that happy with the ethnic group that he said he belonged to. So now he is choosing another one. ...⁴⁸

While most Addis Ababans hold that 'ethnicity is not important⁴⁹' or 'we are all the same⁵⁰', it is particularly the Amhara residents who do not like talking about their own ethnicity. Many Amhara residents asked about their ethnicity answer: 'I am Ethiopian'. While some Addis Ababans acknowledge that 'Ethiopian culture is Amhara culture'⁵¹, most Amhara residents do not want to acknowledge their past dominance in Ethiopian history and its continued effects. Moreover, in Addis Ababa, not all ethnicities are treated equal. Instead, the capital has been characterized by what has sometime been described as Oromophobia. Many Addis Ababans from non-Oromo backgrounds hold negative opinions about the Oromo, describing them as primitive and uncultured. Those negative sentiments are primarily directed towards Oromo outside of Addis Ababa and recent urban settlers, not the long-term Oromo residents. Long-term urban residents are identified as 'Addis Ababans' not Oromo. Negative stereotypes have been normalized and socially accepted and it is not infrequent that 'Oromo' is associated to insults. Anti-Oromo sentiments are often expressed unhidden, which, according to a resident of the capital, 'is quite something for people living in Oromia regional state and who live in the capital of the Oromo region'⁵². Addis Ababans in daily conversations stated for example:

You know why Oromia has OR on their license plate? It means Always Rong. You get it? They are so wrong, they can't even spell⁵³.

This one is surely an Oromo. He drives like a peasant⁵⁴.

The negative attitude has in recent times also been fueled by fear that the Oromo from outside of Addis Ababa might enter the capital and claim their rights to the city. The intensifying Oromo protests around Addis Ababa have heightened this sense of danger.

⁴⁷ Interview with resident from 6-Kilo, 19th of December 2020

⁴⁸ Interview with resident from Gerji, 15th of December 2020

⁴⁹ Interview with resident from Hayat, 15th of December 2020

⁵⁰ Interview with resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

⁵¹ Informal conversation among Addis Ababa residents, Camille Pellerin, 13th of December 2020

⁵² Informal conversation with resident from Bole Atlas, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 15th of July 2020

⁵³ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 12th of March 2020

⁵⁴ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 16th of August 2020

Information and rumors about ethnically-targeted violence in the Oromo protests in other parts of the country further heightened the fear. An Addis resident explained:

We have seen it. We know what happened. Do you know how many people have died in Addis? Hundreds. [The official figure says 10] It's not Abiy telling us that the qeerro are dangerous. We know. And they might come here to cause trouble ...⁵⁵

In the Oromo protests, the established Oromo in Addis assume a peculiar position. Many non-Oromo residents perceive them as Addis Ababans, not Oromo, and dissociate them from the Oromo protests. However, Oromo who have recently moved to Addis are often perceived as outsiders and potentially linked to the Oromo protests. While many Oromo in Addis recognize the marginalization of the Oromo, many did not support the destruction and violence caused by the Oromo protests in Addis Ababa. Oromo residents explained for example:

I didn't support the qeerroo when they arrived in Addis this time. They had a sense that they were bringing the violence to the area where there were a lot of Neftenjas.⁵⁶ What they did was morally unacceptable.⁵⁷

After the second protest I didn't support them anymore. In Sheshemene they destroyed everything. They killed civilians. They are a terrorist group. Butchers. Any act that terrorises civilians is a terrorist act. So it's a terrorist group.

In the light of current Ethiopian politics, rumors about the city government granting privileges to Oromo through the form of illegal land allocation, access to government housing and access to jobs in state enterprises, such as Ethiotel, have further heightened the tensions and the sense of political favoritism between Addis Ababans of non-Oromo heritage and newly arriving Oromo. Many non-Oromo residents do not believe that the claims of the qeerroo for economic and political redistribution, and their specific claim to resources in Addis Ababa, are legitimate. Instead, non-Oromo residents have portrayed the qeerroo as criminals. Residents held:

Those people [the qeerroo] aren't rational, they just destroy things. You have to be careful. They can attack anyone. It's not safe anymore.⁵⁸

Most of them didn't even know what they were protesting for. It's not really about grievances. Some of them don't know what they are doing. They just blindly follow the calls for violence.⁵⁹

