Protests, Development and Democratization in Ethiopia, 2014-2020

Kelecha, M.

UNIVERSITY OF
FORWARD
THINKING
WESTMINSTER⌗

Protests, Development and Democratization in Ethiopia, 2014-2020

Mebratu Dugda Kelecha

A thesis submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy in
Politics

London, United Kingdom

April 2021

Thesis Summary

The objective of the thesis was to identify and analyse the challenges and opportunities for democratization in Ethiopia's recent political reform process. As such, the thesis explores how the recent Amhara and Oromo youth struggle for democracy has contributed to the activation of a movement that exposed Ethiopia's long-standing political vulnerability, bringing together social forces and social groups that were rival and fragmented in the interest of creating a national protest movement to challenge the status quo and topple a deeply entrenched authoritarian regime. For addressing these objectives, I employed a qualitative approach of a deductive nature, which allowed the formulation of a theoretical framework, consisting of nine preconditions, as determinants of democratization. The synthesis of these factors provides a useful set of conditions that have helped explore the extent to which Ethiopia meets the preconditions. The thesis also analyses Ethiopia's predicaments for achieving democracy over a longer historical trajectory, which are deeply rooted in the making of the modern Ethiopian state. Moreover, contrary to the assertions of modernization theorists, that most countries that have managed to create stable democracies achieved high rates of economic development before the transition to democracy, the experience of Ethiopia shows that economic development does not necessarily lead to democracy. Rather, it seemed to support the deepening of authoritarian rule by creating a dominant party regime that controlled security, military, politics, and economy under the ideological guise of revolutionary democracy, which remained an anti-thesis of democratic development.

The thesis also explores the diverse understanding of democracy and the lack of consensus as to what constitutes it among the political entities involved in the current transition, as to whether democracy is primarily a substantive way of life, encompassing social and economic aspects as defining criteria, or rather a set of procedural rules that are mostly concerned with the process of institutional arrangements. There are many democratic characteristics explored in this thesis, but the consideration of societal democratic values and culture has received the most attention in the analysis. The thesis argued against the trends of importing/emulating theories and models from outside to solve the long-standing democratic deficits of the country. I argue that the interest in building a democratic culture must arise from a political imagination that engenders the expression of social realities through the indigenization of modern democratic theories in a way that reflects the Ethiopian context. Such a theoretical framework allowed the study to extract relevant elements from the Oromo Gadaa system that may help

shape local governance in the Oromia region. In the Gadaa political tradition, popular rule means not only, as in the representative model, consent to power, but also that the ordinary citizen has access to the exercise of power through various mechanisms that place them at the centre of political institutions. Similar political traditions, reminiscent of a form of "deliberative democracy", are also found in other local ethno-regional traditions in Ethiopia and these might serve as basis to rethink democracy in Ethiopia, creating a common indigenous political framework more rooted in society. Finally, the thesis analyses the nature of political relations in the post-protest period, examining how the transition process and the main political actors attempt to respond to the challenges of democracy in Ethiopia. This sheds light on the types of institutions and policy approaches to address the challenges impeding the emergence of a vibrant democracy in the country. Based on the key findings of this thesis, the main challenges facing the current political transition in Ethiopia include the ineffective transition management, the fragility and disunity of countervailing forces such as political parties and civil societies, increased competition between contending ethno-nationalist groups, and the contradictory legacy of the making of modern Ethiopia.

Table of Contents

Lists of Acronyms:

ADP   Amhara Democratic Party

ANDM   Amhara National Democratic Movement

AU   African Union

CBE   Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

EFFORT   Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray

EHRC   Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

EPLF   Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF   Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP   Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

AfCFTA   African Continental Free Trade Area

GERD   Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

GTP   Growth and Transformation Plan

HDI   Human Development Index

HOF   House of Federation

HOPR   House of People Representative

IMF   International Monetary Fund

MDGs   Millennium Development Goals

MEISON   All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement [Amharic acronym]

METEC   Metals and Engineering Corporation

MIDROC   Muwakaba for Industrial Development, Research & Overseas Commerce

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

OAU   Organisation of African Unity

ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TIRET	An endowment company of the Amhara Regional State
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
TUMSA	An endowment company of the Oromia Regional State
WONDO	An endowment company of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional state

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Hannah Cross and Dr. Maria Holt for their invaluable guidance throughout this research. I am particularly very grateful to Dr. Hannah Cross for her continued support and encouragement, gently twisting my arms to carry out a series of revisions, from the first draft of my project proposal to the final version of this thesis. I thought I was done when I submitted the first draft of the thesis, but this final version is very different and, in my opinion, has been greatly improved thanks to her rigorous reading, patient questions, comments and calls for revision. It was a great honour and privilege to work and study under her supervision.

I would also like to sincerely thank my sponsors, Cara - Council for at risk academics and the University of Westminster for their generous scholarship, which allowed me to safely pursue my Ph.D. at a time when I needed the most help due to the risky political environment in Ethiopia.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my British friends Lucy Trench and her husband Robert Collingwood for making my stay in the UK beautiful. Lucy and Robert were like family to me the entire time I lived with them at their garden house in Strand-on-Green in West London for two years free of charge until they moved to Wales. I must also acknowledge that the extensive discussions we used to have over coffee and dinner on the range of issues, mostly related to Brexit, colonial Britain, and my research, were greatly helpful in shaping my thinking. No doubt they sometimes got bored of listening to me, but they never let me down, and their extensive questions and enthusiasm for learning more about the complex Ethiopian politics broadened my horizons considerably.

My largest debt in this thesis is to my mother *Ayelech*. My mom did not have the opportunity to go to school, but she dedicated herself for me to be successful academically. There was nothing, but nature gave her wisdom to understand the importance of education, from which I draw inspiration and strength to climb the educational ladder that she never had the opportunity to try. I believe that I did not disappoint her! I would like to dedicate this thesis to her for her constant love and prayers through the ups and downs, wishing that success in my PhD would bring her more happiness and a sense of accomplishment. Finally, I am very grateful to my wife *Lelitu*, who has graced my life with her kind heart, love, understanding, prayer, and constant support in completing this research work.

Author's declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Map-1: Ethno-regional map of Ethiopia

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ethiopia), (OCHA, May 2021)

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The links between democracy and development have been studied and discussed for decades with the expansion of liberal democracy (Lipset, 1959; Przeworski & Fernando, 1997; Robinson & White, 1998; Shelley, 2004; Carothers & De Gramont, 2013). The approaches to their relationship can generally be classified into three main groups. These include (i) *the democratic governance approach*, which stresses the importance of democratic governance for development; (ii) *the developmental state approach*, which believes that development comes first and democracy later; and (iii) *the multiple path perspective*, which emphasizes that development can be achieved by different governance systems but must be organized in highly context-specific paths (Carothers and De Gramont, 2013: 207–208). This thesis spins around Ethiopia's quest for development and democracy vis-à-vis the protest movements that advanced against the repressive actions of the developmental state. Its analytical focus, particularly, is in line with the debates in the second group, trying to address the theoretical issue of concepts, processes, models, and practices that advance or limit the frontiers of democracy in this context.

The view in the developmental state approach is that the key to rapid growth and economic transformation is centralized decision-making, commitment to development and poverty eradication, massive investment, and an autonomous and capable bureaucracy (Woo-Cumings, 1999; Mkandawire, 2001; Edigheji, 2010). This view builds on the tremendous developmental successes of East Asian countries.

In Ethiopia, the emergence of the developmental state can be seen in three contexts. First, as Clapham (2006) explained, it can be seen as part of the 'emulation policy' of the successive Ethiopian regimes, which began with imitation of Imperial Russia as the first model of modernization and development in the mid-19th century. As part of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), since the beginning of the new millennium, Ethiopia tried to emulate the development paths of East Asian countries: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China (De Waal, 2012; Planel, 2014). Clapham (2006:149) claims that Ethiopia consistently tried to solve its long-standing political and economic problems by emulating the models from different countries, but all have failed. In this sense, the thesis highlights the need to reflect on models, institutions and values that best fit the complexities of Ethiopia's reality. By appreciating the contradictions between utopian aspirations and the practical realities of

prevailing paradigms, the thesis rejects the trends of importing theories and models from abroad to solve its long-standing democratic deficit.

Second, another reason for adopting the developmental state model in Ethiopia was due to the strong political determination of the ruling party to create single-party dominance under the pretext of development projects to solidify its grip on power (Vaughan, 2011; Lavers, 2012). Political leaders in dominant party regimes have different survival strategies, including creating a strong party that dominates the economy, controls areas of political competition and uses coercion to increase their chances of staying in power (Way, 2005). Between 1991 and 2018, the EPRDF was a de facto coalition controlled by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), dominating key political, military and security positions, and controlling the economy. The political ideology of revolutionary democracy allowed the EPRDF to merge the party and state to facilitate monopoly and domination. In fact, the 2005 contentious elections, which left the ruling party at risk, were a defining moment for the EPRDF to realize that it lost legitimacy so that it quickly changed its strategy, strongly pushing towards developmentalism to enable the party to retain not only power, but also heavy hands on the economy (Vaughan, 2011:632). From this viewpoint, the thesis empirically analyses the attempts of the TPLF/EPRDF to establish a dominant party system in Ethiopia based on ethnic federalism, in which the formal adoption of the model has led to the reformulation of democratization measures in the context of the doctrine of the developmental state, making discourses of economic development and poverty eradication a central aspect of the EPRDF's claims of legitimacy while setting aside democratic credentials.

Third, the emergence of the developmental state model in Ethiopia was also part of the widespread global response to the failure of neo-liberalism in the developing world, especially in Africa, which led to a reassessment of development approaches (Di Nunzio, 2015:1182). Meles Zenawi (2006) argued that the liberal paradigm has come to a dead end as a mode of African development, and the new developmental state approach is the most viable alternative. This paved the way for Ethiopia's ambitious plans to become a middle-income economy by 2025, demonstrating that the developmental state should be one of the two pillars of the Ethiopian Renaissance, while ethnic federalism – presented under the guise of 'revolutionary democracy' - was the other: the legitimacy that comes from the latter is considered so important for the former because of Ethiopia's deep-rooted history of autocratic culture.

With the adoption of two consecutive growth and transformation plans in 2010 and 2015, respectively, Ethiopia has shown steady economic growth, including expanding access to education, road and rail infrastructure, an increase in the country's average income, and doubling the proportion of people with access to electricity. It has also reportedly achieved six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): reduced the prevalence of extreme poverty by half; the prevalence of HIV/AIDS; malaria and other diseases amongst the adult population has dropped; it has achieved universal primary education; reduced child mortality; improved environmental sustainability and developed a global partnership for development. On the other two lagging MDGs, namely gender equality and the empowerment of women, and improving maternal health, significant progress was reported (UNDP, 2015:1).

However, despite this impressive performance, the country faced an unprecedented political crisis, especially since the spring of 2014. This revealed that the EPRDF's interest in building a developmental state and deepening democracy was not without problems. Despite sustained economic growth averaging 10% between 2005 and 2015, studies confirmed that the EPRDF regime did not progress in creating democratic structures that would facilitate meaningful political participation (Bach, 2011; Hagmann & Reyntjens, 2016). In this regard, the thesis traces the dynamics in Ethiopia's experience of development and democracy and empirically explores their practical implementation to explain why the impressive economic growth could not ensure political stability in the country.

For scholars monitoring Ethiopian politics, the main criticism of the EPRDF in recent decades has been the narrowing of the political space in its emergence as an almost single party, trying to create a developmentalist state that claims legitimacy on the delivery of developmental outputs, abandoning the constitutional pledges of multi-party democracy. Multiple flawed elections, including most recently in 2015, as well the horrific details and reports of human rights abuses, land grabbing under the guise of 'development projects', suppression of dissent and closure of democratic spaces, and restrictions on the independence of the media and civil society organizations (CSOs) illustrate this abandonment (Abbink & Hagmann, 2016; Abbink, 2017; Allo, 2017).

As a result, the country was still in a difficult situation, and, in fact, the four years preceding the appointment of Abiy Ahmed to the post of prime minister in April 2018 were marked by the unprecedented protests that had not been seen since the EPDRF took power. The outbreak of the protests not only revealed the fragility of the social contract governing Ethiopia's

political life, but also demonstrated the EPRDF's inability to achieve legitimacy stemming from development outcomes. The developmental state model was under pressure, with demands for more civil and political rights to ensure political accountability and respect the autonomy of the regional states.

One of the triggers for the protests was that in April 2014, Addis Ababa officially announced plans to expand the capital city to respond to the city's industrial and human growth. The social movement, known as the Oromo protests, soon began when students across Oromia protested against this plan to expand Addis Ababa by 1.1 million hectares deep into the surrounding Oromia region. Other protests erupted in the Amhara region against the persecution and imprisonment of outspoken individuals who were members of the Committee advocating for the reintegration of the Wolqait area into Amhara and other groups advocating for the identity of the Qemant people. These together spawned an uprising in late July 2016. In its efforts to put down unrest, the government allowed the security forces to use lethal violence against the protesters in both regions (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Aljazeera, 2016). Despite the government's heavy security measures, protests continued to rock the country, disrupting its relative social and political order, until Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018. With that in mind, the thesis analyses the historical background of the Oromo protests that are deeply rooted in the making of the modern Ethiopian state, as the latter remains one of the main predicaments for achieving democracy in the country. After examining this context in depth, the thesis moves on to a critical analysis of the key political events during the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests with detailed explanations of how they started, their causes and basic demands, strategies for mobilizing the protesters, government reaction to the protests and how the protest movement eventually led to the hope of transformation since then.

With the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister, Ethiopia began to undertake political reforms covering a wide range of issues that have made the country hit the headlines in many international media outlets for several reasons: the unbanning of so-called terrorist organizations, making peace with Eritrea, freeing political prisoners, expanding political space, freeing journalists, lifting a ban on media and civil society organizations and making significant political changes within the ruling party. These are some of many significant changes that inspired hope for transformation and made Prime Minster Abiy win the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Abiy's award reflected the hope of a transformational change in Ethiopia but has also raised many questions from different perspectives. In this context, the thesis analyses the changes associated with reforms led by Abiy, focusing on the current gains and opportunities

for deepening democracy, as well as the challenges facing the transition, both within the regime and from the outside.

1.2   Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this thesis is to explore the challenges and prospects for democratic transition in the current political reform process. With this overall objective in mind, this thesis has attempted to address the following research questions:

A. What are the determinants of democratization in terms of concepts, processes, models, approaches, and practices that advance or limit the frontiers of democracy in the context of Ethiopia?

B. How do we understand the origin of the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests in Ethiopia and the background factors of the youth movement? How have youth activists played a role in advancing the cause of democracy, and in what form? What was the role of party competition, factional squabbles, and intra-elite rivalry of the ruling party in terms of bringing about the current transition?

C. How have divergent and contrasting views of the state and nation-building efforts affected the quest for democracy in Ethiopia? What are the challenges and prospects for the transition to democracy under Abiy's leadership, and how can we reconcile Abiy's *Medemer* discourse (meaning synergy, coming together), with contending nationalisms and other political ideologies during this transition period and beyond? Is it possible to create a common political framework more rooted in Ethiopian society by reconstructing the tenets of various indigenous traditions into an alternative paradigm of democracy that inspires as a basis for rethinking democracy in Ethiopia? What institutional features can be extracted from Oromo indigenous democracy to inspire or help overcome some of the inherent flaws of representative model, and on what levels would it work?

1.3   Research Methodology

This section explains the theoretical approach to this thesis, research design, research methods chosen to collect data and an overview of how field work was conducted in Ethiopia. There are also separate sections that present the relevance of the study, ethical considerations observed in the research process and study limitations. Methodology is defined as a series of choices: choices about what information and data to gather and how to analyse it. It is also defined as a

systematic way to solve a problem. It is a 'science' of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena constitute the research methodology (Kothari, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

This study used a qualitative approach of a deductive nature, which allowed me to collect data to address the research questions mentioned above. A deductive research process is an approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the latter is formed from the former (Bryman, 2016). After a thorough review of the prevailing Western theory of democracy, nine conditions were formulated to assess the democratization process in the context of Ethiopia (see below).

Qualitative research in its most basic form includes analysis of any unstructured data, including responses to open-ended interviews, literature reviews, recordings, etc. Breman (2016) describes a qualitative study as an approach that uses words rather than quantitative numbers, allowing the researcher to understand the mechanisms of social processes and provide an explanatory basis for analysis (Bryman, 2016). Hence, since a core objective of the study is to explain how the youth protest movements contributed to major changes in Ethiopia, an in-depth qualitative approach based on a case study was used as an explanatory tool to study a complex political crisis in Ethiopia. A basic case study includes a detailed and extensive analysis, in this case of the Oromo protests and the Amhara uprising, which helps to expand knowledge by analysing the case in accordance with the theoretical framework adopted in the study, as a way of determining the applicability of the wider categories of the theory to which it belongs (Bryman, 2016). Such an approach is also flexible enough in the sense that it allowed me to modify my questions as the investigation progressed.

Thus, that is exactly what I have done in this thesis, assessing the main questions of the study based on the theoretical structure, becoming a natural focus in the analytical process. I have considered more precisely: How have divergent and contrasting views of the state and nation-building efforts affected the quest for democracy in Ethiopia? What are the assumptions on which Ethiopia claims to be a democratic state? What are the core problems that obstruct democratic transition in Ethiopia? What are the collective grievances of the youth protesters, and how they have evolved and organized their grassroots networks? How do the reform measures under Prime Minster Abiy advance or limit the development of a new political dispensation to transform the country into a stable democracy? What were the roles youth

played in the movement? How do key political actors seek to influence the course of the ongoing transition? Is there a chance for democracy today in Ethiopia? How can a democracy rooted in the country's indigenous traditions contribute to the development of a democratic culture and national renewal? To answer these important questions, the study was supported by semi-structured interviews and literature reviews, which are mostly drawn from Ethiopian sources. Information from seminars, workshops, news, and commentaries was another important part of this research process.

1.3.1 Theoretical Approach

The research approach used in this thesis is a deductive approach driven by democratic theory and supported by an empirical analysis of the protest movements, experiments of development and democratization in Ethiopia. The deductive approach allows the theoretical framework presented in the second chapter to be used to analyse Ethiopia's political development in a longer historical trajectory and determine the extent to which Ethiopia meets the preconditions that are defined as the determinants of democratization. It reflects the theoretical understanding of democracy taken from Dahl (1989), which outlined five criteria to test whether a particular political reform is democratic: inclusion, control over the political agenda, effective participation, equal voting, and enlightened understanding (deliberation). This cluster of criteria can be described as the right to protection of civil and political rights, the right to democratic representation and equal participation in the collective decision-making process of one's political community. Dahl argues that none of the modern democracies can fully meet these criteria, but they provide a solid basis for judging ostensibly democratic institutions. Thus, I have used these sets of criteria to gauge the progress or lack of democracy in Ethiopia, assessing the evolution of Ethiopia's political predicament and recent reforms undertaken by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, as well as the viability of extracting relevant elements from Oromo indigenous democracy for the local level administration. Thus, the collection of secondary literature was necessarily from various Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian sources to support the research, which include published and unpublished materials, archival resources, reports and policy speeches by government officials and party leaders; newspapers; official and unofficial documents. Such information was very important for conducting case studies and using methods such as qualitative interviews (Bryman, 2009).

This allows the study to expand on Dahl's definition of democracy and outline a synthesis of nine conditions that, I believe, better account for contemporary transitions to democracy and

overcome the limitations of modernization, structural and transition approaches of democracy: economic development, management of social heterogeneity and polarization, the existence of robust statehood, the existence of a vibrant civil society, cultural democracy, freedom of the press and social media, nonviolent social movements, the role of the diaspora and international engagements, and liberalized autocracy are emphasized. These conditions can be used to assess whether a given country is democratizing, although its specific composition may vary from case to case due to the presence of different local contexts that require varied applications.

It was important for this study to examine the different perspectives on the relationship between democracy and development to further clarify the theoretical foundations of the research. The literatures on the developmental state have many variations, but on the main focus was on the developmental state debate that presupposes that the development comes first and democracy later to examine the Ethiopian experience. One strand of this literature is concerned with the developmental state in Africa, African development paths and divergences in development outcomes, the construction of democratic developmental states and success stories (e.g., Edigheji, 2010; Mkandawire, 2001; Ake, 1996; Zenawi, 2006; Noman et al, 2012).

Another part of the literature pertains to Ethiopia's developmental state in particular, focusing on discussions on the policy framework that governed economic and political dynamics (see Clapham, 2018; De Waal, 2018; Lefort, 2012; Di Nunzio, 2015; Fantini, 2013; Gagliardone, 2014; Planel, 2014). It includes the policy and functional aspects of the federation process; contrasts between Ethiopia's federal system and the developmental state model; political economy of the dominant party regime and leadership; and regime survival strategies that are used to impede democratization. These can include the manipulation of political institutions such as parties and elections, co-option of allies and civil society organizations; and weakening potential competitors who can play a countervailing role to force the regime to comply with the principles of democracy – the principle of equal opportunity for participation and representation in shaping public agenda, as well the recognition of civil and political rights.

One way or another, this set of literature corresponds to an alternative understanding of the political reform processes of "liberalized autocracy", which embarks on a liberalization project in the political and economic spheres, not necessarily for the genuine advancement of democratization, but rather for the broadening of coalitions to offset public discontent and endorse the continuation of the regime in one form or another. Thus, the synergistic analytical basis has provided an opportunity to critically assess the reform process and outcomes in terms

of its contribution to broadening political participation, representation, and respect for civil and political rights in Ethiopia.

1.3.2   Data Collection Methods

Field work was carried out in Ethiopia to collect first-hand information that helps to explore the topic from different perspectives by conducting semi-structured interviews with informants from different backgrounds to better understand the complexity and multifaceted aspects of the political situation in the country (see Appendix 1). The fieldwork lasted for 12 weeks from February 23 to May 23, 2019, with visits to regions that were hit by the popular protests, speaking with a range of people in groups and individually from government bodies, civil society organizations, youth groups, academia, media, and the political elites. The first phase of the interviews was conducted in Addis Ababa, and then in Adama in Oromia region, as many of the people I spoke with before arriving in Ethiopia live in Addis Ababa and Adama. Then I went further north to Mekelle in the Tigray region, and north to Gondar and Bahir Dar in the Amhara region. These are all major urban areas in central and northern parts of the country. Upon return, I visited the epicentres of Oromo protests such as Ambo, Burayou, Shashamane, Bale, Gindhir, Awoday, Harar, Chinaksen, Jimma, Nejo, Nekemte in the Western and Eastern rural parts of Oromia region. I also travelled further east, to Jijiga, the capital of the Somali region, and talked with elders and youth. The final phase of the interviews was conducted in Hawassa, the capital city of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) during the week prior to my return to London on May 23, 2019. See Ethno-regional map of Ethiopia presented on page 11 (Map-1) for where the interviews took place.

This study was originally meant to be based on secondary sources because at the time I started my PhD in early 2017, the political climate in Ethiopia did not allow me to return to the country. However, this plan changed after the political transformations that took place in early 2018. Thus, when I started fieldwork, I had to rely on a few people, chosen based on their knowledge and participation in the recent political changes taking place in the country, who helped connect with other potential respondents in their network. Moreover, since the time I could stay in the field was limited, it was not possible to conduct more surveys with ordinary people, which could have significantly helped the research. In view of this limitation, I also drew on informal conversations, accidentally encountered while traveling around the country, to complement the interviews and literature used. These discussions were more about politics and the situation in

the country, as well as personal stories about people's lives. Thus, notes were taken from memory as quickly as possible after the interactions occurred.

1.3.2.1 Interviews

Since interviews are one of the most important methods to collect data from people through conversations (Bryman & Bell, 2003), this thesis employed semi-structured interviews in the context of informal conversation as a method of collecting data from respondents, giving them flexibility as to how they answer questions. This allowed us to develop the conversation further than indicated in the schedule but with efforts to retain the same wording for each individual informant in every question that was asked in order to maintain reliability and validity (See Appendix 2).

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, given the complex nature of Ethiopia's political context, following structured interviews could have contributed to non-cooperation or even hostile reaction from the respondents: most people preferred informal conversation, which usually takes place at informal places such as inside teashops, pubs, and restaurants outside of their office hours. Secondly, due to the recentness of political events and the topic under study, this kind of interview made it possible to collect updated information in a more flexible manner with ease. Thirdly, in this case of the interview, there was opportunity to see the reactions and facial expressions of the respondents as they happened in a flexible environment, providing an understanding of their emotions, and indicating the direction of the interview.

The interviews were conducted with people from different backgrounds, including ethnic, political, and intellectual, who actively participate in and understand the contemporary political atmosphere in Ethiopia. In other words, the fieldwork experience involving formal and informal conversations with government bodies and non-state actors in various parts of the country had a greater impact on the study to understand the collective grievances of the protesters, how they evolved and organized their networks, their causes and basic demands, mobilization strategies, government responses to protests, and the role of the protest movement in advancing the causes of democracy in Ethiopia. Hence, the sample consisted of forty-four respondents with a wide range of backgrounds divided into different categories: government bodies, members and leaders of civil society organizations, youth activists, academics, the media, and political elites. An overview of the study participants, date of the interview, place and occupation are given in Appendix 1. Skype interviews were also organized to follow up

with some respondents, as required by the process, because of the freshness of the research topic and the rapid dramatic changes taking place in the country. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, some of the respondents, mainly from government bodies, decided to remain anonymous, while others did not mind mentioning their name. However, I have maintained the anonymity of all participants because the snowball sampling method used to identify study participants is vulnerable to tracking who said what through referral chains that could easily undo the anonymity of respondents who did not give their consent. This also helped to ensure consistency throughout the analysis process.

1.3.2.2   Sampling

The two most well-known sampling methods are probability sampling (representative samples) and non-probability sampling (non-representative samples). In this study, the snowball technique, which is a non-probability sampling method and a subset of purposive sampling, was used to identify study participants. Snowballing is also called chain-referral sampling because the sample is achieved by asking a participant to suggest someone else who might be willing or appropriate for the study (Berg, 2001). At an early stage, as explained below, there was reliance on few people who helped connect with other potential respondents in their network. As research progressed, this technique helped to expand the sample to include more people who helped contribute to the study.

The process began here in the UK before heading to Ethiopia, meeting with relevant people on social media, during social gatherings and at research conferences. This helped establish contacts with some of their networks within Ethiopia, which expanded during the fieldwork to include those who better understand Ethiopian politics and / or are actively involved in recent political events - from organizing and participating in the youth protest movement to those who tried to push the movement away from rooting in the country. The interviews were scheduled with five study participants before traveling to Ethiopia, based on their knowledge and participation in the ongoing political shifts taking place in the country, which helped to establish contacts with others in their networks. The sample was expanded on arrival in Ethiopia. The main goal was to talk with the Ethiopians with knowledge and personal opinions about the situation, as well as to hear from young people about their perspectives and experiences. This allowed the analysis to capture interesting results, especially regarding the actions of youth activists during the protests and how the protest movement would successfully withstand harsh government reactions for three consecutive years. The information has been

translated into English, so the data presented in this study are the views of the respondents. Moreover, since ethnicity and political affiliation are necessary to understand respondents' views, this was disclosed in Appendix 1 and, as necessary, in the analysis.

The total sample of respondents in this study was forty-four. Eleven of the respondents were young activists who had an active role in the youth protest movement. Eight of the respondents were senior government officials, while academics, members of opposition political parties and civil society organizations, each of which was six, consisted of eighteen people together. Two of the respondents were media representatives, and four were ordinary citizens, including new university graduates, a farmer in the suburbs of Addis Ababa, and an athlete.

All interviews were conducted during the weeks of March to May 2019. Since the changes undergoing are recent, the political climate during the fieldwork influenced the study's findings and perspectives in two different ways: on the one hand, with the opening of the political space, it became possible to turn to people to talk about the state of the country without fear. On the other hand, since many were busy establishing their positions in the country as they were returning from exile and/ or were engaged in calming the conflicts that had resurfaced in the newfound freedom in the country, it became difficult to access politicians and experts as planned, as many had to postpone or cancel the interviews.

1.4   Relevance of the Study

There are at least three things that make this thesis relevant and offer an original contribution to academic knowledge and the deepening of democracy in Ethiopia. First, unlike much research on developmental states that has dealt with the economic modelling of East-Asian development, this thesis looks more closely at the political dimensions of the developmental state by exploring the concepts, process and policies that may advance or limit the frontiers of democracy in this context. This study applies an innovative framework comprising of the synthesis of nine conditions for democracy based on the reviews and critical analysis of theories of democracy prevailing in the West. The framework has provided a set of conditions for identifying and analysing the challenges and possibilities of advancing the frontiers of democracy with a focus on the latest political developments in the country. It contributes to the originality of the study in the way that it helps to explain whether political changes in Ethiopia have pushed the nation towards democratization, or if they are mainly the survival strategies of the regime. Importantly, this framework also contributes to broader discussions of democratic innovation, drawing the functional elements of Oromo indigenous traditions from

the country's many cultural practices as one example, so that it may serve as inspiration for rethinking democracy to create a common political framework that is more rooted in Ethiopian societies.

Moreover, as far as my knowledge is concerned, there is a dearth of research on the developmental state in Ethiopia based on primary qualitative data. Thus, a second contribution of this thesis is the application of qualitative interviews to understand the narrative of a developmental state in the Ethiopian context. By doing this, the thesis contributes to the wider literature on democracy and development that carries its own original knowledge, which can be used in debates and practices of democratic projects.

In this regard, the results from this study are already being used to inform debates about the ongoing political reforms through publications of commentaries and participation in conferences in Ethiopia, thus putting some of the research into action. This has included participation in several *Addis Weg* forums, a discussion platform organized by the Prime Minister's Office, and other bodies such as the Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA) to shape policy alternatives, and publishing op-eds on Ethiopian-focused and widely read websites such as *Addis Standard* and *Ethiopia Insights*. The commentaries have analysed the current political changes in Ethiopia, reflecting on the popular protests, a change in political leadership, and political reforms. They have evaluated the achievements, gaps and risks in the reform process and the gravity of outstanding challenges (see Kelecha, 2019).

