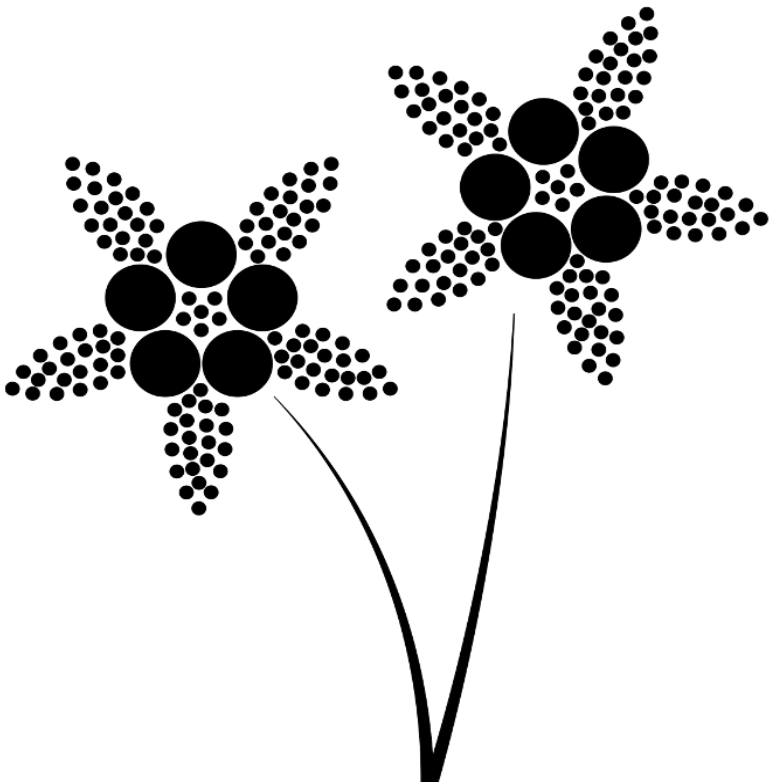
# *Bachelor thesis*

## *Peace in Tigray: An Analysis using Johan Galtung's Concepts of Positive and Negative Peace.*



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## Abstract

Ethiopia's Tigray conflict is one of the most serious problems facing peacebuilding in conflict-affected nations today. Beginning in 2020, there was widespread bloodshed, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis as a result of the conflict between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional authorities. With the Pretoria Peace Agreement, active hostilities were officially terminated in November 2022. Still, it is unclear what type of peace has been reached and whether the underlying causes of the war have been addressed. This thesis investigates the state of peace in Tigray prior to the start of the conflict as well as in the years after the Pretoria Agreement. The analytical foundation for assessing how various manifestations of peace appear in the area is provided by Johan Galtung's ideas of structural and cultural violence as well as his conceptions of positive and negative peace. The study uses a qualitative case study methodology and combines policy reporting, human rights documentation, and scholarly research.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to the Research Topic

The conflict between Ethiopia and Tigray is one of the worst political and humanitarian disasters of the twenty-first century. The conflict started in November 2020 and involves international state actors, regional militias, the Ethiopian federal government, and the regional Tigray authorities. Millions of civilians were impacted by the extensive humanitarian needs, mass displacement, and widespread human rights violations that followed more than two years of fighting (African Union, 2022). With the signing of the Pretoria Agreement in November 2022, which established a lasting cease-fire between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Government of Ethiopia, the conflict reached a watershed. The nature of the peace that has since developed in Tigray is still unknown, notwithstanding the official cessation of active fighting. It is still up for debate whether peace is just the absence of violence or a more complex process requiring social, political, and institutional change. In situations like Bosnia following the 1995 Dayton pact, when armed combat ended but the ensuing peace remained precarious because the pact strengthened ethnic differences rather than addressing the fundamental reasons of the war, this ambiguity is clear (International Crisis Group, 2014). Whether a return into conflict is still a serious possibility will depend on how well political grievances, territorial issues, and human rights violations are being resolved. Numerous post-conflict situations worldwide show that peace accords frequently provide temporary calm without addressing the underlying problems that sparked the conflict, which results in violent cycles that repeat (International Crisis Group, 2014). An interesting case study to analyze this dynamic is Tigray.

Ethiopia's predicament is very important to the larger field of peacebuilding research. Ethiopia, which has a federal government structured around ethnolinguistic regions, is one of the most ethnically diverse republics in Africa. Political rivalry and contestation have arisen from this arrangement, which was designed to preserve autonomy and self-administration. The Tigray war serves as an example of how, in the absence of effective institutional processes for conflict

resolution, disputes over political representation, territorial control, and federal power may quickly spiral out of control. Knowing these processes is important for improving our understanding of peacebuilding in fractured governments as well as for assessing Ethiopia's future course. Many people agree that the Pretoria Agreement, which signaled a change from military conflict to political dialogue, was a major diplomatic victory (International Crisis Group, 2022; Chatham House, 2023). International and local observers, however, are still debating whether Tigray's administration, social cohesion, and human security have actually improved as a result of the peace process (International Crisis Group, 2022; European Institute of Peace, 2022). While combat has reportedly mostly stopped. There are still a number of important concerns that need to be addressed, including the state of affairs in Western Tigray, responsibility for atrocities committed during the conflict, and the reintegration of displaced people (International Crisis Group, 2022). This begs the question of whether post-conflict changes are a brief lull in a conflict fueled by intricate political grievances or a turning point toward lasting peace.

Due to a lack of empirical facts and continuous uncertainty surrounding post-agreement developments, examining the nature and trajectory of peace in Tigray necessitates scholarly investigation.

### 1.2 Research Problem and Academic Relevance

Ending armed violence is usually given priority in post-war peace processes, but political grievances, accountability, and structural inequalities are rarely sufficiently addressed. They thus run the risk of creating flimsy peace agreements that could break down due to unresolved issues (International Crisis Group, 2022). In order to lessen the possibility of future violence, conflict resolution experts have increasingly warned that peace agreements must include measures for long-term reconciliation and institutional reform in addition to addressing urgent security issues One striking example of these difficulties is the Tigray conflict. Political tensions in the area before the war broke out were caused by disagreements about territorial governance, federalism, and political representation. The end of the military conflict did not eliminate these issues, which

continue to be major causes of friction between the federal administration and the Tigray province. Everyday life in Tigray is also still impacted by the conflict's humanitarian aftereffects, which include civilian trauma, displacement, and interruptions to vital services. Scholarly and policy-focused analysis of the Tigray conflict has grown significantly since 2020, encompassing extensive human rights documentation by international organizations (Human Rights Watch, 2021) as well as investigations into the political causes of the war and federal-regional tensions (International Crisis Group, 2021). Nonetheless, considerable information gaps exist about how post-conflict peace processes evolve in practice and why efforts to proceed beyond the cessation of violence sometimes fail to create deeper political and social reform.While recent research has improved understanding of the Tigray conflict's political causes and humanitarian consequences, little attention has been paid to the mechanisms that link pre-war structural tensions, such as political marginalization and federal-regional disputes, to post-agreement peacebuilding outcomes. In particular, there has been little empirical research into how these underlying variables impact the opportunities and obstacles for achieving meaningful peace following the Pretoria Agreement. The Pretoria Agreement put a stop to hostilities, but little empirical research has examined how Tigrayan civilians feel the post-war environment, particularly with regard to faith in governance, accountability, and long-term security, according to Reuters (2023) study. Together, these gaps indicate a limited scholarly understanding of how pre-war structural pressures interact with post-agreement peace processes, raising crucial issues about the conditions under which peace may become sustainable.

