

Early-modern ethiopian migration to italy and the question of european racism



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Before starting this paper, the researcher would like to mention the fact that many nations in Africa continent such as Somalia, Algeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Congo, Nigeria etc. have remained the focus of international community and political debates because of rising number of disputes and conflicts. Without any doubt, the continent (where Blacks are in majority) has observed various ethnic riots, violence and aggression that confirm the absence of harmony and unity among various religious and ethnic groups in African nations. The researcher, in this paper, is concerned with (historic) Ethiopia - Italy diplomatic relations. The paper will address the issue of migration of Ethiopian refugees to Italy and the perceived racism / discrimination among African people in Europe. The researcher will demonstrate the history of racism in Italy (regarding the plight of Ethiopians) and will subsequently mention the recent diplomacy trend between Ethiopia and Italy. Furthermore, the researcher will also elaborate on the issue of racism across Europe against Non-Europeans. It is worth mentioning that Ethiopia does not have strong historic ties with Italy because the Italian kings were involved in military ventures with the nation in late 1890s and 1930s. Italy initially had control on Somaliland, Libya and Eritrea. Hence, it also had an inclination to expand its empire by gaining administrative and military control on Ethiopia, which enjoys unique location that contributes significantly to its geographical importance in Africa. Nevertheless, Italy faced strong resistance from Ethiopian military in 1890s; thereby resulting in its failure to accomplish its evil intentions against this African nation.

However, the stronger Italy easily defeated Ethiopian army in 1935 war and gained what it desired. Later, Ethiopians and British banished Italian ruling

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forces after which Ethiopia emerged as an independent nation on the map of world (Kwintessential Report, n. d). Historians, theorists and international Relations researchers such as Fransen and Kuschminder (2009) have argued that the major reason towards internal and external migration of Ethiopian refugees is political unrest and uncertain economic environment.

Nonetheless, Ethiopia in past was known to be a poor nation where unemployment rates were extremely high as a large number of people were below poverty line. Hence, Ethiopians preferred to migrate to Italy, United States, Sweden, Canada, Netherlands and other countries to find fair employment opportunities and assurance of safety. Fransen and Kuschminder (2009) have summarised the findings from OECD report 2005 according to which the largest Ethiopian Diasporas were in United States, Canada and Italy respectively (specifically in Europe and North America). Also, the Italy in 2005 had hosted more than 15, 000 Ethiopians in comparison to over 72, 000 in USA. The reason was biases and prejudice against Ethiopians in Italy due to historical animosities between the two countries (Wabishabeele Report, 2010). Overall, the situation in Europe is not as bleak as it was prior to 1990s because Ethiopia has turned over a new leaf by strengthening its ties with Italy, Sweden, Netherland, Norway, Spain, France, Finland, Belgium etc. that to a great extent eradicated ethnic discrimination against Ethiopians (Wabishabeele Report, 2010). References Fransen, Sonja and Katie Kuschminder (2009). Migration in Ethiopia: History, Current Trends and Future Prospects. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance [Online] Available at [http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/file? uuid= a7c2f798-20c1-45d6-9176-7b1ff305ca9a&owner=](http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/file?uuid=a7c2f798-20c1-45d6-9176-7b1ff305ca9a&owner=956eb41e-37c2-4cc0-8e1b-ec309f55cbeb)

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