Third, this thesis interrogates Ethiopia's current political crisis and argues that this crisis is deeply rooted in the creation of modern Ethiopia, and in the ideologies and intellectual discourses used to reorganize the process, especially since the 1960s. By emphasizing the structural and epistemological flaws of the Ethiopian state, the thesis contributes to a discussion of rethinking the dominance of Eurocentric episteme and how we theorize and write history, which is critical to a political project to transform Ethiopia into a progressive and inclusive nation. This is due to the fact that Ethiopianist scholars, who, with the support of the state, focused on the scholarship of domination, produced an "official" history that denies the historical space for the Oromo and other southern peoples. These scholars were guided by the ideology of cultural universalism and distorted or ignored the history and culture of "subaltern" groups. According to John Markakis (2011: 19-21), the glaring emphasis of Ethiopian studies on the centre cast the periphery into a gloomy shadow, placing Ethiopianist scholars and their European and American counterparts at fault for writing Ethiopian history only from the

perspective of the Christian Amhara and Tigrinya people at the expense of the periphery and lowland people. It is fair to say that Amhara and Tigrayans have their own history, while other peoples have their own anthropology, as their history remains largely unwritten, if not unknown (Clapham, 2002:40). Partial exceptions to this trend are Oromo studies, covering a nation whose size, geographic distribution, and longstanding political struggles at the heart of the Ethiopian state make it impossible to ignore. Therefore, this thesis is aimed at a more detailed study of the situation with the Oromo in Ethiopian politics, focusing on the protest movement to contribute and fill the gaps in written literature.

However, in the recent past, there has been a change and continuity in Ethiopian studies. While many scholars continue to support the Ethiopianists' version of the scholarship of domination, others have recognized the need for multiple centres in the production and dissemination of knowledge, a marked break with the tradition of producing the narratives of domination (Jalata, 1996). For example, Oromo scholarship has already begun to bring tangible results, since there is a dialectical connection between Oromo studies and Oromo national consciousness. The recent protest, led by Oromo students, is rooted in a deeper understanding of the indigenous historical and cultural knowledge system. Among other things, the work on the *Gadaa system,* Oromo's indigenous democratic socio-political system, in all its complexity was critical, as the key components of what existed were elevated and recognized as a solid cultural and experimental basis for social consciousness. This consciousness is at the heart of the cultural revival that has led to mass protests in recent years, which this study took interest in investigating.

From this standpoint, a core contribution of this study lies in understanding and developing knowledge of a subject that is insufficiently represented in academia for the reasons stated above. Given the systematic features of political life in Ethiopia, studies of Oromo youth social movements can provide new analytical ideas as a contribution to emerging trends in Ethiopian studies that differ from the existing generalizations about Ethiopian political change. Thus, by exploring the contemporary political phenomena in their real-life context, the study helps us to better understand how Oromo youth created a movement that contributed to the major changes taking place in Ethiopia. The recentness of the phenomena in question, covering the turbulent period between 2014 and 2020, as expected made the study challenging. Nonetheless, it was important to follow political developments as they unfolded in order to understand Ethiopia's political trajectory.

1.5   Ethical Considerations

Ethics have become a cornerstone for conducting effective and meaningful research. As such, the ethical behaviour of individual researchers is under unprecedented scrutiny, which requires them to seriously consider ethics throughout the research process (Burnham, et al., 2008). Hence, as this research is related to human beings, it is important to explain in this section the ethical considerations adopted in the research process. To begin with, before traveling to different places in Ethiopia, I reviewed the lists of potential sources of risk and tried to fully understand their implications in advance, drawing on information from the relevant local authorities. This enabled completion of the field work without causing significant problems for the personal safety of the researcher and participants.

Important ethical issues in this study also included the need for voluntary participation, informed consent, non-discrimination, confidentiality, and anonymity (Michael J & Waller, 2010). The consideration of 'voluntary participation' is that there should be no coercion or feeling of it by the interviewee from the researcher. As a rule, from the very beginning, respondents were advised that participation in this project is completely voluntary and that they can freely withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. In each interview or conversation, I refrained from any attempts to influence the respondents, but rather explained my role as a doctoral researcher. There were no obligations to answer the questions and no negative consequences for what they replied. Accordingly, I explained in detail what the interviews were for and how they will be used. Only after the participants consented were the interviews conducted. Respondents were also informed of the precautions that would be taken to protect their confidentiality and anonymity in relation to research. Accordingly, the university also provided ethics clearance after considering and assessing risk factors and the mitigation mechanism before starting the field work. Moreover, given that this research was conducted in a socially, culturally, and complex diverse community in Ethiopia, it was important to adhere to the principle of non-discrimination, which I have committed to throughout the research process, triangulating information from multiple sources before use.

1.6   Research Limitations

There were several limitations when conducting the study, which are presented here in three groups. The first concerns the difficulties in collecting data, since the information covering the study period is very limited and inadequate due to the recentness of the phenomenon of study and rapid political changes in the country, especially after the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as

Prime Minister in April 2018. Due to the recentness of the research, there was a gap in written literatures. Most of the written information was relatively short, whether articles or commentaries and op-eds, and only a few reports were written about the current political reforms. Getting official information and data was difficult without using a special social network, which made the process of collecting reliable data time consuming.

Moreover, as this thesis aims to study the Oromo protests and Amhara uprising in more detail, and since the protest movements were clandestine, it made it difficult to establish contacts with youth who played an active role in the movement. The active presence of youth on social media under pseudo names is mainly due to fear of harsh reactions from the security forces and this makes it even more difficult. Thus, finding people associated with the movement inside and outside Ethiopia had been a daunting task because this required establishing trust.

Second, political topics are sensitive issues in Ethiopia. Despite the relatively more comfortable stance towards freedom of expression after liberalization measures adopted by Prime Minister Abiy since 2018, at a lower level, the cadres of the old regime are still intact and unreformed. Thus, writing critical articles about Ethiopian politics in general and democratization in particular or openly criticizing the Ethiopian government remains unsafe, so fear of possible consequences, such as restrictions, arrests, and imprisonment, can colour the statements of respondents, and therefore the data collected. The sensitiveness of the research topic has also limited research by limiting the number of interviewees who were willing to be taped in the study, so their interviews were not recorded, but I took notes. However, the relaxation of the political climate was useful to my research works, as study participants were then willing to share their views and experiences. Some contacted people declined an interview, despite guaranteed anonymity. And, after assessing whether my studies could have negative results for study participants after publication, I decided to keep them anonymous, as harm could occur not only during the research process, but also after the information is made public, especially where respondents are located in Ethiopia.

Third, determining the time and place of the interview also took a lot of time, as the respondents chose the preferred time and place for the interview. Moreover, given the tense political situation at that time, conducting elite interviews was difficult due to the frequent postponement and cancellation of the agreed schedule. Thus, it was necessary to reschedule another meeting, which, nevertheless, was possible, since many elites from different regions of

the country are stationed in Addis Ababa, allowing me to conduct the lion's share of elite interviews in the capital.

1.7   Chapter Outline

This thesis has the following chapter outline, dividing into seven chapters.

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter introduces the theoretical framework and key concepts of the study by reviewing the literature on various concepts of democracy, the determinants of democratization and the developmental state, with a focus on Africa. This framework consists of a synthesis of nine preconditions for democratization, which this thesis applies to Ethiopia's political development over a longer historical trajectory in order to determine and analyse the extent to which the country meets these preconditions in the recent reform process.

The third chapter analyses Ethiopia's quest for development and democracy *vis-à-vis* the causes of the popular protests, as well the political measures adopted by the regime with the aim of establishing a dominant party regime in Ethiopia. The chapter also provides an analysis of the factors that led to the restructuring of power in the EPRDF and how it recently morphed into a new merger party called the Prosperity Party at the end of 2019, replacing the previous dominant coalition.

Chapter Four explores the contradictory accounts of modern Ethiopia state and nation building, the trajectory of its development, and the ideas and ideologies used to reorganize the process, especially since the 1960s. More emphasis is also given to the historical foundations of Oromo struggles for democracy and self-determination within the framework of the making of the modern Ethiopian state. This provides insight into the historical depth of the causes of the social movement led by youth activists, with a focus on the implications of historical paradoxes and the legacy of state-building efforts relevant to the quest for democracy in Ethiopia.

The fifth chapter analyses the 2014-2018 social movements that brought Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to power. The analysis divides the protest movements into phases based on the protesters' demands, the government's reactions to the youth-led social movements, as well as the reactions of other groups and international communities with a focus on the factors that led to the dynamism of the demands of the protest movements.

The sixth chapter presents an analysis of the current measures of political reform undertaken by the new administration from April 2018 until late June 2020, exploring the challenges and

possibilities of Ethiopia's ongoing troubled transition. The chapter also carefully examines the different understanding of democracy among Ethiopians, and analyses the governing ideals of Oromo indigenous democracy, which may contribute to broader discussions of democratic innovation by reconstructing the core tenets of Oromo political traditions into an alternative model of democracy for local governance.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter, which synthesises the research findings based on the theoretical framework. It argues that the recent public protests in Oromia and Amhara regions contributed significantly to create better conditions for transitioning the country into democratic reforms. However, problematic management of the transition process, the political and institutional heritage of the previous regime as well as the nature of political relations in the post-protest period – among the disunity among opposition parties, appear to complicate or undermine the gains and progress made in addressing the problems of democracy in Ethiopia.

Chapter Two: Competing Concepts of Democracy, Theories of Democratization, and the Developmental State

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to the various meanings of democracy, the competing theoretical explanations of democratization and salient features of the developmental state that enable the study to address its main objectives. It provides an understanding of the factors that advance and limit the frontiers of the democratization process and explores how they are manifested in the current reform processes in Ethiopia. For this purpose, the chapter is divided into four main sections. Following this introduction, the second section begins by examining what is meant by "democracy," the ultimate condition to which the democratization process leads, and then ends with Robert Dahl's (1989) definition, which offers key criteria for what a democratic regime should embody. The last part of this section also analyses the salient features of developmental states to understand their relevance to democratic development. The third section focuses on the various theoretical explanations of what motivates or impedes the development of democracy to determine the most relevant framework for this thesis. Accordingly, this study offers nine conditions that can be used to determine whether the political changes in progress in Ethiopia are pushing the nation towards democratization or are strategies and tactics for survival of the regime. The fourth, concluding section, presents a summary of the theoretical foundation of the thesis as framed in this chapter.

2.2   Revisiting the concepts of democracy

Democracy is one of the great concerns of the contemporary world. There is a consensus about the validity and legitimacy of democracy, as opposed to all forms of undemocratic regimes. However, if the defence of democracy is a consensus, the understanding of what it stands for is not. What is the meaning of democracy? The most problematic issue in defining democracy is the determination of whether it is primarily a substantive way of life or rather a set of procedural rules. This issue has a privileged position within political science, having a unique role in the considerations on the legitimacy and institutional designs of political systems. The debate resurfaced recently due to the crisis of liberal democracy in the Western world and the rise of authoritarianism in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Haynes, 2013). In other words, since democracy embodies the tension between utopian aspirations and practical realities, in recent decades it has become the subject of serious debate among scholars of democratic innovation. The utopian ideal is that ordinary citizens should have the right to rule

themselves, since democracy means rule by the people, not by the elites. In practice, even in the most vibrant democracies, ordinary citizens can choose their rulers and hold them accountable, but they do not rule themselves (Gastil and Erik, 2018: 304).

There are roughly two perspectives on the concept of democracy: the first is known as a "minimalist conception," which is also called the "democracy of means" and its foundations based in Joseph Schumpeter's assumptions of what democracy is. Briefly, this can be understood as the result of a mutual commitment between political elites on the rules and procedures that produce peaceful choices, through voting and competitive elections, within the plurality of interests existing within societies (Schumpeter, 2006). The conceptions known in the literature as "maximalist" or "democracy of ends" conceive that democratic regimes cannot be reduced to methods of electoral choices and political institutional mechanisms. In the following paragraphs, thus, I have reviewed these two perspectives of democracy in detail, and then end with the definition by Robert Dahl (1989), who offers criteria that a democratic system should embody. These criteria are also translated into three categories of rights that make up the essential elements of modern democracy: participation, representation, minimum level of civil and political freedoms.

2.2.1   The minimalist conception of democracy

In his famous work *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (the 2006 edition)*, Joseph Schumpeter discusses his "procedural" definition of democracy by criticizing the implications of the concept applied by political philosophers of the eighteenth century such as John Stuart Mill, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They viewed democracy as rule by the people, and the democratic method as an institutional device for political decision-making that realizes the common good, allowing people to decide for themselves, choosing people who are able to carry out their will (Schumpeter, 2006:250).

The above definition has been consecrated over the centuries as the classical doctrine of democracy. It is exactly against this view that Schumpeter would raise rigorous and forceful arguments, from there building what is known as Schumpeterian minimalism. Schumpeter's scathing criticism of classical theory begins by attacking the two pillars upon which it structures itself: the common good and the general will. According to this doctrine, the people enjoy a definite and rational opinion on all the questions that are presented to them to decide, since the common good implies precise answers to all the questions, to the point of every fact and every action being clearly classified as good or bad. Furthermore, even if the administration

of some public business requires special skills and techniques that require it to be entrusted to specialists, even then the principles of the common good and the general will would not be affected, for experts will simply act in a manner to carry out the will of the people (Schumpeter, 2006:250-1).

The Schumpeterian objections, therefore, start from the premise that there is no such thing as a single, well-defined common good, upon which all people agree through rational arguments. Its non-existence stems not from the fact that some people desire things different from the general interest, but from the simple and obvious reason that for the different individuals and groups the common good is bound to mean different things. On the other hand, even if the opinions and wishes of citizens were precisely defined and independent, with which the democratic process could work, and even if everyone acted towards them with ideal rationality, it would not necessarily follow that the political decisions produced by that process represented anything that could be called convincingly the will of the people. This is because whenever the wills of individuals are divided, it is very likely that the political decisions produced will not conform to what the people really want (Schumpeter, 2006: 254).

In Schumpeterian objections, what really exists is a government produced and approved by the people, which he believes to be more truthful about the facts of life (Schumpeter, 2006: 273). Hence, Schumpeter understands democracy as a method, a means that makes it possible to reach a certain end - political, legislative, and administrative decision-making, by the elected leaders of the people. In its conception, democracy represents nothing more than an instrument - not an end in itself - in which individuals, through competitive elections, acquire the votes of the people to thereby enjoy decision-making power in their place. In addition to highlighting democracy as a method, the theory embodied in that definition underscores the vital aspect of leadership, hitherto neglected by classical doctrine, which gave the electorate an unrealistic degree of initiative (Schumpeter, 2006: 270). Moreover, the conception of democracy as a method simply means that the reins of government should be given to those with more support than any of the competing individuals or group. This allows the acceptance of the rules of the democratic game, which is actually necessary for its survival, and then promotes pluralism, that is, the coexistence of conflicting interests (Schumpeter, 2006: 301).

According to the Schumpeterian view, democracy does not mean that the people actually rule; it simply means that the people have the opportunity to accept or refuse the persons appointed to govern them (Schumpeter, 2006:284-5). Such reasoning leads Schumpeter to argue, inspired

by Weber, that rationalization is a necessary part of a complex world that requires an impartial and functional ordering and that only "governments of specialists" can direct the administrative apparatuses of the State. Only a highly restrictive model of democracy can be sustained in contemporary circumstances (Held, 2006:145). It is precisely in this, therefore, that democratic elitism is intrinsically associated with the minimalist conception: the reduction of the concept of popular sovereignty to the electoral process and the justification of political rationality as a result of the presence of political elites in government (Melucci & Avritzer, 2000:511-15).

For the minimalist view of democracy, the concept of competition for leadership is also intrinsically related to competition in the economic sphere. Just as in the economy the competition is never absent, something similar occurs in political life, where there is always some competition for the people's adhesion. This precisely justifies considering Schumpeterian minimalism as an economic theory of democracy. By defining the democratic system as a method for reaching political decisions through free competition for free voting, Schumpeter makes democracy a market in which political entrepreneurs vie for the preference of voters, consumers of public goods (Schumpeter, 2006:271). In this market, voting is the only currency that voters use to buy the achievement of the common good, casting their votes for potential leaders from those who compete for political leadership (Przeworski, et al., 2000:16).

Competition for voting, however, requires a great deal of tolerance for differences of opinion. A competitive regime is one in which the government tolerates the opposition instead of repressing it, and the opposition, in turn, tolerates the government, accepting the possibility of rising to power through participation in free elections and not by revolutionary means. Competition only becomes effective through tolerance from one side to the other. In this scenario, rival political forces obey the results of people's vote for their chance to win office. People who have weapons obey those who do not. Adam Przeworski called this the miracle of democracy. Conflicts are regulated, processed according to rules, and thus limited (Przeworski, 1999: 15-16).

Hence, the Schumpeterian definition of democracy is strictly procedural: democracy is only a method for the choice of rulers, a set of rules that establish how those who must make political decisions should be chosen. It is up to voters to choose which politicians they wish to elect.

2.2.2   The maximalist conception of democracy

Beyond elections and basic civil liberties, maximalists often associate democracy with ideals such as popular sovereignty, autonomy, and equality. Popular sovereignty is the principle of legitimacy, according to which the will of the people is the only source of legitimate power. Autonomy means self-rule, according to which people have the right to participate in the adoption of policies and laws that bind them, and equality means that ordinary citizens should be able to exercise power in decision-making on an equal basis (Kloppenberg 2016: 16).

The predominant variant of the maximalist conception is "deliberative democracy," the notion, according to Joshua Cohen (2007), that the exercise of power in democracies is clearly linked to the conditions of social thought. In a simple and objective formulation, one can point out the essential aspects of deliberationist discourse as follows: "Deliberative democracy requires that political decisions be made by those who will be subjected to them, through free public reasoning among equals. Rational argumentation, publicity, lack of coercion and equality are the values that must guide decision-making in democratic regimes, and the absence of any of them compromises the legitimacy of results" (Cohen, 2007:219-20).

Public reason, according to the above formulation, functions as the ultimate source and barometer of legitimacy in any democratic society. For maximalists, the legitimate use of coercion by agents of the democratic state requires a more substantive commitment to the core values of democracy that regard individual citizens as free and equal members of society. Deliberative democracy is premised on the "fact of reasonable pluralism," which speaks to the observable reality of multiple commitments, obligations, and beliefs that condition the behaviour and reasoning of individuals in society (Thompson, 2008:500).

Deliberative democracy is contrasted with minimalism in many respects. It provides a framework for bringing people together to achieve common goals and make public policy decisions through rational debate. Participants are encouraged to engage in free and equal deliberations. Either consensus is the preferred outcome of such discussions, or all possible cares are taken to bring the final decision closer to collective judgment (Bohman, 1997:210). Deliberative democracy can reduce the exclusionary effects of money and political power in a liberal democracy (Gutmann, 2009:11). Deliberative democracy is relatively effective in transforming individual subjective preferences into a more objective conceptualization of the collective good, as the unity of the participants is either discovered or constructed through open discussion, creating a context in which differences in social position and identity serve as a

resource for promoting common public goods (Young 1997: 383). This means that the essence of democracy must be the ability to speak across differences in culture, social positions and needs without necessarily erasing them. Maintaining and listening to such differences in positions and viewpoints deepens democratic culture.

As such, whereas in the minimalist conception the ultimate objective is the formation of government through democratic procedures, the maximalist view strives for the observance and practice of democratic values in society as a whole. Moreover, since it is entirely possible that a government elected through free and fair democratic procedures could pass unjust laws or even violate the rights of its citizens in special circumstances (Rawls, 2009: 308-312), the deliberative structure provides a framework for discussing issues vital to the interests and expectations of all members of society reasonably in ways acceptable to all, even if some important disagreements inevitably remain (Karpowitz, et al., 2009: 578 & 598). This suggests that a broader, more substantive set of ideals and political values must guide the ideal procedures of deliberation. In a deliberative setting, individuals enter the domain of public reason with an understanding of one another as equals, endowed with the right to participate freely in society under the conditions of collective self-rule. For deliberative liberal democrats such as Cohen, these values combine to form a unique ideal of "democratic toleration" that touches very significantly upon the classical liberal values of toleration, but which also makes substantial revisions to provide a political space for fundamental moral, religious, and philosophical disagreement in democratic societies (Glen Newey, 2001:334-336).

In democratic societies where this overarching value of democratic toleration is prized and adhered to, the public realm is characterized by inclusive modes of interaction among citizens of many backgrounds and beliefs. In general, the maximalist conception is the one arguing that elections, political freedoms, and civil liberties are necessary, but not sufficient to fulfil the democratic definition. There are various democratic properties that, maximalists claim, should be met on top of those practices, with three of them receiving the most attention: civil participation, representation, and political deliberation. Plus, additional variables such as societies' democratic values should also be considered.

2.2.3 Equidistant conceptions of democracy

Although there are many different details about what really distinguishes democratic regimes, midway between the minimalist and maximal positions one discovers Dahl's concept of democracy. In thinking of what is the meaning of "liberal democracy," Dahl expands on

Schumpeter's work to define democracy as a "unique method of making collective and binding decisions" and "a process which produces desirable solutions". A fundamental characteristic of a democratic government is its responsiveness to the desires of its citizens and equal access to power in collective decision-making (Dahl, 1986:5). In other words, democracy as the rule of the people is what the political scientist Robert Dahl suggested, arguing that it is a system in which all members of a society have an equal right to participate in shaping public policies (*Ibid*).

In his critique of minimalism, especially the liberal paradigm, Robert Dahl proposed five criteria that a democratic system should embody. Effective participation is the first criterion, which stipulates that all citizens are given an equal and effective opportunity to express their views on political alternatives before adoption. Voting equality is the second criterion, which means that all citizens should have an equal and effective opportunity to vote and that all votes be equal in political decisions. Enlightened understanding is the third criterion for enabling a political system to deliver on its democratic promises by giving citizens equal and effective opportunities to identify and validate policy options and their potential consequences in a democratic deliberation process. The fourth criterion is citizens' control over the policy agenda as a condition for preventing imposition from outside or from within, giving them an exclusive opportunity to decide how and what issues should be included in the agenda, as well as changing policies if they wish. The fifth criterion is inclusion, which aims to measure the quality of a democratic system, combined with the first four criteria, according to which the political system should be as representative of citizens as possible to ensure representational legitimacy (Dahl, 1989:37).

Dahl argued that each of these criteria constitutes a workable standard for measuring the achievement and capacity of democratic governance. He also explained that most existing democracies do not meet one or more of the five criteria in his definition of democracy, and infringement of any of the criteria can lead to a decline in the quality of democracy (Ibid: 39). It is for this reason that he coined the term "polyarchy" to describe liberal electoral models that do not merit the name "democracy" as they often fall short of his democratic criteria (Dahl, 1971). In short, according to Dahl (1989), democracy should provide opportunities for effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda, and inclusive citizenship. These criteria form three categories of rights that become the markers of modern electoral democracies: participation, representation, minimum level of political and civil liberties.

While these elements can be seen as standard categories for distinguishing democratic from non-democratic regimes, there are also several political systems that adopt such measures of democratic discourse without translating them into substantive political changes. For example, in many African countries, elections are held without significant impact on the quality of democracy or socio-economic development. A regime may include official opposition and therefore meet this criterion, but this opposition can be truly powerless and able to operate only under state consent. However, by expanding the thinking behind Schumpeter, Dahl (1989) offers a way to assess the democratic course of political reforms. This is to see if they expand the scope of participation and representation in policy deliberation with civil and political freedoms, providing a wide range of adequate criteria for identifying the elements that should be included in political reform for the successful transition to democracy. Given this advantage, this study used Dahl's (1989) criteria as a starting point to critically examine how and in what ways democracy is conceptualized in Ethiopia, as well as the possibilities for expanding its frontiers. This helps to reflect on the compatible elements of cultural democracy (see below, section 2.3.5) presented as a determinant of democratization in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

However important this conceptualization of democracy is, it is not strong enough to support the theoretical bases of this study. As such, it is necessary to study various theoretical explanations of what motivates or impedes the development of democracy to determine the most relevant conceptualizations. Thus, the theoretical framework designed to fit the objective of the study provides space for critical examination of the issues of emulation and uncritical importation of theories from abroad, emphasizing the need to reflect on the models, institutions and values that best fit the complexities of Ethiopia's reality. Using this analytical tool and ideal criteria that measure the actual characteristics of democracy against its utopian aspirations, in Chapter Six, this thesis assesses the various conceptions of democracy in Ethiopia and suggests relevant elements that are extracted from Gadaa that may contribute to rethinking the functioning of democratic local governance in Oromo area.

2.2.4   Developmental States Reconsidered

A developmental state consists of two main components: ideological and structural. The nexus between these two components is important to defining a developmental state. The ideological characteristics of the state and its developmental goals are essential for promoting high rates of economic growth and sustainability, as this forms the basis of its legitimacy (Castells, 1991;

Pronk, 1997). Beside setting this ideological feature, a developmental state must have institutional characteristics that Mkandawire refers to as the 'state-structure nexus' that enable one state to be able to achieve growth and development while others cannot (Mkandawire, 2001). This is primarily because what sets a developmental state apart from others is not only that it is able to clearly set its development objectives; it also establishes institutional structures in order to achieve the objectives. Taken this way, a developmental state can be defined as one whose ideological underpinnings are developmental and one that seriously attempts to construct and deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development (*Ibid*).

The following salient features of the developmental state are extracted considering the nexus between the two components that have shaped the aspects of the above definition. Firstly, numerous analysts emphasize the essentiality of developmental political leadership bound together by a powerful economic and political ideology focused on development (Amsden, 1989; Beeson, 2004; Woo-Cumings, 1999). Circumstances which give rise to a developmental political leadership can be quite diverse. But several analysts suggest that a developmental leadership evolves from a clear consensus within the governing elites, both administrative and political, over the scope and direction of development (Weis, 2016; Pempel, 1999). In the case of the East Asian developmental states, these political elites were able to win the trust and cooperation of the bureaucrats as well as the private sector to create functional state institutions that facilitated both political stability and economic development (Huff, et al., 2001; Fritz & Alina, 2006; Waldner, 1999).

Secondly, the autonomy, capability, and effectiveness of the bureaucracy in the East Asian developmental states is remarkable compared to other developing regions (Wong, 2004). This is traced back to the presence of bureaucracy in the Weberian tradition which prioritizes meritocratic recruitment, provides promotion incentives, shows rationality, and guarantees high levels of prestige and legitimacy to bureaucratic officials (Johnson, 1999; Evans, 2012). Moreover, the bureaucracy was able to effectively insulate itself from unproductive political interference (Pempel, 1999). Not only was it able to protect itself from particularistic private sector interests, but it was strong enough to cooperate with the same in a productive manner (Beeson, 2004).

A production oriented private sector has been at the centre of the rapid progress of industrialization that occurred in the East Asian countries (Booth, 1999). The state was not

only able to secure the survival and the ability of the private sector to compete at any level but, more crucially, was able to "create" and "reward" in addition to "picking" good performers as well as "punishing" bad ones (Wade, 1998: 30). In this way, the state was able to promote long-term investments among the industrial elites that resulted in sustained industrial development in East Asian countries.

There are two further components worth noting regarding the governance orientation of developmentalism. First, the ruling elites in these countries demonstrated high levels of commitment to poverty reduction. They began to address equality concerns from the early stages of the transformation process (Hort & Stein, 2000). As a result, rapid industrial growth in East Asia was paralleled by a favourable pattern of income equality, low unemployment, and the near elimination of grinding poverty. Second, successful economic performance was the primary source of (claims to) political legitimacy. Political elites in these countries largely depended on delivering growth with equity as a means of strengthening their legitimacy and support base (Kim, 2007). Legitimation occurs from the state's economic achievements, not from the way it came to power (Johnson, 1999).

A discussion on developmentalism in Africa must also necessarily begin by referring to the initial post-colonial experiences of African countries in the 1960s and 1970s because these were characterized by the state-led interventions and have been seen to be an expression of "developmentalism" (Shivji, 2005). At independence, the nationalist parties in many countries which had taken over political power from the colonial administration faced the task of nation building as well as pursuing economic and social development. Given the weakness of the indigenous private sector the new states were under pressure to assume considerable economic responsibilities. In fact, they became the main economic actor involved in a wide range of activities that included not only social and economic infrastructure but also the ownership and management of productive industry. Hence, for most of the first generation of African leaders, 'development' was certainly a central preoccupation (Mkandawire, 2001: 295).

Ake defends a quite different point of view. He sees post-colonial ruling parties pursuing not only nation-building and socio-economic development, but first and foremost seeking to consolidate their own power. He explained that the ideology of development did not serve any purpose as a framework for economic transformation, as the interventionist policies were used as a means to reproduce political hegemony to facilitate the appropriation of wealth by means

of state power. Such politics of power in Africa were the greatest impediment to development no matter that the ruling elites propagated development as their aim (Ake, 1996:9).

Mkandawire and Ake's conflicting interpretations serve to remind us that Africa consists of many countries whose post-colonial experiences have differed substantially. However, some general characteristics can be identified. Bureaucracies in post-colonial Africa lacked the autonomy deemed necessary in a developmental state. Olukoshi (2004: 158) explained that the lack of autonomy made the bureaucracy vulnerable to predatory behaviour such as corruption, rent-seeking, abuse of public resources and a basic lack of accountability with detrimental consequences for policy making and implementation.

The private sector as well did not play a significant role in the national development process during the post-colonial era. This is understandable given the weakness of indigenous business after independence, which remained a major challenge for reorienting production to the interests and needs of African societies. Moreover, the state in post-colonial Africa was also instinctively opposed to private sector development and did not recognize the private sector as a crucial development player.

Many post-colonial African states also opted for one-party systems of rule shortly after independence. As a result, dominant party regimes that were autocratic and intolerant of dissent, combined with a strong personalistic element, began to characterize the continent (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010). While many African countries have institutionalized formal democratic institutions such as elections, parliaments or courts, these institutions rather perform functions other than democratic systems, such as controlling arenas of competition that are important to the incumbent to continue stay in power (Stuppert, 2020: 11-14). Political leaders in such regimes often rely on various forms of coercion to control political space and advance their interests through draconian laws that marginalize civil society organizations and regime opponents (Mac Giollabhuí, 2019; Rakner, 2019: 10). Ruling elites in such regimes depended on the distribution of spoils to stay in power and diverted huge amounts of public resources for patronage purposes, detracting from genuine development efforts in the process (Acemoglu & James, 2005; Acemoglu, 2005). In short, the political and economic crisis resulting from the postcolonial state experience in Africa can be seen as the result of states that lacked the essential features of a successful developmental state, as well as the entrenchment of authoritarian regimes that institutionalized autocratic practices to suppress opposition and consolidate their hold on power.

Countries such as the United States and international agencies such as the World Bank have also played a role in exacerbating the problems of an already fragile continent, creating structural adjustment programs, pressuring regimes that relied on foreign agencies for loans, aid, and trade (Shivji, 1991; Saul, 1997). According to Bollen (1983), international exchange, including trade and investment, favours a rich international core at the expense of a poor periphery that has been exploited. Maintaining this system of exploitation in peripheral countries requires the suppression of democratic rule, in which authoritarian leaders are considered to be more receptive to the interests of international economic centres. Streeck (2011) also explained that in Africa and beyond, the economic dimensions of integration into the global economy have led to the decline of national democratic governance.