However, while some interpret the protests in apolitical terms, others suggest they are driven by legitimate grievances and connect them to the broader Oromo struggle:

Before Abiy people's question was legitimate. But now it's not a legitimate question that requires violence of this scale. Still, after Abiy arrived, the Oromos also asked legitimate questions. The Oromos are being killed by their own special forces. Their leaders are arrested. Before the questions

⁵⁵ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 26th of July

⁵⁶ A hate speech term used to describe the Amhara

⁵⁷ Interview with Addis Ababa resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

⁵⁸ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 27th of July 2020

⁵⁹ Interview with resident from Bole Bulbula, 12th of July 2020

*were about land and economic other resources. (...) The Oromo people are in war. They are led by the OLF. Their violence is legitimate.*⁶⁰

When ‘The Bushes’ fight ‘The Streets’

The accounts of Addis Ababans regarding the violent protests after the death of Hachalu clearly emphasized two points: First, according to Addis Ababans, the perpetrators of the violence were mainly qeerroo entering the capital from the outside and many residents described them as ‘peasants’. Second, Addis Ababans recounted how the residents in the capital had defended themselves against the assault. Hence, rather than signifying a shift ‘from the bushes to the streets’, violent protests in Addis were more accurately described as ‘the bushes fighting the streets’.

Even before the violent protests in 2020, the Oromo protests did on several occasions touch the outskirts of Addis Ababa, areas such as Alem Gena. Apart from isolated incidents, however, the Oromo protests did not reach the city center. In 2020, Hachalu Hundessa, a singer and political icon of the Oromo struggle, was killed in Addis Ababa in the evening of the 29th of June. Information about his assassination was shared on social media, leading Oromo youth from outside of Addis to come to the capital to grieve his death. Passing through the outskirts of Addis in the early hours of the 30th of June, the qeerroo proceeded to Gelan condominium, where Hachalu had been shot. More youth entered Addis Ababa later during the day and nearly all parts of the city were touched by disturbances, destruction and violence (see Figure 1 below). Passing through the outskirts on their way through the city, the qeerroo destroyed windows of public and private buildings, looted shops and residences, blocked roads, burned tires and clashed with local residents. Addis Ababa residents recounted that violence included ‘throwing stones’, ‘crashing cars’, ‘burning tyers and vehicles’⁶¹.

