

# The Benefit of Wolaita Regional State Formation in Ethiopia

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**Abstract** The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore and examine the benefits of Wolayta regional state formation which has been requested by the entire Wolyata people for a century and quarter as it is not only beneficial initiation for the region but also for the national and international communities because the state formation has direct and indirect connection to the economic, political and socio-cultural enhancement. Therefore, this research study uses the in-depth interview, as a research methodology, in order to explore all the benefits and their relationship with the advancement of various sectors of the life activities: business, human right and others. In fact, the research study focuses on examining the relationship of the benefits of state formation with the survival of socio-cultural values, such as language which is in the dangerous situation to the extent to end up in extinction; and survival of identity. In addition, this research study also examines the benefits of Wolayta regional state formation to the national economic development. Furthermore, this research study also explores the advantages of Wolayta regional state formation to the international communities related to the investment and other significant positive outcomes.

**Keywords** Wolayta National State, Regional state, Wolayta/Wolaita, Ethiopia, Economy, Socio-cultural values, Political society, National economy, International relationship, Survival, Identity

## 1. Summary

According to the famous and prominent international organization that has been working on the health development, and has been providing services and products to boost the health status of different nations in the globe, World Health Organization (WHO), the definition of health comprises of several main points depicted to indicate that it is the state of physical, mental, and social wellbeing in which disease and infirmity are absent (WHO, 2000). In this regard, the Wolayta people and population as well as the entire nationality members who live in several parts of the country explain that their physical, mental and social values have negatively been affected by the frequent rejection of Ethiopian government leaders who have been denying the request of Wolaytas for a century and quarter. In the other words, it means that Wolayta people have been struggling against the leaders since the conquest and annexation of the territory to the country by force at the end of 1800s. However, just after being annexed, Wolayta people needs to form its own political structure that allows the region to practice self-rule in order to help develop the language, cultural values of the region, economic status, and social networks

with other nationalities of the country and the global communities with a collaborative communication and cooperation of the federal government. For instance, just after the conquest of the last king of the territory, Kawo Tona, and being captured by the troops of Minilik II who were collected from all over the other parts of the country, Wolayta people were given a derogatory name to be called, "Welamo", to the correct name, "Wolayta" that comes from one of the first dynasty to take the kingship position, the *Wolaita-mala* until the Wolaita-Tigrain dynasty took over around the estimated and educated guess of time, the 15<sup>th</sup> century. According to the retrospective and historical analysis, there had been more than 50 kings who arose from three different clans or tribes to make the dynasty: the Wolaita-mala, Arugia, and Tigriya; however, the two major dynasties, the Wolayta-Mala and Tigria are well known in the region to take the kingship and crown in which the monarchical leadership with different political structures had been practiced in the region (Wagesho, 2000; Chama, 2017, Babanto, 1970). In fact, it is neither related to the formation of a new country or state by cession, nor to depart from other nationalities; instead, it is genuinely the request of reformation of the state that had forcefully assimilated by the political force led by Menelik II at the end of 1800s. This infers that Wolyata was a country or state that had had more than 50 kings who had independently been ruling the territories; and it was called the kingdom of Wolayta or sometimes, Damota. In addition, several historical evidences,

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folklores, and written documents prove that the Wolayta state had its own monetary system or coins shaped money that the people used to practice marketing inside and outside the region. The money or "*Marccuwa*" that replaced the salty substance which animals eat with husks, grasses and other dried foods for the cattle, the *Aduwa*, and was used for bartering exchange in which all materials in the market, such as food stuffs (corn, clovers, peas, nuts and others), homemade garments or *Hadiya* (Dunguza, Gomora, Seriya, Guttuma..) and others that look like a blanket (Bullukkuwa, Afala, Naxala); alcoholic beverages made by the fermentation, distillation or other processes (*Arakiya*, *Parssuwa*, *Sham''eta*) were used to be exchanged with the bartering system, *Aduwa*, then the *Marccuwa* (Hailu, 2019).

As far as the linguistics domain is concerned, the Wolayta region has its own language which holds only some dialectic variation with the other nationalities, such as Gamo, Gofa, Dawuro, Konta and others; nevertheless, there is no significant different among other languages spoken by the nationalities who live around the Omo river –the so called -Omoti languages, except its being dialectically diversified, to some extent, with some meaning differences. For example, just only a word which is regular and polite that used in the daily activities of people in the Wolayta region gains derogatory or non-polite meanings in the neighboring nationalities; however, the number of such words are few so that people can understand the conversation without interpreter; and recognize the cultural sensitivity.

In fact, the author of this article found only a few words with different meanings in half of a decade stay in the teaching profession in the Dawuro and Gamo area. For example, one of the word used to express hasty action and robbery, "BOGGA" is simultaneously used in Wolyata; but, has derogatory meaning in the Dawuro language which is related to sexual practice. Wontto and Wontta, Ceeggis and Hayqiis ...etc have different meanings, but can easily be understood based on the contextual meanings in the statement. Therefore, in 1996, the Wolayta language become independent from other similar languages with dialectic variations after the zonal structure was allowed for the major four nationalities and others who live in the Southern part of Ethiopia with the formation of collective political organization-the so called "WOGAGODA" which takes the first two letters of each nationalities: Wolayta, Gamo, Gofa, and Dawuro. Later on, 56 different nationalities were formed the political organization, the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (*SEPDM*) that established the capital city at Awassa and had been operating for about three decades until the date of Sidama's referendum to depart the collective political party on 11/11/11 Ethiopian calendar even if it resulted in the horrific criminal action in the area when the government became reluctant to allow Sidama people to practice the constitutional right that grants all nationalities to form state at any time they want( Article 47(3)). Now, Sidama became the 10<sup>th</sup> regional state in the country and it may lead to the constitutional amendment and

Wolayta people has been working on the regional state formation.