This study is also pertinent to more general scholarly discussions about the conception and realization of peace in modern intrastate conflicts. Many peace initiatives, according to academics, are successful in stopping widespread violence but fall short in addressing the underlying structural and political causes of conflict, leading to unstable forms of negative peace (ICG, 2022; Berhe, 2024). Recent Ethiopia evaluations highlight a tension in assessments of the Pretoria Agreement: while the agreement succeeded in ending large-scale hostilities, there is ongoing debate about whether unresolved issues related to governance, accountability, and territorial disputes may undermine the prospects for a more durable peace (Chatham House, 2023). Research organizations also emphasize the importance of empirical analyses that investigate how pre-war structural tensions relate to post-agreement political developments, as existing research frequently treats these periods separately rather than as part of a continuous

conflict trajectory (European Institute of Peace, 2022, pp. 6-8). This thesis thus contributes conceptually by connecting positive and negative peace debates to a current case, empirically by filling in gaps in post-agreement evidence, and practically by producing insights that can guide ongoing peacebuilding in Ethiopia by analyzing continuity and change before and after the 2022 agreement.

### 1.3 Objective and Research Questions

This thesis investigates the nature of peace in Tigray before and after the 2022 Pretoria Agreement, with an emphasis on the political, social, and security facets of post-conflict stability. The study analyzes whether and to what extent the peace process has addressed political and structural features of the conflict, and how these factors connect to post-war dynamics. The thesis investigates continuity and change in the factors shaping peace in Tigray, an area that has often been treated independently in earlier study.

The study is directed by the following research questions in order to accomplish this goal:

1. What kind of peace existed in Tigray before the 2022 Pretoria Agreement?

This inquiry looks at the security, political, and economical circumstances prior to the 2020 violent spike.

2. To what degree has the Pretoria Agreement addressed the causes of violence and helped Tigray achieve lasting peace?

The term "lasting peace" in this thesis refers to the circumstances surrounding Galtung's notion of positive peace, which includes the absence of armed conflict as well as the existence of social justice, political inclusion, accountability, and a decrease in structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1996, pp. 29–31, 196–198). This inquiry evaluates how governance, stability, and grievance resolution have been affected by the agreement's implementation since 2022. These inquiries establish a framework for assessing continuity and change in the conditions of peace and give the analysis direction.

## 2. Literature review

Since the war began in 2020, research on the Tigray conflict has expanded quickly as academics and advocacy groups attempt to analyze the underlying causes of violence as well as the potential for peace. The ethnic federalism system in Ethiopia, the function of political elites, the participation of outside parties, and the war's humanitarian effects have been the main topics of this research. In addition to posing concerns regarding the viability of the peace process started by the Pretoria Agreement in 2022, these studies collectively offer significant insights into the origins and intensification of the war. One line of inquiry has looked at Ethiopia's federal structure as a key element influencing the violence. Abbink (2011, p. 601) contends that although the 1995 constitution's ethnic-based federalism system was meant to grant varied people self-determination, it actually strengthened exclusion and consolidated ethnic differences. Federalism fostered rivalry and distrust rather than unity, resulting in a precarious political equilibrium that is prone to dramatic collapses. This opinion is supported by subsequent analyses that show how the federal system exacerbated polarization by integrating ethnicity into political and administrative structures, even while it recognized the right to secession constitutionally.

The historical dominance of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) inside the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has been the focus of several academics. Clapham (2009, pp. 187–188) emphasizes how the TPLF's excessive power in the years following 1991 stoked animosity among other communities, especially the Oromo and Amhara. When Abiy Ahmed formed the Prosperity Party in an attempt to break up the EPRDF coalition and consolidate power, this animosity grew. One direct cause of the war has been found to be the ensuing political conflict between the TPLF and the federal government. The literature has also given external actors a lot of attention. Eritrea's long-standing animosity for the TPLF influenced the war's dynamics, according to the International Crisis Group (2022). In addition to fighting alongside the Ethiopian army, Eritrean forces were charged of committing numerous crimes, such as systemic sexual assault. These conclusions are supported by the joint OHCHR–EHRC

investigation (2021) and the AU Commission of Inquiry (2022), which both detail widespread human rights abuses by all conflict parties. These studies draw the conclusion that intentional war tactics, such as extrajudicial executions and mass relocation, were used to commit crimes against humanity, destroying any chance for peace.

In recent UNDP (2018) and World Bank (2023) assessments, structural and developmental perspectives highlighted Ethiopia's underlying weaknesses and regional inequities. Socioeconomic complaints were made worse by the marginalization of peripheral areas like Tigray in terms of investment and infrastructure. Scholars have connected this marginalization to Galtung's theory of structural violence since instability was exacerbated by systematic disparities in access to resources and services. Another body of research has focused on the peace process itself. The Pretoria Agreement, signed in November 2022 under AU mediation, has been widely discussed in policy circles. Analyses by the International Crisis Group (2022) and Chatham House (2023) welcome the agreement's success in halting active hostilities but caution that it left many root causes unresolved, including contested questions of autonomy, representation, and justice. Berhe (2024) similarly argues that while the Agreement established a "permanent cessation of hostilities," it risks entrenching only a fragile negative peace unless broader structural reforms and inclusive dialogue are pursued.

Lastly, the widespread use of gender-based violence during the conflict has been brought to light by recent studies. Bekele (2023) details the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war by several armed organizations, which had disastrous effects on women and girls. In addition to highlighting the extent of suffering, this body of work links to more general discussions of cultural violence in peace studies by demonstrating how gendered norms and power dynamics allow such atrocities to go unpunished. There are still some gaps in this developing collection of materials. Existing studies clearly outline the conflict's political dynamics, humanitarian implications, and the limitations of the Pretoria Agreement, but they rarely discuss the relationship between pre-war structural tensions and post-agreement political developments. Furthermore, no scientific study has been conducted to evaluate the type of peace established in Tigray using a recognized theoretical framework, despite policy assessments noting unresolved issues such as autonomy, representation, and accountability. So far, no study has thoroughly examined Galtung's difference between positive and negative peace in order to analyze the

Pretoria Agreement's consequences.