There are two differing views on replicability. The first view is a notion that is used to argue that the East Asian development experience can serve as a model for Africa. This notion is supported by the 'emulation' thinkers who advocate that the replication of the developmental state is possible in Africa given the established experiences of the East Asian countries (Robinson & Gordon, 1998). Particularly following the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, which many economists considered to have been the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, this notion is increasingly propagated among global south leaders that have considered foundation stones of the long-dominant neoliberal ideology overturned (see Zenawi, 2012).

The second view argues that the developmental state approach is not viable in Africa and expresses scepticism as to whether the East Asian development experiences can serve as a model. This view is maintained by the 'impossibility' theorists who have been influenced by several points of view. One view posits that the unique and specific circumstances which led to the emergence of developmental states in East Asia cannot easily be replicated due to the difficulty of imitating institutions that are highly contextual and time dependent, as their development is linked to East Asian social traditions and culture (see Hewitt, 2000; Low, 2004; Mkandawire, 2001: 293-4).

Beeson (2004) further explained that given the transitional character of developmental states and the rapid expansion of Western influence in the post-Cold War environment, even East Asian countries would find it difficult to replicate their own development experience in the current context. These unique properties make the "strait jacket" transfer of the developmental state model difficult (Leftwich, 2001). In short, the lack of state capabilities necessary for a

development strategy in Africa would limit the replication of the developmental state model (Morrissey, 2001). Birdsall adds that Africa lacks the adequate political superstructures and leadership required to pursue developmental policies (Birdsall, 2007). As a result of these governance limitations there is insufficient commitment by the state elite to development imperatives (Fritz & Alina, 2006).

2.3 Determinants of democratization

Theoretical literature on the determinants of democratization offers a wide range of competing explanations for the process. The three main theories of democratization in question are (i) a modernization approach that links democracy to capitalist development, (ii) a structural approach that critically considers the perspectives of political change embedded in the architecture of social systems, and (iii) a transition approach that focuses on the agency of elites, emphasizing the significance of the strategic behaviour of those in the incumbent regime in the process of democratization. It should be noted here that there is no single ideal organization, standard or teleological condition that should be emulated by all nations, since they are not without problems. Thus, the nine conditions of democratization, outlined below, are aimed at overcoming such limitations of the prevailing approaches of democratization to better explain the current transition to democracy in African countries. The synthesis of these nine conditions adopted in this thesis are: economic development, management of social heterogeneity and polarization, the existence of robust statehood, the existence of a vibrant civil society, cultural democracy, freedom of the press and social media, nonviolent social movements, the role of diaspora and international engagement, and liberalized autocracy. These nine factors are discussed as follows to adequately define the democratization measures relevant to the research.

2.3.1 Economic development

The links between democracy and development have been studied for decades, but still the debate on their connections is controversial and inconclusive. Carothers and de Gramont (2013:207–208) identify at least three different theoretical perspectives in this debate. The first theoretical perspective is rooted in the developmental state camp, which is strong in the thesis of "development first, democracy later," claiming the presence of a highly significant positive correlation between the degree of economic development and democratization. It is rooted in the belief that the transition to democracy can be direct or indirect, but no matter which path they take, it argues that most democracies have a high level of economic development before

becoming democratic. On the direct path to democracy, for the modernization theorists Rueschemeyer et al, economic development is a capitalist development, which is based on the historical path that states take towards liberal democracy (Rueschemeyer et al., 1992:243).

In contrast to the path of direct evolution from economic development to democracy, Samuel Huntington (2006) offers an alternative interpretation of the indirect evolution from economic development to democracy. Huntington argues that undemocratic regimes indirectly evolve into democracy in the context of economic growth through political instability and social unrest, caused by the institutional failure of such regimes to meet the needs and demands of disaffected social groups, leading to political change that can be institutionalized. From this perspective, economic development enhances the resources available to ordinary people, and this increases the masses' capabilities to launch and sustain collective action to achieve their common demands, mounting effective pressure on state authorities to respond. Consequently, the major effect of their collective action is that they shift the balance of power between the elites and the masses towards the masses (Huntington, 2006:51).

In practice, however, not all transitions to democracy stem from economic development, as the examples of East Asian states, including China's economic growth, can prove that development does not necessarily lead to democracy. Although economic development and a free market may promote democratic ideas, such development can also weaken democracy or even support autocratic rule. This camp claims that there are strong empirical data that counter the case for an authoritarian state development. One such empirical evidence is that serious socio-economic problems arising from a morbid economic model of government play a central role in political instability, inhibiting the transition to democracy and the progress of democratic structures, especially in Africa (Bratton, 1989:35). For example, the land grab problem, where foreign investors acquire vast tracts of land in Africa at the expense of local farmers, is a good example of Africa's morbid economic model guided by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF in the name of development. The implementation of this authoritarian development scheme, which is founded on a policy of leasing millions of hectares of land to investors, includes human rights violations, forced displacement and disregard for local livelihoods, especially contributing to political repression under the guise of development. Thus, large-scale land grabbing is a real obstacle to African democracy. Rather than developing the necessary level of trust in their leaders to create real democratic structures, Africans feel frustrated and betrayed by their authorities and their power mechanisms, which perpetuate cycles of poverty, marginalization, and authoritarianism.

The second theoretical explanation, i.e., the democratic governance camp, firmly rejects the thesis of development-first, noting that democracy must be a precondition for development and that the promotion of democracy is a strategic approach to achieving prosperity, security, and peace (Halperin, et al., 2009). It claims that because of the unique features of democracy, such as accountability, checks and balances, low corruption, openness, competition, information flow, transparency and adaptability, democracies generally outperformed non-democracies on most indicators of economic and social well-being (Siegel, et al., 2004:57). For example, Van de Walle (2002:76) argues that in sub-Saharan Africa, countries undergoing democratic reforms are less likely to witness armed conflict in the region. The Legatum Prosperity Index (2020) uses a broader concept of human prosperity, which includes, for example, safety and security, entrepreneurship and opportunity, personal freedom, and economic and social aspects, demonstrating considerable empirical support for the fact that democratic politics, as well as 'desirability' in terms of human rights and the rule of law, can ensure a more sustainable development than autocracies.

The third theoretical perspective, which is the multiple path camp, argues that there is no single best model, so politics must be organized according to the situation, since development can be driven through different governance systems (Carothers & De Gramont, 2013:207–208). Moreover, Francis Fukuyama (2011) also argues that political institutions develop in complex and often random ways. Thus, this theoretical perspective encourages local processes and domestic problem-solving efforts, as the best path in any country will depend on their local conditions (Levy & Spiller, 1996).

2.3.2 Management of social heterogeneity and polarization

Some scholars have argued that effective management of social division and social polarization is an important prerequisite for a successful democratization process (Merkel and Weiffen, 2012). The assumption here is that the prospects for democracy are diminished by a failure to properly manage social heterogeneity, as hostility also intensifies in a country that is deeply divided along religious, linguistic, and ethnic lines (Horowitz, 1998:348). Extreme social polarization is detrimental to democracy because it easily turns into a violent struggle to monopolize the state, preventing the peaceful transfer of power from one group to another, as required by democracy (Dahl, 1971). From this perspective, different arguments on how ethnic dynamics and democracy are interrelated are presented below, examining how democratization mobilizes ethnicity and how mobilized ethnicity also shapes the path that democracy takes.

The ethnic variant in social heterogeneity is a controversial issue on democratization, as there are two distinct arguments that ethnic passions can lead, on the one hand, to violence, and on the other hand, to the mobilization of ethnic nationalists against authoritarian regimes. In the first account, the impact of ethnicity on democracy is negative in the sense that ethnic diversity and strong ethnic nationalism are obstacles to building a stable democracy. As per this argument, the introduction of open political competition in an ethnically plural society inevitably generates "ethnic outbidding" on the part of elites seeking maximum support from their ethnic groups. For example, Chandra (2005:523) recapitulates the problems of party competition in polarized societal cleavage structures, arguing that it can lead to a dominant party controlling the competition, creating a one-party system favouring a particular ethnic group. The outcome of such exercises has often been a slide toward the collapse of democracy and violence, either because elites attempt to manipulate the decision-making process, or because certain ethnic groups reject political decisions in which they feel they have no voice (Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). Similarly, Robert Dahl also expressed concern that high levels of ethnic diversity reduce the likelihood of democracy, especially in countries where one ethnic group tends to dominate the state (Dahl, 1971: 114). These views equate strong ethnic sentiment with radical ideologies, instinctive anti-democratic hostility and a propensity for militarism, intolerance and violence, arguing that the exclusionary character of ethnic nationalism creates a weak foundation for building a democratic society (Berman, 1998; Merkel and Weiffen, 2012; Berman et al., 2004). From this viewpoint, only civic nationalism is compatible with democracy (Plamenatz, 1973:36). Mkandawire (2009: 150) also argues that democratization has the seemingly paradoxical effect of increasing interethnic tensions.

In the second account, the impact of ethnicity on democracy is positive in the sense that politically mobilized ethnicity can serve to advance and strengthen democracy. Beissinger (2008) argues that the positive impact of ethnicity on democratization is hidden by a traditional and narrow view of their relationship, as many of the traditional theoretical studies focus too much on a specific demographic configuration to determine this relationship. The reduction of the topic to the question of the specific demographic composition of a country fails to recognize the difficulties of objectively measuring diversity, given that there are many other factors, such as institutional, social, historical, and economic factors that can better predict the political mobilization of ethnicity than demographic metrics (Beissinger, 2008:88). In Africa, there was little intellectual effort to understand ethnicity, as criticism of the primordialists has been misinterpreted, suggesting that studying ethnicity and recognizing its political significance

plays into the hands of former colonial master. Authoritarian rule further occulted the ethnic question by simply denying its salience in African politics (Mkandawire, 2009: 156).

However, democracy as a form of government does not require ethnic demobilization; instead, ethnic mobilization can provide an opportunity to address pressing problems affecting society by finding a path into politics. Indeed, what democracy requires is a resolution of ethnic conflicts without serious violence and within legal channels, so that neither conflict nor uncertainty about the ability of democratic institutions to resolve grievances can provide a foothold for a resurgent authoritarianism. Several studies suggest that the processes that determine the interaction of ethnicity with democratization revolve around the ways in which regime change interacts with the interests of people within different cultural groups (Posner, 2007: 1304; Beissinger, 2008:91; Young, 2007). Ethnic mobilization associated with regime change can often escalate into ethnic violence, but it can also play a stabilizing role if satisfied ethnic groups demobilize or favour institutionalized forms of multi-ethnic interaction. Such outcomes depend on the leadership and choices politicians make during the transition process, by which ethnicity becomes a basis for inclusion or exclusion in the democratization process.

There are several reasons why the process of democratization exacerbates ethnic conflicts, especially in the early stages. The first reason concerns the interests of authoritarian rulers and how they manipulate ethnicity in order to gain and retain power for themselves, playing the "ethnic card" where elites make nationalist appeals in their competition for popular support to avoid rivals or strengthen their rule (Kanyinga, 1996:66; Barkan, 1976:269). Authoritarian rulers have the incentive to use government leverage and control over the economy and the media to sell the exclusive nationalism to their political base or ethnic group as a means of gaining popular legitimacy instead of democratization (David, 2003: 467). The second reason refers primarily not to leaders and their manipulation schemes, but to a wider system of social relations and the interests of the broader societies, which democracy is likely to influence or reshape. In most authoritarian regimes, ethnically pluralistic societies are dominated by a particular cultural group, resulting in stakes that are often significant, including the relative status of groups, the division of wealth among them, educational and cultural opportunities that members enjoy or are denied, the chances of promotion, representation in government, etc. In this sense, democracy often becomes a numbers game in which the majority rules, and this may pose a potential threat to minorities (Apollos, 2001).

The democratization process in multi-ethnic societies usually faces a "minority problem" that needs to be addressed to prevent further division or instability, because ethnic minorities are always among the potential losers in the democratization process that empowers the ethnic majority. Thus, the main dilemma facing democratization in a multicultural society is how to integrate minority interests into a reconfigured system of government whose legitimacy is critically dependent on majority rule.

In other words, in the situation where an authoritarian regime favours a majority ethnic group, the mobilization of minorities from below plays a relatively small role in initiating political openness. Thus, in this context, democracy is also unlikely to threaten the existing system of ethnic stratification. Yet, minorities often benefit from the political openness that accompanies democratization in that they can mobilize and put their questions on the political agenda. Such mobilization may contribute to the development of democracy, but the stability of the democratization project depends to a large extent on the ability to create mechanisms for the integration of minorities into the newly reconstituted political order. Under an authoritarian regime that favours an ethnic minority at the expense of an ethnic majority, ethnic mobilization of the majority is often the main driving force behind transition. Regime change here necessarily means a radical change in the system of ethnic stratification. The main challenge facing democratization in such countries is how to demobilize formerly privileged minorities and make them accept their changing and less privileged role in the reconstructed political order (Posner, 2007; Beissinger. 2008:91). These arguments indicate that the democratization process continues or is regressed depending to the ability of the transition process to demobilize and integrate disaffected ethnic groups. Thus, any attempt to explore the relationship between ethnicity and democratization must include factors that mobilize or demobilize ethnic nationalism and transform it into sources of political (in)stability in the context of regime change, such as economic opportunity and incentives, the collective action of disaffected ethnic groups, and public policies aimed at integrating these groups.

The third reason that democratization can exacerbate ethnic conflict is explained in views that favour civic nationalism over ethnic nationalism for the creation of stable democracy, on the assumption that ethnic passions can breed extremism and instability. For example, liberalism has a significant aversion to the phenomenon of ethno-nationalism, as it focuses on the rights of individuals independent of cultural communities, with the belief that emphasizing the rights of a particular cultural group can restrict individual rights. However, it should be noted that no

country is culturally neutral. Liberal democracies, even if they are based on civic rather than ethnic nationalism, also have deep roots in the dominant cultural idiom (Yack, 1996: 195-7).

The above view points out that, while there is a dangerous potential for ethnic nationalism to escalate into chauvinism and violence, there are also ways in which ethnic nationalism can be functional for democracy. For example, modern nationalism and modern democracy are linked to the principles of popular sovereignty and self-determination. As such, there must be convergence of passion for self-determination in the ethno-nationalist sense and passion for self-rule in the sense of democracy for ethnicity to have a positive impact on democratization (Nodia, 1992). In this respect, the liberating spirit engendered by ethnic nationalism can be a driving force in countering authoritarian rule, serving as a glue to build stable political societies. But not all ethnic nationalisms lead to the same consequences. Nationalism directed against members of other ethnic groups can undermine the foundations of democratic stability and the rule of law, as it can escalate into chauvinism and bloodshed (Beissinger, 2008:95). Mkandawire (2009: 151) also noted that where nationalism sought more definite and fixed identities, it only fomented "ethnic cleansing," irredentist expansionism, or genocidal exclusion of the other. But ethnic nationalism aimed at ending imposed authoritarianism can provide a social basis for successful democracy.

Moreover, in the literature on political transition, democracy is most often seen as a product of confrontation between proponents of democracy and its opponents, who together chose the path of negotiations and, therefore, open the country to reform through mass mobilization of citizens against tyranny. Democratization movements that fail to mobilize large numbers of supporters are unlikely to put enough pressure on the state to bring about democratic change or counter repressive attempts by the regime (Bunce, 2003:172). Ethnic mobilization that focuses on liberation from authoritarian domination can provide a mass basis for democratic movements. The strongest mobilization in favour of democracy may come from movements focused on democratization, not from eschewed nationalism that have sought to turn against other ethnic groups. The more followers are mobilized, the less the likelihood of repression and / or the greater the ability to resist repression. Groups with weaker ethnic identity are less able to induce the mobilization needed to end or limit the tactics of a repressive regime. In this regard, having a strong ethnic identity mobilized in the pursuit of freedom from authoritarian rule can play a key role not only in bringing about regime change, but also in ensuring that it ultimately leads to democratization, providing a powerful impetus for building democratic

institutions. This indicates that robust ethnic nationalism against imposed authoritarianism can help, not harm, democratization.

Finally, robust ethno-nationalist movements can also lay the foundation for the revival of civic life and contribute to the emergence of civil societies that can stand independent of the state and hold it accountable, as well as contribute to the understanding of social problems. On the other hand, the lack of a strong ethnic identity against a repressive regime could reinforce a weak civil society, creating the basis for authoritarian rulers to tie the country more firmly to authoritarianism. In such cases, the lack of strong ethnic activism against authoritarian hegemony undermines the prospects for democracy, weakens democratic institutions, and allows elements of the old regime to use nationalist rhetoric to reinforce the rule of strongmen. And, where institutions are weak and the politically dominant group has failed to accommodate the demands of disaffected group, democracy may lead to bloodshed and even the disintegration of the nation (Mkandawire, 2009: 151). This suggests that it is the lack of a strong ethnic identity, not its existence, that can be detrimental to the building of a successful democracy, denying the opportunity for democracy to thrive in multinational contexts. Hence, ethnicity in Africa cannot be ignored, disappeared, or suppressed, so what is more possible is to tame it by recognizing its power and managing it to provide guarantees against its dire side effects, because ethnicity can be gratifying and terrifying (Berman, 1998; Mkandawire, 2009). In short, while agreement can be reached on a democracy that it provides a framework within which ethnic groups can negotiate and live together the power of ethnicity might be recognized as an opportunity to build civil society and promote representation or understood as an obstacle to democratization.

2.3.3 Existence of robust statehood

In modern society, existence of a functioning statehood is one of the necessary conditions for achieving democracy, as such a state is able to determine the political community in which democracy operates. There is a long-running argument in the political science literature that a political decision to become democratic requires resolving the questions of statehood, regardless of whether this is a result of negotiations and cooperation between political elites or under pressure from popular protests. In other words, it is impossible to be a democracy until the elements of the statehood are settled (O'Donnell, 1993; Przeworski, et al., 1995; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Rose & Shin, 2001).

However, scholars differ on the elements that they consider essential to resolving the questions of statehood. Philip Schmitter and Terry Karl argue that citizenship is the most distinctive feature of democracy because democracy does not make sense if you do not know which state you are a citizen in, where leaders recognize you as potential constituents when they run for office (Schmitter and Karl, 1991). Robert Dahl (1989:207) claimed that the democratic process presupposes the existence of territorial boundaries and a political community, as democratic methods in themselves cannot solve the problem of the proper scope and domain of democratic units. He pointed out that the majority principle, for example, will not work if we do not know the boundaries of the entire political community, because only when the clear majority does not doubt the political community to which they belong, the majority principle allows them to organize their lives in a democratic way (Dahl, 1989:147).

On the contrary, if a broad section of the population in the territorial social unit renounces the adaptation of the unit as an entity convenient for making legitimate decisions and there is a desire to create an independent state or merge with other countries, a democratic procedure cannot work and solve the problem of identity. Here the main challenge is to develop a strong identification with the territorial-social unit. In this sense, Dankwart Rustow (1970:350-352) argued in his classic article on the transition to democracy that "national unity" is a precondition for democratization based on the experience of countries that have achieved stable socio-economic development. These are Western European countries that have managed to create a common national identity and national unity by adopting a state-building process imposed by governments that used a wide range of tools to suppress linguistic and cultural pluralism to create nation-states that define political communities in which the democratization process took place (Linz & Stepan, 1996). As these methods are not acceptable ethical standards today, the lesson from past transitions to democracy is that nation building must precede democratization.

In the postcolonial era, African countries continue to struggle with the pursuit of democratic development, since the legacy of colonialism has made both democracy and nation building very difficult. Post-colonial "national integration" processes were essentially imposed from above, which allowed differences to be subsumed or suppressed on account of diversity. Instead of unity in diversity, group uniformity was often imposed, even where federalism was espoused. It is not surprising that now, several decades after independence, these countries are neither fully democratic nor properly built up "nations" in the true sense of the concept.

Democratic institutions are feeble, state systems are fragile or collapsed, and people are not integrated into a common national identity (Dorman, 2006: 1088- 1091).

Moreover, as Berger pointed out, in Europe, nation-building has historically preceded state-building, while in post-colonial states, state-building has preceded nation-building, which has made it necessary to engage in nation-building in the post-colonial period (Berger, 2006). This change in historical trends has had dire consequences for state-building programs and democracy projects in post-colonial Africa, creating fragile relationships between democracy and nation-building with big questions that remain unresolved with regard to priority: Is democracy a necessary and sufficient condition for building a nation state, or is the building of a nation with a strong national identity a necessary prerequisite for democratic development? In many ways, this has become the Achilles heel of many African countries that have suffered from conflict after independence, instability, and civil war (Mukwedeya, 2016).

In addition to the legacy of colonialism, poor leadership and bad governance and its negative consequences in terms of poverty, inequality, exclusion, and marginalization are important explanatory factors impeding the process of nation-building in African countries (Olalere, 2015). In short, it turns out that in all of the cases mentioned above, the issue of statehood with the core elements of nation-building has to be resolved in the first place, as it is a roadblock to democratization and stable development.

2.3.4 Existence of vibrant civil society

The significance of a vibrant civil society in the transition to democracy is emphasized as an important factor in understanding "pressure from below" that could oppose authoritarian rule. The transition to democracy in Eastern Europe, as well as in South Korea, was inspired by demonstrations and strikes by students, unions, and citizens to destabilize their authoritarian governments (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Some scholars also pointed out that one of the reasons why Africa did not collapse into total absolutism was that civil society was able to survive by providing a way to resist authoritarianism, despite the systematic efforts of the state to destroy it (Anderson, 1999). Civil society in Africa was shaped by its relations not only with the state, but also with other public units. The recurring trend has been for civil society organizations to retreat to discrete arenas either through: "submerged society", where needs are met through patronage networks or a "defiant society" in which dissenters openly ignore state power and mobilize to replace the existing state, which includes groups such as national liberation groups (Lemarchand, 1992:184). In both cases, the legitimacy of the state is challenged. Such extreme

vulnerability of civil society in some African countries has left citizens with only two options, either to face persistent harassment from the state, which often leads to violations of their individual and collective rights or exile from their countries because the state is seen a hostile force.

The presence of a strong civil society does not allow the state to become over powerful. And to the dissatisfaction of the ruling elites, a strong civil society explicitly demands political reform. An independent civil society, found in trade unions, professional associations, community development associations, social movements and other nongovernmental groups that put pressure on the system, is a necessary condition for democratization. For transition researchers such as Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), civil society emerges in economic development, reinforcing the ability of the lower classes to participate in changing the balance of class power. Bratton (1989) points to this, saying that economic development leads to a greater concentration of people in densely populated residential areas and at the same time dissipates them into diverse networks of interactions. This leads to decentralized information management, increasing sources of alternative information, spreading literacy, knowledge, income, and other organizational resources among the population, thereby increasing the likelihood of protests that can challenge the authoritarian system (Bratton & Mattes, 2001).

However, a weak civil society may become an instrument of preserving the power of the ruling class. Thus, civil society can play the opposite role: some groups may retain authoritarian power to protect certain interests and counter democracy (Sørensen, 2010). Therefore, it is important to find a balance of power between the state apparatus and civil society, which de Tocqueville (2009: 372) called an "institutional bedrock" for promoting democracy by inspecting and maintaining a balance of power with the state. Overall, a strong civil society is considered as an important precondition for a successful transition to democracy. The growing presence of civic groups would be a good indicator of how the government relates to freedom of expression and assembly rights, as well as to democracy in general.

2.4.5 Cultural Democracy

Cultural democracy claims that only democracy consistent with the country's history and culture can create political conditions that facilitate successful democratic development (Osabu-Kle, 2019). The rationale for its use in Africa is necessarily broad since there is no Western theoretical approach that could adequately explain African political systems (Nyong'o, 1987). Cultural democracy is compatible with the wisdom of contingency theory, which

recognizes that no organization can best solve human problems. The results depend not only on the agent, but also on the compatibility of the agent with the environment and technology used (Donaldson, 2001). Similarly, postmodernists also argue that there is no single ideal organization, standard or teleological modernity that all nations, including industrialized ones, must emulate, since they are not without problems (Lash, 2014.). The value and reality judgment in any given decision-making process depend on the evaluative system of the decision-maker (Vickers, 1987). Since people's judgments about reality and value vary in different cultures, their understanding and decisions also vary regarding the objects, processes, and practices, including political aspects. What is acceptable in one culture may be completely rejected in another culture. Thus, the complete transfer of political practices from one culture to another can lead to disastrous consequences.

For example, the current political and social problems in many African countries go back to the colonial treaties of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, in which European colonists agreed to divide Africa among themselves, after which indirect rules and the colonial education system were introduced, which mainly serve the interests of the colonists (Gjersø, 2015). The period of structural transformations after gaining independence raised the issues of integration into the world economy, which led to the need to achieve "appropriate" political conditions, such as the adoption of "democracy" for this type of integration (Ake, 1991:34-36). Thus, African countries were forced to imitate, without appreciating the serious limitations of liberal democracy from the Western world (Parekh, 1992). As result, many African countries remain in a constant state of crisis with catastrophic consequences for political stability, economic growth, and overall well-being.

Compatible cultural democracy also considers the ideas of Marxist political scholars who argue that social, cultural, and political phenomena are primarily determined by the mode of material production (Paulson et al., 2003). Although this understanding ascribes primacy to economics rather than the idea of explaining historical processes, the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser argued that superstructure elements of ideology and politics are conditions for the existence of the economy (Althusser, 2006). Consistent with this claim, compatible cultural democracy also accepts the central argument that each mode of production requires appropriate political, social, and cultural arrangements. Thus, African countries that are still pre-industrial cannot be expected to have the same political arrangements and practices as industrial societies. They need political arrangements and practices compatible with their communal cultural environment.

The concept of compatible cultural democracy in Africa can also be seen in the context of Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2007). While advanced countries may be at the stage of satisfying self-fulfilment and the greatest achievements such as space exploration, poor African countries may be at the stage of satisfying the physiological needs of providing bread to their hungry millions, struggling to meet security needs for protection from dangers, threats, and hardships, as well as the social needs of nation building, including instilling a sense of belonging and acceptance of one ethnic group by another.

Moreover, if we accept the definition of politics as the authoritative allocation of values by David Easton (1953), then compatible cultural democracy claims that African politics must be an authoritative distribution of African values, not an authoritative distribution of foreign values. The authoritative spread of African values among African peoples by Africans in the context of African culture and African history is important for the development of African democracy with the manifestation of African identity and values that are recognized throughout the world community. The application of compatible cultural democracy in the African context cannot be socialist, communist, capitalist, liberal or any other foreign "ism". However, it has to become a reflection of Africanism - the ideological, economic, and political practice of Africans according to African history and culture, which aims to free Africans from foreign excrescences (Osabu-Kle, 2019).

However, the concept of compatible cultural democracy is a very general application in both the developing and the developed worlds. According to the contingency theory, compatible cultural democracy claims that there is not a single best political organization or technology that every country of the world can emulate. On the other hand, since politics is aimed at meeting human needs (Bay, 1968; Fitzgerald, 1985), it stands to reason that we find differences in the application of democratic theory where people also have different needs and attitudes towards political objects, processes, and practices. Thus, Westerners supposedly practice a democracy that is compatible with the attitudes, experiences, orientation, and perspectives of Westerners. The lesson that can be drawn from all of these differences is that the compatibility of a particular type of application of democratic theory with the orientation and attitude of people towards compatible political culture is important.

Incompatible cultural democracy may have dangerous consequences. Indeed, all presidential, parliamentary, federal, and consociational democratic systems are different applications of compatible cultural democracy that aims to solve human problems and meet human needs in

different cultures (Osabu-Kle, 2019). Given this, it is also reasonable and appropriate for African countries to practice a kind of compatible cultural democracy suitable for their environment, in which incompatible alien ideologies are the main cause of political unrest and economic chaos. The wholesale transfer of foreign ideologies and political practices undermined indigenous institutions, which are prerequisites for the success of democracy and economic development for Africans. In the context of imitating foreign "democratic" practices that ignore the cultural and historical aspects of Africans, there is a potential danger of repeating the mistakes of the past with serious consequences. Hence, it is time to seize the opportunity to understand and appreciate the value of compatible cultural democracy in Africa found in political languages and discourse.

2.3.6 Press freedom and social media.

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are the basis of democracy. A political system can be defined as fully democratic only if there are independent media to disseminate political information adequately, monitor the performance of the government and convey a plural set of voices and judgments about the functioning of the political system. Traditional media provide citizens with useful information to monitor the results produced by their political representatives and allow them to make informed decisions while increasing their level of political awareness, responsibility, and trust in representative democracy. In fact, providing more information helps voters to control more politicians efficiently (Besley & Prat, 2006).

In addition, the media can be a 'watch-dog' that protects against power abuse, facilitates political accountability and combats corruption with effects on the citizens' confidence in public institutions. From this perspective, then, the media become the backbone of democracy and acts like an institution that improves the democratic process and promotes loyalty toward the political system. Despite the relevance of the media in the political process, their impact on democracy is disputed. The negativity of media along with the coverage of politics as horse-race can be sources of political mistrust, 'malaise' and cynicism that decrease trust in government. On the contrary, according to Norris (2002), the availability of political information provided by the media increases trust in the political system among users that access those contents, while it has no effects on apathetic citizens that are unwilling to follow political news. As such, the exposure to political news will produce a virtuous circle of trust in democratic institutions and the media will enhance political interest, knowledge, and participation. While the diffusion of political news, per se, can increase satisfaction toward

democracy, the top-down approach followed by traditional media outlets can be beneficial to the public when the political elite proposes a viewpoint that supports democracy.

However, in recent years, the internet and social media have flanked the traditional media in the field of information and communication. Some believe that the internet can become a free public domain or a source of direct democracy, contributing to increased responsiveness and accountability in real politics (Khazaeli & Stockemer, 2013), while other social scientists have expressed a more sceptical view. On the one hand, some empirical analysis shows that the internet reinforces the demand of citizens for democracy or commitment to good governance (Norris, 2002). The internet and social media can have a positive impact on political knowledge, political participation or many other indicators of civil society participation and penetration into social networks. They can also increase voter turnout (Ceron & Memoli, 2016). On the other hand, some studies have not confirmed these results, and can show a negative impact on turnouts (Davis, 2003, as cited in Quintelier & Vissers, 2008:416). Finally, online communities can produce undesirable consequences in a democratic system if they are extremist (rather than moderate), so that their users become a source of ideological lock-ins (Downey & Fenton, 2003). Confidentiality issues and the dissemination of falsified news are other important determinants of the online community (Lazer et al, 2018). In conclusion, the potential political influence of social medias depends on their ability to transmit, retrieve, and disperse information more effectively, since news can be distributed at high speed, low cost and in a wide range. That means that social media daily produces a huge amount of information that also contains some alternative views that are not broadcasted by traditional media (Besley & Prat, 2006).