"The right of any Nation, Nationality or People to form its own state is exercisable under the following procedures:

- When the demand for statehood has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned, and the demand is presented in writing to the State Council; When the Council that received the demand has organized a referendum within one year to be held in the Nation, Nationality or People that made the demand;
- When the demand for statehood is supported by a majority vote in the referendum;
- When the State Council will have transferred its powers to the Nation, Nationality or People that made the demand; and
- When the new State created by the referendum without any need for application, directly becomes a member of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia."

The Wolayta people has been following the constitutional law and completed all processes but stopped at the final level that depicted under "d" that allows the referendum. Now, the government is gerrymandering the region and ignoring the quest of the people who demonstrated to ask the regional state formation which is beneficial to all stake holders. Wolayta people came out for the demonstration to ask for the state formation based on the constitution which is shown on the picture below; however, the government frequently denied to respect the quest and came up with wrong response that connects the demonstration with only political elites and their activity. In fact, the picture indicates that the Wolyata people are turning to be a political society after one of the prime minister came from the society and leading the country for more than one term and would like to maintain the political awareness created after huge sacrifices made for century and a quarter.



## 2. Why Wolyta Need the State Formation?

It also continued to kill Wolaitas in Awassa after the prime minister resigned; however, no one became responsible for the murder and ethnic cleansing orchestrated by the SEPDEM and TPLF leaders for that tragedy to kill innocent people after the person proposed from Sidama region lost the vote just after the youngest prime minister of the country took the power. In fact, 56 nationalities who accepted the artificial identity, DEBUB, and decided to use the national language, Amharic in the way that the cultural practices and other socio-economic values were damaged for about three decades. Now, Sidama, has declared its own statehood after fierce and sour struggle against the ruling party of the country. Then, the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF) changes its name to the Prosperity Party (PP) in order to make the worthless reform on all aspects that left citizens being butchered, dislocated, and became refugees, homeless; students have been kidnapped, killed, and detained from the universities by unidentified criminals that the government refused to disclose and report to the public. In fact, Wolaita remains the majority group in the 55 nationalities but denied fair political representation in the region. In addition, Wolaita has been using another language in the school system that prevented to use the universal right to practice language in the primary and other levels of the educational institutes so that the Wolaita language is in danger to be extinct like other non-existing languages, such as the Gafat, and Geeze (only used in the Orthodox church). For example, only some of the new generation, centennials or Gen Z (1996 to present) can speak pure language within a short conversation without mixing some words from Amharic, English or other native languages; however, the in depth interview result indicates that the generations older than Millennials (1977-1995), generation X (1965-1977) have no significant issues to speak the language in clear manner; and they express all materials or objects, plants and animals in the vernacular language or the mother tongue. When it comes to the baby boomers (1946-1964) the generation has ability to express everything in the language, use folklores and proverbs with their meaning, sing Wolaita's songs that matches different seasons of festivals, such as the new year or *Gifataa* or *Masqala* that Wolaita people celebrate at the first Sunday of the month, September until it was ordered to combine the new year with the cross day (September 17) of the country in the king's reign and it has been celebrated in the combined form. In fact, the Wolaita people started to celebrate the New Year which comes two weeks later than the nationally celebrated one on September 1 of the Ethiopian calendar. The governmental and religious leaders of the area, elderly people, historians, and all others with adequate knowledge in the social, cultural, political, economic and other related trends of the society have a huge concern on the survival and maintaining the sustainability of all the important values,

norms, and habits in the area so that they acknowledge that the New Year must be celebrated in separate time than the Cross-day even if Wolaita is dominantly Christian with a few Islamic religious affiliated individuals who live only in the urban areas of the region. In fact, almost all of the Muslim religious affiliated are internal migrants who have been living in the area in peaceful manner because there is no discrimination based on religion for the matter of fact that all the society members believe in the religious freedom in which anyone can follow and practice whatever denomination per se. It is evidenced and proved with no revenge on other tribes after shooting to death took place in August, 2020, by the military members since Wolaita has been under the command post, curfew and military government due to the request made to form regional state. Therefore, there are various religious institutes in which no huge political intervention other than preaching and educating the society member to minimize or avoid, if possible, the bad habits and cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation, visiting enchantress, magic or sorcery that give harmful instructions and prescriptions to visitors. For example, there is a public joke or parable that a magician recommended a visitor who paid ten times more money to save the hen which became sick that- 'kill the young calf and smear the blood on the head on the hen so that you can cure it.' In fact, the meaning of such a public joke has different analysis related to the rationale behind recommending to kill a calf to save a hen after paying to visit the magician. To put in a nutshell, the value of the hen to the person and the purpose to save it can be interpreted in different manner.

Furthermore, the high fertility rate and population growth make the area one on the densely populated region with high number of human resource; and the statistical evidence indicates that more than 20-30 thousands of the young generation live in the area who have completed bachelor's degree program. However, the region has no industrial development, infrastructural facilities, and lacks basic needs, such as water, food, and shelter. So, the nationality is in danger regarding its survival in the future and becoming unable to reach or fit the normal developmental level which is deserved to be.

## 3. Introduction

The name of Wolaita originates from two major points of views: one is the clan that had been contributing kings or leaders for long time called a Wolaita Mala. In this regard, it had been unacceptable to be called with the other name that Wolaita people were forced to be called by invaders just after the concur of the last king of Wolaita. Another source of the name that a number of historians believe is its meaning-Walahetta, which is equivalent to the English word-"mixed, heterogeneous or diverse." According to the second source of meaning, Wolayta has diverse clans, about 200 in number in the Wolayta region and the same clans live in all neighboring areas, such as *Gamo*, *Gofa*, *Dawuro*,

*Kontta, and Basketto*. Among the 200 clans, only about 15 belong to the Dogala who had their own small gods to worship; however, all the rest belong to others –the so called the “*Maalla*” clans who had no small gods. Generally, all the clans fall under two major categories: the Mala and Dogala; and it is culturally restricted to make marriage among similar clans from paternal and maternal sides to the seventh step so that the marriage system has been converging clans and increasing the link among divers clans. For example, the man comes from *Wolaita Maalla* father and *Tigire* mother cannot make marriage from both clans so that the second generation holds at least three to four different clans. In fact, the Dogala clans are only 15 in number those who had their own small gods to worship until the Christianity, especially the protestant religion became widely spread to eradicate the traditional beliefs (Wana, 2000, Chama, 2017). So, it is possible recommend that Wolayta people are diverse and culturally strong enough to form their own state or any other type of political structure that allow them to practice self-ruling because they have historical background to be reigned by their own kings for more than century until the last king was defeated by the Abyssinia King who incorporated and annexed Wolayta in the current country-Ethiopia. However, Wolaita people are strong nationalists; and are active participants in the national activities who provided the former premier, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, and many other high-level officials though it became impossible to perform fair economic allocation, avoid maltreatment and injustice action against the Wolaita people by the government officials who comes from other majority clans.