## 3. Theory and Analytical framework

### 3.1 Johan Galtung's Peace Theory

One of the most important conceptual frameworks in peace and conflict studies is provided by Johan Galtung's peace theory. The distinction between positive peace, which is characterized by the existence of social justice, equitable institutions, and inclusive political processes, and negative peace, which is defined as the absence of direct physical violence such as war or armed confrontation, is fundamental to his work (Galtung, 1996, pp. 29–31). Therefore, achieving positive peace necessitates more than just putting an end to violence, it also calls for changing the fundamental systems that enable violence. Galtung's idea of structural violence, which describes institutionalized and systematic injustices that restrict people's prospects, rights, and life chances, encapsulates these institutions (Galtung, 1996, p. 198). Instead of being caused directly by individuals, structural violence is ingrained in political, economic, and social systems. This is complemented by cultural violence, which refers to the customs, stories, and symbolic behaviors that legitimize or normalize structural and direct violence, making inequality seem inevitable or acceptable (Galtung, 1996, p. 196).

The Conflict Triangle, which views conflict as an interaction between three mutually reinforcing elements, is a second fundamental component of Galtung's paradigm.
Contradictions (C) are the underlying structural tensions or incompatibilities in a system
Attitudes (A) are the attitudes, feelings, and narratives that groups have toward one another; and
Behaviors (B) are the responses to contradictions and attitudes, such as cooperation or violence (Galtung, 1996, p. 72).
When contradictions become more acute, attitudes harden, and behaviors intensify, conflict turns violent. Therefore, interventions that address all three aspects: behavior (putting an end to hostilities), tensions (political and economic systems), and attitudes (trust, recognition, and identity) are necessary for peacebuilding.

These components: direct violence (physical injury), structural violence (institutional injustices), and cultural violence (justifications for inequality), combine to produce Galtung's Violence Triangle.

If just direct violence is eliminated, peace would be unstable since all three types of violence reinforce one another (Galtung, 1996, pp. 196–199).

Galtung's theory provides a crucial instrument for assessing peace accords since it defines peace normatively, based on what a fair and inclusive society ought to look like. It aids in determining whether peace initiatives only put an end to violence or start addressing the underlying structural and political issues that fuel conflict.

### 3.2 Relevance of Galtung's Theory for This Thesis

This thesis critically evaluates the nature of peace prior to and following the 2022 Pretoria Agreement using Galtung's theory. Three factors make the framework appropriate for this investigation:

A theory that can examine violent conflict, ingrained inequality, disputed political identities, and the justification of exclusion is needed in the Tigray example. These dynamics can be studied collectively rather than separately according to Galtung's theoretical framework.

Assessment of peace accords that go beyond ceasefires

Ending hostilities does not always mean that there will be a lasting peace. This thesis uses Galtung's positive/negative peace dichotomy to assess whether political agreements implemented after 2022 just serve to restore order or alter the dynamics between parties involved in conflict.

Consistency with the long-term conflict paths

Galtung emphasizes that even after direct conflict has ceased, unresolved structural and cultural violence poses a risk of resuming conflict cycles (Galtung, 1996, pp. 196–198). This viewpoint is necessary to understand why the latent circumstances for reoccurring war in Tigray persisted during earlier times when there was no violence.

Galtung's theory is also suitable for this thesis since it makes clear what kinds of results are reasonable to anticipate from a peace accord like the 2022 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. A suspension of hostilities is by definition intended to put an end to active combat, which aligns with Galtung's concept of negative peace as opposed to positive peace (Galtung, 1996, pp. 29–31). Resolving long-standing cultural grievances, addressing structural injustices, or changing political institutions are typically outside the scope of its mandate. Therefore, it would be analytically incorrect to suppose that the Pretoria Agreement could result in positive peace on its own, according to Galtung's theory. Rather, the deal should be viewed as a way to stop direct violence while, at most, making room for longer-term societal and structural reform. The consideration of whether the post-2022 peace in Tigray signifies only an end to violence or the start of a more significant shift is guided by this theoretical expectation.

### 3.3 Analytical Framework

The main analytical tool used in this thesis to evaluate Tigray's peace situation both before and after the Pretoria Agreement is Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace. Three fundamental analytical categories, based on Galtung's theory, are employed to organize the analysis. The lack of overt acts of violence, such as armed conflicts or assaults, is referred to as negative peace (Galtung, 1996, pp. 29–31). The analysis looks at:

-Whether direct hostilities stopped or increased
-The degree of civilian safety and physical security
-Conditions for humanitarian access and relief

These elements enable the study to evaluate the extent to which the Pretoria Agreement was successful in putting an end to violence and stabilizing fundamental living circumstances.

Indicators associated with structural violence are examined to ascertain if peace initiatives addressed the conflict's underlying causes (Galtung, 1996, p. 198), with a focus on:

-Regional autonomy and political representation
-authority over contested areas, particularly Western Tigray
-Access to necessary services and economic disparities
-Legal responsibility for crimes

From this standpoint, the continuance of economic marginalization and poor institutional arrangements suggests that structural change is required to lessen the danger of repeated conflict (Galtung, 1996, p. 198).

Indicators based on cultural violence are used to assess whether post-war interactions promote reconciliation or strengthen division (Galtung, 1996, p. 196). These indicators include:

- Decrease in antagonistic narratives and hate speech
- Tigrayan identity's inclusion in national discourse
- Acknowledgment of past wrongs
- The condition and care of victims of gender-based and sexual assault

Research demonstrating that stigmatization and gendered harms perpetuate long-term exclusion and jeopardize peacebuilding supports this dimension (Bekele & Eckles, 2023).

Application in the Analysis

The Analysis chapter is organized into three steps based on these indicators:

| **Analytical focus** | **Theory applied** | **Purpose** |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-conflict peace | Negative vs Positive peace | Determine whether the years prior to 2020 were a time of transient stability or lasting peace. |
| The Pretoria agreements outcomes | Direct vs structural/cultural violence | Determine if peace initiatives addressed underlying issues or merely put an end to hostilities. |
| Post-agreements conditions | Risk of conflict recurrence | Evaluate the durability of peace and the ongoing causes of insecurity. |

# 4. Methodology

## 4.1 Research design

The nature of peace in Tigray before and after the 2022 Pretoria Agreement is examined in this thesis using a qualitative case study design. Because the research focuses on a current political process that is inextricably linked to its larger historical, social, and institutional environment, a qualitative case study is appropriate. Case studies enable a deeper understanding of processes when context and causality are deeply entwined, as Bryman & Bell (2013, pp. 45–47) emphasize. Decades of political change, regional dynamics, and socioeconomic disparities have formed the Tigray war, thus a strategy that can capture complexity rather than isolate factors is crucial. This research is both analytical and exploratory. It tries to comprehend how peace has been produced, interpreted, and implemented in one particular situation and what this says about broader patterns recognized in peace studies, rather than producing generalizable assertions about all peace processes.