2.3.7 Non-violent social movements

Gene Sharp (2012) in his book From Dictatorship to Democracy identifies four mechanisms of nonviolent struggle that lead to the downfall of dictatorship. These are conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration. Conversion is least likely, but it occurs when members of the ruling regime are emotionally moved by the oppression imposed on brave nonviolent protesters or are rationally convinced that the reason for resistance is just and therefore, they may welcome demands of the resistance movement. Accommodation occurs when both sides fulfil some of their demands, but neither side achieves everything they wanted. This mechanism may not bring down the dictatorship. When the balance of power tilts towards the protesters, the government can choose this mechanism if the demands of the

protesters may not threaten its power while it improves the regime's positive image in the eyes of the international community. Nonviolent coercion is when mass non-cooperation and disobedience can change social and political situations, especially power relations, to such an extent that the ability of dictators to control economic, social, and political processes in government and society is effectively deprived. The fourth mechanism for change - the disintegration of the authoritarian regime - is when the regime collapses simply with a general phenomenon of ungovernability, not even having enough strength to surrender (Sharp, 2012:35).

Thus, a non-violent social movement can be broadly defined as a movement through which groups can actively resist the system of injustice and violence without the use of violence (Dudouet, 2011). However, equating nonviolence with pacifism is one of the misconceptions about nonviolence. Though nonviolence rejects the deliberate use of violence or armed force to achieve one's political goals, nonviolence should not be equated with pacifism. This is because limited violence against the regime and its accomplices is inevitable, as frustration and hatred of the regime may escalate into violence. More importantly, when the state exploits its right over the use of violence for illegitimate purposes, then the protesting public has the right to oppose the state, even using violence. Nonviolent protesters can occasionally resort to such things to challenge the injustice and violent government responses to reduce the strategic importance of what could be lost due to violence.

In Africa, this injustice ranges from repressive governments to structures that perpetuate violence and exacerbate inequality between different groups. When studying the political history of the continent, despite the trend of violence under repressive regimes and in the struggle for self-determination, there are many examples of non-violent actions that can be identified throughout history. Africans used marches, petitions, and boycotts against taxes, land policies, and labour laws of the colonial powers back in the 1890s. In addition, traditional chiefs also used civil disobedience in their refusal to pay taxes, and an economic non-cooperation was used to stop the transportation of raw materials and minerals from the colonies. Educated elites have also formed associations in protest against repressive governance. The combined efforts of these and other actions enabled most African countries to gain independence, mainly through the use of non-violent movement (Beinart, 1987).

Recently, despite a history of Africa that often focuses on violent armed conflicts, there have been cases where non-violent movements have led to political reforms and regime changes in

different parts of the continent since the "Arab Spring", which has increased global interest in non-violent movements. Moreover, dissatisfaction with the state, political leadership and the problems of poverty and unemployment by most African citizens requires an assessment of the potential of non-violent movements on the continent. A case in point is political events in North Africa, for example Tunisia, where popular, nonviolent social movements have succeeded in removing repressive governments and helped promote fundamental political reforms (Howard and Hussain, 2011).

The changes in the North African countries - and in the Arab world - together, seemed to embody a new phase in the history of democratization movements, the fourth wave of democratization, different from the democratization movements that mobilized against authoritarian regimes in the 1980s and 1990s. In this wave of democratization, the pro-democracy forces protested not only against stricter authoritarian regimes than in the early phases of democratization, with the re-consolidation of authoritarian rule since the opening of third wave, but also received less support outside of their national setting. In these circumstances, the scope of competitive politics is determined not by liberal measures or strong civil societies, but rather the incapacity of incumbents to maintain power or establish political control (Pace and Cavatorta, 2012).

In Africa, contemporary non-violent measures have included a wide range of methods. For example, street protests, occupying squares, television and radio discussions, marches, vigils, sit-ins in front of parliament, meetings with pro-democracy activists to positively transform the peace process, non-cooperation, boycotts, strikes, mass demonstrations, symbolic actions such as dancing and singing in protests, and rallies have focused on a call for an end to repressions (Presbey, 2018).

The sources of non-violence in Africa are diverse. The role of spirituality in facilitating the non-violence movement is important because the concept of non-violence is consistent with concepts such as reconciliation, love, peace, and truth that are central to religions such as Islam, Christianity, or other traditional beliefs that many Africans share. Furthermore, the concept of indigenous institutions and the emphasis on social and horizontal relationships that foster the perception of others as brothers or sisters and as a human-being also contribute to the formation of non-violent actions (*Ibid.*).

Strategy is also an essential component for the success of the non-violent movement in Africa. This requires an understanding of the source of the strengths and weaknesses of the oppressive

regime, as well as clear and thoughtful planning on how to achieve the goals of the movement. It also requires a clear analysis of the problems and causes of grievances to ensure clarity in the goals, methods of action and the desired results, otherwise a non-violent movement will not lead to democratic changes (Sharp, 2012:25).

Many non-violent actions in Africa lack planning and organization. But organization and coordination are an integral part of the success of a non-violent movement that seeks to influence repressive governments to change their governance practices. It should be noted that a non-violent movement is more than just filing grievances and expressing them through protests and other non-violent actions, but it is the organization of actions in a way that leads to constant and constructive changes that transform the long-standing structural obstruction of positive social changes for democratic development. Strategic, visionary, and goal-oriented leadership is the basis of the success and failure of non-violent movement. Leaders must strongly support and embrace the principles of non-violence and charismatically guide people in their response (Ettang, 2014:415).

Lack of cohesion of non-violent movements can weaken the cause. The oppressors are always interested in applying the principle of "divide and rule" to suppress any form of opposition, whether violent or non-violent. It is important to reach out to other ethnic groups and political parties in order to overcome differences and create a united front against a repressive government. The success of non-violent movements in Africa depends on popular support for the movement. They strengthen as their numbers increase, so it is necessary to mobilize people who pursue similar goals and are sufficiently disciplined to promote non-violent actions (Schock, 2015).

Clear communication is also necessary for a successful peaceful struggle. Communication becomes important not only between the leader and supporters, but also between supporters in order to avoid divisions. It is a prerequisite for conveying the clear needs, public grievances and changes that non-violent movements have sought. Empirical evidence from Tunisia and Egypt showed that although their movements were unprecedented, the new forms of social solidarity supported by the use of social media played a crucial role in their movements. The success achieved during the mobilization period was the result of surprisingly rapid and widespread information, supported by information technology, fostering activism that helped individuals to join the movement. They are vivid examples of the very rapid political

transformations achieved through the political deployment of social media by democratic agencies (Ettang, 2014).

Maintaining self-discipline and group discipline in non-violent movement is important, despite the dangers of the oppressor. When activists use non-violence, it is very likely that the repressive regime will use violence to suppress the non-violent movement, which includes beatings, injuries, imprisonment, and death of non-violent demonstrators. But it is highly recommended that non-violence requires self-discipline and strong personal commitment, even in conditions of imminent danger. The most powerful weapon of the non-violent movement is their self-discipline, commitment, and deep faith in non-violence, which is necessary for the struggle to achieve the desired democratic transformations (Ibid).

In addition, it is important to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the context, including the weaknesses of the government and how they can be used to make changes, as well as understanding the unique cultural contexts of society and the government concerned. It is also important to understand the context in which the conflict arises. Despite positive factors conducive to a nonviolent movement, there are factors that can limit the potential and success of nonviolent action in achieving the necessary change. They range from the nature of the repressive regime, lack of resources, the emergence of violent movements and the divisions that make up many African countries.

2.3.8 Role of diaspora and international engagements

Much has been said about the practice of the diaspora in the context of democratization. Shain (2007) is one of the few scholars who say that diasporas are not simply careless nationalists, but they can help their homeland in striving for democracy. After studying the Greek, Haitian, Cuban and Mexican cases in the United States, among others, Shain (2007) argues that the struggle of diaspora to unseat authoritarian regimes is often led by political exiles who were involved in political activities before departure. Foreign students from the diaspora often participate in demonstrations against undemocratic practices (Shain, 2007). Diasporas can transfer funds to civil society organizations and become critical factors in running democratic political campaigns inside their homelands. They can challenge the home regime's attempts to suppress or co-opt the opposition, contest the regime's international legitimacy, expose human rights violations, combat the home regime's foreign propaganda, obstruct friendly relations with the West and USA through effective lobbies, and assist and actively participate in the struggle of domestic opposition (Shain, 2007).

In addition, diasporas reframe conflict issues to redefine what is politically acceptable before and during election campaigns. They participate in elections from abroad or try to change restrictive electoral laws prohibiting their participation (Gamlen, 2008). They forge links with civic organizations in the host-land and seek to promote democratic and liberal values in the homeland (Shain, 2007). In contrast, Koinova (2009) cited Anderson (1998) in her work "Diasporas and Democratization in the Post-Communist World", describing diasporas as "long-distance nationalists" who can often act "irresponsibly" towards their homeland since they do not bear the consequences of their actions (Koinova, 2009:45-6). Thus, arguments about the democratization of authoritarian regimes concern diaspora by increasing their understanding of practices that they can use to promote democracy at home.

There are also important areas in which the diaspora can play a role in the context of democratization by putting pressure on foreign agencies and governments. One such area is that they can urge host countries to influence foreign policy and have a say in aid packages, loans, diplomatic relations, and intergovernmental organizations such as the UN and other regional organizations to put pressure on their homeland to begin the process of democratization (Sørensen, 2002).

Pevehouse (2005) suggests another possible international factor in democratization: regional organizations. Diaspora can turn to regional democratic organizations with evidence revealing the nature of the repressive regime, demanding pressure on authoritarian regional member states to accept and carry out democratic reforms (Pevehouse, 2005). Another radical form on which the diaspora can focus its advocacy activities include direct foreign intervention, such as attempts to impose economic sanctions, or foreign military intervention in an attempt to raise the level of democracy in another country. However, recent studies have raised more doubts about the overall effectiveness of these strategies, noting that such diktat from abroad is contrary to the basic principle of democracy, because democracy literally means rule by the people (De Mesquita & Downs, 2006; Pickering & Kisangani, 2006).

Finally, the international influence of diaspora includes their role in political opposition movements that automatically spread through civil society as citizens jump to the democracy bandwagon: this raises the possibility of an international perspective of a "domino theory" of regime transition leading to situations in which political developments in one country influence others across international borders. This type of international spread occurs within the regions passing through regime transition, as well as from the nuclei to the dependent peripheries. The

main factor in these processes is breakthrough in the field of communication technologies, especially social media, which increases the connections between ordinary people and promotes the spread of political ideas.

2.3.9 Liberalized autocracy

The concept of " liberalized autocracy" stems from a broader literature that discusses the process of political liberalization that has taken place in some parts of the Middle East. Middle Eastern countries have encountered what researchers like Brumberg (2002) call "liberalized autocracy" in that there are deliberate actions taken by authoritarian regimes to provide sufficient changes to meet popular or international demands while allowing ruling elites to retain power. Brumberg (2002:57) claimed that such types of liberalized authoritarian regimes allow some "political freedom and political competition not because they are committed to democratic change", but because they want to avoid high costs of confronting social crises of their people, seeing "limited reform" as "less costly". Thus, the political system of "liberalized autocracy" is characterized by pluralism, controlled elections, selective repression, and thus it provides limited liberalization and civic participation: the repressive regime is not essentially changed, even if it faces external pressure from the international community or internal pressure from its community (Brumberg, 2002).

Liberalized autocrats tend to create a situation that allows them to partially open the political space. Brumberg (2002:65) claimed that such countries are "liberalized" and carry out reforms from above and allow parliamentary elections and political participation of their people, so that they freely express themselves and welcome associational life. However, they limit this power. Therefore, free, and fair elections, political participation and associational life are not strong enough to play an active political role. It should be noted that these scholars distinguish between political liberalization and democracy and recognize differences in both processes. Brynen et al. (1995) argue that the transition to democracy involves greater participation in political life in such a way as to provide citizens with a certain degree of collective control over public policy. On the other hand, political liberalization could be a process aimed at securing the status quo in the face of pressure for change and suggests expanding the public space by recognizing and protecting civil and political freedoms, especially those that affect common interest. O'Donnell et al. (2013) explain that political liberalization is the process of redefining and extending rights, such as freedom of movement, the right to fair trial and freedom to voluntarily associate with other citizens.

Individuals usually claim rights when they are no longer suppressed by the system in question, and this stimulates other groups and leads to the expansion of "space for the liberalized action". There is no "necessary or logical sequence" for this process, it depends on the response of the system, and if the demands do not threaten the system, the liberalized practice over time will become institutionalized (O'Donnell et al, 2013:6). Liberalization is necessary, but not enough to move from an authoritarian to a democratic system, and if there is no liberalization, democratization becomes a mere formalism. On the other hand, political liberalization without democracy can be the way to a completely different end and indicate not the beginning of the path to democracy, but quite the opposite: the shoring up of authoritarianism that lacks institutional accountability and that can allow political liberalization to be easily manipulated by government (O'Donnell, et al., 2013:8).

According to Samuel Huntington (1997), liberalized authoritarian regimes can free political prisoners, open some issues for public debate, reduce censorship, sponsor elections for offices with little power, allow resumption of civil society and take other steps in a democratic direction, without alternation of top decision makers. Moreover, Brynen et al. (1995) suggest that elections are seen as a way to increase political participation in government decision-making and can be held under partial franchise or fraud. Hence, even if elections are held, they are not necessarily a real democracy. Several countries have instead been able to present liberalized images to the outside world, while in fact they are ruled by elites who are able to manipulate the facades of democratic institutions to remain in power. Such governments seek to expand the inclusiveness of the state by institutional bodies such as parliament, which acts as a "safety valve" and an "institutional mechanism" to beautify the image of an authoritarian regime and promote authoritarian elites, allowing the state to respond to threats. At the same time, social actors in these countries are marginalized and repressed if they threaten the regime and thus civil society is weakened (Diamond, et al., 2003).

Diamond (2015) points out that regimes manipulate political institutions through elections to ensure that they do not actually perform democratic functions, but instead strengthen control over the state and political domination. This suggests that authoritarian rulers can often manipulate elections in Africa, which seem to promote political liberalization to create a loyal parliament. These elections can also be an instrument for transferring legitimacy to the system and gaining popularity and can be a strategy used by the system to ensure their survival, rather than to promote democracy, which means that they do not meet the standards of modern political democracy. In such circumstances, the executive has power, and the legislative and

judicial branches are weaker and more manageable. Although there are opposition parties, their access to the media is limited and does not extend to the activities of their campaigns, voting for certain groups can be forced or interfered with, in favour of the executive, and gerrymandering can occur. Thus, Volpi (2004) describes those states that conduct elections, albeit limited, as "pseudo democracies".

However, prolonged periods of "controlled contestation" carry hope for progress towards democratization, as in Mexico and Senegal. In the beginning the process seems weak, but it begins to challenge the authoritarian rulers: through the electoral process, moderate opposition movements can gradually abolish the power of the ruling elite (Volpi, 2004). On the other hand, Nathan (2003) explains the resilience of the authoritarian regime by its readiness to respond violently to opposition groups that might threaten its rule (Nathan, 2003). The regime creates "coercive organizations" to protect itself. Brownlee (2002:35) considered four cases in which the regime's coercive apparatus and violent actions against the opposition ensured the survival of the regime: Syria (1982), Iraq (1991), Tunisia (1987) and Libya (1993). Whether these autocratic regimes persisted as a result of the manipulation of the system by political institutions (such as elections) to ensure that they do not serve democratic functions but promote political hegemony; or control through coercive means, the end result is the same: limited progress in creating democracy (Brownlee, 2002:49). It must be noted that a commitment to a coercive political apparatus, backed by Western security concerns, makes the transition to democracy more difficult. This understanding is important for this study, especially in terms of identifying and separating two processes of the current political liberalization, which leads either to the transition to democracy or to the survival of the regime.

In general, the above discussions showed that the nine explanatory factors can be defined as factors impeding or advancing democratic change, i.e., the change in the country's political system with respect to Dahl's (1989) criteria that forms the broader rights of participation, representation, and civil and political rights. However, these nine factors are not necessarily sufficient to strengthen democracy. There is also no formula that determines the degree to which each factor on its own is required, or that each factor should be in any particular context.

2.4 Conclusion

The reviews of literature in this chapter indicated the divergent definitions of democracy and the lack of consensus among scholars of what constitutes democracy. One of the most problematic issues in defining democracy is also the determination of whether democracy is

primarily a substantive way of life or rather a set of procedural rules. In this regard, the "maximalist and minimalist" variants of conceptualization of democracy could be gathered. The "maximalist" definitions stipulate "substantive" or comprehensive concepts encompassing social and economic aspects as defining criteria, and the "minimalist" or procedural definitions are mostly concerned with the process of institutional arrangements. However, Dahl (1989) offers a mid-way to assess the meaning of political reforms, whereby this study has objective of testing whether they are expanding the realms of participation, representation, and deliberation in Ethiopia. Thus, democracy should be understood in this study to mean a political system that encompasses participation, representation, and democratic deliberation that aim to ensure civil and political rights, so that democratization becomes a trajectory of political reform towards those objectives.

This chapter also showed that there is no agreement among scholars about the environment that creates the conditions for democratic transition, as there is not any condition sufficient for democracy to take root. Nevertheless, I propose a synthesis of nine conditions for the democratization process by analysing modernization, structural and transition approaches to democratization theories. The prerequisites provide a useful set of conditions, which can be used to assess whether a country is democratizing, but they are not without shortcoming. Nevertheless, it is possible to examine the extent to which any or all of these prerequisites have been existent in Ethiopia or a result of the political reforms in the period under investigation, thereby examining the outcomes of the reforms and identifying reasons for these outcomes.

This chapter also explored the strategies for regime survival, which deliberately inhibit democracy through manipulation of political institutions such as parties, elections, or civil society organizations. Regimes seek to bolster their legitimacy, to co-opt allies, to counter transnational or external pressures for political reforms, and disempower potential competitors for power by implementing political reforms which liberalize the political system without surrendering to any of the criteria for democracy – greater participation, representation, democratic deliberation, or significant civil and political rights. With the synthesis of this theoretical guide, this study has assessed the progress made in deepening democracy in Ethiopia, using the nine conditions, as required by the topics discussed in the individual chapters of this thesis. For example, factors of economic development, along with the developmental state are applied in the third chapter to address the issues of development and democracy *vis-à vis* the causes of the popular protests that have dragged the country into a permanent political crisis.

Chapter Three: Development, crisis, and resurgence in the EPRDF's Ethiopia

3.1 Introduction

The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power, defeating the Marxist military regime, in May 1991 (Young, 1996; Abbink, 1995; Clapham, 2009). The EPRDF had introduced several measures: both economic and political. After the seizure of state power, it promised a multi-party democracy, a federal system of government and an end to the command economy (Gudina, 2011; Vestal, 1997; Clapham, 2004). Thus, the Transitional Charter was introduced, which included some principles of liberal democracy: it recognizes freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to self-determination and a market economy (Aalen, 2002). Moreover, the centralized system of governance was dismantled, and a new administrative map was introduced, based on four criteria: language, settlement pattern, identity and consent of the people concerned. The newly introduced policies have been enshrined in the federal constitution of 1994 (FDRE Constitution, 1995).

Along the way, the economic sector has been reformed by modelling after East Asian countries. As a result, Ethiopia declared that it was taking the course of the developmental state since 2005. Several sources published news about Ethiopia's economic transformation over the past two decades. On March 13, 2014, *Time* magazine published an article entitled "Forget BRIC; Meet the PINEs," an acronym for emerging economies of the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, in which it reports Ethiopia's social and economic progress in the fight against poverty (Time Magazine, 2014). Similarly, other news sources and development institutions reported that Ethiopia is leading the African continent as a model of economic transformation (The Bloomberg, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2018).

Ethiopia has shown sustained economic growth over the decade up to the COVID-19 pandemic, including increased access to education, expansion of roads and railway infrastructure. It has reportedly achieved six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): it has reduced the prevalence of extreme poverty by half; HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases amongst the adult population has dropped; it has achieved universal primary education; reduced child mortality; improved environmental sustainability and developed a global partnership for development. On the other two lagging MDGs, namely gender equality and the empowerment of women, and improving maternal health, significant progress was reported (UNDP, 2015:1). Currently, many hydropower plants are under construction, the

purpose of which is to stimulate the economy and become an energy giant in the region, which exports electricity to neighbouring countries.

Ethiopia is also striving to achieve the goals that make the country a middle-income country by 2025 (National Planning Commission, 2016). This appears to have prompted the government to view the developmental state as one of the two pillars of national renaissance. It was hoped that, in combination with another pillar, democratic governance, the creation and strengthening of an effective developmental state was supposed to lead to national transformation (Zenawi, 2006; Lefort, 2013; Alex de Waal, 2018). However, the desire to build a democratic developmentalist state was not without challenges.

Accordingly, political promises made after the transition in 1991 remained either unfulfilled or highly contested. The main problem was the political ideology of revolutionary democracy pursued by the ruling party. This wartime ideology of rebel groups had fundamental implications for peacetime politics, allowing the party and the state to merge, eliminating the separation of powers, checks and balances (see Aalen, 2019). The practices eventually resulted in the closure of political space and the emergence of the EPRDF as the dominant party, especially after the 2005 elections, trying to create a developmentalist state that claims legitimacy on the delivery of developmental outputs, abandoning the constitutional pledges of multi-party democracy. From this viewpoint, the chapter presents an empirical analysis of Ethiopian experiments of democracy within the developmental state framework. It explains why economic development, which is one of the determinants of democratization, not only failed to ensure democratic development, but also led to country-wide political unrest, organized mainly as Oromo protests and Amhara uprising, reflecting deep-rooted grievances in the country.

Ethiopia was ruled by an ethnic minority that imposed its will on the majority, a crucial factor in understanding the deep-rooted grievances that caused the protests: between 1991 and 2018, the EPRDF was a de facto coalition dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Frustrated by their leaders, who were subservient to the TPLF, anger over the lack of benefits from economic growth, the closure of political space, the horrific human rights abuses, and the publication of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, all became causes for the protesters to single out the TPLF for their problems, accusing them of controlling key political, military and security positions, blocking democratic decision-making and dominating the economy.

Also, from this perspective, the chapter presents an analysis of TPLF / EPRDF dominant party regime in Ethiopia, as well as the resulting political crisis and power dynamics among the four EPRDF members. It explains the factors that led to the resurgence of the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) within the EPRDF, which ultimately eroded the dominance of the TPLF in the country.

In light of the themes highlighted above, the topics in this chapter are divided into six sections. Having introduced the chapter, the second section discusses the theoretical explanation of the drivers of Ethiopia's developmental state. The third section presents the analysis of the contradictions of the doctrine of the developmental state with the federal structure of the country in place since 1991. The fourth section presents an analysis of Ethiopia's quest for development compared to the reasons for the Oromo protests to understand the links between development and public protests. The fifth section presents an analysis of the factors that led to the restructuring of power within the EPRDF, and how that recently mutated into a new merger party named the Prosperity Party. Concluding remarks are presented on the basis of the theoretical framework adopted for this thesis in the sixth section.

3.2 The Political Drivers of Ethiopia's Developmental State

More than two decades have elapsed since the concept and some elements of a developmental state paradigm had begun to emerge in Ethiopia's various policies. However, it is after the 2005 elections that the Ethiopian government openly announced it and it became the subject of intense debate in academic and political forums (Lefort, 2012).

The emergence of the developmental state in Ethiopia could be seen in three contexts: (i) as a consistent attempt to emulate the development paths of different countries, (ii) as part of the global phenomena that responded to the shortcomings of the neoliberal paradigm in Africa, and (iii) as the political project of the TPLF/EPRDF to create one-party dominance under the pretext of development projects.

The policy of emulation in Ethiopia began in the mid-19th century taking Imperial Russia as the first model of modernization and development. This was followed by an attempt to copy the Meiji period from the Japanese Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The process discontinued during the war with fascist Italy. After the Second World War, the British monarchy became a model for emulation (Clapham, 2006). And the 1974 revolution brought the socialist military regime that staunchly followed the Soviet Union as a model (Bekele,

1995). The overthrow of the socialist regime in 1991 due to armed struggle led to a distinctiveness and a modified Marxist model, with particular adherence to the Stalinist theory of "national questions", which advocates the right to self-determination as an approach to the problem of ethnic diversity in Ethiopia (Clapham, 2006:148). Over the past decade, Ethiopia has been attempting to emulate the development success of East Asian countries, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and, most recently, China, which show the fact that the search for a developmental model is still an ongoing process (De Waal, 2012; Planel, 2014).

On the other hand, the emergence of the developmental state model was part of the widespread global response to the failure of neo-liberalism in the developing world, particularly in Africa. Following the collapse of the socialist camp, the ideology of neo-liberalism was promoted by Western countries and the international financial institutions as a panacea for Africa's problems (Ferguson, 2006).

However, the structural adjustment programmes imposed on developing countries failed to achieve the expected development and transformation (Heidhues and Obare, 2011: 55-64). The economic policies that underpin liberal ideas such as limited government, free market and individualism have failed to reflect the social and economic realities of developing societies. Thus, the developmental state proved to be a successful model in East Asian countries and appeared the most promising option for African countries. However, it is difficult to trace the exact timing of Ethiopia's formal adoption of the developmental state model. In fact, there seems to be a difference in the political and economic discourse of the country, both in terms of time and its cause. One reason is that, just as some policies reflected the characteristics of developmentalism during the transition period between 1991 and 1994, some elements of the developmental state were also observed in the 1995 Constitution, for example, in Articles 41 and 89, which formulate the national economic objectives and the role of the state in the economy, and the preamble, which envisions the creation of one economic community.

For others, the promotion of the developmental state as the best model for Ethiopia began in the beginning of the 2000s whilst the government introduced a campaign depicting poverty as an existential threat to the country's survival. This was further reinforced following a split in the TPLF central committee in 2001 caused by disagreements over the war with Eritrea (Tadesse & Young, 2003; Aalen & Tronvoll, 2009). The winning group in this split embarked on developmental state rhetoric ahead of the 2005 general elections (Gebregziabher, 2019:476).

Moreover, the post Eritrean war period has paved the way for a more ambitious policy in many ways. First, it led to a deep rift within the TPLF itself, in which the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi barely appeared as victor but was able to marginalize his rivals in the party and direct development policy in a much more personal way (Bach, 2011:643). Second, there was attention to implementing a national project in which the country's internal and external security depended on the securitization of the development process. This last factor contributed significantly to the 2005 electoral crisis, when the regime reinforced its efforts to achieve "performance legitimacy" through the benefits derived from development success, designating its critics as anti-development and anti-peace (Hagmann & Abbink, 2011:585).

This implies that a coherent development strategy came in the early years of the new millennium. Ethiopia has implemented Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), guided by the international financial institutions (the IMF and World Bank). It developed the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Policy (SDPRP), spanning the three-year period (2002/03 – 2004/05), "A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP)" covered from 2005/06-2009/10, the first "Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)", 2009/10-2014/15 and the second "Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)", 2015/16-2019/20 to play strategic roles in achieving the national vision of the country.

The implementations of these development programs have caused serious disagreements and problems at the local levels. This situation was mainly noticeable in the Oromia region, and Gambella regions bordering South Sudan, where large tracts of land were allocated at low prices to foreign companies from Saudi Arabia, India, Japan, and other countries (Pearce, 2012). Other points out that the contentious 2005 elections, which left the ruling party at risk, were a defining moment for the developmental state paradigm to emerge as a national agenda (Kefale, 2011).

It should be noted that the speeches of former prime Minister Meles Zenawi, which underscore the need for rapid economic growth to ensure Ethiopia's survival as a country, represent the most important impacts. And the 2006 version of his master's dissertation titled, "African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings," argued that the liberal paradigm has come to a dead end as an alternative to African development, and the new-approach developmental state is the most viable alternative to advancing. He rejected the "Washington Consensus" model, saying that it simply made developing countries adopt submissive attitudes toward developed countries, and therefore a strong state was needed to

break a reliance on the western modernization path (Zenawi, 2006). He repeated the same thing in his speech on the new year of the Ethiopian Millennium in 2007, in which he proclaimed the "Ethiopian Renaissance", establishing developmental state and democratic federalism the two pillars of Ethiopian Renaissance (The Finfinne Times, 2007).

Later in 2010, Zenawi stressed the failure of the neoliberal model, describing the last three decades as a lost decade for Africa, and thus presented Africa's commitment to the developmental state model as an alternative in his speech[1] at the World Leaders Forum at Columbia University, indicating that this could be seen as Africa's second liberation. Zenawi strongly advocated the developmental state model for the whole of Africa until his death in 2012. Ethiopia's growing advocacy for development has led to the long-term goal of becoming a middle-income country in 2025, part of which incorporates the five-year growth and transformation plans (GTP1 and GTP2), which were laid out in 2010 and 2015 respectively (National Planning Commission, 2016). Two conflicting views explain the rationale behind Ethiopia's move to adopt the developmental state model.

One view is that a reassessment of the country's development approaches was led by the conviction of the ruling elites about the eminent national danger of continuing conditions of chronic poverty (Di Nunzio, 2015). This understanding of the country's risky situation along with the international momentum created by the Millennium Development Goals paved ways to choose a developmental state as the model for the country.

However, according to dissenting opinions, the real reason for adopting the model in Ethiopia is the strong political determination of the ruling party to create one-party dominance under the pretext of development projects (See Vaughan, 2011; Lavers, 2012). This view also confirms that the electoral crisis of 2005 was an important event for the ruling party to realize that it lost its political legitimacy, leading to a quick change of strategy, strongly pushing towards developmentalism to enable the party to retain not only power, but also heavy hands on the economy (Vaughan, 2011: 620). It is also important to note that these debates are mainly rooted in the tense relationship between the government and the opposition, in chronic disagreement over political and ideological positions of multinational federalism and revolutionary democracy advocated by the ruling party.

---

[1] See *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWoEPK9njWY* ;Speech of Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi at Columbia University's World Leaders Forum

Hence, the EPRDF's interest in building a developmental state and deepening democracy was not without problems. Despite sustained economic growth averaging 10% between 2005 and 2015, studies confirmed that the EPRDF regime has not progressed in creating democratic structures that would facilitate meaningful political participation (Bach, 2011; Hagmann & Reyntjens, 2016). Multiple flawed elections, including most recently in 2015, showed the government's willingness to brutally repress the oppositions and their supporters, journalists, civil societies, and activists (See Abbink & Hagmann, 2016; Abbink, 2017).