**Table 1.** Dogala Clans and their small gods

No.	Clans	Small god	Comments
1	Aadda	Dada	
2	Amaara	Gerggisa	
3	Aypparsuwa	Kittosa	
4	Bubula	Mulugushsha	
5	Geda	Dosa	
6	Hirayittuwa	Hombbeeba	
7	Hiziya	Xaydara	
8	Laarossuwa	Kamma/Wombbaa	
9	Maakkaa	Mageera	
10	Qaallichcha	Amilakka	
11	Wolaita Malla	Boshshaashiya	
12	Wommigiira	Hambbaaza	
13	Woshsheeshsha	Anggilaala	
14	Zaminiya	Gemena	
15	Zaatuwa	Abordda	

Source: D/r Zebdewos Chemma (2009). The history or gospel of Jesus in the Wolayta and other neighboring areas (p.34).

## 4. Conceptual Background

### Needs of the formation of Wolayta National State

Wolayta people needs to form their own state or any other types of the political structure that assist them to practice self-ruling mechanism for several reasons that this study examines and explores. The two major reasons that Wolayta state formation became imminent are for saving the cultural values and language from being extinct. Therefore, the economic, social, political, moral and other values need to be developed instead of being assimilated with others to the extent of being damaged and destroyed. In fact, developing the social, cultural, political and economic aspects in Wolayta become beneficial to develop the neighboring nationalities who share similar, even if not identical, socio-cultural values because they share all goods and values in the open market and interrelated. Politically, Wolayta people shares similar trends with the three major nationalities of Ethiopia for several reasons: the Amhara, The Oromo and the Tigree. One of the reasons is that Wolayta people had been reigned by more than 50 kings of their own in the past; and have been contributing to the top leadership of the country. For example, not only the former prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn Bosh who had been leading the country for about six years until he became the first leader who stayed in the country after being voluntarily resigned to contribute to the political reform started in February, 2018, one of the few African leaders who resigned the political power; but also the bank governors, ambassadors, and several political figures in different ministerial and secretarial posts have been appointed and elected from the region. Therefore, leadership and management are dominantly familiar to the Wolayta people to practice, manage, control and conserve the self-ruling in effective and efficient manners. As the major three sources can give tangible evidence and insights to the historical background: legends, written documents and archeological evidences, all of the evidences indicate that the following kings, about 50 in number, had been taking power in the region, as an independent political and socio-cultural territory in three dynasties-Wolayta-mala, Arujiya and Tigriya (Zebedwos & Wagesho, 2009). In fact, it is common in the country to possibly count upward to more than seven steps of the paternal side for several reasons. Therefore, the Wolyta people count all kings and their paternal line upward to the 40 to 50 without any doubt because kings and their names are eminent and famous in the society. Generally, Wolayta is considered as a society with a powerful melting pot that turns a heterogeneous cultural values to the homogeneous in respect to the common culture formation. In fact, kings from only the TIGRE dynasty with different clans from their maternal side are listed below in order to show the independency and self-governing style of Wolayta people with all crucial parts of the kingdom equivalent to the legislative, judiciary and law enforcement sectors in the old time until the conquest of the last king of Wolayta by the Abyssinian King, Menelik II who used weapons that purchased from some European countries for the preparation of war again Italian aggression (Tedle, al el., 2018).

**Table 2.** Kings of Wolayta since 15<sup>th</sup> century to 1895

Names of Kings		Year of kingship	Origins of the clan
1	Shum Gaym	15 <sup>th</sup> century	Tigria (Temben)
2	Michael	15 <sup>th</sup> century	Tigire and Wolaita
3	Girma	16 <sup>th</sup> century	Wolayta Tigire
4	Gazahgn	16 <sup>th</sup> century	Wolayta Tigire
5	Adaya	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Wolayta Tigire
6	Kote	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Wolayta Tigire
7	Libana	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Wolayta Tigire
8	Tube	1761	Wolayta Tigire
9	Oogato	1761-1800	Wolayta Tigire
10	Amada	1800-1835	Wolayta Tigire
11	Damota	1835-1845	Wolayta Tigire
12	Gobe	1845-1886	Wolayta Tigire
13	Gaga	1886-1890	Wolayta Tigire
14	Tona	1890-1895	Wolayta Tigire

Source: Wanna Wageshho(n.d) & Zebdewos Chemma (2009).

### Challenges and barriers related to the formation process of WRS

**Table 3.** Historical Political pressure posed on the Wolayta region and people

Ethiopian Political system	Political structure	Leaders
Before 1886	Self-ruled by their own kings	Kingdom
Ethiopian Empire	Annexed to Ethiopia	King Minilik II
Ethiopian Empire	Combines with Sidama	King Haile Silasie I
Revolutionary Government	Kept combines with Sidama	Mengistu Hailemariam
Ethiopian Federal Government	Self-ruled as Wolaita region	Meles Zenaw
	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People Region(SNNPR) 56 together	Hailemariam Desalegn
	SNNPR after Sidama's depart (55 together by force)	Abiy Ahmed
Now	Request to practice self-ruling	Denied by the old state and federal government for the last 2 years

Historically, the Wolayta people have been denied to practice the self-ruling eligibility for the last 125 years since the defeat of their last king after bloody war with the Abyssinia king who subdued entire Ethiopian local kings, such as Aba Jifar of Jima, Ras Michael of Wollo, Ras Mengesha of Tigria and others at the end of 1800s just before the battle of Adwa in which Ethiopians defeated Italian troops with mercenaries. Therefore, the federal government has internationally been loading a strong political pressure that forces Wolayta to stay with other nationalities and just giving a leadership position for some individuals who come

from Wolayta to tranquil the formation of regional state quest related violence.