## 4.2 Data Collection Method

The thesis only uses secondary data, which may be divided into four categories:

Scholarly literature: Ethiopia's federalism, the function of political elites, structural inequality, humanitarian advancements, and the Pretoria Agreement are all examined in peer-reviewed research. These sources add theoretical nuance and place the Tigray conflict in the context of current academic discussions.

International organization reports: Information on violence, displacement, humanitarian access, and governance dynamics can be found in documents released by the OHCHR–EHRC (2021), ACHPR (2022), International Crisis Group (2022), Chatham House (2023), UNDP (2018), and the World Bank (2023). In situations where independent scholarly fieldwork has not been feasible, these accounts are crucial for reconstructing events.

Policy evaluations and local expert information: Berhe (2024), Bekele (2023), and other regional researchers' commentary offers viewpoints based on post-conflict changes and local political history.

The principal peace accord: The original Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (2022) is used to analyze the formal provisions of the peace agreement and the way in which it frames commitments for political reintegration, disarmament, and humanitarian access.

### 4.3 Ethical Considerations

This thesis examines a recent and extremely sensitive armed war that resulted in extensive civilian suffering and human rights breaches. As a result, ethical issues played a significant role in the research design.

The study relies solely on secondary sources, such as academic literature, policy reports, and documents from international organizations. There were no interviews or fieldwork conducted. This strategy reduces ethical risks by avoiding direct contact with affected individuals, particularly survivors of violence and displacement, for whom involvement could be dangerous or psychologically harmful. Sensitive topics such as war crimes and sexual and gender-based violence are addressed with caution and discretion. The analysis is based on established reports from reliable human rights organizations, and graphic or sensationalized depictions are avoided to respect victims' dignity and prevent harm via portrayal. Given the politically charged character of the Tigray conflict, care was made to use information from diverse respectable organizations while maintaining an analytical distance. Responsibility is examined at the level of political actors and structures rather than civilian populations, in accordance with ethical principles in conflict research.

Overall, the thesis follows known ethical criteria for peace and development research by using non-intrusive approaches, carefully selecting sources, and providing transparent referencing.

**4.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The analysis takes a thematic qualitative approach, guided by the theoretical framework. Rather than coding systematically using software, this study used theory-driven theme categorisation, in which empirical information is organized according to three analytical categories taken from Galtung's peace theory:

Negative peace means the end of direct violence and the restoration of basic security.

Structural violence is defined as disparities ingrained in institutions, governance systems, and resource allocation.

Cultural violence refers to narratives that justify exclusion, repression, or oppression.

These categories are used to assess both the situation prior to the conflict and the developments following the agreement. The analytical categories derived from Galtung's peace theory are used to explain why various types of peace are more likely to last or relapse into war.

The Pretoria Agreement is analyzed utilizing document analysis with a focus on disarmament measures, political reintegration, humanitarian access, and accountability/justice clauses.

These factors are reviewed to see how well they match the parameters for positive peace, or if they only establish a fragile negative peace.

**4.4 Methodological limitations**

Several restrictions limit the scope of this investigation.

First, using solely on secondary data restricts access to local Tigrayan viewpoints on justice, security, and government. Existing reports rarely incorporate systematic qualitative interviews with Tigray inhabitants, resulting in an underrepresentation of affected populations' viewpoints.

Second, many of the available resources were created by multinational entities with institutional mandates. While they provide reliable records of human rights breaches, their focus may be on foreign priorities or diplomatic considerations rather than local political realities.

Third, the conflict is recent and continues to evolve. Several aspects of the Pretoria Agreement remain unsolved, including territorial issues, accountability systems, reintegration of displaced groups, and Eritrean disengagement. This means that conclusions about long-term peace should be evaluated with caution. Finally, the incapacity to conduct fieldwork limits the extent of empirical triangulation. Although triangulation across academic literature, policy reports, and official documents helps to overcome this limitation, a more comprehensive analysis could include Tigray-specific interviews, surveys, or anthropological observations.

## 5. Background and context

### 5.1 Ethiopia’s Federal System and Tigray’s Role

Ethiopia's federal system is essential to understanding the current political difficulties surrounding Tigray. Following the overthrow of the Derg administration in 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the new ruling coalition, was dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Ethiopia was reformed into ethnically defined regional regions under the 1995 Constitution, each of which was given the constitutional right to self-determination and political autonomy (Abbink, 2011, p. 601).

Tigray had considerable influence on federal decision-making during the nearly three decades that the EPRDF was in power thanks to TPLF-held posts in military and national security agencies. Tigray profited from extensive development initiatives, better infrastructure, and political prominence during this time (Clapham, 2009, pp. 187–188). But there was also animosity throughout this time. Tigray was seen as economically privileged and politically overrepresented by other regional nations, particularly Amhara and Oromo. As Ethiopia's leadership shifted, this dissatisfaction set the stage for subsequent political divisions.

### 5.2 Reform, Power Shift, and Growing Political Tensions (2018–2020)

The election of Abiy Ahmed as prime minister in 2018 following massive Oromo and Amhara protests marked a significant turning point. Large-scale political liberalization policies, including the release of political prisoners and the expansion of media outlets, were carried out under his government. Dissolving the EPRDF and combining its parties into the Prosperity Party, a single national party, was a significant move. Ethiopia's ethnic federalism and regional autonomy were allegedly threatened by this unification, which the TPLF rejected (International Crisis Group, 2022). The enmity between Addis Ababa and Mekelle grew as a result of this disagreement.

| Source of tension | Tigray perspective | Federal perspective |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Centralization of state power | Threat to autonomy | Necessary national unification |
| Security reform | Loss of TPLF influence | Removal of entrenched elites |
| 2018 peace deal with Eritrea | Exclusion of Tigray from talks | Normalization of regional relations |

Tigray held its own regional election after the federal government postponed the 2020 national elections because of COVID-19. The conflict escalated when Addis Ababa ruled it illegitimate and withdrew government financing (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

**5.3 Outbreak of the War (November 2020)**

Following an alleged TPLF attack on the Northern Command's military post in Mekelle, the federal government initiated what it called a "law enforcement operation" against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on November 4, 2020, sparking the start of the Tigray conflict. This incident signified the transition from rising political struggle to open war (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The battle developed swiftly when the Ethiopian National Defense Forces were joined by Amhara regional militias, Fano irregular groups, and the Eritrean Defence Forces, whose presence greatly escalated the scale and brutality of the fighting (International Crisis Group, 2022). Heavy combat extended over Tigray, leading to the collapse of fundamental public services and the extensive destruction of infrastructure including hospitals, schools, telecommunications, and electricity networks (OHCHR–EHRC, 2021, pp. 6–8).