In fact, what was largely missing from the Ethiopia's development narrative was that the EPRDF's "development" strategy went together with widespread human rights violations, land grabbing under the guise of 'development projects', the suppression of dissent and closure of democratic spaces (See Allo, 2017; Horne, 2016; Lavers, 2012, Mittal & Frederic, 2011).

As a result, the country was still in a difficult situation, and, in fact, the last four years leading up to the appointment of Abiy Ahmed to the post of prime minister in April 2018 were marked by protests that have not been seen since the EPDRF took power. This revealed the fragility of the social contract governing Ethiopia's political life since 1991. The outbreak of mass protests in 2014/15 had demonstrated the EPRDF's inability to achieve legitimacy derived from economic growth, putting the developmental state model under pressure, and leading to demands for more civil and political rights, which led to political changes in the spring of 2018.

The change indicates a departure from the East Asian emulated governing ideology previously adopted by the EPRDF. As such, the EPRDF's recent moves to sell large state-owned enterprises in part seems to be measures aiming to put the nail in the coffin of the developmental state. Similarly, the recent decision to join the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is also contrary to the previous strategy of protecting key sectors and strengthening infrastructure-based integration as envisaged by the East Asia model. Several factors might have triggered the shift in ideology under the new administration that has turned its face away from east to west. For example, despite encouraging economic growth over a decade, recent years have been characterized by serious inefficiencies and corruption, rampant unemployment, and massive democratic deficits. Large government projects and institutions, including sugar factories, and the military-run metal and Engineering Company (METEC) were unproductive, resulting in a rapid accumulation of debt and neither has it provided enough jobs (The Reporter Ethiopia English, 2018). The party's loyalty also took the driver's seat to replace merit, and this led to the booming of patronage networks, where people in and around

government offices diverted state resources to their own pockets (Araia, 2013, as cited in Hassan, 2018: 386).

Moreover, unlike Asian countries that have successfully adopted the developmental state model, part of the reason that the model remains unlikely for Ethiopia is the presence of an ineffective framework for guiding private sector inputs into the economy where rent seeking behaviour becomes pervasive among the ruling elites; non-existence of a competent and autonomous bureaucracy (See next section); and the problem of state and nation building, as there is no shared sense of national identity, which is a precondition for democratic development (See chapter four).

3.3 Incompatibility of the developmental state with the federal system

Ethiopia's developmental state model is largely dependent on East Asian countries, drawing on the experiences of China, South Korea, and Taiwan, which have a largely homogeneous population. There are, however, peculiar national conditions that affect its implementation in the context of the multinational federal system that was adopted in 1991 as an antidote to the pervasive historical mismanagement of the country's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. The centralized system of government was forced into federal restructuring, which decentralized power to regional states, formed on the basis of language, settlement patterns, ethnicity and consent of the people concerned.

The paradoxical models of multinational federalism, which has decentralized authority for regional states, and the subsequent adoption of the developmental state, which calls for centralization as the correct path to overcoming poverty, remain the most important pillar of the country's political and economic restructuring. According to one academic who is a constitutional expert, Ethiopia's efforts to achieve a developmental state in the context of a multinational federal government system not only deviate from the prevailing model in East Asia but are also inherently incompatible due to the competing approaches that define the two systems[2]. She further noted that the centralized and top-down approach in decision-making is further entrenched by the party's long-held ideological principle of 'democratic centralism,' pushing it to the extreme. EPRDF decision-making was primarily in the hands of the TPLF, and the TPLF's modus operandi was to hold a protracted internal debate – completely inscrutable to outsiders, – and then issue the "correct" party line that was not up for debate. The

---

[2] Interviewee Nr. 17, Academic, May 1, 2019, Addis Ababa.

norm of plural democracy was reduced to bounded debate, conducted by a small political establishment behind closed doors, and other citizens were reduced to the role of consumers who had no right to ask questions (De Waal, 2021). As a result, the way the developmental state was practiced caused grievances and disenfranchisement among the population, eroding the values and positive strides that the multinational federal arrangement aspires to achieve.

The ideology of democratic centralism has its root in Marxism-Leninism. It tries to combine 'democracy with strict hierarchical methods of execution of party decisions' where free discussion within the top leadership of the party is the primary means of consensus building and decision-making (Waller, 1981:89). All other cadres and state machinery should remain subservient to the decisions made at the centre. For example, the EPRDF's executive committee, whose 36 members are equally divided among the four-member parties of the ruling coalition, remained its central decision-making body. Key decisions are therefore made by this body and then passed on to rank-and-file party members at all levels of government for strict implementation. Consequently, regional, and local governments are virtually hamstrung by the centralized and top-down approach of the party and remain subordinated to the central authorities. The relapse of a centralized state structure has intensified the hitherto ethnic marginalization and economic exploitation. Hence, it appears that the highly decentralized government structures involved in devolution of authority to regions are in sharp contrast with centralised administrative structures that characterize successful developmental states.

Moreover, the last decade has witnessed the growing intervention of the federal executive on matters regarded as inherently regional and even local. A case in point is the large-scale land deals for foreign and domestic investors. Empirical studies suggest that the central government allocated large tracts of land to foreign investors under the guise of facilitating investment, in clear disregard of the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of regional states (Mittal & Mousseau, 2011). The federal government designated a federal agency with a mandate to transfer and manage large scale land in a blatant encroachment on the regional jurisdiction (See Section 3.4.1). The allocation of huge tracts of land without adequate consultation with regional, local government and communities engendered disenfranchisement and agitation (Lavers, 2012). Violence and attacks against farm companies were witnessed in the Gambella regional states where the practice of large-scale land acquisition is pervasive. One of the interviewees, an academic, explained that land grabbing problems were also one of the main rallying issues for the Oromo protest, which began in 2014, as seen from the placards of the

protesters: 'Oromia is not for sale', 'stop the land grab![3]' Moreover, foreign-owned companies were primary targets of protesters across Oromia and Amhara as they were perceived to accumulate wealth backed by the central government at the expense of the local community.

The second feature of the developmental state is its elitist nature, a defining feature of the classical developmental state model. According to Leftwich, the model is built around 'developmental elites' who comprise small groups of senior politicians and bureaucrats with critical roles and authority in the making of developmental policy (Leftwich, 1995:405). They work closely together with the top executive figure who often embodies a charismatic or heroic leadership style. State- society relations in this model are also narrowly constructed around political elites, technocrats, and industrial elites while the broader citizenry is kept at the periphery of this relationship.

However, although the EPRDF tried to emulate the developmental state where a few elites assigned at the centre are tasked with making decisions on behalf of the general public, this lacked broad coalition commitment to achieve the desired development goals, as there was no clear consensus among the governing elites of the four constituent parties of the EPRDF, both administrative and political, over the size and direction of development. The lack of broad coalition commitment among the administrative and political elite was reflected in its inability to mobilize public support to achieve the desired development results. It is also captivating to see how some of the ideals of developmental state model work in tandem with the Marxist-Leninist oriented ideologies of the ruling party. One can pinpoint the convergence of the elitist approach of the model with the party's 'revolutionary democracy' doctrine. This doctrine is grounded on Lenin's conviction that 'the enlightened elites should lead the unconscious masses to a social revolution'. The EPRDF's venture to marry the developmental state model with the notion of 'revolutionary democracy' can be captured from the party's document stating that: the mass is 'backward, uneducated, and unorganized' and hence would easily fall into 'the nets of rent seekers' (Quotes from internal EPRDF document, as cited in Lefort, 2013: 461). Based on this premise, the logical conclusion is that the masses should be 'mobilized, organized and coordinated' by the 'omniscient' vanguard political leaders towards the desired goal. Accordingly, as Toni Weis (2016) correctly pointed out, the ruling elite has assumed the role of interpreting the needs and aspirations of the masses. Ayenew (2014) also noted, particularly while referring to the positive lessons from the preparation of earlier national development

---

[3] Interviewee Nr. 44, Academics, April 24, 2019, Jimma

plans, that the positive traditions that were observed in the SDPRP such as extensive consultations by the private sector, professional associations and the wider public did not continue with the same vigour in the preparation of subsequent development plans.

As such, the elitist vanguard system expounds a vision that neither connects the state and society nor builds institutional channels and regulatory frameworks for public participation. In the absence of strong state-society relations, the political leaders cannot forge mutuality with the people they govern, inevitably leading to misunderstanding and tension. Public policies and projects, which are supposed to be the outcomes of negotiation and re-negotiation between the state and society, merely reflect the needs and priorities of the people as speciously understood and framed by the elites, which ultimately leads to political unrest. The diverging narratives of the Master Plan that set off the Oromo protests (see Chapter 5) is an important example in this respect.

Another aspect of the Ethiopian developmental state model is its authoritarianism. The classic Asian prototype of the developmental state is often associated with an authoritarian nature of governance. Scholars also arguably view the autocratic nature of the developmental state in East Asia as a factor contributing to impressive performance (Yeung, 2014:82). As mentioned before, one explanation is that the state must ease itself from the procedural hurdles of democracy to deliver fast economic growth. The other explanation is that governments need to stay in power for a longer period so as to ensure continuity of policy that would transform the country. Meles Zenawi, the architect of the Ethiopian developmental state, in his draft manuscript 'African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings' summarized the latter explanation as follows while presenting these arguments of others:

> *'Developmental policy is unlikely to transform a poor country into a developed one within the time frame of the typical election cycle. There has to be continuity of policy if there is to be sustained and accelerated economic growth. In a democratic polity uncertainty about the continuity of policy is unavoidable. More damagingly for development, politicians will be unable to think beyond the next election etc. It is argued therefore that the developmental state will have to be undemocratic in order to stay in power long enough to carry out successful development'.*

Meles Zenawi, 2006.

In theory, Meles himself seemed to advocate a democratic developmental state as a viable project for an ethnically diverse continent of Africa. However, the praxis contrasts sharply with his theoretical conviction. The road towards a developmental state in the aftermath of the 2005 contentious election was accompanied by a regression of democracy and a reversion to a complete authoritarianism. Since then, opposition parties have been weakened and the infamous laws were issued that successfully hamstrung the activities of civil societies and the free press. The result of such strict control and purges of political parties, civil society and media was the emergence of the EPRDF as a dominant party controlling all levers of political power from national to the lowest local unit. This pushed the country to the edge of total closure of political space for any dissenting voice and firmly returned to the camp of authoritarian regimes.

In a nutshell, the experiment of the developmental state in a federated Ethiopia has brought fast economic growth. On the flip side, it has also caused discontent among the wider public. It appears clear for any observer of Ethiopian politics that social unrest has been brewing given the stifling political climate that the brutal execution of the developmental state unleashed. Mass protests that roiled the country, mainly Oromia and Amhara regional states, from 2014 to 2018 are a case in point. Since the early 1990s, Ethiopia's reform programs have been designed with the key objectives of addressing public sector quality problems, improving equity and efficiency by providing "the right incentives" for allocating public sector resources (Ayenew, 2014:11). These measures were dictated by the policies of the international financial institutions, based on the view that improvement in the allocation of public sector resources can underpin and encourage dynamism in the private sector.

As a result, the state is heavily involved in most economic sectors and parastatal and ruling-party affiliated companies continue to dominate trade and industry, while the private sector was under excessive pressure to tow the government policy line. From a theoretical viewpoint, regardless of their contrasting position, one element that both neoliberalism and developmental states have tried to foster is the private sector. In both paradigms, private sector development is seen as a key driver of sustainable economic growth and technological transformation. Their main difference is that neoliberalism transfers economic control from the state to the private sector. Yet the developmental state is autonomous from the private sector, but it also guides and uses the private sector to foster economic development and technological transformation to balance economic growth and social development, which is intended to overcome market failures (De Waal, 2018: 2).

As the developmental state view is that the state should play an active role in promoting economic development, this requires a professional bureaucracy. Scholars such as Edigheji (2005) have argued that the bureaucracy should be staffed with "principled agents," with a professional commitment based on the ethos of public service, a strong sense of mission, and *esprit de corps*, as such a bureaucracy is critical to deliver development outcomes. However, evidence shows that the transition to a developmental state model of public administration in Ethiopia has more deprived bureaucrats of their "autonomy" and eroded the meritocratic foundation of the civil service. The already weak civil service systems in Ethiopia were not only ill-equipped to fulfil the required roles, but they were manipulated by ruling elites who used public administration as a source of patronage and a basis to build their networks or punish their opponents. As one civil servant recounted, the most egregious example was the practice of using public servants to "bring in votes" during elections through the 1 to 5 bondage, in which one person is assigned to 'control' or monitor the other five, organized by the regime at all levels of public service institutions[4]. Thus, politics-administration interference in Ethiopia sharply contradicts the core principle of a professional and depoliticized civil service system as the state expands its political control over the bureaucracy. In the country's history, the bureaucracy has never been neutral in its service to the public and has remained a demonstration of a deviation from established norms as loyalties to the political executive became the only criterion for individuals to get employment and be promoted in the hierarchy of public office. According to an opposition politician, the EPRDF had a huge number of civil servants being paid from taxpayer money, but their duties are purely political and that includes recruiting new members of the cadres that unquestionably and uncritically serve the regime in public institutions[5]. Indoctrination is mainly carried out by forcing civil servants to attend the political party meeting and to purchase the infamous party magazine: *Addis Ray* magazine, which was centrally distributed under the editor in chief of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The new administration, which came to power in early 2018, faces severe obstacles due to this legacy of the EPRDF regime, making the progress on reform a difficult undertaking.

3.4 The EPRDF's developmental state and Oromo protests

From the early 2000s to 2018, the EPRDF actively followed a self-proclaimed model of a "democratic developmental state," which mimics the development policies of Asian countries. Its essence is that development and democracy were equally important and indispensable

---

[4] Interviewee Nr. 38, Expert, May 2, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[5] Interviewee Nr. 23, Politician, March 5, 2019, Addis Ababa.

values and choices for the survival of Ethiopia as a country (Zenawi, 2006). Eradicating poverty and deepening democracy in Ethiopia called for the implementation of these equally important values as a matter of priority. However, the practical implementation has brought its own dynamics, which often contrast with the constitutional pledges of multi-party democracy and the federal structure, leading to political unrest in the country since the spring of 2014.

This section analyzes the practical implementation of development and democracy in Ethiopia, which has revealed several contradictions between economic growth and a virtually non-existent democratic space. These include deep-rooted economic grievances, discontent over land grabbing, the closure of the political sphere and the growth of electoral authoritarianism. Ultimately, the combination of these factors with the publication of the Addis Ababa Master Plan led to the 2014-2018 protest movements that paved the way for the political changes that have been taking place in the country since April 2018, as explained below.

3.4.1 Land grabs and development

One way to explain the paradox between the impressive economic performance and the recent political turmoil in the country is as the clash of two issues: development and land grabbing. Land grabbing problems and mass unemployment are the main and direct sources of youth's grievance, which also explains why the impressive economic growth could not ensure democratic development and political stability in the country. The issue of land has always been central to the Ethiopian people. Under the imperial regime, the conquest and southward expansion led to a highly exploitative system of relations between the landlord and the tenant, the legacy of this controversial history of dominance is still today one of the main aspects of what the historiography defines as the Ethiopian "national question" being centred on the question of land redistribution. This question to some extent had been answered with the 1974 revolution, when the military regime came to power through the political slogan "land to the tiller" (Markakis, 2011:169). The military regime abolished the Imperial landed class by nationalizing land, and redistribution was carried out through the newly formed peasant associations (Young, 2006:60). By a decree of March 1975, the land was declared state property (*Meret mengist*) and seized without compensation (Markakis, 2011:170).

In the post-military regime, land policy in Ethiopia is restructured in accordance with the decentralized architecture of the Federal Republic. According to the EPRDF constitution, land is the common property of the State and the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia

(FDRE Constitution, 1995). In Ethiopia's recent history and certainly throughout its past, land has not been the property of the farmers. Even after the famous 1974 revolution that dethroned the last king, Emperor Haile Selassie, the land was redistributed through the formation of the Peasant Association, rather than directly to the farmers. This means that the land issue has remained virtually unchanged, as farmers have been denied free access to land. This not only makes the land issue intact under the condition of development, but also keeps the farmers in conditions of dependence on the government (Lefort, 2010). As heard from the slogan of demonstrators across the country during Oromo protests, the current situation can be best explained as a change from "Land to the Tiller", a slogan used during the Ethiopian student movement of 1970s, to "Land of the Investor" as individual farmers are not part of the process of decision making and have been evicted in the name of development policy.

Therefore, at the centre of youth's land grabbing grievances was a government project that would expand Addis Ababa to the surrounding areas of the Oromia region. It was an attempt by the government to seize land from the Oromo farmers against their will and without proper compensation. The Addis Ababa Master Plan announced by the government in 2014 aimed to substantially expand Addis Ababa, which would have incorporated around 30 towns and villages in the Oromia region and displaced thousands of farmers from their land without adequate compensation. It was first introduced to OPDO cadres in Adama in early 2014 by the TPLF officials. However, unlike the previous practice of toadying the official TPLF line, opposition to the Master Plan was initially provoked by the OPDO's nationalists and was aired on regional television after the workshop. This triggered protests in April 2014, which were suppressed before the May 2015 elections, but later resumed in the town of Ginchi in November 2015, becoming a mass protest that swept the entire region and spread to other parts of the country. "No to the Addis Ababa Master plan," Oromo youth chanted from city to city. Activists often use words and phrases such as "land grabbing", "confiscation" and "annexation" to describe the plan and its intended consequences[6]. According to one opposition politician, it was a land grabbing scheme disguised as a development plan and a plan for political control of Addis Ababa along with its resources by EPRDF leaders[7]. An academic also explained that for the Oromo people, the master plan was a plan for annexation[8].

---

[6] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[7] Interviewee Nr. 33, Politician, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[8] Interviewee Nr. 36, Academic, February 21, 2019, Skype.

Government officials initially denied that the master plan was aimed at expanding Addis Ababa into Oromia, presenting it as a mutually beneficial project for both Addis Ababa and the neighbouring Oromia region. They presented it as a sign of modernity and as a development plan aimed at creating an infrastructure that connects Addis Ababa with the surrounding region of Oromia to promote mutual benefits in trade and investment, explaining that it was prepared by professionals from France and used the experience of the city of Lyon. However, in January 2016, the government was forced to cancel it, acknowledging that plan was the main reason for the Oromo protests.

The protesters from the very beginning feared that the master plan would evict farmers without alternative livelihoods, with little compensation, considering its intention to divert resources from Oromo farmers to investors affiliated to the ruling party to use it for everything from industrial development to luxury housing. One athlete explained that in the past, the government evicted farmers who were her relatives from their land for sale to foreign investors without compensation[9], while a veteran politician claims that the master plan was also thought to rob Oromo farmers of their rights and land[10]. Oromo politicians and activists argue that the lives of Oromo people who have lost their land in the past also justify their fears of the master plan. An activist claim that many farmers who were evicted from their land live in poverty, with their women being forced into prostitution and their children being street beggars[11]. An academic further explained that the evicted were also forced to work as security guards or daily labourers for those who had displaced them[12]. A civil engineering graduate claimed he was denied equal employment opportunities in a factory built on land from which his families had been evicted after an employer learned he was the child of a former landowner.[13] In short, "land is everything, and loss of land is loss of everything else," said one farmer who lost his land without compensation for *labuu* condominium development[14].

Overall, the Addis Ababa Master Plan came under the pretext of development. The flashpoint that ignited public protests across Ethiopia's vast Oromia state was the displacement caused by the rapid expansion of Addis Ababa, at the expense of adjacent Oromo towns and farmland. Hence, Oromo protests were a protest against the confiscation of land from farmers. This led

[9] Interviewee Nr. 37, Athlete, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[10] Interviewee Nr. 33, Politician, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[11] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[12] Interviewee Nr. 7, Academic, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[13] Interviewee Nr. 28, Graduate student, April 23, 2019, Burayou.
[14] Interviewee Nr. 27, A farmer, April 27, 2019, Ambo.

to a series of protests because farmers on the outskirts of Addis Ababa were already suffering a large number of real estate expansions, which quickly spurred Oromos in the country and abroad under the slogan: "*Lafti Kenya - Lafe Kenya*", which literally means that "our land is our bone". It became a rallying point throughout Oromia and abroad. As indicated above, this led to the birth of Oromo protests in 2014.

The Master Plan case is a microcosm of pervasive serious flaws in the design and preparation of development projects in Ethiopia. Resistance and distrust of the project was mainly the result of a top-down approach, a secretive planning process and a lack of public consultation and participation regarding the benefits, impacts and consequences of its implementation. This top-down approach, where policies or projects are rarely the result of consultation and negotiation with the general public in general or with interested and affected communities in particular, is pervasive throughout the country. For example, until recently, in the name of development, local communities were forcefully evicted from their lands to clear land for sugarcane and cotton plantations in several parts of the country, especially in the southern Omo valley and the Gambella region (Makki & Geisler, 2011; Abbink, 2011). In a nutshell, anti-government protests that threaten the country's political stability are strong evidence that Ethiopia's development paradigm needs to be addressed immediately and represents local manifestations of long-standing grievances among the population with the country's political and economic trajectory.

Several factors led to the development of flawed expropriation policies and facilitated the massive land grabs in the present Ethiopia. The first factor was the securitization of development, which contributed to the flawed relationship between economic growth, land grabbing and political instability in Ethiopia. Because the EPRDF saw poverty as an existential threat to Ethiopia's survival, it often tried to rationalize its desire to aggressively extract and mobilize resources and consolidate power in violation of basic conventions to counter the alleged existential threat: poverty (Gebresenbet, 2014). In this regard, the 2016 Oakland Institute report showed how government drafted the anti-terrorism law and used it as a tool of repression to deter resistance against forced evictions and massive land grabs by domestic and foreign investors (Oakland Institute, 2016).

The other factor is the development and implementation of land policies based on partisan politics and authoritarian practices. The state ownership of land gives the ruling party excessive powers to control the land users (Lavers, 2012:109). While the government defends the

ownership of land for the protection of tenure security and social justice, the practice has been criticized for violating protection against arbitrary expropriation (See Crewett, et al., 2008; Ambaye, 2015; Tura, 2017). For example, the Constitution separates the legislative and administrative aspects of the use of land and natural resources between federal government and regional states. The establishment of policies for the use and conservation of land and other natural resources is a mandate of the federal government, whereas the mandates to implement these policies are granted to the states. For example, article 52 (d) states that one of the powers and functions of States is to administer land and other natural resources in accordance with federal laws. And Article 55 (2.a) stipulates that the House of People's Representatives has legislative power and enact specific laws on the utilization of land and other natural resources, rivers and lakes that cross the boundaries of national territorial jurisdiction or connect two or more states. As shown here, the law unambiguously divides the mandate to legislate and administer land and other natural resources between the federal and regional states.

Contrary to this clear constitutional provision, there has been a substantial move to extend the mandate of the federal government to include the power to manage and implement land policy that falls within the jurisdiction of the states. By a simple decision of the party's top leadership, the regional states were forced to delegate their land administration mandate to the federal government without any legal grounds, on the assumption that the regional states could not administer it (Tura, 2017:98). The land is thus leased centrally to commercial agricultural investors. But the Constitution only provides for the delegation of powers from the federal government to regional states downward, not upward. For example, Article 50 (9) states that the Federal Government may, when necessary, delegate to the States powers and functions granted to it by Article 51 of this Constitution (FDRE Constitution, 1995). These measures have had disastrous consequences for local communities, resulting in the forcible eviction of tens of thousands of farmers from fertile land to free up for investors (Horne, 2012:2-5; Keeley, 2014). Despite the rhetoric that land is the common property of Ethiopia's nations, their role in governance remains marginal, and all rights linked to land became disposable for the sake of development.

However, following the changes that took place in 2018, the balance of power between the regions and the centre changed, so the regional investment bureaus became more influential in the decision-making process, especially regarding the administration of land that they had previously been delegated to the federal government by returning unused land to the state land

bank (Addis Fortune, 2017). A particularly striking example of such dynamics occurred in August 2017 in the Oromia region, during the presidency of Lemma Megersa, according to a respondent with close knowledge of the issue, President Lemma refused to provide land after the federal investment commission signed an agreement with a Chinese manufacturer[15].

More recently, the decision that previously forced states to delegate their land administration mandate to the federal government is reversed with the belief that a more balanced distribution of investments could also help defuse political tensions. One of the core grievances of Oromo protests was the demand for greater regional autonomy in economic policymaking and to allow states to develop strategies that are more adapted to local needs.

3.4.2 Economic grievances

There are also other factors that explain the economic grievances of young protesters who staged demonstrations against the regime. First, despite some progress in terms of economic growth, Ethiopia remains a very poor country. More than a third of the population lives in extreme poverty and around another 40 per cent of the population is clustered just above this poverty line. According to 2014 data from Oxford University's Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 90 percent of Oromos live in severe poverty and destitution, more than 80 percent of Oromo households do not have access to electricity or sanitation, and more than 75 percent do not have access to potable drinking water (Oxford University, 2014). Yet the region is endowed with large agricultural land, abundant surface and groundwater that can be used for irrigation and covers over 36% and 34% of the national population and land size, respectively.

A consultant at international development agency explained that more than 60 percent of national coffee exports come from Oromia and similarly, the region covers more than 45 percent of national crop production[16]. Thus, the protesters raised questions about the morbid government economic model that left Oromo people living in extreme poverty despite their huge contribution to the country's GDP growth. According to a veteran politician, the economic growth of the government has not improved public life, but it has helped to attract billions of dollars of foreign investment that has been used to benefit politicians and oligarchs with ties to the ruling party[17]. Hence, the anger at not benefiting from economic growth was a factor behind

---

[15] Interviewee Nr. 34, Politician, March 6, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[16] Interviewee Nr. 40, Consultant, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[17] Interviewee Nr. 34, Politician, March 6, 2019, Addis Ababa.

the protests, which explains the failure of the government-led development paradigm. There was also popular disgust with the ethnic economy created by the regime, increasing the feeling that a segment of the population was receiving economic benefits at the expense of other groups. For example, according to one academic-activist, the TPLF used its power to corner the national market to make way for its economic dominance[18]. As such, the conviction that in order to control politics it is necessary to control the economy has doubled their drive for resources, while complicating the problem facing the regime.

One of the specific TPLF elite-based economic ventures that the regime created was METEC, a corporate military wing established in 2010 as an agency to oversee the establishment of an industrial base for the economy. METEC was supposed to be a vehicle of transferring technology to the country, but it was practically involved in all sectors of the economy. As such, the military became a powerful economic actor and took part in ethnic patronage practices, as it was heavily influenced by Tigray military generals. This, in turn, led to competition as one of the TPLF's strategies was to use the military to negotiate with other ethnic groups. A trade expert interviewed explains that some METEC generals used their military ranks to influence decisions and ensure their networks benefit in the competition for resources, leading to massive emblements against a contract signed for the implementation of megaprojects[19]. In a nutshell, the desire to transform the economy into an industrial power was hijacked by military generals, who fell into ethnic patronage to create and redistribute wealth, which became another source of frustration for young people, who viewed the Addis Ababa Master Plan as a grand plan for economic control.

Moreover, party business owned by the ruling EPRDF was another source of youth's economic grievance. The ruling EPRDF coalition runs multi-billion-dollar party's conglomerates. Owned by the TPLF, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) is a major player in the party business. Figures are hard to establish, but it is estimated that EFFORT has 66 companies' worth more than $ 3 billion and is involved in all sectors of the economy (Techanie, 2017; Aklilu, 2007).

The other junior members of the governing coalition also own profitable companies registered as Endowments: Amhara Endowment commonly known as TIRET owned by ANDM, the TUMSA Endowment owned by OPDO and the WONDO group controlled by SEPDM. These

---

[18] Interviewee Nr. 7, Academic, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[19] Interviewee Nr. 41 (a), Expert, March 14, 2019, Addis Ababa.

enterprises are holding companies that operate in several sectors of the economy. Given their involvement in all sectors, the economic strength of the business owned by the ruling party points to the dominant position of the EPRDF in the economy. This contributed to the rise of upstart millionaires overnight, although the source of their investment is unknown, but there is evidence of their enormous influence. Some of them are former senior government minsters and retired generals who became incredibly wealthy after leaving public service. Others are politically linked investors who have benefited from political patronage. One of them is the MIDROC business group, owned by Mohamed Hussein Amoudi, with assets totalling about US $ 10 billion and with over US $ 2 billion in investments in all sectors of the economy in Ethiopia (Gebregziabher, 2018; Abegaz, 2011).

The overall effect of these enterprises was the strangulation of private initiatives, since the EPRDF business acted as a replacement for the market and had access to all profitable enterprises before anyone else. This made it impossible to compete in the market for others as access to the most profitable sectors was blocked for private entrepreneurs, a trade expert recounted[20]. According to another respondent from the same office, the ability of politically affiliated companies to distort the market is too high, as they can freely win government bids, limiting competition and artificially inflating the cost of important materials and services[21]. This in effect corrupts the emerging democratic system by blurring the boundaries between the state and the party, rigging electoral votes and political financing. In short, the developmental state became the ideology and mechanism that legitimized the capture of the state with the aim of establishing one-party sovereignty of the country's political economy, which was strongly opposed by the demonstrators in Oromia and Amhara regions.

The frustration over economic growth that was not trickling down to youth was another main area of economic grievance, as Oromo protest was also an expression of frustration over "unmet expectations" regarding employment. Discontent was growing in this segment of society, which could not get decent jobs even after receiving the first and second degrees. Young people were increasingly feeling left out of key economic decisions that would affect their future. These feelings spread all over the country among disaffected youth in many regions. Although critics view this statement with doubt, one government official claimed that youth frustration was the result of the very success that the EPRDF unleashed as a result of progressive economic

---

[20] Interviewee Nr. 29 (a), Expert, May 14, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[21] Interviewee Nr. 31 (a), Expert, May 14, 2019, Addis Ababa.

policies, making the party the victim of its own successes. He explained that the economic success of the EPRDF raised high expectations among the youth who have been skilfully manipulated by the rent-seeking elite in Oromia and Amhara, fuelling resentment against the TPLF for control of the party and state[22].

Nevertheless, youth unemployment was not only acute, but also employment in the public sector, the leading employer in the country after agriculture, requires party membership or close ties with the ruling elite. Membership in the ruling EPRDF coalition was often a condition for employment, making it difficult to work in government, even if you have a good resume, as one opposition politician recounted[23]. Oromos were arbitrarily denied commercial licenses in Addis Ababa, and teachers were often dismissed if they belonged to opposition political parties, according to a senior trade expert[24]. In rural areas, the loyalty to the ruling party was required to ensure access to seeds, fertilizers, agricultural resources, food assistance and other aspects of development. The regime unreservedly violated constitutionally protected rights because it prioritized party loyalty in order to stimulate growth that would ensure its economic dominance.