### Practical benefits of the WRS formation

There are potentials to develop social, political, cultural, economic and others sectors if Wolayta people are allowed to practice self-ruling with in the country which will believed to be beneficial to the neighboring nationalities, too, because it facilitates recognition of identity; benefit the country because Wolayta is one of the strongest region in the national political arena that suffers from political restriction to practice self-ruling; and to the global communities who can be invited to participate in the investment projects after the security and safety of the region will be guaranteed with the self-ruling regional state which will have its own security chambers.

### Neighboring nationalities point of view

The Sidama, who had been with Wolayta for several decades, became independent to practice the self-ruling after referendum that indicated 98% support from the population who participated in the vote. In fact, the result will be 100% if the referendum would have been allowed for Wolayta based on the constitution because all nationality members want to save and secure their identity which is in the dangerous situation of being extinct in the long run; language become assimilated because no one allowed to use it in the federal government system; cultural values will be destroyed for the federal government owned mainstream media that reject to broadcast and promote nations' and nationalities' culture except the two: Amhara, and Oromo. Tigray region is acting as if it is an independent state after the government changed the name of the political party, Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to the Prosperity Party (PP) after reform. For example, the Voice of America radio only broadcasts in the three languages of Ethiopia even if the Wolayta language is spoken in all the following areas, such as the *Gamo, Dawuro, Gofa, Konta, Basketto* and others. In addition, millions of Wolayta people live outside the region owing to the highest population growth related to the highest fertility rate totally support regional state formation. Now, the Ethiopian federal government has been working on the quest of state formation of Wolayta and others just after deciding to divide the former Southern Nations and Nationalities People Region in to four smaller states: the Omo, Southern Shewa, Western and Sidama so that the federal government has called for general assembly, closed for journalists panel discussions and political discussion with open political opinion based study conducted in the area. However, Wolayta people have been rejecting to join none of the new states and vice versa at least the headquarter must be at the capital city of Wolayta. In addition, all the neighbors refused to be with Wolyata which seems negative but politically helpful decision for the venue of Wolayta regional state (WRS) formation. This indicates the positive attitude and support of neighbors, implicitly and explicitly, because the political representatives from Wolayta and the neighboring nationalities boldly stated and

spoke out to form state without including Wolayta. The only process left to do is declaring Wolayta Regional State formation that gained support from all political and socioeconomic stakeholders and shareholders except its process is delayed so long. Now, more than 35 innocent people were shot to death and about hundreds were wounded by the military members assigned by the federal government while unarmed demonstrators were out to show support to the detained leaders by the old regional state. This indicates the Wolayta regional state formation is fully supported by the entire people who realized the benefit of the regional state formation in the conservative nation.

The following picture indicates several thousands of people came out to support their leaders who were detained by the military members while they were in the meeting related to the formation of Wolayta Regional State at the beginning of August, 2020 and the zonal court released the leaders after 4 days. Later, the old state officials and the federal government appealed to the higher level of court and the case is still under trial. In fact, the court location is illegally changed from Wolayta to other place and the case has been seen for twice in the presence of only defendants' attorneys because the court of appeal is available at Wolayta and it is the quest of entire Wolayta people but not the leaders so that it is not mandatory for leaders to appear in the court. Generally, in the indirect democracy system the representatives of Wolayta people have the legal right to have meetings; and have immunity to not be jailed unless they have red-handed while committing a serious crime.



Source: AB pictures from the Fasil Eyasu's facebook page

### External factors affect the formation of WRS

Some of the external factors that affect Wolayta regional state formation are the effect of federal government's force that has been decreased the recognition of Wolayta region by the national and international communities for a century and

quarter; however, the election of a former prime minister from the nationality who had been leading the country after death of the late prime minister, Meles Zenaw, in 2012 boosted the recognition level to the maximum height even if there were several conspiracies related to a number of factors. Now, Wolayta is well recognized in the local and international levels as it was before the end of 1800s so that it is the right time to practice the self-ruling which can play significant role to facilitate the development of the region. In addition, the similarities in languages with neighboring nationalities have been misinterpreted by some national and international communities who have deficit of knowledge to understand the political tension among the Omotic language speakers that always orchestrated by the local and federal government in order to pose the divide and rule policy of the colonials in the past. For example, a number of countries speak English does not mean that they should have the same geo-political structure so that Wolayta should not be in the same political region or territory with others who speak similar languages with dialectics if the people believe that it is not beneficial to the Wolayta and others, too. In addition, Somali, Harari, Ganbella, Benshangle Gumuz and others have their own regional state that allow them to develop their languages, and other socio-cultural values that the Wolayta people has been deprived of to do so. As the statehood is the concept that Ethiopian government borrowed from the United States and some other federalist nations, it is clear that some small sized states, such as Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut and others in the United States of America practiced their right to form statehood regardless of the size and similar language, English, that they share with others.

In fact, Wolayta is the strategic region with 7 routes that connect Sidama, Gamo, Dawuro, Gofa, Hadiya, Kanbata and all the routes are at the strategic locations for various types of business, tourism, trade, agricultural activities, and so on that the federal government always wants to keep Wolayta sandwiched in the neighboring nationalities in the lose-lose principle. Therefore, it is recommendable to assist the people to enjoy their right of forming Wolayta regional state that can be beneficial for the region, the country and all interested global community members who have willing's and ability to invest in the area.