Numerous human rights investigations show that all parties have committed serious abuses. Summary executions, intentional attacks on people, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, forced relocation, looting of civilian property, and the destruction of religious and cultural sites are a few examples (OHCHR–EHRC, 2021, pp. 6–8; Amnesty International, 2022; ACHPR, 2022). Thousands of women and girls are impacted by the systematic and targeted nature of sexual and gender-based violence in particular (Bekele & Eckles, 2023). By

mid-2021, the violence moved beyond Tigray into the Amhara and Afar regions, causing a major increase in displacement. More than 2.2 million people were internally displaced, according to humanitarian organizations, and millions more experienced famine-like circumstances as a result of blocked relief routes, destroyed agricultural systems, and the collapse of local markets (UN OCHA, 2021; Amnesty International, 2022).

### 5.4 Humanitarian Consequences

One of the worst humanitarian disasters of the twenty-first century resulted from the war. Up to 2.2 million people were internally displaced, according to aid organizations, and millions more experienced severe food insecurity, including famine-like circumstances in many rural regions (ACHPR, 2022; Amnesty International, 2022). Essential services crumbled across Tigray as hospitals ran out of medical supplies, energy became inconsistent or altogether unavailable, and communication networks were routinely shut down. Long-term suspensions of banking services worsened the socioeconomic collapse by depriving households of savings and income. For the majority of the conflict, humanitarian access was severely restricted, making it impossible for relief organizations to provide affected people with food, medical care, and basic necessities (ACHPR, 2022; Amnesty International, 2022).

The conflict primarily impacted women and girls. Multiple human rights investigations highlighted the systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence by diverse armed groups, who deployed rape and sexual torture as methods of intimidation, humiliation, and terror. Widespread psychological and physical trauma was caused by these abuses, which also severely restricted survivors' access to psychosocial support, legal protection, and medical care (Bekele & Eckles, 2023). International pressure increased as the battle reached a military standoff in late 2022 and the humanitarian situation worsened, which led to further diplomatic attempts to put an end to the conflict.

### 5.5 Regional and International Dimensions

Despite being predominantly a local struggle, the war was influenced by regional geopolitical ambitions. The Eritrea military participated, increasing atrocities and displacement, because it

saw the TPLF as a longstanding enemy from the border war in 1998–2000.

Mass expulsions of Tigrayans resulted from Amhara regional forces seizing control of Western Tigray, a long-disputed territory (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6–7).

Securing peace in an area vital to the Red Sea and Horn of Africa was a top priority for international actors, notably the African Union, the United States, and the European Union. Due to Ethiopia's critical role in peacekeeping and continental politics, international powers used diplomatic pressure but employed careful tactics, frequently avoiding harsh criticism of the federal state (Chatham House, 2023).

### 5.6 Path to the Pretoria Peace Agreement

The conflict came to a catastrophic standstill by the middle of 2022. Negotiation opportunities were limited due to diplomatic pressure, humanitarian collapse, and exhaustion. On November 2, 2022, the Pretoria Agreement was reached through mediation by the African Union. The pact contained pledges to:

- An end to hostilities for good
- Tigrayan forces disarming
- Service restoration
- Access for humanitarians
- Reentry into the government system
- AU-led monitoring system

(Pretoria Agreement, 2022).

With the Agreement, there was a resumption of aid, political discourse, and extensive bloodshed. However, questions about long-term stability and durability were immediately highlighted by unresolved issues, including as contested areas, accountability, and Eritrean involvement (Berhe, 2024).

# 6. Findings

## 6.1 Ethnic Federalism and Political Dynamic

Tigray's political status before the conflict was defined by Ethiopia's ethnic federal structure, which was established under the 1995 Constitution. The constitution guaranteed ethnically defined regions the right to self-government and self-determination. In practice, the system coincided with increased political competition and intergroup tensions on the federal level. According to Abbink (2011, p. 601), ethnic federalism codified ethnic identities and heightened regional competitiveness rather than promoting national political coherence.
Between 1991 and 2018, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), had significant federal political authority. Scholars observe that this supremacy fueled anger among other significant ethnic groups, particularly the Amhara and Oromo, who saw themselves as barred from substantial political participation (Clapham, 2009, pp. 187–188). Although Tigray benefited from its pivotal role in the ruling coalition, the federal system became synonymous with unequal political representation.

After Abiy Ahmed was elected prime minister in 2018, political dynamics evolved. The federal government cited his decision to disband the EPRDF and replace it with the Prosperity Party as an attempt to lessen ethnic tensions and concentrate political control. The TPLF saw these reforms as a challenge to regional autonomy and Tigray's political standing within the federation. Tensions escalated when the Tigray regional government held regional elections in September 2020, despite federal recommendations to postpone voting due to the COVID-19 outbreak (International crisis group. 2022).

According to the International Crisis Group (2022), this series of incidents exacerbated the political conflict between the federal administration in Addis Ababa and the regional authorities in Mekelle. Cooperative processes within Ethiopia's federal system diminished, and political dialogue between the parties worsened.These developments provided the immediate political framework for the beginning of armed conflict in November 2020.

### 6.1.2 Socio-Economic Dimensions

Tigray's pre-war scenario was characterized by socioeconomic inequality as well as political conflict. Despite Ethiopia's overall economic improvement, regions like Tigray have remained economically excluded. Development programs frequently prioritized central districts, particularly Addis Abeba, contributing to persisting regional disparities (World Bank, 2023). Tigray's economic weakness was exacerbated by widespread reliance on humanitarian aid and ongoing food insecurity. Tigray's pre-war scenario was characterized by socioeconomic inequality as well as political conflict. Despite Ethiopia's overall economic improvement, regions like Tigray have remained economically excluded. Development programs frequently prioritized central districts, particularly Addis Abeba, contributing to persisting regional disparities (World Bank, 2023). Tigray's economic weakness was exacerbated by widespread reliance on humanitarian aid and ongoing food insecurity.

### 6.1.3 Political Narratives and Identity Framing

In the pre-war period, there were numerous narratives that justified exclusion and enmity toward Tigrayans. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was frequently depicted in national discourse as a hegemonic organization that had dominated Ethiopian politics for decades, rather than as merely a regional political actor. This framing aided in the attribution of collective responsibility by blurring the boundaries between the TPLF leadership and the general Tigrayan populace (Clapham, 2009, pp. 187–188).