3.5 Splits, resurgence and restructuring of power in the ruling elites.

Post-1991 Ethiopia is essentially the creation of the EPRDF and can most accurately be described as a dominant-coalition party state. The core elite consisted primarily of the TPLF. In the interests of expanding its support base and strengthening its influence across the country, in the early 1990s, under the auspices of the EPRDF, the TPLF moulded alliances with several ethnic parties rooted in different regions (Vaughan, 2011). This marked the period when the TPLF planted the seeds for a future political crisis because, as one politician explained, these satellite parties became the Trojan horse of the TPLF, representing the TPLF in the federation member states, rather than representing their constituents in the governing body[25]. These regional parties in the ruling EPRDF had no equal powers or participation in the coalition. For decades, coalition partners demanded for their elevation to an "equal" party status, under pressure from their constituents, regime opponents and mass protests, but the failure to correct this imbalance was the regime's Achilles heel, an ODP politician said[26]. The EPRDF, therefore,

---

[22] Interviewee Nr. 11, Politician, March 25, 2019, Mekelle.
[23] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.
[24] Interviewee Nr. 30 (a), Expert, May 13, 2019, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[25] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.
[26] Interviewee Nr. 5, Politician, May 20, 2019, Addis Ababa.

was essentially a TPLF in power and until recently remained influential and controlled key sectors, as none of the other coalition members command in their regions or in the capital (Lyons, 2019). Such unequal power relations within the ruling coalition had often been a source of political crisis and rifts among party leaders until recently, when the front dissolved in late 2019 and replaced by a new merger party, the Prosperity Party.

During the nearly 30-year reign of the EPRDF, there were several rifts in the ruling party, but two of them were grand splits: the first was a split in the TPLF Central Committee in 2001, and the second split occurred after the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as the country's prime minister, which subsequently led to the dissolution of the party in late 2019. While the first split was mainly within the TPLF, the second split is between the TPLF and EPRDF, the junior members of the coalition that it created to hold them in compliance with its hardlines policies in the country. EPRDF authoritarian practices contributed significantly to the current crisis, multiplying grievances both within and outside the party over the TPLF's control of the military, politics, and the economy. Discontent among coalition partners intensified following the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012, the party and coalition architect. Oromo leaders in the EPRDF protested vigorously within the party, demanding more autonomy and power, especially after the outbreak of the mass movement in 2014. Unrest in parts of the country left the federal government weaker than ever, leading to rivalry among regional leaders, allowing activists to grow stronger and create fertile ground for mass movements, and paved the way to the deliverance of the ANDM and OPDO. Encouraged by popular protests, a group that needed change pushed the party towards further major reforms, creating a general climate of ungovernability that helped ANDM and OPDO beat the TPLF in the selection process that saw the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as party chairman and prime minister.

Although Ethiopia is in a political transition after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April 2018, the EPRDF continued to dominate the country. The shift in power has so far been primarily a shift within the EPRDF bloc regional parties: the previously dominant TPLF has lost its influence on its former junior partners, in particular to the OPDO and ANDM. In September 2018, in a triumphal celebration, OPDO rebranded itself by changing its name to the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), and similarly, the ANDM also renamed as the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP). The rebranding measures involved strategically distancing oneself from the TPLF, but many rarely believed that this move would quickly lead to the dissolution

of the EPRDF. So quickly and unexpectedly, on December 1, 2019, the EPRDF quietly disappeared, leaving the scene for the Prosperity Party created by Abiy. Up to that point, according to one political analyst, the EPRDF seemed indomitable, and its doctrine would guide the country for years to come[27]. Given that the EPRDF brand is too damaging for a successful campaign, Abiy had to get rid of it and create something new before the forthcoming Ethiopia's sixth round election. An academic activist also explains that Abiy appears to have quickly pushed the merger through the party machines, making organized opposition virtually impossible[28].

The Prosperity Party comprises three of the four parties to the long-standing governing coalition EPRDF: ADP, ODP and the SEPDM, plus the five parties that control the Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Harari and Somali regions. Not included is the TPLF, the party that dominated the country until Abiy took office in early 2018. But it has since joined the opposition, accusing Abiy of plotting to replace the multinational federal system with a unitary state, an opposition politician said[29]. While the TPLF's claim of this threat is hypocrisy, given the fact that it resisted true regional autonomy throughout the time it ruled the country, there is an element of truth in its version of political developments that have been unfolding since Abiy came to power. The TPLF caused these anomalies, abandoning a multinational political settlement in which former strongman Meles Zenawi created the mess that others had to inherit after his death in an attempt to create a dominant party regime. As for the TPLF, part of the objection is that the new party abandoned the EPRDF members' equal voting model in favour of a proportional system, which certainly favours much larger groups such as Amhara and Oromo. The rapid dissolution of the EPRDF coalition, the formation of Prosperity Party, and the crackdown on the opposition leaders are seen as a behind-the-scenes attempt to subvert the federal structure.

Then an important question arises: is the EPRDF certainly dead? On the one hand, yes, it is dead as a bloc of four ethnic parties that were entrenched in the political thought of revolutionary democracy. With the creation of the Prosperity Party, the ODP, ADP, SEPDM, and the five affiliates no longer exist: they are replaced by 'regional prosperity party branches' open to people of all ethnicities.

---

[27] Interviewee Nr. 19, Political Analyst, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[28] Interviewee Nr. 7, Academic, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[29] Interviewee Nr. 23, Politician, March 5, 2019, Addis Ababa.

On the other hand, it is not dead yet, but it has simply mutated from a dominant coalition into a more centralized party, changing its shapes and name. In many ways, like the EPRDF, the Prosperity Party remains dominant. First, despite a sharp change of leadership at the top, there is considerable continuity within the party structure. An opposition leader explains that the party's offices are still the same, only with a new logo. Not only Abiy and his reform teams are children of the EPRDF, but they have inherited millions of EPRDF members and its resources[30]. Second, apart from TPLF officials, many of the cadres that have been purged over the past two years are reinstalled as the sixth-round election approaches. Third, Abiy still has strong incentives for members to comply with his policies, given the party's access to resources that remain centred. Fourth, as one scholar explained, nothing has changed with respect to party-owned companies that operate across a range of industries, as the endowments inherited by the Prosperity Party continue to dominate the economy[31]. Fifth, as usual, the prosperity party continues to engage in extortion of the business community. For instance, as unveiled on March 14, 2020, it amassed over 1.5 billion birrs in a campaign led by members of the ruling party's Executive Committee serving as ministers[32]. Hence, it remains to be seen whether delivery will emerge from the sudden disappearance of the party closely intertwined with the state.

3.6 Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn considering the theoretical framework of the developmental state used in this chapter. Ethiopia pursued the developmental state thesis, which claims "development first, democracy later," subscribing to the argument that most countries that succeeded in creating stable democracies achieved high economic development before they transitioned to democracy.

However, the Ethiopian experience provides evidence that economic development does not necessarily lead to democracy. In contrast, it seems to support the consolidation of authoritarian rule by creating a dominant party regime that controls security, military, politics, and the economy, in line with the ideological guise of revolutionary democracy, which remained an anti-thesis of democratic development in the country. Moreover, Ethiopia's attempts to pursue a developmental state in the context of a multinational federal system of government not only deviate from the prevailing centralised pattern in East Asian models but are also inherently

---

[30] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.

[31] Interviewee Nr. 35, Academic, March 24, 2019, Mekelle.

[32] *See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ag_WapqT0sU የብልፅግና ፓርቲ ከደጋፊዎቹ 1.5 ቢሊዮን ብር ገቢ ሰበሰበ (Translation: Prosperity Party collects 1.5 billion birr from its supporters).*

inconsistent due to the competing characteristics that define the two models. As a result, the way the developmental state is practiced in Ethiopia caused disenfranchisement among the population, eroding the values and positive strides that the multinational federal arrangement aspires to achieve: the predatory and uneven economic development strategy pursued by the EPRDF caused discontent among the population, leading to political instability and social unrest, which led to a change in the leadership of the ruling party in April 2018.

However, the claims of Samuel Huntington that undemocratic regimes indirectly grow into democracy in the context of economic growth, due to political instability and unrest, cannot be substantiated at this stage, as Abiy's Ethiopia has yet to organize credible and free elections that guarantee democratic transition.

The results of this study illustrate Slater and Fenner's (2011) assertion that authoritarian regimes create dominant parties as the main strategies for political survival to increase their chances of staying in power. In line with this claim, the hallmark of political development in Ethiopia under the EPRDF was the attempt to create a dominant party system in which the ruling party controls state institutions down to the local level through its members or affiliates. In particular, the TPLF controlled state power, occupying key positions in government and party structures that subordinated government institutions to the interests of the party. This has greatly diminished hope for a democratic transition, as ruling elites consolidate their power and control over resources through overlapping roles in state administration and party structure, carried out in accordance with the principles of revolutionary democracy and democratic centralism effectively avoiding potential competitors.

Also, in line with Stuppert's (2020:11) claims, under the EPRDF, authoritarianism was consolidated by systematically twisting incentives for democratic reform to centralize power and control. As the result, the reform process illustrated the contradictions in economic growth, the desire for dominance in the political and economic spheres, and the limited participation and violation of civil and political rights of citizens. Moreover, the overwhelming electoral victories were presented by the EPRDF as a reward for the party's economic growth, so such narratives were put forward to try to convince the public to remain loyal to the EPRDF because the opposition cannot provide a viable alternative.

Such narrative was also accompanied by a process of depoliticization, which effectively reduces the areas of political competition and thus helps to strengthen the regime to justify economic and political alternatives, where the ruling EPRDF plays a dominant role. In addition,

as argued by Slater and Fenner (2011), this study noted that party-run companies, cooperatives, and party-affiliated business dominate the economy and play a role in generating income streams for the ruling party, as well as strengthening party membership and structures, which allow the EPRDF to restrict political space through a series of new draconian laws.

Mac Giollabhuí (2019) also argued that political leaders in a dominant party regime often rely on various forms of coercion to control political space, to reduce opposition threats, and strengthen their hold on power. From this perspective, the results of this study showed that the EPRDF regime relied on low-intensity and high-intensity coercions to restrict the ability of dissenting party members and other opponents to mobilize public support. In particular, since the 2005 electoral crisis, the regime increasingly relied on high-intensity coercion to counter opposition to electoral fraud, which appears to be the last resort available to the regime to maintain power through coercion as a survival strategy in the face of widespread opposition from the general public and opposition parties.

As the mass protests were engulfing the country from all sides, power struggles and infighting within the front became an open secret and the ANDM and OPDO were empowered to say "enough is enough" to counter and expropriate power from the TPLF, the former hegemon.

Such unequal power relations within the ruling coalition had often been a source of political crisis and rifts among party leaders until recently, when the front dissolved in late 2019 and was replaced by a new merger party, the Prosperity Party. Therefore, from this perspective, the recent youth-led movements, namely the Oromo protests and the Amhara uprising, to be explored in the fifth chapter, were the logical culmination of resistance by the public and factions within the ruling front against the long-standing grievances regarding the deepening authoritarianism in the country, which led to the end of a de facto one-party dominant rule of the EPRDF that played a vital role in halting the hopes of democratization in Ethiopia.

Chapter Four: State Building and Political Contradictions in Ethiopia

4.1 Introduction:

Ethiopia's modern history has always been marked by a struggle to build national identity and the subsequent centre-periphery question, in which the absence of a robust political settlement for managing diversity has become a major obstacle to nation building since the state took its current form in the late 19th century. As a result, the state-building process was accompanied by interethnic tensions, squabbles, and conflicts, mainly revolving around a war of visions between two sides: those who demand more regionalization and those who want to maintain a more centralized system (Khorrami, 2021). The complex nature of this development has given rise to fundamental questions about the nature of the state as a political institution, as well as about the cultural and political content of the nation as a national community.

As such, reconstructing Ethiopia in response to a profoundly changing landscape, both domestically and regionally, has been the centrepiece of political struggle in the country. The question of what Ethiopia is and what it wants to be became so important that it gave rise to conflicting narratives that are used in intellectual and political debate, as well as in the increasingly organized and violent political and ideological struggle in the country, especially since the 1960s.

Moreover, these debates about the cultural and political identity of Ethiopia are often constrained by the use of concepts and frameworks that are theoretically sterile and politically limiting. One of the main questions, which has long occupied much of the political and intellectual debate in Ethiopia, is whether Ethiopia is an empire of completely different and subjugated societies, or a nation that, despite the many differences among its national groups, enjoyed essential unity. There are two main different perspectives to explain this dynamic that has shaped the development of Ethiopia's complicated identity. The first perspective comes from those groups that take pride in Ethiopia as a country with more than three thousand years of history and see Menelik as one of the greatest leaders in Ethiopian history, the hero of Adwa and the man who presided over the "reunification" of Ethiopia in the late 19th century (Kebede, 2003). For this group, Ethiopia is one nation, not in terms of a common language, culture, ethnicity, or psychological makeup as such, but in terms of sharing the heritage of history, memories accumulated over the centuries, and a deep understanding of coexistence.

The second perspective claims that the empire reflects the political character of the Ethiopian state since the late nineteenth century and views Menelik as a black colonizer who participated in the European scramble for Africa, conquering independent territories and peoples by brute force (Holcom and Ibsaa, 1990). This view is shared by a significant portion of the Oromo, Eritrea, Tigre, Somali and Sidama elites etc. These groups demand(ed) either the creation of their independent state, or the simultaneous destruction of the old order, which was believed to be essentially the empire of unequal nations, and its transformation into a modern, inclusive, and multinational state.

In order to overcome this ideological and theoretical deadlock, Gulema (2020) puts forward the thesis that Ethiopia, which materialized after and as a result of the development of the 19th century, was not an empire or a nation-state per se, but something in between, simultaneously possessing the qualities and elements of both structures (Gulema, 2020:364). The analysis presented in this chapter also advances this third perspective, breaking the analytical deadlock that limits the political imagination to capture the complexities embedded in the construction of the Ethiopian state both from the colonial and modernization perspectives. This thesis noted that the underlying question of political struggles in Ethiopia, now or in the past, is related to the cultural and political identity of Ethiopia as a nation and its place in the world. The answers to this question are rooted in the often-disputed process of state and nation-building, especially in the political economy that shaped its development. With this view in mind, this chapter focuses on critiquing the existence of robust statehood, the politics and ideologies of state/nation building and their implications for democracy, as outlined in the theoretical framework.

To synthesize this analysis in this perspective, the chapter is divided into four sections. Having introduced the chapter in the first section, the second section discusses Ethiopia's controversial state and nation-building endeavours. The discussions in this section focus on examining the creation of modern Ethiopia and the structural crisis inherent in the process that have shaped the emergence of colonial and modernization/nation-building theses to explain Ethiopia's 19th century conquest and expansion. The third section discusses Ethiopia's current predicaments for achieving democracy, which are deeply rooted in the creation of the modern state. This is the most important section of the chapter, analysing four major historical paradoxes and the legacy of nation-building efforts relevant to the quest for democracy in Ethiopia. It tries to answer an important question: how divergent and contrasting views of the state and nation-building efforts have affected this quest. The fourth section of the chapter attempts to make a

concluding remark based on findings from the critique of various views on state / nation-building policies and ideologies and their implications for democracy, as outlined in the theoretical guidance of this thesis.

4.2 Ethiopia's controversial state and nation-building

Ethiopia is a polarized country born in contradictions. Historical and political discourses are filled with conflicting narratives and have long been widespread among scholars, historians, anthropologists, the general public, and more recently among political activists. They tend to reinforce various frameworks that idealize, sanitize, and disparage national history, erasing or justifying human suffering as collateral damage in the pursuit of progress or nation-building. I discuss the contradictory discourses regarding state and nation-building in Ethiopia in two groups based on their importance in informing the country's current politics: i) the colonial thesis and ii) the modernization/nation-building thesis. Both colonial and modernization claims are supported by theory, and their implications are also discussed in relation to democratic aspirations, shedding light on the significance of contemporary Oromo politics in the quest for democracy.

Ethiopia went through three historical stages - imperial, socialist and federal - that have generated many opposing views that define the current political interactions. Debated throughout this morphological process, especially among the Oromo elite and political forces, over and over but still unresolved, is whether the Oromo question should be viewed from a colonial or nation-building perspective. In hindsight, I bring up this very important question in reverse order: was Ethiopia really a colonial empire, as opposed to the rest of African states that survived colonialism? To answer these questions, it is necessary to place Ethiopia, as well as Oromo's aspirations for self-determination and democracy, in a broader global and African context, analysing the implication of both theses on contemporary political development. However, it should be noted from the outset that discussion of this often-contested topic does not aim to provide a definitive answer to irreconcilable narratives. Rather, it only seeks a clear understanding of the essence of the political dilemma facing Ethiopian statehood and nation-building, both from colonial and modernization/nation-building perspectives. It should also be noted here that even if the chapter deals with different perspectives of historical accounts, it largely focuses on understanding the implications of those complex and divergent viewpoints of historical accounts, how they are reflected in the current transition and, therefore, their implications for democratization.

4.2.1 Reflections on the colonial thesis

The colonial perspective is one of the perspectives that emerged in the political and intellectual discourses of the 1970s and continued through the 1990s to explain the making of the modern Ethiopian state. It represents the colonial conquest of the Amharic-speaking groups against the Oromo, Somalis and other southern peoples who were independent peoples until the late 19th century. The arguments in the colonial thesis can be divided into four main categories. The first one is that European weapons of destruction were supplied exclusively to the Abyssinian forces for strategic purposes to conquer Oromo and neighbouring territories, rendering Oromo's spears useless in battle (Hassan, 1999: 128-134). The second argument is that European technical skills were also offered to the Abyssinian elites, which helped them create a state apparatus designed to occupy the conquered Oromo and other southern territories (Ibid). The third argument of the colonial thesis is that the newly built Ethiopian colonial empire was a dependent colonial state that required constant support from Western powers, mainly France, Britain, Italy, Soviet Union, and the United States to survive (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990). Holcomb and Ibssa (1990) argued that Ethiopia was a good example of dependent colonialism and functioned as a dependent colonial state not only when it was created in the late 19th century, but throughout its modern history. The fourth argument is that Menelik II played an active role in the "scramble for Africa" as a regional warlord to save imperial Ethiopia from falling prey to European colonialism, allowing him to triple the traditional kingdom of Abyssinia with the support and understanding of European colonial powers because of their vested geopolitical interests (Toynbee 1965: 44; Schwab 1985: 5).

Other scholars also further cemented that the forcible incorporation of several independent territories inhabited by different societies into the modern Ethiopian Empire led to subjugation and deculturation (Hassen, 2002, Kumsa, 2009; Benti, 2009). Although Ethiopia has constantly tried to evolve into a multi-ethnic political system, participation in national political life usually required assimilation with the cultural values of the core of Amhara: Amhara language, Orthodox Christianity, and the ability to operate within the structure and assumptions of the court administration (Clapham, 2017).

There are many historical records and arguments that have tried to demonstrate the dependent nature of the Ethiopian colonial state. The reflections in this section try to shed light on some of the key arguments in support of the colonial thesis to synthesize its implications. I then

analyse the global and continental dynamics that have shaped the emergence of colonial theses and their impact on the struggle for self-determination and democracy in Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa came into existence as bridgeheads of grand imperial ambitions to control the region in the second half of the 19th century, becoming the site of fierce expansionist competition that involved both internal and external forces (Iyob, 2001; Yasin, 2010; Niane, 1984). Markakis (1999: 65) argued that the Ethiopian Empire was the main actor in the tension and rivalry between and within states that became the hallmark of the Horn of Africa. According to Abbas Gnamo (2014), two forces from Christian Abyssinia (i.e., Tigre and Amhara) also engaged in this bitter rivalry with each other, seeking to control much of the same territory in which Menelik II later succeeded in creating the Ethiopian Empire (Gnamo, 2014: 116). Holcomb and Ibssa (1990) also argue that the creation of the modern Ethiopian empire was the result of an alliance between the major European powers and Abyssinian princes. For example, such interaction between European powers and the Abyssinians in the Horn's expansionist projects was also demonstrated through Ras Mekonnen's visit to London in 1902 to attend the coronation of King Edward VII as a representative of Emperor Menelik II (Green, 1998: 23) and employment of foreigners to perform operations for which the Abyssinians lacked the necessary skills, especially in the fields of palace building, medicine and imports, and the production of firearms (Pankhurst, 1967: 29).

Thus, a closer look at political interactions in the Horn of Africa demonstrates that Abyssinians had expansionist ambitions based on religious, political, economic, and cultural domination in the Horn of Africa region. Unlike other unsuccessful attempts in the region, Abyssinia's aspiration for empire building was successful, giving birth to the modern Ethiopian state that had international recognition from the European powers operating in the Horn region (Clapham, 2000: 4).

Many scholars argued that the self-created attitude of the Abyssinians towards themselves and their neighbours was the main sources of violent conflicts with neighbouring communities. In this narrative, Abyssinians considered themselves entitled to enslave and subjugate their neighbouring nations (Käufeler, 1988: 197). Christopher Clapham explained that the existence of written language, and a long-established set of historical myths of statehood compounded with the teaching of Orthodox Christianity gave Abyssinians a sense of seeing themselves as a more civilized nation, destined to govern the territories around them (Clapham, 2002: 10). These myths, which represent the supremacist self-image of people destined to rule over their

neighbours, seem to aggrandize their status as the only true bearers of Christianity and an "exceptional nation." Incorporated into the teachings of the Orthodox Church, the myths were drummed into the minds of ordinary people until the supremacist thinking was taken for granted (Lencho, 2006: 98). The same sentiment, depicting Ethiopia as a Christian Island besieged by Islamist states, persists until early 2018 under the guise of regional security concerns, until prime minister Abiy Ahmed reconfigured his government's foreign policy. The was often touted as a justification for Ethiopia's encroachments on neighbouring countries, such as the US-backed global war on terrorism in Somalia in 2006 (Hussein, 2006).

The neighbouring communities might have viewed the Abyssinians' self-created belief with benign curiosity before they acquired modern firearms in the second half of the 19th century. With the acquisition of the firearms, this supremacist belief subsequently turned into a total disaster, cementing a centuries-old obsession for dominance over numerous adjacent societies (Leta, 2006: 98). This was accompanied by the brutal conquest of several sovereign nations and territories with the ensuing consequences of the economic, political, cultural, and religious oppression of the conquered communities, including the Oromo, thus being conquered for the first time in recorded history (Marcus, 1975: 44). The colonial mechanism of exploitation and dispossession was carried out in the north and south of the empire. It is important to note, however, that ordinary people from conquered as well as the conquering societies, whose leaders emerged as local imperialists, suffered greatly, although there were differences in degree. Lencho Leta (2006: 102) argued that Abyssinians were favoured in three ways. First, they were the owners of the land they cultivated, while the conquered societies became the landless tenants of the conquerors. Second, almost all northerners who lived on their land as farmers became a gun-owning society with ubiquitous possession of modern firearms such as breech-loaders and plenty of cartridges (Pankhurst, 1967: 121). Thus, all that was required of these armed men was to migrate to the conquered areas and become a landowner to benefit from the sweat of the conquered people. Harold Marcus (1975: 139-140) further argued that the conquered territories were raided for grain and livestock by armed men, which were used to create granaries in many Abyssinian provinces to feed victims of famine. Third, King Menelik exploited the wealth he had amassed in the southern and southwestern territories to buy weapons, support the north's sagging economy, and ensure the continuation of the Amhara-Tigrean political and cultural hegemony built largely on a religious alliance (ibid.).

However, despite these features, which are more or less similar to the characteristics of colonial practices in other parts of Africa, I argue that there are other global and continental dynamics

that gave rise to the colonial thesis in Ethiopia, which remains very contested. This is found in the emergence of the student revolutions in Ethiopia which coincided with the rise of Marxism and the development of nationalist movements with socialist orientation in other parts of Africa. The period of the 1950s and 1960s were the heyday of the Marxist, anti-colonial, and leftist ideologies of the former colonial countries of Africa and Asia. Many revolutionaries viewed Marxism as a logical response to European colonialism as it incorporated people of African descent, emphasizing human solidarity and equality (Agozino, 2020: 182).

Moreover, the era of decolonization was the golden age of associational life and the emergence of civil society such as trade unions and student associations, as well as the growth of government bureaucracy and private business, which brought many changes in many parts of Africa (Crawford, 1994: 36). Deeply influenced by such global and continental dynamics in the early 1960s, trade unions, student and teacher associations started to emerge in Ethiopia. Ethiopian intellectuals who were influenced by anti-colonial movements and Marxist ideologies, largely Oromo, Somali, and Eritrean elites embraced nationalism that saw the making of Ethiopian statehood as a colonial enterprise. With the aspiration to become the seat of the African integration process that led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Ethiopian intellectuals and students of the time emphasized the African part of Ethiopian history (Gebrekidan, 2012). This helped them to learn not only about the foreign ideologies and challenges that other African societies were facing, but also to become acquainted with some radical Marxist thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah (Gebrekidan, 2012: 82).

However, the conditions under which the colonial ideologies developed in Ethiopia were very peculiar and different from other African countries. This was mainly due to two factors: the absence of European colonization in Ethiopia, and the scholarship that mythologized Ethiopia as an independent empire living in peace, unity, and civilization. In particular, the victory of the Battle of Adwa in 1896 over invading Italian forces is often used as a tool to reaffirm Ethiopia's unique image as an African power that was able to defeat the European army, which served as an inspiration for the Pan-African movement (Paulos, and Metaferia, 2005: 181).

However, despite this difference between Ethiopia and the rest of Africa, there were some similarities between them in terms of nationalist movements and the ensuing social transformation. For example, like all other African states, socialism, and Marxism, as one would expect, became popular in the intellectual and student circles of Ethiopians (Bahru,

2014; Donham 1999). The Marxist-Leninist elite, who viewed Marxism as an unchallengeable truth, plucked up courage and reconstructed their experience of alienation, exploitation, and oppression as internal colonialism, formulating an ideology against the archaic feudal-capitalist system (Jalata, 1996; Virtanen, 2009). Beside such external influences, the historical and cultural justifications used for Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea in 1962 actually further exacerbated the alienation of other communities and provided additional impetus, especially for Oromo resistance (Keller, 1995). As a result, an alliance was formed with disaffected elements of Eritrean society who felt alienated by the annexation. This alliance of struggle against the imperial regime took up arms to undo the annexation as well as end other forms of oppression elsewhere in the country, such as grievances over agricultural taxes and land expropriation. It began to acquire improved interdependence since the 1970s and continued even after Eritrea gained independence in 1991 (Iyob, 1997).

Thus, the exposure of Marxism and anti-colonial movements was the main continental dynamic that shaped the emergence of the colonial thesis in Ethiopia. It provided these intellectual and students with a framework for interpreting their alienation experiences through the notion of colonization, an idea that portrays Ethiopia as a black colonialist, akin to European white colonialists in other African countries. This was like a double-edged sword that allowed them to reject the Ethiopian Empire, as well as the West that was conquering other African states, while supporting Emperor Haile Selassie, the last king of the empire, who crystallized the creation of the Ethiopian state begun by Menelik II.

Meanwhile, two dominant narratives, in which the question of land was central, began to take shape in the Ethiopian student movements against the oppression of the imperial system. The first was the colonial thesis, which demanded the dismantling of the Ethiopian empire in order to end internal colonialism (Záhořík, 2017). The second was the question of "class and national oppression" (Keller, 1981:540), the root causes of which were attributed to the failure of the nation-building project and of modernization and progress, the resolution of which should not necessarily lead to the disintegration of the Ethiopian state. Haile Selassie's regime, once hailed as a modernizer, was perceived as either backward or "colonialist." The differences in perspectives led the groups to seek the fulfilment of the demands of democracy, self-determination, equality, and human rights, either within the framework of the Ethiopian state or through the creation of an independent republic.

In short, as the period coincided with the era of decolonization and the emergence of Marxism as an inspirational revolutionary ideology of student revolutions, the impact of such changes was profound. This led to a series of uprisings that resulted in the downfall of the Imperial regime in 1974, only to be replaced by the military regime that devastated the country for the next 17 years. Hence, Oromo's struggle for democracy and self-determination must be seen as part of this broader continental and regional dynamic process of ending oppression.

However, as the Oromo struggle was deeply influenced by external dynamics such as Marxism, it was also negatively impacted by events in the region that perpetuated the suffering arising from the interaction of widespread struggles for justice and democracy. As Oromia stretches from the edges of the Ogaden Lowlands in the east to Ethiopia's border with Sudan in the west, the Somalis sought to realize the Greater Somalia project by annexing much of the adjacent eastern Oromia, while the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) frequently invaded the Oromo Liberation Front's operational areas in the west (Jalata, 2000: 58; Lata, 2006: 2-3). This forced the OLF to fight simultaneously with these regional movements and the Ethiopian regime, which significantly reduced their combat effectiveness and had a deterrent effect on the strict pursuit of anti-colonial perspectives.

Furthermore, this crucial moment in the struggle of the Oromo people was also of negative importance because the chronic divisions between Oromo elites and political forces, which continue today, began with the student revolution, utterly divided into two main positions on the way forward (Østebø and Tronvoll, 2020: 614; Jalata, 2020: 160). The first is the separatist stance that emerged in the 1970s and is represented by the OLF. This separatist stance strongly defies the nature of the Ethiopian state, viewing Menelik's expansionist war in the late nineteenth century as internal colonization and enslavement, arguing that the only recourse is to secede from Ethiopia and create an independent Oromo republic[33]. The second stance in Oromo politics can be characterized as a federalist position, which also emerged in the 1970s but took hold in the 1990s after the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE).

Thus, in 1991, the military regime was defeated by the Marxist-Leninist nationalists, who formed the liberation front that created a "multinational state" that considers the country's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Post-1991 politics also provided the conditions for a resurgence of the colonial and national oppression discourse, leading nationalists to exercise

---

[33] Interviewee Nr. 21, politician, April 3, 2019, Addis Ababa.

the right to self-determination in different ways. While the Eritreans were allowed to create an independent state, with the intervention of the United States and the West, Oromo, Somali, and other nationalist movements sought to satisfy the demands of democracy and self-determination within the Ethiopian state (Gudina, 2011: 667; Cohen, 1991).

Ethiopia, after a unitary state system had existed since the state took its current form at the turn of the 20th century, adopted a multinational federal system in 1991 to address the long-standing questions of national oppression and democracy. In an effort to soften the demands of separatists as well, the political forces that assumed state power adopted a self-determination clause in the federal constitution that aimed at achieving a higher level of self-government.