### Internal factors that expected to affect the formation of Wolayta regional state formation.

Crashed and endangered economic system by the central government which is very fragile and weak to implement the rule of law that secures the individual rights in the nation, diversified clans who live in the Wolayta region so that they have the issue of being dreaded, scared and panic of domination, and the internal political structure that privileged only three clans (Amhara, Oromo and Tigria) to be the ruling classes (class struggle) so that some elites want to stick with the power holders to hold offices, and internal slavery practiced by the Wolayta kings in the past that holds revenge; and internal tension which demands internal revolution against office holders. In addition, the children's

migration that forced a number of Wolaytas to live outside the region so that others use such a loophole for their political agenda and evict them, high population and labor forces without agricultural, and industrial development in Wolayta and others have been influencing the people to stand apart during inquiry to establish and form the regional state that encompasses the following major points: uses the flag of Wolyta, makes the capital city at Wolayta Soddo, practices the Wolayta language in the state, giving self-ruling power to the Wolayta people and recognizes the historical and locally demarcated boundaries of Wolayta and also owns the constitution of Wolayta Regional State. Now, the federal government replaced all the Wolayta representatives from federal and the old state of 56 nationalities, including the zonal leaders, religious leaders, youth representatives and elderly people of the area who have been working hard to form the regional state after shooting down unarmed demonstrators. This indicates the unsolved internal issue that needs to be solved to make firm and strong solidarity so that the federal government can no be able to put high pressure to manipulate the people and deny the constitutional rights that evidenced with the survey as the entire people demand to form the regional state due to its cruciality and benefits.

## 5. The Research Problem

This research problem, the quest of Wolayta people to declare its own regional state is a question of Wolayta people for more than a century that started since the reign of Menelik II the second, the end of 1800s which has connection with the conquer of the last king of Wolaita, Kawo Tona Gaga, in 1896 after several years of war at different battle fields in the Wolaitas' land. The battle fields being at Wolayta for the solid seven years that took place in a butchery manner was evidenced by historians that entire Ethiopian troops that had been unified to create the Ethiopian empire and put all the power under the single king called, Menelik II, fought against King Tona Gaga. It was just couple months before the first Italian war attempted to colonize Ethiopia and aggressively deployed the mercenaries from different countries in order to defeat the Ethiopians led by king Menelik II. So, King Menelik II went to Wolayta with all the troops and logistics gathered for the preparation of international war. This indicates that Kawo Tona Gaga was wounded and captured after the bloody war between Wolayta and all other nationalities led by king Minilik II who decided to unify the different parts of the regions by force that compelled others to form a' holding together 'federations instead of forming the 'coming together' federation in Ethiopia. However, the massacres of Wolaytas' royal families, destroying the palace, mutilating men's private parts of the body and other evil activities were continued after the last king of Wolayta was surrendered due to the revenge and retaliation for the loss of soldiers of Menelik II in the past sit time war against Wolayta which

goes against the humanity, war captives right, and violation of civilians freedom that witnessed by the report of a French journalist who traveled with Menelik II to the war front (Wagessho, 2004). The solely action that shows a single mercifulness of the king of Shewa who subdued all others is leaving king Tona alive after being captured for several. In fact, historians provide several reasons for the decision of Menelik II to capture Kawo Tona Gaga alive. One of the reasons was the fear of losing the strongest warrior and leader of the Wolayta people who had been fighting until the treason made by the three people who betrayed the Wolayta warriors with leaking information to the enemy side. The three betrayers: Wozito Wobilo, Lome Na Adare and two others told the enemy soldiers to burn living homes of the Wolayta worriers at the mountain so that worriers can leave the fortress instead of fighting against the ambushed fighters at the border of Wolayta who were waiting to defend the aggressors led by the King, Menelik II, and all subdued kings of different regions. The messengers guided war strategists to the hillside of the region of the then country, Wolayta, and set fire on the living homes made of special grasses, bamboo tree, and other local materials that everyone who stands at the lower land could see the fire set. For example, on the eve of Maskel and Gifaata, Woliata people do a fire work, comes out with torches from each house; and burn the filed wood (Guule) at the Damot mountain at the evening so that it is possible to see from far areas, such as *Hadiya, Gamo, Gofa, Dawuro, Sidama, kanbata* and other places. In fact, all soldiers of the King Menelik II could see fire set on their Wolaytas' living houses and all the soldiers started to run in order to save children, women, elderly people who couldn't participate in the war. In addition, warriors left the fortress and run back to the Damot Mountain where fire was set on all houses thinking that they could save domestic animals, such as cows, oxen, sheep, goats; beast of burdens, such as donkeys, mules, horses and others who live in the special compartments of the house with family members. In the other words, Wolayta people of the highland areas provide domestic animals the room that people and animals share the same house; however, low landers, and some other tribes, nationalities and ethnic groups of the neighboring areas keep the herd or animals in the separate living houses for several reasons. Some others are nomads who move different places with their cattle in search of food and water for animals. The author of this research thinks that Wolayta people focus on the quality of animal products so that they give shelter to animals in order to anticipate the feeding process of animals. In fact, Wolayta is naturally organic and green area with the strong carrying capacity even if has artificially been affected by deforestation, overgrazing, inorganic fertilization usage and other controllable ecological hazards.

Another reason that King Menelik and his troops left kawo Tona Gaga alive had relationship with his paternal line comes from the Tigray dynasty because the kingship of Menelik II comes after death of King John IV of Tigray who was killed at the battle of *Metema* against Sudanese or Durbush; nevertheless; Ras Mengesh Seyum, the Son of King

John IV, were subdued to Menelik II for several reasons. In the other words, Menelik did not want to kill King Tona to have preparation to fight against Italians who are coming to conquer Ethiopia at the end of 1888. However, the Ethiopian troops led by King Menelik defeated Italians at the battle of Adewa and became the victory of Ethiopia on Italians and mercenaries.