According to the International Crisis Group (2022), federal officials are increasingly using these narratives to portray Tigray's calls for regional autonomy as a threat to national unity and political stability. This framing was accompanied by aggressive rhetoric, which increased political polarization. Human rights reports revealed the rise of derogatory language and hate speech directed at Tigrayans, which helped to normalize exclusion and discrimination (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6–7).

Ethiopian state-affiliated media frequently characterized military action as a kind of national defense, portraying the TPLF as an existential security danger. International media coverage frequently reinforced simplistic perceptions of the conflict, stressing the TPLF's historical

political power while paying little heed to regional complaints in Tigray (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 7-8). International solutions to Ethiopia's political crisis have generally focused on state stability, which, according to policy assessments, risks marginalizing regional voices and concerns.

### 6.1.4 Eritrea and Border Dynamics

Tigray's pre-conflict security environment was affected by the 1998-2000 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The fighting caused widespread displacement, significant infrastructure damage, and protracted insecurity in border villages. Despite the formal end of hostilities under the Algiers Agreement, the border remained contentious, and both countries maintained a significant military presence in the region (UNDP, 2018). The lack of full border demarcation, as well as ongoing force deployments, have contributed to prolonged tensions and insecurity in northern Tigray.

The 2018 peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea improved regional diplomatic relations, but Tigray's local engagement was limited. While the accord restored relations between Addis Ababa and Asmara, Tigrayan authorities were excluded from the negotiations, despite the region's important involvement in the previous border dispute. According to the International Crisis Group (2022), this exclusion was widely seen in Tigray, where the accord was viewed as essentially a bilateral deal between the Ethiopian federal government and the Eritrean leadership. The accord did not immediately address Tigray's security concerns or unsolved issues over the border dispute.

Military action in and around Tigray rose prior to the 2020 conflict. Eritrea's long-standing animosity toward the TPLF gave way to increasing cooperation with the Ethiopian federal government. Human rights investigations revealed Eritrean soldiers' involvement in the conflict and linked some of the most serious crimes to their presence in northern Ethiopia (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6-7). During the pre-war period, Eritrea's military presence exacerbated regional tensions and insecurity in Tigray.

### 6.1.5 International Stance and Neglect of Tigray

Prior to the Tigray war, international engagement with Ethiopia was primarily motivated by worries about the country's stability as a federal state. Ethiopia was largely considered as a crucial peacekeeping contributor, a hub for regional economic projects, and a significant political player in the Horn of Africa. As a result, many international actors prioritized national unity and state stability over resolving regional political conflicts. According to Chatham House (2023), the state-centric approach frequently resulted in international talks that gave little regard to Tigray's autonomy claims and deepening political marginalization.

International development partners, such as the World Bank and UN agencies, were also closely monitoring Ethiopia's macroeconomic performance. Reports regularly highlighted persistent GDP growth throughout the 2000s and early 2010s, while regional differences in development received relatively less attention (World Bank, 2023). Despite Ethiopia's overall economic improvement, development outcomes remained varied between regions, with Tigray continuing to have high levels of poverty and underdevelopment compared to national norms.

Prior to the beginning of large-scale violence, regional and continental organizations, particularly the African Union, had minimal influence in resolving increasing tensions in Tigray. Although the AU promoted discussion and non-interference, there were few specific procedures in place to address regional political problems. According to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 2022), the absence of early participation limited potential to de-escalate tensions before armed conflict broke out.

## 6.2 The Pretoria Agreement and Post-Conflict Peace

### 6.2.1 Terms of the Pretoria Agreement

On 2 November 2022, the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The agreement outlined a set of provisions related to the cessation of hostilities, political arrangements, security, humanitarian access, and implementation mechanisms. The main provisions can be grouped into six categories.

**Disarmament and cessation of hostilities**

Both parties agreed to a lasting halt of hostility. The deal called for TPLF soldiers to disarm in stages, commencing with the delivery of heavier weapons. The procedure was tied to the restoration of Tigray's constitutional order and security arrangements (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, pp. 1-2).

**Respect for the constitutional order**

The TPLF pledged to adopt the Ethiopian Constitution and to refrain from taking measures that could jeopardize state sovereignty and territorial integrity. In return, the federal government agreed to restore constitutional power throughout Tigray (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, p. 1).

**Reintegration of combatants and security arrangements**

The agreement called for the rehabilitation and reintegration of former TPLF combatants into civilian life, with provisions for incorporation into federal and regional security organizations as needed (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, pp. 2-3).

**Restoration of services and humanitarian access**

The deal includes measures to restore basic services like banking, telecommunications, transportation, and electricity. It also committed both parties to ensuring unhindered humanitarian access to Tigray (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, page 3).

**Amnesty, accountability, and transitional justice**

The federal government agreed to construct a transitional justice system in accordance with the Ethiopian Constitution and international legal responsibilities. The Pretoria Agreement (2022, p. 4) mentioned accountability systems and, if applicable, amnesty provisions.

**Information commitments**

Both parties acknowledged the significance of hostile rhetoric in the war and promised to avoid propaganda, hate speech, and provocation (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, p. 2).

**Monitoring and implementation**

The African Union established the Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism

(AU-MVCM) to oversee disarmament, humanitarian access, and agreement implementation (Pretoria Agreement, 2022, p. 3).

### 6.2.2 Immediate Post-Agreement Developments

The signing of the Pretoria Agreement resulted in the end of large-scale hostilities between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. According to reports, extensive fighting and shelling in Tigray, as well as areas of Amhara and Afar, has decreased since November 2022, marking the first persistent reduction in active conflict since the war began in November 2020 (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6-7). While sporadic security events were reported in some locations, the overall pattern of armed conflict transitioned away from active combat (International Crisis Group, 2022).

Following the accord, humanitarian access to Tigray improved. Prior to November 2022, significant constraints on assistance delivery had caused widespread food insecurity and malnutrition. After humanitarian corridors were reopened, UN agencies and other organizations resumed delivering food, medical supplies, and other necessary aid to Tigray's key population centers. By early 2023, relief convoys had reached some urban regions, easing immediate shortages, but humanitarian needs remained high.

The agreement was followed by political and administrative developments that altered Tigray's relationship with the central government. The TPLF was removed from Ethiopia's list of terrorist organizations, allowing it to resume regular political activities. In parallel, the restoration of vital services including banking, telecommunications, and power began following long-term outages during the conflict (International Crisis Group, 2022). These events represented a shift in Tigray's administrative and economic reintegration following the end of hostilities.