However, if we take stock of the past 27 years (1991–2018), the practice of federalism was often violated by the very party that enacted it and pledged to defend it. The ruling EPRDF party ruled the country with democratic centralism, and centralized state rule practically snatched ethnic groups of the right to self-determination and other constitutional rights, triggering a series of protests and resistance from the ethnic groups. The 2014 Addis Ababa Master Plan, which sparked strong and sustained Oromo protests, was the straw that broke the camel's back. The protesters originally demanded respect for the autonomy of the Oromia regional state over development and urban planning decisions, but quickly turned to a broader demand for regime change and rectification of historical injustices that have perpetuated since state formation, such as redefining national identity and rewriting national history. Thus, the crisis of legitimacy that the Ethiopian state is experiencing today, and its failure to create an enabling environment for democracy is associated with political development that has root in the formation of the empire which continues to this day (see section 4.3).

4.2.2 Reflections on the modernization thesis

The second discourse on the making of the Ethiopian state concerns modernization, which some view as a nation-building project, yet its failure has led to oppression that spawned long-standing "national questions". Hence, according to this thesis, the search for modernization or development was Ethiopia's most important political project in the twentieth century. The imperial expansion of the nineteenth century was driven by derivative modernization of the West that Ethiopia sought to implement as a result of its marginal position in the global economy (Makki, 2011). Zewde (2002) argued that the idea of "modern" Ethiopia was widely developed by a remarkable group of Ethiopian intellectuals of the early twentieth century. During the nation-building phase that followed the successful creation of the Ethiopian state,

reformists, and intellectuals of the early twentieth century viewed modernity as a pressing need, seeing the lack of material progress more than anything else as Ethiopia's existential challenge (Gulema, 2020). These early intellectuals were driven by a cognitive dissonance between an inherited sense of cultural superiority and an acute awareness of Ethiopian "backwardness", in contrast not only to European states, where many of them studied, but also from colonized African peoples (Zewde, 2002: 100).

Quoting Gebrehiwot Baykedagn, a prominent intellectual of the early Ethiopians, Gulema (2020: 366) further argues that acquaintance with the West was seen not only as the key to resolving the challenges of development in the country, but also believed as a revelatory teleology that would return Ethiopia back to history as a member of the civilized world. Although their analysis concerns the acquisition of arms, Holcomb and Ibssa (1990: 83) cite that Sahle Selassie was the first king to have direct contact with European powers, in particular the British and French, believing that acquaintance with Europe was the solution to the problems with his imaginary empire, only to be realized decades later by his grandson Menelik II. Ras Mekonnen's visits to England, Italy, France, Turkey, and Germany in 1902 were probably influenced by the modernization zeal of his grandfather, King Sahle Selassie, and his cousin, Emperor Menelik II (Monin, 20113: 383).

Menelik also initiated several modernization projects, such as the establishment of the first Western-style school in Ethiopia, the creation of government ministries, hiring of several European advisers, and the construction of a railway from the coast to Addis Ababa that was completed after his death (Shinn and Ofcanski, 2004: 219). All the same, there is much evidence in the historical records showing that *Ras* Tafari Mekonnen, the future emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974), visited Europe in 1924 with the conviction that modernization was the key to building a modern country, as well as to overcome its lagging behind the West (Monin, 2013: 389). Clapham argued that, unlike African intellectuals in the colonized regions of the continent who viewed colonialism as exploitative, some early Ethiopian intellectuals often regretted that Ethiopia was unable to obtain the "benefits" of colonialism (Clapham, 2006: 141).

Progressive forces of this period emphasized the urgency of changes as long as the changes strengthened monarchy without undermining the empire's material and ideological basis. As a result, the modernization process began with state-led projects that attempted to reorganize politics, economy, and foreign policy, all without destabilizing the foundations of the imperial

system. Levine (2007: 6) argued that the vision of modernization began to prevail in 1957, over half a century ago, when the emperor put into practice various measures that he believed would benefit Ethiopia in the future. Ethiopia adopted a five-year plan as early as in 1957 to set economic goals, but as a predominantly agrarian country, it was unable to reform the land tenure structure on which the power of the state elite was based (Clapham, 2006: 143). Other measures included the centralization of governance, the creation of a modern bureaucracy, the creation of a national army, the emergence of a national school system, and the construction of national symbols (Gulema, 2020: 366). French schools opened in Ethiopia, and French served as the language of instruction before 1941. Many of Ethiopia's early intellectuals and revolutionaries also studied in France (Záhořík, 2017: 6; Zewdie, 2000: 114; Bishaw and Lasser, 2012: 55). Urban centres became the place where the nation met modernity, especially in Addis Ababa, which emerged as an essential space that produced and reproduced a vision of modernity, often statist and authoritarian, imposed on the nation.

However, the modernization experiment in Ethiopia was largely unsuccessful, as the need for modernization faced an internal shortage of economic resources. Gulema (2020) argues that the country's traditional political economy could not avoid a fundamental crisis in the broader political modernization project. Violence that was embedded in the modernization project elsewhere also accompanied Ethiopia's vision, ultimately leading to large-scale exploitation, dispossession, and disenfranchisement of the newly incorporated territories. However, supporters of the imperial order continue to believe that the imperial Ethiopia represents a time of progress, that could set Ethiopia on the path of peaceful and democratic development if it were not cruelly halted by the 1974 revolution (Clapham, 2006: 144). Emperor Haile Selassie is portrayed as the modernizer of Ethiopia, which was true during the early years of his reign until the first constitution was adopted in 1931. After that, "true" modernization was constrained by colossal centralization, bureaucracy, poverty, lack of infrastructure and urban plutocracy (Zewde, 2002).

4.3 Ethiopia's state and nation-building legacy in the quest for democracy

The current crisis in Ethiopia is essentially a crisis of state/nation building. Most of the crises were created and have a genealogy dating back to the making of modern Ethiopia when the nation expanded southward because of its economic centrality for the new state. But also, the systemic marginality of the incorporated nations into the emerging Ethiopian state gave rise to "national" oppression. This was mainly because the emerging structural flaws of the Ethiopian

state were not only political and economic, but deeply cultural. Gulema (2020) explained that the cultural is not just an extension of political economy, as identity politics is more often used as a means of expressing fundamental economic struggles in Ethiopia.

As detailed above, Ethiopian intellectuals and political forces have also interpreted the country's malaise and prescribed political alternatives to address it, based on different ideological predispositions. This ranges from those who described the country's underdevelopment as the main problems in the early twentieth century, to those who identified the lack of freedom and equality as the main structural problems, including the colonial thesis, discussed since the 1960s in the context of political and social changes taking place in the country. However, despite some radical raptures and revolutions, the changes do not meet the basic demands of progress, democracy, freedom, justice, and equality in Ethiopia. Below, I take a deeper look at some of the historical paradoxes and legacies of state and nation-building endeavours that are relevant to the quest for democracy in Ethiopia.

Hence, the important question that this section tries to answer is how the divergent views on the Ethiopian state and nation-building endeavours have affected the quest for democracy. Accordingly, the major legacies of Ethiopia's state/nation-building endeavours are identified to analyse their implications for the development of democracy. This struggle has been based on its basic constituent elements such as freedom and equality over the past fifty years, shaping political interactions, especially since the 1960s.

4.3.1 Political contradictions and polarization

Political contradictions and polarization are one of the legacies of the making of the modern Ethiopian state, which still remain the challenges for transformative politics. In post-imperial Ethiopia, there are two main distinguishing features that stand out as the achievements of the revolutionaries who turned into nationalist liberation fronts. First, the 1974 revolution not only dethroned the imperial regime and gave birth to the first Ethiopian republicanism, but also led to the redistribution of land among farmers, which dismantled the economic foundation of the imperial regime. Second, the liberation fronts, which came to power in 1991, restructured the state on a new foundation, replacing the old, centralized structure with a multinational federal system that created a second republic (Abbink, 2009). However, the inconsistent implementation of these changes has led to the persistence of poverty, inequality, oppression, and authoritarianism, threatening the country's stability and the emergence of stable democracy for several reasons.

The contradictory experience in the sphere of freedom and equality has become a hallmark of post-imperial Ethiopia, in which citizens are empowered and legally recognized, but constantly circumscribed through political action. For example, ethnicity has become the most important foundation of Ethiopian politics and political participation since 1991. The rise of ethnicity as the organizing principle of the state during the EPRDF regime expanded the political space, empowering previously marginalized communities. The elevation of ethnicity to such a privileged position is not the problem in and of itself, but rather its politicization and the centralized structure of the ruling EPRDF party, which has stripped ethnic groups of the rights recognized in the federal constitution. The federal system has given rise to opposing views of ethnic rights and empowerment. The protection of linguistic rights and self-governance of ethnic groups at the local level have generated a sense of ethnic satisfaction among historically marginalized groups in the country. But the centralized party structure with TPLF seats at the top has generated a strong sense of Tigrean dominance over some of the country's major ethnic groups. The politicization of ethnicity has disenfranchised people of mixed ethnicity, largely privileging ethnic homogeneity at the expense of diversity and rich social fabric at the household level. The ethnicization of politics, especially of the father as the sole marker of identity, also entrenches patriarchy, masking the oppression and gender-based struggles that are integral to building democratic societies (Razavi, 2001:214).

Furthermore, the conception of nation remains primordial in post-imperial Ethiopia, embodying the same elements of cultural and religious construction that it had at birth. Despite the fact that the revolutions forced the state through a morphological process from empire to socialist, from socialist to federal, what has been perpetuated since the creation of Ethiopia as an empire is the inability to transform Ethiopia into a civic nation with an overarching national identity, which is a precondition for democracy.

The contradiction and polarization in contemporary Ethiopian politics creates a narrative of struggle that recognizes the histories, memories, and truths of one group, but elide or erase the rest of their memories, truths, and histories. Such narratives of national history are forced upon others through deeply authoritarian political exercises, which have always been destructive for the country, as its peoples are left without the possibility of moral reckoning. Groups that have dominated the state in Ethiopia have treated others as peoples devoid of valuable history, culture, or political structure (Baxter et al, 1996: 90). Hence, such practice has not only limited our understanding of the past, but also resulted in the fragmentation and impoverishment of

national politics, blocking the path to a more transformative politics that overcome divisions to create a stable democracy.

More than ever, Ethiopians need critical reflection, understanding and political compromise to overcome the destructive forces of polarization and contradictions in the current political transition, which began in early 2018. The revolutionary protest movements that have contributed to the arrival of a new group of leaders in the country inspired a sense of optimism and confidence in the possibility of a democratic transition. It is too early to draw conclusions, but the way the political transition has taken place over the past three years has signalled the same consequences of citizen empowerment and disempowerment, arguably replicating the past. This vicious circle of expansion and contraction of democracy, from which the country seems unable to emerge, has become a permanent feature of the Ethiopian state that often failed to create a lasting democratic order in which freedom, equality and socio-economic justice prevail.

4.3.2 Eurocentrism/uncritical emulation of foreign models, theories, and ideas of progress

Eurocentrism has significant epistemological dominance in the non-Western world (Alcoff, 2017). Regarding the influence of Eurocentric thought on Ethiopian history, Messay Kebede argues that there is no better illustration of the external seal of Ethiopian history than the designation of expatriate scholars as the founders of Ethiopian studies. He goes on to name some of these scholars who were designated as the founders of Ethiopian studies: Job Ludolf, James Bruce, August Dillmann, Edward Ullendorff, Donald Donham, Donald Levine etc (Kebede, 2003:1). The prominent historian Teshale Tibebu also provided a more comprehensive critique of Eurocentrism, arguing that the Eurocentric construction of Ethiopian identity began in the sixteenth century with the Portuguese presence in Ethiopia (Tibebu, 2008:359). According to Messay Kebede, this promotion to the rank of founders of European scholars who perfectly establishes what is called Ethiopian history and culture is largely a representation of Western scholarship, which means what we call Ethiopian studies is Ethiopia viewed from the West as the centre (kebede, 2003:2). Ethiopian historians also followed the same tradition rather than challenging it, succumbing to the Eurocentric paradigm. For example, citing the works of historians Taddesse Tamrat (1972) and Sergew Hable Selassie (1972), Messay Kebede further argued that Ethiopian scholars themselves admit that they owe their knowledge of Ethiopia to Western scholarship (Kebede, 2003:2).

Suffice it to say about Eurocentric dominance, let it not be misunderstood that the arguments presented in the thesis are not intended to reject the entire contribution of Western scholars as useless. Whether it is research, methodology, or theory, Western scholarship set high and relevant standards, from which this thesis has enormously benefited. What is rejected in the thesis is the arrangement and ranking of different social and cultural formations only from the viewpoint of the West. For example, since the Eurocentric construction of Ethiopia's history is very strong, this connection is so important that the Abyssinians were distinguished from other national groups as the carriers of the historical civilization of Ethiopia. This civilization is considered to be Semitic civilization. In the words Donald N. Levine, "Ethiopian Empire of the twentieth century consists of a number of previously autonomous and distinct African tribes subordinate to an [alien] Semitic minority. This view is a natural consequence of the beginning of Ethiopia's history, as scholarly convention has had it, with the supposed Semitic immigrations of the first millennium B.C " (Levine, 1974: 26). This Semitic theme, be it myth or reality, is so important that it commands the organization and meaning of Ethiopian events and culture.

In effort to deconstruct this Semitic heritage so that it could be considered as indigenous, Messay Kebede argues that the total absence of "great achievements" among southern Ethiopians as an excuse for foreign scholars to regard northern civilization as Semitic (Kebede, 2003). Here his criticism of Eurocentrism begins to generate flaws. Although he deconstructs the Eurocentric assumption of what is considered a Semitic civilization and presents it as indigenous, he does not challenge the Eurocentric paradigm of the superiority of the Abyssinian civilization. Instead of facing head on, he tried to sanitize what he called the problem, presenting it as if it were only the views of the West. His criticism of Eurocentrism is more directed at agents rather than at the assumptions. This appears to be the reason that he placed almost all the blame on foreign scholars for the Ethiopian state to become immune from criticism, despite the fact that Ethiopian scholars have fallen for Eurocentrism, that the state developed a curriculum and distributed their scholarships as official textbooks. Thus, Ethiopian studies are not only Ethiopia as viewed from the West, but also the official historical record of the Ethiopian state, in which the north was seen as the bearer of an advanced civilization, and the south as backward. This is another legacy attributed to state building in Ethiopia that has serious implications for alternative intellectual practices, leaving unanswered the question of how to create a democratic and inclusive Ethiopia in which every citizen and group has a stake in its future.

One of these implications is that the convergence of a Eurocentric drive for modernization and long-established myths of statehood place the country on the plinth of exceptionalism, distinctively presenting Ethiopians as "black Caucasians" with a separate civilizational space better than the rest of Africa, if not Europe. But this narrative of Ethiopia's exceptionalism was essentially that of Abyssinia, Christianity, Judaism, Semitic Ethiopia, constructed as the foundation of Ethiopian civilization. Such a religious and cultural construction of Ethiopia led to the division of the country into a civilized north and a backward south (Ullendorff, 1960). It localized the global cultural divide between the West and the rest, legitimizing and informing imperial politics, which divided the people into locals and outsiders, the former being northerners, and the latter mostly referred to as Oromo (Baxter et al, 1996).

The division also became the foundation upon which the homogenization policy was built to create a "nation" in imperial Ethiopia, privileging Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language as the standard for membership. For example, in imperial Ethiopia, Ethiopian Muslims were called "Muslims in Ethiopia," which is the idea of Muslims as "outsiders" to Ethiopia (Østebø, 2013). Islam was seen as the antithesis of "Ethiopianism" (Markakis, 1987: 74), while Christianity has always been the profound expression of Ethiopian national existence (Ullendorff, 1965: 97). Such division has important implications for contemporary Ethiopian politics. For example, as noted above, the failure to create a broad and inclusive political and social space has led to increased polarization and disputes over political and historical narratives. This has become a serious obstacle to the country's transition to democracy, replacing the old grouping of the country's population as "modern and backward" with "indigenous and immigrant". Abyssinians used to consider themselves alone local to Ethiopia, while others, mostly Oromo, were outsiders. This traditional assumption is overturned through historical, political, and epistemological reconstructions of the narrative in which non-Abyssinians now become indigenous to Ethiopia. This, however, has led to the emergence of nativist discourses, exacerbating division and violence that make the possibility of democratic transition a nightmare in the current political transition.

Despite the aforementioned problems, Oromo scholars over the past 30 years, under the auspices of the Oromo Study Association (OSA), have challenged the idea that Oromo are incapable of great achievement, which Ethiopian historians have replicated from the global Eurocentric assumption. Oromo intellectual response to Eurocentric epistemological violence has made history writing and interpretation central to the struggle for self-determination, both from Oromo and non-Oromo scholars. This was a deliberate move aimed at decolonizing the

Ethiopian episteme, divorcing it from its Eurocentric and Semitic heritage and linking it to a critical subaltern and postcolonial studies. Overcoming these birthmarks of Ethiopian studies was thought to be necessary by providing alternative scholarship that removes the germ of the predicament and shapes its current and future trajectory (Jalata, 1996).

The uncritical emulation of the Western model, its theory of history and ideas of progress is the main legacy of state-building that negatively influenced the emergence and development of democracy in Ethiopia. Gulema (2020) argued that Ethiopia's main problem in imitating modernity is its narrow approach to achieving material progress without critically considering fundamental problems of democracy such as popular sovereignty, social equality, freedom, and secularism. Moreover, Lencho Leta (2006) also argued that part of the contemporary crisis in Ethiopia may rest on the political elites who do not often critically evaluate Western ideas of progress. He further explained that, unlike Ethiopia's state-building experience, which was entirely based on a traditional agrarian economy built on the labour and land of poor peasants, the success of European state-building projects was due to the fact that industrialization eventually made the process less painful. Teshale (2008) also explained that uncritical belief in the transformative power of radical political experiments and revolutionary ideas such as Marxism-Leninism aiming to end injustice ended up creating new injustices. He also noted that identifying positive cultural and political values and practices from Ethiopia's past will continue to be a challenge that Ethiopians will have to confront in order to build peace and social justice. In fact, building a just, democratic, and equitable country requires a sincere attempt to confront the past and correct mistakes.

In a nutshell, it should be noted that shaping Ethiopia's future requires a critical reflection on what went wrong in the past and a deeper understanding of its complex history, traditions, indigenous knowledge system, and practices. Uncritical emulation has always been one of Ethiopia's biggest challenges, regardless of the type of regime - imperial, socialist or federalist. Under the imperial regime, Ethiopia's early educated class adopted modernity as the universal norm, but Ethiopia and its people inherited only the foundations of a failed state and a failed modernity that became the hallmark of the country along with a deeply entrenched autocratic political culture. Instead of critically appropriating cultural values and traditions as a prerequisite for modernity, political elites have resorted to the destruction, alienation, and uprootedness of the indigenous knowledge system.

The forces that toppled the emperor in 1974, like their predecessors, quickly adopted foreign forms of Marxism and socialism as solutions to the country's problems. This experience also has either destroyed or overlooked indigenous institutions and traditions in an attempt to replace them with those that were recreated on the basis of the imported radical socialist and Marxist ideology. As a result, not only has the repressive state persisted, depriving people of the freedom to exercise their rights, but poverty and inequality remain entrenched. The same practice continued under the EPRDF, but with only slight flexibility in switching the policy of emulation between West and East depending on the circumstances.

The other biggest challenges for Ethiopia's transition to a democracy has been the uncritical imitation of the notion of nationalism from the European experience of nation-building that identified homogeneity as a precondition for political, economic, and social citizenship (Gellner, 1997: 29), often leading to the imposition of the Amharic language on Oromo and other southern Ethiopian peoples, which has proven to be counterproductive for the emergence of inclusive democratic societies.

Despite the broader conception of self-determination rights, equating the expression of nationalism and self-determination with secession is the main legacy of the decolonization movement in Africa, in which Ethiopian elites emulated their African counterparts who committed the first mistake, strikingly equating such rights with independence (Halperin et al. 1992: 20). The reason why the Ethiopian state violently opposes the right to self-determination of its national groups is partly due to the contradictions and inconsistencies with which this right is exercised in Africa. The fact that the right to self-determination was equated with decolonization in post-colonial African states made the recognition of this right a very difficult exercise for the defenders. Respect for these rights fundamentally contradicts the claims of the Ethiopian rulers about Ethiopia's "exceptionalism", based on centuries-old myths of statehood, as the only black African country not conquered by white colonial rule. The recognition of these rights was always seen in part as a concession to the colonial thesis, according to which the Ethiopian state subjugated the Oromo and southern peoples.

A careful analysis of the struggles of the Oromo people in Ethiopia now and in the past shows that the original goal was never to secede and achieve an independent state. Oromo nationalism was originally a demand for equality. However, intransigence and denial of the right to self-determination on the part of Ethiopian rulers have always been more responsible for the accompanying unrest and conflict, which prompted some factions within the Oromo and other

groups to accept secession as an alternative to securing freedom and peace. For example, one of the defining moments in modern Oromo struggles is associated with the Bale peasant uprising and the formation of the Macha and Tulama Association (MTA) in the 1960s, which marked the birth of Oromo nationalism. The Bale Peasant Revolt was a historic act of tax resistance and an uprising against land confiscation by the feudal system that existed in the Ethiopian Empire (Østebø, 2020). The creation of the MTA also aimed to promote Oromo identity and provide basic infrastructure such as schools, medical facilities, roads, and water.

However, the intransigence of imperial rule to properly cater to peasant demands, as well as the imperial regime's ban on the self-help association, led to the creation of Oromo's first political party, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Oromo nationalists, who founded the OLF in 1974, constituted the majority of the former MTA members. The Bale revolt on the periphery, the creation of the MTA and then OLF informed the Oromo about the importance of their culture and the oppression inherent in the imperial socio-economic and political system. With the intransigence of the imperial regimes, Oromo nationalists put forward a variety of demands - from secession to achieving regional autonomy and reconstructing Ethiopia's national identity.

4.3.3 The absolutist state, domination, and hegemony

The enduring tradition of the absolutist state, its institutions of hegemony and domination, is another legacy of Ethiopia's contested state and nation-building that continues to pose serious structural problems for democracy. Charles Tilly (1985) argued that in European countries, democracy was a by-product of state making. It emerged out of the contentious and conciliatory relationship between the state and the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, and the peasantry, which over time forced the state to reconstruct itself in a more inclusive way. Such concession by the state to represent and recognize the rights of citizens was an important consequence of the existence of a strong capitalist class that emerged from the urbanization and commercialization of agriculture. As a result, democratization coincided with the development of capitalism and the transformation of the bourgeoisie into a strong independent class capable of seeking concessions from the state and sharing political privileges.

However, the 19th century imperial expansion in Ethiopia saw marked deviations from Europe's imperial past in terms of state formation. While Charles Tilly's axiom "War made the state, the state made war" is most relevant in explaining the intense and continuous warfare that led to the emergence of the Ethiopian state, this process did not lead to significant democratic

dispensation in Ethiopia. One of the reasons is that in Ethiopia, as in other African colonized countries, the process of state formation precedes the creation of a "nation", which is contrary to European experience. It is believed that this has become the Achilles heel of many African countries for democratization projects (Mazzuca, 2014).

On the other hand, Yusuf (2020: 61) argues that another reason democracy could not take root in Ethiopia is that there were no strong contenders against the state demanding representation or limited government. He went on to explain that three factors contributed to this. First, in Ethiopia, the conditions for the emergence of capitalism were unfavourable, so that the bourgeoisie either did not break away from feudalism, or practically did not exist. Second, the highly parasitic aristocrats were uninterested in technological progress and relied on the hard labour and fertile lands of the conquered people as the source of their wealth. Third, the constraints associated with the state's tradition of levying high tribute on peasants in imperial Ethiopia also impeded technological progress in agriculture. Holcomb and Ibssa (1990) also argued that because the newly created state was designed and assembled under the auspices of superpowers with their own strategic expansionist agendas in the region, it focused not on investment for internal economic progress, but on plunder and consumption with no long-term perspective for advancement.

The Ethiopian Empire, which was born with Amharic as the only state language, was another obstacle to socio-economic development as the insistent use of a single language prevented vital information from reaching the majority of the population (Sarah & Kjetil, 2003). Radio Ethiopia, for example, broadcasts all information about health, agriculture, and education only in the Amharic language. Imperial language policies marginalized parts of the population, for example, impeding Oromo education for decades, which in turn fed struggles for self-determination, and since 2014, it has become a key grievance factor for the Oromo youth movement.

Against the modernisation perspective, there was no discernible step towards commercialization and urbanization that would have contributed to the growth of a strong bourgeoisie. Urbanization was very weak, and the emerged garrison urban centres simply served as places for the local nobility to skim off rural produce from poor farmers in imperial Ethiopia (Hassen, 1999). Holcomb and Ibssa (1990: 110) also explained that the creation of various fortified garrison towns was mainly aimed at protecting settlers from the resistance of conquered peoples. Likewise, Benti (2007:178) also argued that the fortified urban centres

were used largely as a springboard for expansion into the south, the political and economic powerhouse of the imperial regime. The commercialization of agriculture began in the 1950s largely with the ownership of the aristocracy (Lavers, 2012), but this too did not live long to create a strong, independent bourgeois class. Moreover, as the manufacturing sector and international trade were dominated by foreigners in the early period of modernization, an indigenous bourgeoisie did not emerge (Markakis and Ayele, 1978).

As a result, the traditional agrarian economy and production process did not give way to domestic capital accumulation. The cumulative result of these developments was that the emperor amassed immense power and became an absolutist and hegemon, since there were no strong contenders who could force the state to make concessions in favour of political liberalization, a precondition for democratization (Yusuf, 2020). As a result, the foundations of post-imperial autocratic rule were firmly established, in which the military regime inherited the structures of a centralized absolutist state (Clapham, 1990). Under the military regime, state power became even more reinvigorated, as its mechanisms of suppression and control were unprecedentedly enhanced thanks to access to modern technologies of coercion and control (Markakis, 1981). Besides, the long-standing and widespread armed clashes contributed to the destruction of the country's emerging civil societies and trade/labour unions, shattering hopes of a democratic transition (de Waal, 1991: 7).

Ethno-nationalist liberation fronts also inherited a country devastated by civil wars when they toppled the military regime in 1991. Ethiopia has once again proved to be an unfavourable environment for democratization, as the organized opposition, independent civil society and the middle class were extremely weak as a result of the seventeen years of civil wars. As armed struggle had already weakened independent centres of power, the political environment helped perpetuate authoritarianism, allowing the victors of wars to use their military power to capture the state, thereby increasing the state's repressive capacity over the next three decades. Despite the creation of some nominal democratic institutions, the EPRDF remained committed to a legacy of authoritarian practices until it was dissolved and replaced by the Prosperity Party, created by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in late 2019. In short, Ethiopians have inherited the authoritarian and absolutist state as a result of the nation-building failure of the previous era, which remains the most serious challenge to establishing democracy in the country today.

4.3.4 Emergence of contending nationalisms.

Ethiopia's contested state-building efforts have ultimately allowed contending nationalisms to flourish, which has several implications for the struggle for democracy. The relationship between nationalism and democracy is the subject of various debates. The debates range from viewing nationalism as a force "allergic" to democracy (Diamond and Plattner, 1994), as an inherently anti-democratic force (Fukuyama, 1994: 23-28) and to another view that sees their marriage as necessary. For example, Nodia (1994: 4) argued that the idea of nationalism is impossible and even unthinkable without the idea of democracy, and that democracy also never exists without nationalism.

With this theoretical debate in mind, the discussion in this section reflects on the ways that various forms of nationalism have influenced the democratic aspirations of the Ethiopian people. It demonstrates that the struggle for democracy has long been a prisoner of the political and cultural construction of Ethiopia's past, generating various competing ideas of the state and contested national identity.

I argue that the first phase of the rise of nationalism in Ethiopia was associated with Menelik's conquest of Oromo and the southern communities. This is a nationalism which emerged from the feeling of seeing oneself as superior and more civilized than others, but, despite this, constructed all the basic signs and symbols of the nation and imposed a certain identity as the identity of the state as a result of certain historical and cultural experiences (see section 4.2.1 for detail). This state-framed nationalism has undergone several permutations over the years. First, it morphed into pan-Ethiopian nationalism after Adwa's 1896 victory over Italian forces, creating Ethiopia's image as a unique African power that was able to defeat European forces. Adwa's victory provided the conquerors with a blank check for recreating their supremacist thinking as an integral part of the state ideology. It reproduced and imposed Ethiopia's narratives of 'exceptionalism' to justify the imperial conquests of the 19th century and the affliction that followed, from which the country still suffers. Second, a pro-Marxist and socialist progressive tradition of the 1960s and 1970s, rooted in the Ethiopian student movement, attempted to redefine Ethiopia's national identity on ideas of equality, solidarity, and freedom. But these efforts were largely unsuccessful due to the military takeover of the student revolution, and as a result, the old nationalism continued, only with the recognition of certain religious rights of Muslims, but ingrained pan-Ethiopian rhetoric even deep into the institutions, structures, and discourses of socialist Ethiopia. The abolition of the imperial

system in 1974 did not abandon the imperial doctrine of homogenization, as the new military regime continued to adhere to the same policy to some extent. Only with the fall of the latter at the end of 1991 was this policy mitigated with the emergence of the second Republican. Cementing this reality, Gulema (2020) argues that reasoning in the name of nation building or national survival, pan-Ethiopian nationalism extols Ethiopia's achievements, and sacrifices in defence against foreign aggression, while glossing over the agony of the nation or members of ethnic groups, women, and religious communities, which allows the state to compose and impose a one-dimensional narrative obtained in the process of its creation. Hence, the reality is civic Ethiopia, which is liberal and inclusive, never emerged, as its protagonists could not divorce from its fundamental cultural and religious roots.

With the EPRDF coming to power in 1991, pan-Ethiopian nationalism lost its privilege in national discourses as a new multinational, secular and federalist Ethiopia emerged. But the contestation continued, while now pan-Ethiopian nationalism went underground and became an anti-establishment opposition for much of the EPRDF's rule, until it resurfaced in national discourses with a political opening enacted in early 2018. Over the 27 years of EPRDF rule, pan-Ethiopian nationalists resented the ethnic-friendly rhetoric of the EPRDF regime and emphasised its perceived negative impact on the country's unity, viewing the federal system as a step towards Ethiopia's disintegration. They often accused the TPLF of conspiring with the EPLF to violate Ethiopia's territorial integrity by allowing Eritrea to form its own state, leaving the country landlocked. Over the past two years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, pan-Ethiopian nationalism has morphed into populist nationalism. Populist nationalism is a variant of nationalism that combines features of nationalist politics and populist rhetoric (Blokker, 2005). Abiy views Ethiopia as a magnificent political project, a "land of origin" with a long and uninterrupted history of greatness. His vision of the future also feeds off these mythologized notions of the past and exaggerated perceived greatness of its controversial emperors. The prime minister, as the embodiment of populist nationalism, often claims to be the only person who can restore the "nation" to its ancient "greatness" and lead the "nation" to prosperity and "Medemer" democracy (see chapter six).