So, Wolayta became part of Ethiopia at the end of 1888 and annexed. Wolayta became the part of Ethiopia and lost its territory, dignity, economic benefit, freedom and others because all the leaders since Menelik II has been revenging the people for the bloody war and resistance against Menelik II. Therefore, Wolayta has never given its own territory, self-governance, freedom instead it has been mixed with Sidama until the fall of Socialist government.

Immediately after the EPRDF controlled the country in 1983, Wolayta became a regional state; however, it was changed to admix in order to create the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) that had been encompassing 56 nationalities. Later, the reform initiated by the former Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn who comes from Wolayta; but, resigned later to be part of the reform thinking that it could be possible to facilitate the reform process. However, the incumbent prime minister and other political officials solely kept silent on the constitutional right of Wolayta people that depicted on the article 47(2) and states that;...



A cultural house made of woods and covered with grasses

### Research questions

What are the benefits of Wolayta regional State Formation to the region?

What are the benefits of Wolayta regional State formation to the Country?

What are the benefits of Wolayta regional State formation to the neighboring regions and nationalities?

What are the benefits of Wolayta regional State formation to the global communities?

### Purpose Statement of the research

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine and explore the benefits of Wolayta regional state formation to the region, other neighboring nationalities, national economy and to the global communities.

## 6. Analysis of the Research Problem

### Research methodology

Qualitative methodology with the implementation of in-depth interview of all participants who are considered experts is used based on the participants' knowledge and skill related to their educational status, work experiences in the local, national and international organizations, and other attributes. In this research, the standard and open ended interview questions are used until the saturation of the information is observed. According to Kumar (2014) the in-depth interview can be used as a research design and methodology for the qualitative research in which the exploration or examining the issues in order to answer the research questions are set as objective of the qualitative research.

**Table 4.** The research study participants

Description	Percentage of participants (%)
<b>Experts interviewed</b>	
Experts in the International organizations	10(12.5%)
Experts in the national organizations	30(37.5%)
Experts in the regional and local organizations	40(50%)
Total	80
<b>Organizational case studies</b>	
Religious institutes	50(42%)
Wolaita Intellectuals Association	20(17%)
Wolaita Youth's Association	30(25%)
Women's Association	20(17%)
Total	120
<b>Representatives of the people</b>	
Top level Zonal political leaders	25(42%)
Parliament members	12(20%)
House of federation members	3(5%)
College and University professors	20(33%)
Total	60
Total participants	260

### Sampling

Quota sampling that participates experts and individuals with experiences and knowledge on the issue is implemented so that total of 260 expertise are participated in the research study including the former prime minister of the country who comes from Wolayta. The quota offers a chance to make the ratio of participants to be females and males; and also includes all age groups those who have eligibility to participate in the research. Specifically, the university professors, community leaders, religious leaders, youths' association leaders, intellectuals, university and colleges facility members are participated. Regarding the political figures, politicians in the local, regional, and national institutes, such as the parliamentary members, house of

federation, and others are included in the research study participants in order to collect relevant information until the saturation level is reached.

### **Data collection and analysis**

In-depth interview with the application of different equipment and applications, such the Facebook, zoom.us, phone call and others are used in order to implement representative and relevant information that assists to collect data in order to make generalization. The combination of deductive and inductive methodologies applied to analyze data and about 1,000 pages single spaced papers are used. In addition, a year and half time has been spent to collect data and make analysis while thousands of Wolayta community members participated in the demonstration that aimed to request the formation of Wolayta regional State. Later, all the Wolayta people representatives in the house of council decided to depart the old regional state and requested the direct link formation between the federal government; however, it illegally ended in detaining the leader of Wolayta people with the ad hoc committee members set for the preparation of regional state formation comprises of religious leaders, representatives of the youth idea owners (*Yelaga*), elderly people, opposition party members and others (Report of Wolyta chief administration) Per the design or setting of the research design, it focuses on the qualitative analysis with non-probability research in a qualitative approach and implementation of prospective and retrospective methods that looks in to the past history and future plans respectively. In addition, the constant comparative methods of the qualitative research are used; and common coding method with the grounded theory is applied.

### **Measurement**

Questions are measured by scales/Index type of response of the questions that interviewers explain in academic and scholarly manner with the support of evidence based information from all parts of the area so that the measurement is believed to be approximately accurate, relievable and representative enough to reflect the fact on the ground. In fact, politics is the societal game in which elites play the game with collective supports from all adults who are eligible to participate in the political process. In this case, all Wolayta nationality members contributed to the study because small boys and girls became victimized for the long time inquiry of the political economic and socio-cultural freedom.

### **Setting, quantity and timeframe**

The setting of this research study occurs at the Wolayta's land and in different areas where Wolaita people lives. In fact, majority of the research participants who involved to replay to the open ended interview questions are individuals who have experiences in the Ethiopian, and international political economics and have been working in the federal government agencies for decades. In fact, majority, 70% of the participants are Wolaytas, half Wolayta and those who

were born and grew up in the area so that they have adequate knowledge of the region. For example, all people from Goner, and other Amhara regions that live in the region are included in the research study. Further, more, diaspora members who live in different parts of the world are participated in the study as far as they have expertise level of knowledge and skills related to the benefits of Wolayta regional state formation.

## **7. Results**

The author of this research study directly uses the word-“Result” to represent the opinions of research participants who are dominantly experts. The results are benefits of regional state formation to the regional state of Wolayta, the country, and neighboring nationalities and global community members in nature because it develops the sociopolitical, and economical status of the region and people who live in different parts of the world. In addition, the regional state formation has far different meaning than the balkanization politics in which small states were formed in the past in European peninsula. In short, Wolayta was a country and a state who had more than 50 kings before the last king of the nationality was concurred by the Ethiopian Kind, called Minilik II at the end of 1800s after bloody shade that butchered the people to the extent it decreased number of Wolayta to became the minority in the national level; however, Wolayta is the majority among all nationalities live in the southern part of the country, Ethiopia if accurate an systematic census or the population counting methods takes place.