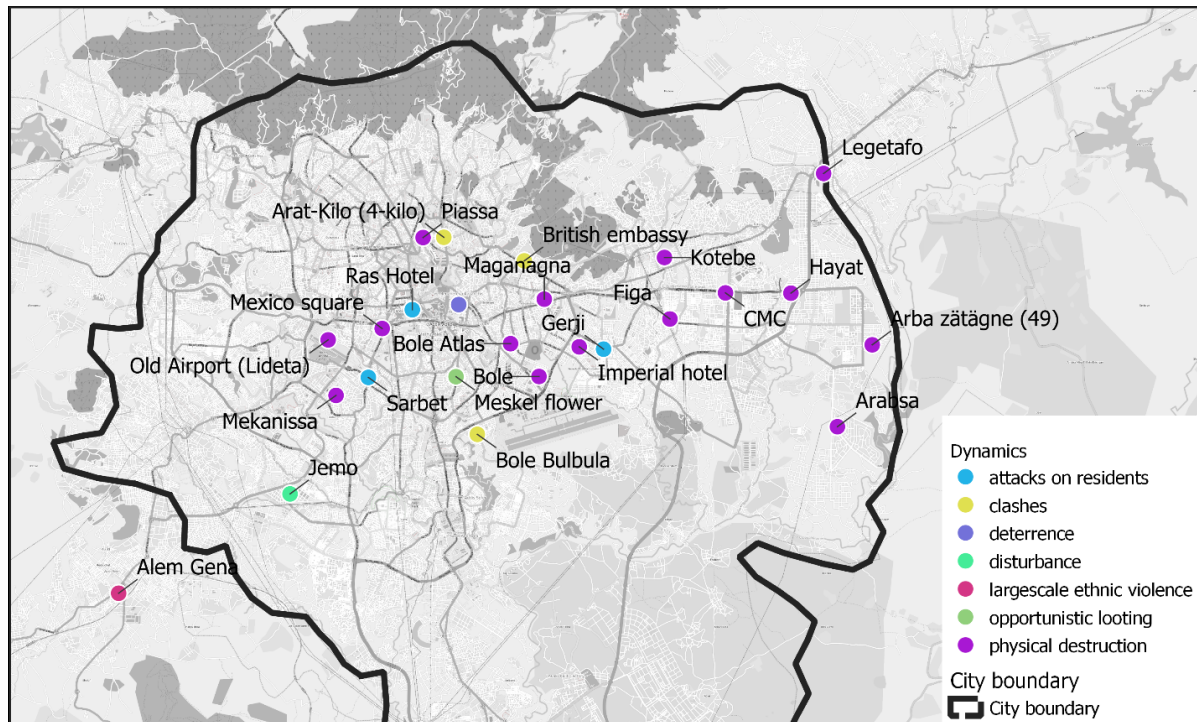


Figure 1: Locations affected by the violent protests June/July 2020.

Addis Ababa city boundary marked in black. The mapping is based on field interviews. Due to the internet shutdown, media reports and twitter feeds do not provide the basis for systematic mapping of the events.

⁶⁰ Interview with resident from Kotebe, 16th of December 2020

⁶¹ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 1st and 2nd of July 2020

Information about the death of Hachalu and calls to the qeerroo to come to Addis spread via social media, telephone and text messages. The residents of Addis Ababa warned each other about potential disturbances, anticipating violence and encouraging people to stay at home⁶². Some said that they were ‘sure that there will be disturbance’ and that they ‘sat down to plan the next days’⁶³. Many citizens recounted that they ‘stayed at home for two days’⁶⁴, that they ‘didn’t go out and didn’t move’⁶⁵ and ‘stayed away from it all for a few days’⁶⁶.

To protect their neighborhoods, many communities set up neighborhood watches to defend the residents from the qeerroo. In some places, guards were provided with ‘horns’ and ‘bells’⁶⁷ to warn the residents in case the qeerroo attacked the community. In other places, the residents patrolled their neighborhood. Addis Ababa residents recounted:

*The nights after it happened people were out to protect the neighborhood. People left their houses armed with some kinds of sticks. [...] I went out and defended myself. The situation was very tense. This was a first time for Addis Ababa. I was polite. I went out only with a stick. Other people went out with machetes and axes. But we don’t know what’s inside their clothes [laughing]. Many people have firearms in Addis.*⁶⁸

*People in the neighborhood went out to defend the neighborhood. They went out with gardening tools and cleaning utensils. I heard in some rich neighborhoods people went out with baseball bats. People took what they had. In our neighborhood, the old ladies even went out with cooking equipment.*⁶⁹

Many Addis Ababans recounted that they were forced to protect themselves, as the police did not intervene when the qeerroo entered Addis. ‘[...] they were just watching. They watched while houses burned and cars burned’.⁷⁰ In some areas, the police intervened, but only several hours after the start of the disturbances. In areas where the police had lacked resources, they asked the residents to ‘[...] be strong and keep their communities safe from the qeerroo’⁷¹ and ‘[...] if you can shoot, shoot’⁷². A resident recounted:

*We didn’t see any police in our neighborhood the whole day. They arrived the day after. Only the next day they passed. They didn’t intervene in the conflict. They just came on their car and watched.*⁷³

As most Addis Ababans had anticipated violence from Hachalu’s death and stayed at home, it seemed unclear why the government had not anticipated the violence. The failure to protect their citizens was interpreted in different ways. Some pointed at the inability of the government to protect all the residents of Addis Ababa, while many suggested that the government had

⁶² Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 1st and 2nd of July 2020.