### 6.2.3 Post-Agreement Challenges

Despite Eritrea's involvement in the conflict, it did not sign the Pretoria Agreement. The accord did not specifically address Eritrea's military presence in northern Ethiopia or its relationship with the TPLF. According to Berhe (2024, pp. 10-12), Eritrea's omission from the deal left significant regional security challenges unsolved.

Accountability for transgressions committed during the conflict remained limited after the

accord. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission conducted investigations that found significant violations of international humanitarian law, including as massacres and systemic sexual violence (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6-8).The Pretoria Agreement did not establish explicit judicial tools for pursuing culprits, but rather referred to future transitional justice proceedings.
According to reports, survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based abuse confront considerable obstacles even after hostilities have ended. According to Bekele (2023), sexual violence was pervasive and systematic during the conflict, and many survivors continue to suffer from trauma, stigma, and restricted access to justice and support services. According to available data, women's and girls' rights remained inadequate after the pact.

### 6.2.4 Role of International Actors

International actors were involved in both the negotiation of the Pretoria Agreement and its immediate aftermath. The African Union formally mediated the talks, while the European Union and the United States provided diplomatic assistance and had discussions with both the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. According to the International Crisis Group (2022), international engagement occurred during a moment when the conflict had achieved a military standstill, which contributed to the conditions for negotiations. The African Union led the mediation process, which aimed to achieve a ceasefire of hostilities within the framework of national sovereignty.

International actors also helped to facilitate humanitarian access and the restoration of basic services following the accord. According to Chatham House (2023), ongoing diplomatic involvement by Western allies has resulted in the reopening of humanitarian corridors and the partial restoration of banking and communication services in Tigray. These activities were primarily focused on meeting critical humanitarian needs in the post-agreement period.
At the same time, Ethiopia's status as an important regional ally and significant donor to international peacekeeping missions influenced the breadth of international engagement. According to Chatham House (2023), this relationship affected how external parties dealt with the federal government following the accord. International engagement remained concentrated

on implementing the ceasefire and facilitating humanitarian access, with bigger political issues addressed primarily through local channels.

## 6.3 Post-Agreement Realities and Ongoing Challenges

### 6.3.1 Humanitarian Recovery and Continued Hardships

After more than two years of severe limitations, humanitarian access to Tigray improved with the signing of the Pretoria Agreement. International organizations such as the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross have restarted relief convoys to Mekelle and other accessible areas, carrying food, medical supplies, and gasoline. According to the International Crisis Group (2022), the restoration of humanitarian routes represented a shift from the period preceding November 2022, when relief deliveries were largely obstructed. According to OHCHR-EHRC reports (2021, pp. 6-7), prior to the agreement, limits on humanitarian access and infrastructure damage had a significant impact on civilian life, including the operation of hospitals and local markets.

Despite the start of help, humanitarian conditions remain difficult. Tigray was previously listed by UNDP (2018) as one of Ethiopia's most vulnerable regions due to persistent food insecurity and environmental stress. The violence exacerbated these conditions by destroying farms, causing widespread displacement, and disrupting basic services for an extended period of time. According to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 2022), almost two million people were internally displaced during the war, and many remained in temporary settlements following the agreement. Although humanitarian assistance restarted, destroyed infrastructure, administrative procedures, and rural insecurity hampered relief distribution, resulting in uneven access between major centers like Mekelle and more outlying locations.

Humanitarian needs went beyond material support. According to Bekele (2023), pervasive conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence resulted in long-term physical and psychological suffering, particularly for women and children. Access to psychosocial support and justice processes remained limited following the accord. Health-care facilities also reported staffing and medical supply shortages, which impacted service delivery. According to the ACHPR (2022), post-conflict humanitarian activities were mostly focused on emergency aid,

with few long-term recovery requirements, such as infrastructure repair and livelihood support.

### 6.3.2 Governance and Political Reintegration

The Pretoria Agreement featured provisions for Tigray's reintegration into Ethiopia's federal structure, as well as the restoration of political and administrative links between Mekelle and Addis Ababa. The accord aimed to reinstate federal institutions and restore constitutional order in the region (Pretoria Peace accord, 2022). According to the International Crisis Group (2022), implementation of these provisions has been patchy, with ongoing disagreements about the extent and pace of reintegration.

The political standing of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) remained a major concern in the post-agreement period. In May 2021, the federal government recognized the TPLF as a terrorist group. This status was withdrawn in early 2023, allowing the TPLF to resume formal political activities (International Crisis Group, 2022). However, political actors at the federal and regional levels held opposing perspectives on the TPLF's role in Ethiopia's political system, notably among regional elites in Amhara and Oromia (Clapham, 2009, pp. 187-188).

Questions about regional autonomy remained unsolved. Tigray's leadership maintained constitutional guarantees of self-rule, while the federal government sought political consolidation through the Prosperity Party (Abbink, 2011, p. 601). According to Berhe (2024), debates over constitutional interpretation and federal authority persisted in post-agreement negotiations. According to reports, governance arrangements in Tigray remained mainly independent, as federal institutions struggled to reestablish control in the province (International Crisis Group, 2022).

Security governance was another source of concern. The Pretoria Agreement addressed Tigrayan troops' disarmament and future absorption into federal and regional security agencies. The implementation of these laws was shaped by the parties' divergent perspectives. Tigrayan officials raised worries about security guarantees and political inclusion, while federal authorities emphasized disarmament as a necessary condition for normalization and reintegration (Berhe, 2024; OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, p. 7). Western Tigray's status remained unsettled following the accord. During the violence, Amhara regional military and allied militias seized control of the

area, resulting in widespread displacement of Tigrayan civilians (OHCHR-EHRC, 2021, pp. 6–7). The Pretoria Agreement specified that territorial disputes would be resolved through constitutional systems, but did not identify methods or timetables (Pretoria Peace Agreement, 2022). According to the International Crisis Group (2022), control of Western Tigray remained unchanged after the accord, and displacement persisted in the region (ACHPR, 2022). International actors remained involved in the post-agreement period, but in a limited capacity. The African Union mediated the deal, and international partners helped with implementation, although their influence over domestic Ethiopian political processes was limited (Chatham House, 2023). Eritrea's withdrawal from the deal continues to influence regional dynamics, particularly in security and governance challenges including Tigray (International Crisis Group, 2022).

## 7. Analysis

This chapter examines the thesis' empirical findings using Johan Galtung's peace paradigm.It investigates the nature of peace in Tigray through three analytical stages: pre-conflict, Pretoria Agreement outcomes, and post-agreement context. The chapter explains the data in light of the study's research goals, using ideas such as positive and negative peace, as well as structural and cultural violence.