## **8. Discussion**

### **8.1. Economic Freedom and Development**

The formation of Wolayta regional state is perceived to allow leaders leap the bureaucratic chains of the current regional state, SNNPR, which holds about 55 nationalities together so that leaders can directly contact the federal government; and it is possible to negotiate and bargain with the federal government in the win-win principles that results in the mutual benefits. In this regard, the new regional state can develop the area with the implementation of quality plan set by experts of the nationalities who have better understanding to the availability of resources in the area, organizing capacity; knowledge to implement local tools, and modern equipment in the way it develops socioeconomic integrity with the least amount of costs. For example, one indication of the long and strong bureaucratic chain is its complex feature to become barrier to make decision on the regional state formation process; nevertheless, it is clearly stated in the constitution or law of the land under *Article 47(2)*. In the other words, this long and strong chain has negative impacts on the sociopolitical and economic development plan of the Wolayta region for a decade and

quarter of a decade years since the time of the concur of the last king of Wolayta.

Having freedom assist Wolayta political leaders and civil servants to engage in the development agenda of the area with the implementation of all human and material resources in effective and efficient manner because it is possible to invite local, domestic and international investments from all over the world including different parts of the country. It will create competitive environment that encourages creativity with in the area; and among leaders and followers due to

division and departmentalization of relatively smaller districts than before.

It allows to develop the security of the area because it will be possible to organize regional state's security council, military force in the regional state level, and public polices which have stronger capacity to safeguard investments from any external or internal risks, such as riots, instigated damages, lootings, and others so that investors will be motivated to choose the safe and secured area.

**Table 5.** Benefits of Wolayta regional state formation to the region, country and the world

Benefits and the Participants' comments
<b>Benefit 1.</b> Breaks long and strong bureaucratic chain Develop political bargain
<b>Benefit 2.</b> Allows contributing to the national censuses to count the population accurately Boosts socioeconomic gains
<b>Benefit 3.</b> Increases number of political representatives in the federal government Strengthens political power
<b>Benefit 4.</b> Develop urban areas and cities in the region with facilities. Develops economic sectors
<b>Benefit 5.</b> Make the area attractive to the local and national investors. Develops economy
<b>Benefit 6.</b> Create competition in the districts of region. Develops economy
<b>Benefit 7.</b> Increases federal funds and budgets based on the number of population Fair resource distribution
<b>Benefit 8.</b> Develop languages which is in the dangerous situation; and avoids extinction. Develop social aspects
<b>Benefit 9.</b> Develops cultural values Develops culture
<b>Benefit 10.</b> Increases peace and security in the region Develop economic aspects
<b>Benefit 11.</b> Attract investors from all over the world Economic development
<b>Benefit 12.</b> Facilitates infrastructural development Develops every aspect of activities
<b>Benefit 13.</b> Increase the competitive market Develops economy of the country
<b>Benefit 14.</b> Motivates creativity and innovation. Develops the economy
<b>Benefit 15.</b> Develop the win-win principle in the country. Develops the nation building and fairness
<b>Benefit 16.</b> Decreases children migration Develop the society and all new generation
<b>Benefit 17.</b> Decrease unemployment rate Develop economy
<b>Benefit 18.</b> Makes Wolayta recognized in the World Develops the society
<b>Benefit 19.</b> Contribute to develop other aspects related to the regional state formation

The formation of regional state is believed to boost the federal fund for several reasons, such as appropriate census in which the official counts will increase the number of population that has been wrongly estimated to limit the number of population in less than two million. Experts indicate that the total fertility rate, the number of children born per the woman or per 1000 women of childbearing age, 15-50, of Wolayta region exceeds the replacement level fertility that the United Nation (UN) considers as a good rate, 2.1; and it is estimated to be 4 in the Wolayta region for several factors, such lack of education, less cost of raising children, child labor, expected support of children to the elderly people, religion, lack of contraceptive use. It is almost closer to the highest fertility rate of the world, Niger, which is 6-7 in 2017. In fact, all the above factors that negatively affect parents and children, except increasing the fertility rate, are the result of Wolaita people being denied to establish its right to practice the self-determination since the end of 1890s when the last king of Wolayta, *Kawo Tona*, who was concurred by Menelik II after the seven years of bloody war between Wolayta people, and the other parts of entire Ethiopian troops and leaders who subdued to Menelik II. Therefore, Wolayta people has been incorporated with *Sidama* people for about half of the century, with Northern Omo (Omotic speakers) for about a decade and half until the zonal government was declared after a pierce and strong struggle of the people. So, Wolayta people inquires to have appropriate census in order to develop education for parents and children, minimize child labor, establish elderly people support center, minimize child migration and human trafficking with the appropriate funds and budget allocation.

**Table 6.** Total fertility rate and estimated population of Wolayta

FFR	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
P	1.8 M	2.16M	2.52M	2.88M	3.24M	3.6M	-
C	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2

Note: The population of entire Wolayta people is estimated to be more than 10 million (3.6 multiplied by 28 years)

## 8.2. Political Development

One of the benefits to establish regional state is its merit to allow Wolayta people to conduct the census or counting population in accurate manner so that the number of Wolayta people will indicate the exact approximation of number which is estimated to be more than 10 million in number. It assists Wolayta people to be represented by a real number of political representatives: in the house of federation, ministries and House of Representatives. Now, Wolayta has only single person, as a minister of the mining and agriculture; and only 3 representatives in the house of federation. In addition, districts of Wolayta will become gerrymandering so that the number of representatives will increase in order to bring the massive issues forward to the government in order to solve the problems. Regional state formation develops the global diplomacy because it will be possible to communicate with foreign countries with the

legal permission from the federal government.