⁶³ Interview with resident living from Gerji, 19th of December 2020

⁶⁴ Interview with resident from Sarbet, 15th of December 2020

⁶⁵ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 4th of July 2020

⁶⁶ Interview with resident from Meskel Flower, 15th of December 2020

⁶⁷ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 12th of July

⁶⁸ Interview with resident from Gerji, 15th of December 2020

⁶⁹ Interview with resident from Meganagna, 14th of July 2020

⁷⁰ Interview with resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

⁷¹ Interview with resident from Gerji, 15th of December 2020

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Interview with resident from Hayat, 15th of December 2020

been unwilling to intervene timely. Some residents suggested that the police supported the qeerroo. Residents explained:

They should have reacted earlier. As soon as they heard about the death of Hachalu, they should have reacted. They knew what would happen. Everyone knew. It was obvious [...].⁷⁴

The police kept quiet. They were angry. They were feeling that it was their guy who had been killed. It was about their ethnicity. Their group. We have no evidence why the police behaved this way. I think they are also Oromos. They consider themselves victims. They don't care.⁷⁵

I have a testimony from my mum. She met a police officer early in the morning. The police officer told her that they had been ordered not to do anything.⁷⁶

Rumors circulated among Addis Ababans that many of the qeerroo who entered the city had been brought from the countryside by bus and given some money to participate in the protests. Many described them as 'peasants from the countryside'⁷⁷. Residents who held that they had talked to the qeerroo reported 'they didn't even know who Hachalu was'⁷⁸, 'they were like twelve years old and had been sent here by those who want to instigate chaos'⁷⁹, and 'they were told they had to go to Addis';

[The qeerroo] came from the outside. Those were brought by busses from Ambo. They asked where is Haya Hulet⁸⁰? They got dropped here with 300 birr. That pays a good lunch. That lunch could give them power for anything.⁸¹

While the dominant narrative was that the destruction and chaos was caused by qeerroo coming into the city, interviews suggest that the situation was more complex. In some of the Addis Ababa suburbs, it was young Oromo living in the area, attacking non-Oromo residents. In others, it was non-Oromo Addis Ababa youth who used the chaos to loot shops. In others, recently settled Oromo residents were attacked by non-Oromo residents. Ethnically targeted violence against Oromo was exacerbated by the calls to arms by Eskinder Nega and his party Balderas, mobilizing the Addis Ababa youth against the qeerroo and, more broadly, Oromo residents⁸². Residents recounted:

In our place also, there were four or five kids. Teenagers. They threw stones into the windows. They also stole stuff. I learned that they are the guys cleaning the shoes and washing cars. They were not qeerroos.⁸³

⁷⁴ Interview with resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

⁷⁵ Interview with resident from Hayat, 15th of December 2020

⁷⁶ Interview with resident from Kotebe, 16th of December

⁷⁷ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 1st of July 2020

⁷⁸ Interview with resident from Jemo, 19th of December 2020

⁷⁹ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 2nd of July 2020

⁸⁰ An area in central Addis Ababa.

⁸¹ Interview with resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

⁸² Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, summary of government media reporting, 2nd of July 2020

⁸³ Interview with resident from Gerji, 15th of December 2020

The kids from the condo went to the qeerroo park. They were armed with sticks. They wanted to attack the qeerroo before the qeerroo could attack them.⁸⁴

Addis Ababa to the Addis Ababans – Re-establishing order by force

What united Addis Ababa residents was a wish to go ‘back to normal’⁸⁵. Regardless of ethnic backgrounds, Addis Ababans demanded that the government intervene strictly and swiftly to reestablish law and order. Even those who initially were sympathetic to the claims of the qeerroo held that no grievance could legitimize the level of violence and destruction. Many held that the qeerroo had abandoned their cause and instead engaged in indiscriminate and illegitimate violence.

Addis Ababans unanimously held that the violence around Hachalu’s death in the capital was unprecedented. While a few referred to the violence around the 2005 elections, they clearly differentiated between the post-election violence after the general elections in 2005 which pitted ‘people against the government’ to the 2020 violence that pitted ‘people against people’⁸⁶. An Addis Ababan explained:

... there have been similar violence in Addis before. During the 2005 elections. Also, in 2001 there were unrests at the university. But then it was clear. It was people against the government. Now it’s people against people. And the state is also involved. It’s unclear.⁸⁷

Addis Ababans were deeply shocked by the events and residents demanded reestablishment of order in the face of previously unknown and uncharacteristic levels of violence. Disturbances in Addis only lasted for two and a half days, as the federal government closed the city’s boundaries and reestablished order by force after its initial passive stance. People stayed at home for three days, and then went out going about their days as usual. The only reminder of the incidences were enhanced police and military presence and a large number of broken windows.⁸⁸ However, the sense of security of the Addis Ababans had clearly been affected and many wanted the government to act with force. An Addis Ababan held:

If they come here with weapons and burn our house. What would you say? You’d want stability. So what the government is doing is necessary. They’ll come and kill us ... do you know how many people participated in the violence? More than 10,000. 100,000 probably. So when they put 5000 in prison. That number sounds about right. They need to put everyone in prison who participated ...⁸⁹

Information and rumors about protests outside of Addis and ethnically and religiously motivated attacks in Oromia regional state fueled the fear of many Addis Ababans. Government media reports alluding to genocidal tendencies and interviewing victims about their experiences exacerbated such fear. Moreover, rumors circulated that the qeerroo were planning further violence against the Addis Ababans.⁹⁰ This meant that Addis Ababans in the majority were supportive when the federal government began intervening harshly against the

⁸⁴ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 5th of July 2020

⁸⁵ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 2nd of July 2020

⁸⁶ Interview with resident from Hayat, 15th of December 2020

⁸⁷ Interview with resident from Kotebe, 16th of December 2020

⁸⁸ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 5th of July 2020

⁸⁹ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 26th of July 2020

⁹⁰ Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 3rd of July 2020

protesters on the second day of the protests. A resident held that '[...] everyone was much happier when the government began to take a hard stance on security issues.⁹¹, another that 'what this is really about [is] that people hope that this means the end of chaos.'⁹² Harsh measures were imposed by the government, including imprisoning individuals who had allegedly participated in the protests, opposition politicians and journalists.

The federal government also shut off internet for three weeks, allegedly to prevent the violence from propagating. While it affected life and work in the capital drastically, most Addis Ababans agreed that this was necessary to 'prevent the spread of rumors and hate speech'⁹³ as well as the 'propagation of violence'⁹⁴ and to discourage people from 'organizing through social media'⁹⁵. While many acknowledged that it was nearly impossible to get information and that it hurt the economy, many believed that the government 'didn't have any choice' and had to 'let things settle down'⁹⁶. While some acknowledged that the government was dominating the narrative of events and telling 'us what it wants us to hear', many believed that the government was mostly providing citizens with truthful information. Consequently, citizens were less concerned with the inability to access information from alternative sources. One explained:

The internet shutdown, it was necessary at first. Because we saw immediately after Hachalu was shot what happened. The things on internet were scary. It was call for genocide. And there were so many of these posts. What were they supposed to do?⁹⁷

Many Addis Ababans quoted government allegations that the armed wing of the OLF had been involved in Hachalu's assassination. When the government aired alleged proof in the form of pictures and whatsapp messages, as well as shared testimonies of former OLF fighters who had defected, many were convinced that the OLF was using the qeerroo movement to justify attacks and to increase recruitment⁹⁸. While perceiving the qeerroo and the OLF as two separate movements, many Addis Ababans highlighted how the OLF was capitalising on the qeerroo for its own activities. The increased activity of the armed insurgents led Addis Ababans to sanction the government's military operation in Oromia regional state, which was supposedly aimed at eliminating the armed wing of the OLF. A resident explained:

The OLF is using the qeerroo to recruit. They recruit among them. They promise them all sorts of things and then they make them kill civilians. We have proof. On the news there were interviews with former OLF fighters. Also, you see the qeerroo waving OLF flags. What more proof do we need?⁹⁹

While on the surface a sense of normality was re-established and citizens in Addis went about their lives in their normal fashion, the incidents left their impact on citizens private lives. For weeks, discussions about the incidents dominated private conversations and created rifts in families and friendship circles. While Addis Ababans mostly agreed that the government had to stop the violence perpetrated by the protesters and should re-establish order, several

⁹¹ Interview with resident from Gerji, 19th of December 2020

⁹² Interview with resident from Bole Atlas, 6th of July 2020

⁹³ Interview with resident from Sarbet, 15th of December 2020

⁹⁴ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 11th of July

⁹⁵ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 7th of July 2020

⁹⁶ Interview with resident from Gerji, 15th of December 2020

⁹⁷ Interview with resident from Magenagna, 6th of July 2020

⁹⁸ Informal conversations, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 12th and 13th of July 2020