### 7.1 Pre-Conflict Peace: Absence of Violence Without Long-Term Stability

The era preceding the 2020 conflict in Tigray might be seen as a state of negative peace rather than positive peace. Although no large-scale armed conflict occurred, underlying political, economic, and cultural problems remained. Ethiopia's ethnic federalism system ostensibly respected regional autonomy, but in effect, it increased intergroup competition and codified ethnic differences. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)'s protracted dominance in the federal system fueled anger among other political actors, resulting in a volatile and polarized political environment.

Socioeconomic imbalances harmed stability during this time. Despite national economic growth, Tigray experienced chronic food insecurity, continued reliance on humanitarian aid, and uneven development outcomes. From a Galtungian standpoint, these conditions indicate structural violence, as institutional arrangements limit access to resources, political influence and economic prospects. In parallel, tales linking the larger Tigrayan people to the TPLF's acts normalized marginalization and reinforced traditional violent practices.

Taken together, the lack of open warfare previous to 2020 obscured deeply ingrained structural and cultural conflicts. Peace in pre-war Tigray was thus maintained through a precarious balance of power rather than inclusive government, social fairness, or institutional reconciliation, which corresponded closely to Galtung's notion of negative peace.

### 7.2 Outcomes of the Pretoria Agreement: Ending Direct Violence

The Pretoria Agreement can be seen as effective in putting an end to direct conflict in Tigray.

Large-scale conflicts ended, actual fighting stopped, and humanitarian channels reopened. The gradual restoration of basic services including banking, electricity, and telephones alleviated immediate civilian hardship while signaling a decisive move away from open military conflict.

At the same time, the Agreement's scope remained primarily limited to the management of direct violence. While the violent struggle had ended, the deeper political, social, and institutional systems associated with it were not significantly altered. The exclusion of crucial actors, most notably Eritrea, from the peace framework limited the scope of the agreement. Furthermore, accountability for extensive wartime abuses, including as systemic sexual violence, remained unaddressed, supporting views of impunity.

From a Galtungian standpoint, the Pretoria Agreement is consequently strongly related to negative peace. It succeeded in silencing guns and restoring some stability, but it failed to address the structural and cultural factors that contributed to the eruption of violence. As a result, the Agreement altered the immediate conflict dynamics but did not address the fundamental concerns that caused the war.

### 7.3 Post-Agreement Conditions: Continued Risk of Conflict Recurrence

Tigray's post-agreement setting shows a continuous risk of recurrent conflict. Although humanitarian access improved following the end of hostilities, recovery has been uneven and unstable. Large-scale displacement remains, rural areas remain underserved, and destroyed infrastructure impedes livelihoods and movement. From a Galtungian standpoint, these situations reflect the continuation of systemic violence rather than a shift to long-term peace.

Governance and political reintegration have also been contested. Disagreements about regional autonomy, disarmament, and federal power continue to influence relations between Mekelle and Addis Abeba. The unresolved status of Western Tigray is a major cause of insecurity, displacement, and mistrust. The lack of movement on this problem undermines trust in constitutional mechanisms and reduces prospects for reconciliation.

The cultural dimensions of the dispute have lingered even after the deal was reached. Stigmatization of Tigrayans and discriminatory discourses persist in political discourse and

media coverage. Survivors of conflict-related sexual abuse experience ongoing trauma, social silence, and limited access to justice, implying that patterns of cultural violence persist in the postwar setting. These processes limit the prospects for reconciliation and societal rehabilitation.

Overall, while the suspension of hostilities reduced direct violence, the persistence of structural and cultural violence shows that the foundations for long-term peace remain fragile, raising the possibility of future war.

## 7.4 Linking Findings to Research the Questions

***What type of peace existed in Tigray before the conflict?***

Prior to the commencement of armed conflict, peace in Tigray may be described as fragile negative peace. Despite the absence of large-scale violence, the situation persisted, as did political isolation, socioeconomic disparity, and cultural stigma. Due to unsolved structural and cultural issues, stability was based on the absence of open combat rather than inclusive governance or social justice.

***To what extent did the Pretoria Agreement create lasting peace?***

The Pretoria Agreement successfully ended direct violence and restored basic services, resulting in a period of short-term stability. The Agreement, however, did not address the conflict's structural and cultural underpinnings. As a result, peace after the Agreement remained essentially negative in nature, with hostilities ending but no corresponding transformation of the political, social, and institutional circumstances required for positive peace.

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## 8. Conclusion

This thesis investigated the nature of peace in Tigray before the start of conflict in 2020 and evaluated the extent to which the 2022 Pretoria Peace Agreement led to long-term peace. Using Johan Galtung's paradigm of negative and positive peace, as well as the ideas of structural and cultural violence, the study examined events during the pre-conflict, agreement, and post-agreement periods.

Based on the analysis, Tigray had a bad peace before the conflict. While large-scale violent conflict was not present, underlying political exclusion, socioeconomic inequality, and stigmatizing myths persisted. Ethiopia's ethnic federalism system, which ostensibly guaranteed regional autonomy, coupled with political polarization and institutionalized differences. Structural inequality, chronic food insecurity, and dependency on humanitarian aid harmed stability, while traditional myths tying the Tigrayan people to the TPLF's actions added to marginalization. As a result, pre-war peace was based on the lack of violence rather than inclusive governance or social justice.

The analysis also reveals that the Pretoria Agreement was successful in stopping direct violence. Hostilities ended, humanitarian access improved, and basic services were gradually restored, providing immediate assistance to residents. However, the Agreement focused primarily on the behavioral aspect of the issue. Unresolved territorial conflicts, inadequate accountability for atrocities, Eritrea's absence from the peace framework, and contentious political reintegration were among the structural and cultural causes that remained unchanged. As a result, the post-agreement peace was predominantly negative in nature.

Post-agreement conditions show that the foundations for long-term peace remain shaky. Continued displacement, uneven humanitarian recovery, unresolved governance issues, and ongoing stigmatization of Tigrayans demonstrate the persistence of structural and cultural violence. Despite the cessation of large-scale warfare, unsolved concerns impede reconciliation and raise the likelihood of future conflict return.

Overall, this thesis contends that, while the Pretoria Agreement effectively ended active warfare, it did not significantly alter the underlying political, social, and institutional conditions that contributed to the conflict. The story of Tigray demonstrates the difficulties of peace procedures

that stress the cessation of violence over structural imbalances and exclusionary narratives. To progress from bad peace to a more lasting and positive form, future initiatives must address issues of accountability, inclusive governance, and long-term socioeconomic recovery.

This study used secondary sources, which provided limited insight into local perceptions and lived experiences in post-agreement Tigray. Furthermore, because the post-conflict context is constantly changing, judgments of long-term peace are only temporary. Future research could address these limitations by adding primary data and investigating the long-term effects of the Pretoria Agreement as political and humanitarian conditions evolve.

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