The question comes from outsiders is why it is needed to request for the formation of regional state now that it was not asked while the prime minister from the Wolayta was in the office. The correct political answer to this question, in short, is that the people came to the full understanding of the benefits of establishing the regional state to maintain the survival of socio-cultural, economic, and political advancement. In the other words, it was the political incubation period in which the nationality had an opportunity to recognize the political setup and system which is full of majority tyranny and never gives a chance to the minority right to be practiced. Therefore, innocent Wolayta people were slaughtered at the day time in the city and villages, burnt with fire alive and dislocated from their living houses due to lack of politicians with power to intervene in order to stop such a human right violation.

### 8.2.1. Political Motivation

Fortunately, the political motivation arises from once the history of the country the *SEPDM* contributed a prime minister to the country that comes from Woliata; however, that merely benefited the nationality for several reasons; and ended with the voluntarily resignation of the prime minister after massacre of dozens of Wolaitas in different parts of the country. One of the reasons that the majority of people claim that the former prime minister worked hard to bring development to the Southern Ethiopia regions except in Wolayta, the region in which the former prime minister born and grew up. For example, two industrial parks in the Sidama region, Sugar factories in Southern Omo (Jinka), Artificial dam and lagoons on the Omo river at the Dawuro borders, airport in Arba Minch, and so on. The only developmental benefit that Wolayta region received from the government is having a single university; however, it is a huge political, historical, moral and psycho-sociological development of the Wolayta people after the former prime minister came on power to reign six years due to the accidental and unexpected death of the late prime minister, Meles Zenaw. Now, the southern region that holds 56 nationality became dismantled and disintegrated by the political pressure made by the incumbent prime minister and his cabinets who intentionally wanted to weaken the region and attack Wolayta people, their political economy and even survival to the extent that the identity of the nationality became assimilated and extinct. In fact, the quest of Wolayta regional state formation has been kept in limbo because the incumbent premier and house of federation council are standing against the constitutional law and fairness that worked to the newly formed regional state.

## 8.3. Cultural Strength and Development

It assists to develop the cultural activities, such as clothing, food, dancing, songs (religious and carnal) It helps save the Wolayta language which is in danger to die or assimilated with other dominant languages. It develops the tourist

attractions, such as caves river falls, monuments, etc. It assists to modernize cities and urban areas so that tourists and others can use outlets in the village, town, city, or any urban areas which have been taking a shape of hamlet where a settlement of hundreds of people are already started even if it is hard to develop due to lack of budgets. The author of this research and informants agree that it is possible to turn Wolyta Sodo to the metropolis level if allowed to form a regional state because there is a possibility to connect the neighboring towns.

### **Social development and recognition**

It allows Wolayta to have its own television that the society have not been given a chance to watch a television aired with the language they understand well and speak for several reasons. One of the reasons is the deficit of courage and motivation to use the television uses the Wolaita language due to less number of development that needs to be promoted on the television screen, ignoring people to entertain with the utilization of their own language, discouraging Woliata people and religious leaders to preach and sing gospel in their own languages and etc. Therefore, the negative reinforcement applied against using the Wolaita language compelled the society avoid the implementation of the language in different sectors, such as education in advanced form, churches in the city, urban areas, and outside the country where a number of the society live, for example, Washington DC, Denver, Atlanta, Wisconsin and others where more than 100 people live.

It assists Wolayta Diasporas to request Voice of America (VOA) and others to air programs in the Wolayta languages so that it will be possible to communicate with others and it is going to be recognized in the global level.

### **Facilitates to make a healthy and wealthy Wolayta**

- √ Facilities for the health care can be organized, established and modernized.
- √ More number of the health care professionals can be trained and be able to educated in fair manner than before per the number of population and other factors.
- √ Assist to train community members in the training centers in order to make awareness in the epidemic and pandemic disease controlling methodologies.
- √ It develops the scientific methodologies and researches to be conducted in the areas when it becomes regional state.
- √ It assists to control human trafficking that affects children, women and other so that healthy community can be created.
- √ It assists to develop planning parenthood, birth controls and other contraceptive methods so that the population growth rate will be modernized and all related risks will be minimized.

## **9. Conclusions**

Benefits of the regional state formation to the Wolaita

region, the country and to the world community are concluded under the following major categories: economic, political, social and cultural if it is to follow the win-win principle and allows the freedom of regional state formation that has been killing people, their language, and other values to save others ( Perkins, 2020). In fact, the major categories are directly and indirectly related each other; and they are not mutually exclusive so that the integrative work to develop make synergy of the benefits can only facilitate the achievement of the development of the area if and only if the state formation will be successful. In fact, the regional state formation is expected to boost the regional development for several motivating factors that assist the political, religious and other leaders to take position in the effective and efficient leadership because it is going to open the freedom to facilitate the decision making process in every aspects independently. For example, the area, after making the regional state, will be able to communicate with other neighboring nationalities and the international communities to develop the infrastructural development and investment so that switching the area from primitive farming to semi-industrialization will be practical. Therefore, Wolaita reginal state formation is the quest of survival, development, sustainability and resilience to the region due to self-determination and it will be beneficial to the individuals, different groups and entire nation, Ethiopia in the context of satisfying needs (Mills & Allen, 2020: Beersdorf, 2018).

## **10. Limitations of the Research Study**

The qualitative methodology and analysis used to conduct a research is based on the situation that allows to use in-depth interview with the application of the modern technological devices in the way it assist to interview Wolayta people who live in the region, outside the region; and different parts of the world; however, unavailability of the research works conducted in the previous time on the topic have huge contribution to the limitations of this study. In addition, the settings of the study that focuses on interviewing several participants from the Wolayta diasporas members who live in different parts of the world has some limitations related to understanding the current situation on the ground due to interviewers geographically live far away from the area even if all participants have direct contact with their family members, friends, and political representatives about their birth place who live in the country. Furthermore, the time limit and deficit of other resources confined the researcher to concentrate only on examining the benefit of Wolayta state formation with the implementation of interviewing Wolayta community members with some others. So, it is recommendable for other researchers to conduct exhaustive, longitudinal or cross-sectional research with different methodologies in the way it will be possible to test the opinions of neighboring nationalities whose opinion may or may not go along with this research results.

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