⁹⁹ Informal conversation, Fieldnotes, Camille Pellerin, 27th of July 2020

questioned the government's narrative of events and the way of handling the crisis. Heated political arguments became more commonplace and in extreme cases family members and friends either stopped talking altogether or did not touch the subject to avoid conflicts. A feeling of depression and hopelessness befell those Addis Ababans who questioned the government narrative of events, as well as its reaction to the protests. However, a few months after the incidents, life in the capital went mostly back to normal. An Oromo resident in Addis summarized his impression:

This is the amazing thing in Ethiopia. After the incidents, in my neighborhood, there was not more tension between the Amhara and the Oromo. You continue going out with your Amhara friend. You grab coffee. You socialize. Life goes on and people continue just as they were. ...¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

The ways in which Addis Ababans made sense of and reacted to the protests and ensuing violence in Addis, provide several important points to reflect back on the broader literature.

According to Addis residents, the protests were not 'urban' in character, as they did not concern urban life in the capital. Instead, citizens narratives suggest that it is more accurate to talk about 'protests in an urban setting'. Addis residents held that the protesters primarily came from outside of Addis Ababa and many were from rural areas. Residents interpreted the protests as linked to the broader Oromo struggle, which in turn is closely interwoven with the continuously contested 1991 political settlement. At the same time, according to many residents, the protests were not about grievances and instead about power and the will to exercise violence. Changes in the political center, with a democratic opening under Abiy Ahmed (the first Oromo Prime Minister), has changed the dynamics, as well as how they are perceived. These changing dynamics appear to resonate with Thomson's finding that urban protests become more likely under changed incentive structures connected to regime defeat.¹⁰¹ In turn, the protests were interpreted in apolitical terms, described as a break from earlier events where violent protests clearly targeted the government. The lack of perceived legitimacy of the protests led many Addis Ababans to conclude that the government should act harshly and promptly, with all necessary measures, to re-establish order.

Residents emphasized that the recent violence is directed against civilians, and violence around the Oromo protests has often been portrayed in ethnic terms. While supporters of the Oromo protests have focused on state violence against the Oromo, numerous other observers have pointed at the violence exerted by Oromo protesters against other ethnic groups. In Addis Ababa such simplified narratives on conflict lines have been challenged by its residents, who have identified the Oromos as both perpetrators as well as victims of violence. Oromo residents, just like other residents, in Addis Ababa recounted to have been victims of the protests that turned violent. Consequently, Addis Ababa residents differentiated between the qeerroo and long-term Oromo Addis Ababans, whom they perceived as Addis Ababans first and Oromo second.

The rise of urban protests has in the literature often been portrayed as a shift from the 'bushes to the streets'. Such suggestions imply a shift from armed rural rebellions to protests in urban areas. However, the narratives from Addis residents suggest that, in the case of the Oromo protests in Addis Ababa, the dynamics were much more complex. Addis Ababans regularly and pejoratively described the protesters as outsiders and peasants, implying that they came primarily from rural Oromia. At the same time, Addis Ababans also quoted government media

¹⁰⁰ Interview with resident from Alem Gena, 16th of December 2020

¹⁰¹ Thomson, "Conflict Termination"

that held that armed rural insurgency was on the rise, with the OLF launching attacks. While Addis Ababans perceived the OLF and the qeerroo as two separate groupings, residents held that those increasingly overlapped. The perceived link between OLF activity and the qeerroo in turn made Addis Ababans supportive of forceful government intervention for peace and stability.

According to accounts of Addis Ababans, the fault lines in the protests were blurred, not only in terms of ethnicity, but also regarding the role of the government. Lack of timely intervention in the protests, as well as reported incidents where the police ‘looked the other way’ and directly and indirectly supported the violence in Addis Ababa, contributed to the fact that Addis Ababans felt that the present conflict was characterized by chaos and lack of clarity. Such lack of trust in the neutrality and legitimacy of the police resonates with observations from other conflict-affected societies,¹⁰² and may fuel rumors and intergroup mistrust. In Addis Ababa, many residents mobilized to defend themselves and their neighborhoods, physically manifesting their own right to the city in the face of the violent protests.

¹⁰² E.g. Annekatrin Deglow, "Localized Legacies of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 6 (2016/11/01 2016).