The second phase of the rise of nationalism in Ethiopia was associated with three organized revolts against Emperor Haile Selassie's regime in the northern and southern edges of the Empire. The revolt in the north began with the annexation of Eritrea to the Ethiopian Empire in 1962, which angered some sections of Eritrean society. In the southern part of the empire, Somali Muslims in Ogaden and Oromo Muslims in Bale rebelled against the domination of the

Christian empire (Tibebu, 2008: 345-6). All three of these revolts were started by Muslims, who were treated as second-class subjects of the empire, so religious elements were among other forms of grievances.

This second phase of nationalism also eventually morphed into ethno-nationalism as non-Muslims later joined the struggles through civil unrests and protests against the centralized rule of Imperial Ethiopia, as well as the emergence of Marxist and socialist-oriented student movements and various associations in the 1960s and 1970s. The entrenchment of ethno-nationalism was spearheaded by the many rebel liberation movements that mushroomed throughout the country. More than a dozen rebel groups fought the military regime between 1974 and 1991. In the process, they raised ethno-nationalist consciousness among their constituents, leading to the downfall of the military regime in 1991, assisted by shifts in international political economy and regional politics. Thus, ethno-nationalism took various ethnic names during the armed and liberation struggle against the military regime, which triumphed in the post-1991 period.

Repression, marginalization, and authoritarianism laid the foundation for the emergence of ethno-nationalist movements in Ethiopia. For example, the Oromo nationalists, who began the struggle against the Ethiopian state in the 1960s, demanded a radical restructuring of the state and society through revolution, exposing Ethiopia's structural crisis, such as lack of progress, a highly authoritarian state and deeply unequal nations. Moreover, the fact that decades of Ethiopia's encounter with imperial state-building and modernity have increased the inconsistency and contradictions of Ethiopia's political economy. One such crisis manifests itself in appalling inequality between city and country, with the city, in particular Addis Ababa, representing the greatest concentration of wealth, power and resources. The struggle over Addis Ababa by the Oromo nationalists is the epitome of the current national political discourse. Two periods are of particular importance in shaping the historical memory of Oromo and its contemporary political claims; one of them is the late sixteenth century, marking the beginning of a continuous and effective Oromo presence in the area of present-day Addis Ababa and its environs. The second is the nineteenth century, which includes episodes when the city's expansion began in the areas inhabited by Oromo, and King Menelik completed the process by occupying the lands and conquering their inhabitants. Oromo, along with other subjects of the empire, were subjected to various forms of violent state practice, including mass evictions that occurred after the founding of Addis Ababa. The dispossession and eviction of Oromo has since become an integral part of the capital's fabric and history. The most recent

manifestation of this phenomenon was the eviction of Oromo peasants following the physical expansion of Addis Ababa, especially in the years leading up to the announcement of the city's master plan in 2014, which sparked the 2014-2018 Oromo protests (see chapter five).

Overall, the past three decades under the EPRDF represent a continuation of the struggle for the cultural and political remaking of Ethiopia, framing political interactions and discourses according to either pan-Ethiopian or ethnic nationalisms by their respective advocates. The difference is that ethnicity has become a privileged organizing principle of the state, competing among groups and with a retreating pan-Ethiopian nationalism. One of the legacies of the post-1991 state building project is the creation and development of a peculiar brand of Amhara nationalism. This is a relatively recent development as it has long been subsumed under broader pan-Ethiopian nationalism. What has been constructed as an Ethiopian identity is more or less the identity of the historically ruling groups that is usually associated with ethnic Amhara. Hence, extracting Amhara nationalism from pan-Ethiopianism was difficult, as there was also lack of clarity in the definition of who Amhara was, which impeded the growth of ethnic nationalism rooted in this identity. People living in today's Amhara region used to describe themselves using intra-Amharic identities such as Shewa, Gojjam, Gonder, Wollo and Menze, rather than using the general rubric of Amhara. Clapham (1990: 24) argued that being Amhara, especially in the past, was more a matter of how a person behaves than who their parents were, in accordance with the core culture, which can be regarded national. Hence, the difficulty in distinguishing it from pan-Ethiopianism prevented the growth of explicit group identity of Amhara nationalism until recent protests that, following to the political model installed by the TPLF-EPRDF, contributed to the emergence of political liberalization in early 2018 and led to more pronounced 'ethnic politics.'

Nevertheless, the problem is not that there are opposing ideas or competing nationalist views of Ethiopia, but that nationalists often re-impose exclusive interpretations of the past to inform the present, which often become sources of violence as the past is always viewed with escapism. This currently happens from all sides. For example, pan-Ethiopian nationalists often focus on a national history that excludes or erases origins, reality, and persistent inequalities, while ethno-nationalists often focus on a history of dissensus to reconstruct past realities. For pan-Ethiopian nationalists, politics aimed at uplifting ethnic identity is tantamount to destroying a perceived sense of unity, while for ethno-nationalists, politics advocating ethnic emancipation is the only way to save the country from disintegration. Pan-Ethiopian perspectives glorify Ethiopia's ancient independent statehood and the social cohesion of its

people. The exclusivism and brutality of the state-building and nation-building process in Ethiopia, as well as the persisting structural inequality in the country, are underlined by ethno-nationalism. For ethno-nationalism, rewriting the past is mostly the result of the presentism of the past, since the current struggle to re-define Ethiopian national identity is never really about the past, but is about the present and the future. The consequences of such production and reproduction of Ethiopia's past to inform the present led to deep-seated divisions and complicated the sense of shared national identity as a precondition for establishing stable democracy in Ethiopia.

Obstacles to political liberalization in Ethiopia also have persisted over the past two years. One of the main problems is the growing polarization of political elites. As discussed above, Ethiopia's political landscape has always been full of competing nationalisms with different and conflicting views of the state and its ideological underpinnings. The ethnic mobilization that has propelled the current transition process remains significant, as the main issues regarding the current multinational federalism and its ideological foundations remain largely unresolved. The debate around the constitution is an elephant in the room, directly or indirectly fuelling political violence and instability in the country as the opinions of the population and the elite differ sharply along ethnic lines. One group, which includes the majority of Oromo and southern nations, sees the current constitution as the tool for managing cultural and ethnolinguistic diversity and protecting both group and individual rights. This group believes that it is necessary to implement the various provisions of the Federal Constitution "in their true letter and spirit." For example, one activist explained that if any amendments are needed, now is not the right time, but after a fair and credible election, elected representatives can present the issues to the Ethiopian public and make the necessary amendment in accordance with the article stipulated in a constitution which in itself is open to amendment[34]. However, others support fundamental and unconditional constitutional changes, in particular the elimination of Article 39, which is an article on the right of nations and nationalities to self-determination up to secession. Many Amhara scholars, politicians and government officials are now openly advocating the latter view.

In short, Abiy's failure to forge a dialogue on shared values and national identity of the country has caused further confusion and frustration among the public due to his failure to tame these fiery and contending nationalisms. Abiy came to power riding on a youth movement stirred by

---

[34] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Oromo nationalism, but to be inclusive, he also wanted to acknowledge a form of Amhara nationalism to consolidate his legitimacy as the prime minster of the country. What held these nationalisms together was their shared rejection of the TPLF, which later rooted out the TPLF from the centre. This change in power quickly signalled a short-lived harmony between the Amhara and Oromo nationalisms, since there was no clear package regarding the future of the country, with failure to organize dialogue and negotiations. This prompted nationalists and their affiliates to use opposition and cooperation as tactics to increase their influence. The National Movement of Amhara (NAMA), urban based parties such as Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZeMa), and ADP nationalists infiltrated party members and some formally joined the ruling party to push their ideas within the government structure, while Oromo nationalists lost time entering into an altercation with the government over the disarmament and demobilization of the OLF army[35].

As a result, the Amhara regional ruling party, the ADP, became hostage to the "Amhara first" nationalist movement promoted by the newly created rival National Movement of Amhara (NAMA) and EzeMa, gaining ground in the region and urban centre. Similarly, the fate of the ODP in Oromia became hostage to the Oromo nationalist movements such as the OLF and Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC). As the two nationalisms intensified in the two largest regions, their impacts soon began to be widely reflected, significantly diminishing the influence of the EPRDF. With growing fragmentation and confrontation, Prime Minister Abiy quickly grabbed the opportunity to dissolve the long-standing ruling coalition, paving the way for the creation of the new centralized party. The reason Abiy hastened the creation of the Prosperity Party was not only the inability to tame rival nationalism, but he wanted to combat the dominance of ethnic nationalists as preventive measures since they threatened his power in future elections. This is detrimental to Abiy's ability to provide effective leadership, make change and deliver on his promises.

4.4 Conclusion

Ethiopia's state-building process is full of claims and accusations of historical atrocities and injustices. From the time of Emperor Menelik's expansion to the south in the late nineteenth century to the more recent "*Medemer*" discourse of Abiy, it is common to find different perspectives of major historical landmarks believed to have influenced cultural identity, livelihoods and rights of citizens and communities. During imperial periods, the archaic form

---

[35] Interviewee Nr. 33, Politician, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.

of state-building promoted by autocratic monarchs and the unitary state sparked, among other things, many ethnic nationalist movements against the state itself, as well as the 1974 student revolution that ended monarchical rule in Ethiopia. Under the military leadership, the revolution succeeded in destroying the old regimes and their economic basis, but it was unable to provide the democratic ideals of freedom and equality, which became the main factors in the proliferation of ethno-nationalist liberation fronts that overthrew the military regime in 1991.

In the post-1991 period, the new ruling party, the EPRDF, remapped the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines, without shedding the authoritarian tendencies of the past. The outcome is the further intensification of not only ethnic mobilisation, but also contending nationalisms within a tightly controlled state through a hierarchically organised party structure, which has undermined the foundations of the regime, especially since early 2014. These demonstrate deeper connections between historical trajectories and current political situations that inform the youth social movement that has erupted in opposition to the Addis Ababa Master Plan.

Disputes over such issues are not merely historical, as they persist in current political discourse, contributing to political polarization that undermines national cohesion. Political elites are sharply divided over the interpretation of the country's past, the current constitution and federal structure, as well as by national history and symbols. In short, the current crisis in Ethiopia can be largely seen as a crisis of the state and its incompetence in creating a genuine multinational structure. The highly controversial and unsettled historical legacy of state-building has perpetuated divisions and animosities between various ethnic groups, undermining efforts to create a common national identity, a prerequisite for successful democratization. Thus, reassessing the relationship between the state and society through mutual negotiation is essential for democracy to succeed in Ethiopia by developing a new set of legitimate and predictable institutional relationships that allow organic democracy to grow out of the multiple identities of the diverse national groups. Against this backdrop, the next chapter explores the paths linking protest to democratization through an empirical study of the recent revolutionary protest movements in Ethiopia, whose root causes lie in the often-contested 19th century state-building process and the political economy that shaped its development.

Chapter Five: Protests, Repression, and Political Change in Ethiopia, 2014-2018

5.1 Introduction

Youth have always played a decisive role in Ethiopian politics. In the most recent political events that garnered so much international attention to Ethiopia, youth have been, as always, at the centre. While they were always at forefront of change, from the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s to the brief relaxed moment around the 2005 elections; the bloodiest red terror of the Marxist regime in the late 1970s, and the massive repression that the EPRDF government followed with, especially after 2005, made activism so passive that youth turned away from politics (Gebremariam and Herrer, 2016: 149). Almost five decades later, the methods of suppressing youth political activism remain. However, despite obstacles, the recent social movements that erupted in Oromia and Amhara regions has challenged the status quo, using social media to offer new platforms for political engagement and collective action.

As such, one of the most remarkable features of the protest movements that took place mainly in Amhara and Oromia regions was the absence of political parties and formally organized groups from the ranks of those who brought down one of Africa's most powerful authoritarian regimes, with the exception of the tipping point provided by nationalist members of the ruling EPRDF. The early stages of protest against the publication of Addis Ababa's controversial Master Plan sparked a wave of protests first in Jimma University on 12th of April 2014 and then spread to Ambo, Mendi, Bale, Awoday, Chinaksan and elsewhere in Oromia. The movements had no formal organizational structures and remained clandestine, amorphous, and horizontal, led by youth with little or no experience in formal politics. They relied on social media to mobilize and convey their messages that rejected the EPRDF regime's grip on power and the ensuing repressions.

Another important feature of these movements was the speed with which they expanded to encompass a wide range of demands, actors, and movements in the country, especially in the two largest regions - first Oromia and then Amhara - which became the centre of popular protests, creating a broad base of support for the movement. To the surprise of many observers who had previously viewed Ethiopia's quiescent populace as a sign of stability secured by the regime's rhetoric of developmental success, the Amhara and Oromo youth protests brought together social forces and social groups that were rival and fragmented in the interest of creating a national protest movement broad enough to challenge the status quo and topple a

deeply entrenched authoritarian regime. Particularly, the convergence between the two regional grievances played an important role in fuelling the crisis in the EPRDF. In November 2017, the Oromo People's Democratic Party (OPDO) reached out to the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation. The resulting alliances played a central role in the downfall of the TPLF-led regime in Ethiopia, which also prompted the arrival of Abiy Ahmed at the helm of state power on April 2, 2018.

Thus, based largely on the views of protesters and activists, as well as several informal conversations with individuals accidentally met while traveling to different places in Ethiopia, this chapter provides a chronological overview of the protest movements in Oromia and Amhara regions, the role played by the nationalist members of the ruling EPRDF coalition, and also analyses the main demands of the protesters and strategies for mobilization, the role of other groups and the government's reaction to the protest movement. This helps put the protests in perspective in terms of Ethiopia's democratic trajectory, documenting the social and political processes that led to the creation of the social movements that contributed to the recent major political changes.

The chapter draws on theories of nonviolent social movements, political defiance, and the transition approach of democratization in analysing the links between the various nonviolent actions that were implemented during the protests along with the role of mainstream and social media, including diaspora and the international community role in the political process that led to political changes in early 2018. With an emphasis on individual agency, the transition approach stresses that democratization is often determined by the strategic behaviour of the incumbent regime's elites. Unlike other theories of democratization, which often focus on causality between structural factors, elite-based theories emphasize the importance of the split between hardliners and soft-liners in the ruling elite in defining the path to democratization (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986). Przeworski (1991) also argues that the rifts within an authoritarian regime increase the chances of successful negotiations between the regime and the moderate opposition, as the popular mobilization plays an important role in increasing the bargaining power of the moderate opposition for bringing about democratization.

However, as the empirical analysis in this chapter demonstrates, these theories fail to fully explain the youth protest movements in Ethiopia for two reasons. The first was the absence of organized opposition groups that played a significant role in the protests and forced the regime to submit to democratization demands. In the case of Ethiopia, reformist elements in the ruling

party were given the opportunity to play an important role alongside protesting communities to bring about political liberalization and a change of leadership in early 2018. The second reason is that such elite-based transition theory rarely explains the specific pathways linking social movements to democratic transitions, such as cases of violent and non-violent anti-regime protests. The latter is especially important in the context of Ethiopia, which has frequently faced violent ethnic and civil strife over the decades.

Thus, building on this debate of the transition approach and social movements, this chapter explores the pathways linking protests to democratization through an empirical study of the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests, and the role played by the reformist elements of the ruling party. From this perspective, scholars on democratization and social movements such as della Porta and Teorell have found that nonviolent anti-regime protests systematically increase the likelihood of democratic transitions, often leading to political liberalization and the establishment of democracy (della Porta, 2014: 32; Teorell, 2010: 104). Accordingly, the chapter claims that the youth protesters employed one of the rare types of nonviolent mechanisms that Gene Sharp (2012), in his book "From Dictatorship to Democracy", referred to as conversion in order to bring about change in Ethiopia.

As will be detailed below, the categorical achievement of the Amhara and Oromo protest movements was the mobilization of the youth in defiance of authoritarianism, whereby the empowered elites, especially the Oromo and Amhara factions within the EPRDF were convinced of the just cause of the movement to end the repression and allow Abiy to rise to power with the promise of political reform. With this in mind, this chapter is divided into five sections. Following this introduction, the second section discusses issues around the Addis Ababa Master Plan and other related political developments that initially sparked protests in Oromia region. The third section presents an analysis of the six phases of the youth protest movements. The first two phases of protests analysed in this section focus on Oromo protests. The third and fourth phases of the protests focus on the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests, while the fifth and sixth phases of the protest analysis focus on the role played by the reformist elements of the ruling party. Discussions in this section also include an analysis of the strategies and mobilization factors that shaped the dynamism of the protesters' demands, the impetus for the protest movements in the face of brutal repression by the security forces, the reactions of other groups to the protests, and how the protests managed to contribute to bringing about political reform in early 2018. The fourth section presents the context of post-protest political

developments in relation to democratization. The final, section five section concludes on the implications of the nonviolent social movement for democratization in Ethiopia.

5.2 The Addis Ababa master plan

The Addis Ababa Master Plan was a 25-year long-term project of the Ethiopian government aiming to expand the territory of the capital city (Addis Ababa City, 2014). The first preparations for the plan, which date back to 2009, reportedly began by establishing a project office, named the Addis Ababa City Planning Project Office, with a mandate to prepare a ten-year master plan for the city, which aimed to include basic infrastructure to attract investors into newly created industrial zones. Then, in 2012, the city administration modified the mandate of the project office to prepare a metropolitan master plan, which would expand the capital's jurisdiction to include the surrounding towns and villages of the Oromia region.

According to one activist, the Plan was formally published in 2014 without meaningful consultations with the affected communities[36]. The plan aimed to expand Addis Ababa by 1.1 million hectares deep into the neighbouring Oromia region, which raised concerns among many Oromos about compensation and adequate protection for families who could face evictions. Similar forceful evictions had already been occurring in the past in Oromia, particularly linked to the government's promotion of private sector agricultural investment since 2005 (Lavers, 2012: 126). The Oromo protests soon began when students across Oromia protested against this plan. Ethiopia was then rocked by an unprecedented wave of popular protests in the years preceding Abiy's appointment as the country's prime minister in April 2018.

However, the waves of protest movements that rocked Ethiopia between 2014-2018 did not come out of the blue, as there were several indicators pointing to a social explosion in the country. There were three other movements in the early years preceding the outbreak of the protests, which fed into the 2014-2018 political events. The first was the Dimtsachin Yisema ("Let Our Voices Be Heard") movement of Ethiopian Muslims, which introduced an innovative mode of resistance rejecting violence on the Ethiopian political scene between 2011 and 2014, while protesting against government interference in religious affairs (Allo and Ibrahim, 2012). The second was the #BoycottBedele campaign launched by Oromo activists online in 2013, continuing into early 2014. They urged beer drinkers in Ethiopia to abandon Bedele products, as well as pressure the company to stop sponsoring the musical tour of Ethiopian pop singer

---

[36] Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Teddy Afro for his eulogies of past Ethiopian rulers such as emperor Menelik II and Haile Sellasie (van Beemen, 2019: 1-8). The third was the #OromoFirst campaign, which erupted with a question on Al-Jazeera's 'The Stream' to Jawar Mohammed, a prominent activist and political analyst: whether he identifies himself as an Oromo or Ethiopian first, to which Jawar replied: "I am an Oromo first", and "Ethiopia is imposed on me"[37]. An activist[38] claimed that the version of Ethiopian identity that the activist distance himself was a metaphor for power for Amharic-speaking groups, making non-Amharic speakers subordinate.

His comment on Al-Jazeera sparked a political tsunami, but the unbalanced condemnation of Oromo nationalism prompted Oromo activists to turn this opportunity into the hashtag #OromoFirst. After the success of this campaign, Oromo activists were able to raise money from the diaspora community and launch the Oromo Media Network (OMN) in early 2014. Rooted in the "I Am Oromo First" movement, the OMN served as resistance media during the 2014-2018 protests, its mission was to disarticulate the dominant Ethiopian discourse by rearticulating the Oromo struggle. There was also Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT), which was founded in 2010 by a group of journalists in exile and became the source of alternative voices sharply criticizing the Ethiopian government and covering anti-government protests that swept across the country from 2014 to 2018.

These three preceding movements provided activists with a rich experience of employing social media and nonviolent social movements to challenge the status quo as they fed into the 2014-2018 protest movements. As such, despite the rift between political parties, the campaign proved how determined youth can confront the brick wall of injustice, so that the widespread public assumption of political divisions between the country's national groups, instead saw its self-healing, which laid the foundation for mass mobilization.

Thus, the #Oromoprotests campaign took place against the backdrop of these social tensions fuelled by multi-layered grievances, so the publication of the Master Plan in April 2014 became a rallying point for protesters against the expansion of Addis Ababa. Building on this growing discontent, Oromo activists in the diaspora began reuniting with young people at home, expanded their networks and translated Gene Sharp's famous book on nonviolent movements into Oromo language, promoting nonviolent methods that have inspired engagement in advocacy and anti-authoritarian resistance (Siraj et al, 2011). Gene Sharp was a significant

---

[37] *See: The Stream - Al Jazeera; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idvJozrs284 ; Do the Oromo have a voice in Ethiopia?*
[38] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

theorist of nonviolent action following Mohandas K. Gandhi and is known to have founded the field of academic research on the theory and strategic practice of nonviolent action, based on his tenacious analysis of Gandhi (King, 2011). In short, as this book on the nonviolent movement had already been secretly circulated to Oromo students at various universities, the announcement of the Master Plan in April 2014 marked a decisive turning point in the struggle of the Oromo people, making it relatively easy to mobilize youth as concerns about the fate of farmers on the land that the government wanted to transfer to Addis Ababa was clearly articulated.

5.3   Phases of the recent youth protest movements.

When protests broke out in Oromia in early 2014, they were largely against the imposition of Addis Ababa's controversial Master Plan, but the government's failure to properly address the concerns raised by the protesters and its continuation of repression pushed the protesters to rediscover past grievances and expand their support bases to demand for eventual regime change. Hence, based on the demands made by the demonstrators, the protester mobilization strategy, the reactions of other groups such as the international community and the government's response to the protests, the discussion in this section puts major political events during the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests in perspective, dividing it into phases. The analysis in the next two phases focuses more on the Oromo protests, because it was this protest that erupted before the Amhara uprising, while the remaining analysis in the chapter covers the roles that all actors played in the protest movements, including the Oromo protests, Amhara uprising, and the reformers faction of the ruling party.

5.3.1 First round protests

The first round of the protests erupted on April 12, 2014, when students of Jimma University staged a demonstration on campus demanding the scrapping of the Master Plan that Addis Ababa announced in early January, an academic said[39]. The ways in which public discussion took place during the workshop on the plan in Adama on 13 April played an important role in spreading and mobilizing the public protests. In response to workshop participants who complained that the Master Plan was superimposed without consulting the Oromo people, the TPLF authorities emphasized the irreversibility of its implementation, a government official

---

[39] Interviewee Nr. 44, Academics, April 24, 2019, Jimma.

from Oromia explained[40]. Oromo activists followed this refusal of TPLF officials with mobilization of the wider public.

Thus, protest against the project quickly spread to universities and schools throughout Oromia. On April 25, students at Ambo University staged a protest and put popular indignation into action. Students from other universities and schools have taken similar steps. The main issue and demands of the protests in the first round were the cancellation of the proposed Master Plan. One activist claimed that protesters chanted: "*Finfinneen handhura Oromiyaati*[41]", which can be translated as "Addis Ababa, the navel of Oromia", demanding the historical claim of the Oromo people to their capital, as well as sending a protest message that the Master Plan violates the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of the region.

The first round of protests was mainly concentrated in the western and south-eastern parts of the region. The main feature of this round of protest was its concentration in educational institutions, in which mainly schoolchildren and university students participated. Another feature of this protest is the silence of non-Oromo groups and international communities over the government's brutal reaction to Oromo youths who had staged protests against entrenched authoritarianism in the country. In response to this silence, according to the activist, the Oromo youths chanted: "*Oromoo walmalee fira hin qabnu*[42]", which means "Oromo, we just have ourselves!" This kind of emotion among the demonstrators helped to create internal solidarity and collective action among the youth to overcome their predicament, emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and aggressive engagement in diplomacies.

Despite the widespread Oromo opposition, both at home and in the diaspora, the regime did not abandon the Master Plan. Instead of entertaining peacefully the protesters' questions, the EPRDF government opted for violent mechanisms, blaming them as anti-peace elements, and accusing the students under the anti-terrorism proclamation 652/2009. The regular army was also deployed in schools and small towns, killing over 47 people, injuring, and detaining many more and most of the killings occurred in Ambo town, the epicentre of the Oromo protests (BBC News Africa, 2014).

However, as recounted by another activist, the atrocities against Oromo's youth had unexpected consequences in changing the attitude of those Oromos who were indifferent to the

---

[40] Interviewee Nr. 26, Politician, May 16, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[41] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[42] Ibid

ongoing struggle, prompting them to join the movement[43]. This not only created a reaction that reflects the disgust caused by atrocities committed against students, but also national solidarity among the Oromo. It could be said that this was the moment when the attitude of many Oromo towards the Ethiopian state began to take on a negative turn, making it clear that regaining control over the region was a condition for the exercise of their human rights. Thus, this was a fundamental change to the demands of the protesters, whose initial complaint was against the publication of the Addis Ababa Master Plan.

5.3.2 Second round protests

The second round of the protests, which ran from November 12, 2015 to the end of December 2015, was not only stronger, but the demands of the protesters expanded, taking advantage of a surge of new discontents and rediscovering past grievances of the Oromo people over land grabbing, constitutional Oromia's special interests in Addis Ababa, marginalization, impunity of the security forces, and authoritarianism.

As the EPRDF regime did not respond to the legitimate demands of the demonstrators in the first round, a new round of protests was inevitably expected, which resumed a few months after the government declared its 100% victory in the 2015 elections. The pre-election period in May 2015 prompted the government to temporarily suspend the city expansion project, fearing that continued implementation of the Master Plan would entail significant risks for the OPDO, the ruling regional party of the EPRDF coalition, in the 2015 elections. As expected, the government began to implement the Master Plan immediately in the post-election period.

On November 12, 2015, in the small town of Ginchi, about 80 km west of Addis Ababa, the decision of the local authorities to remove the forest and football field for the investment project reignited massive protests that continued into early 2018. The Ginchi event was linked to the various historical grievances of the Oromo community against the successive Ethiopian regimes, so it sparked protests that dragged the surrounding areas into a wider wave of action in the next weeks and months and spread to several other parts of the region. In this round, the news sparked protest, first in Ambo, then in Mendi, towns west of Addis Ababa, and immediately spread throughout Oromia. Oromo people responded in unison to the nationwide call of Oromo youth, which, among other things, according to one activist, chanted that "we

---

[43] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

were supressed together, so we have to stand together to regain the rights and freedoms that God had given us[44]".

Like the protests of the first round, the second round of protests was aimed primarily at cancelling the Addis Ababa Master Plan. However, unlike its precursors, the second round of protests was widespread throughout the region. This time, the protests affected not only the towns and their suburbs, but also the rural areas of the region, allowing farmers to play a decisive role in organizing and conducting the rallies, which forced concessions to the demand of the protesters.

Consequently, as of January 2016, after the failure of intense crackdowns and a 100% electoral victory, faced with tens of thousands of mostly peaceful Oromo protesters across the region, the regime was forced to make concessions. An interviewee, who is a member of the Oromia regional council, claimed that at the three-day emergency meeting held in Adama, the OPDO Central Committee announced the government's decision to pursue the "special interests" of the state of Oromia in Addis Ababa that were recognized in article 49 of the federal constitution, abandoning the proposed Master Plan and recognized the protesters' demands as fair and legitimate[45]. The fact that the regime, which had rejected the legitimate demands as agendas of anti-peace elements and declared Oromo activists and demonstrators as terrorists, was forced to make this concession, was a great victory for the protesters.

Protesters hailed the concession as a hard-fought victory, but by this time, the demands of the protesters had grown much wider. A veteran politician said cancelling the Master Plan was too little and too late to stop the protests[46]. By that time, the protesters were talking not only about the plan, but about the brutal response of the security forces to the protests, the jailing of students and women, and the decades of discrimination that Oromo experienced. Its cancellation had little effect on the protesters as they lost confidence in the government, so protests continued, building on a surge of new discontent and rediscovering past grievances.

The government's reaction to the protests of the second round was worse than the reaction to the first round. From the very beginning, the protest movement was accused of being infiltrated by rebel groups such as the OLF, which the government called a terrorist organization supported by outside forces, such as Eritrea and Egypt. These kinds of labels were actively

---

[44] Ibid.
[45] Interviewee Nr. 26, Politician, May 16, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[46] Interviewee Nr. 33, Politician, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.

used to discredit the protesters and to justify the deployment of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force in the region, which was eventually deployed on December 15, 2015. Added to this were the arrests of several opposition figures and their members, such as the prominent human rights activist Bekele Gerba of the Oromo-Federalist Congress, said an opposition politician[47].

Despite threats from the government, Oromo youth continued their struggle to defend the autonomy of their region and the rights of the Oromo people. Even with the brutal violence in which the regime tried to quell the protests, hardly a day had passed without mass demonstrations, often occurring simultaneously in several cities, towns, and districts of Oromia. In the diaspora, media such as the Oromo Media Network (OMN) has played an important role in connecting remote parts of Oromia with diaspora communities around the world. Relying on this source and through other networks such as Facebook and Twitter, Oromo youth actively participated in online campaigns that attracted the attention of the international community starting from the end of 2015. Following the adoption of a strong resolution by European Parliament that condemns the use of excessive force by the security forces in Oromia[48] in January 2016 and the US State Department statements on the situation in Ethiopia, the international community's silence on the violence against Oromo youths was lifted. As this appeal to the international community began to gain attention, non-Oromo groups who were silent also began to express their actions of solidarity with the protests in Oromia, while the demands of the protesters this time expanded to include respect for human rights and expanding democratic space.

5.3.3 Third round protests

In 2016, the third round of protests, which lasted from late January to July, was not only widespread, but also attracted other regions to join the movement. Despite the termination of the Master Plan, these protests began in Guder West Shewa Oromia zone, and in February they escalated to an unprecedented level, spreading to other areas, but the demands in this round were different from its predecessors. This round of protests was triggered by the fact that, despite recognizing the protesters' demands as just and legitimate, the regime did not take any concrete actions in support of the concessions made in January. The regime also continued to view youth protests as a terrorist operation to justify the use of force, so the decision to halt the controversial Master Plan that initially sparked the protests could not end the crisis.

---

[47] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.
[48] See: European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2016 on the situation in Ethiopia (2016/2520(RSP))

By mid-February 2016, in the West Arsi in Oromia, near the town of Shashamene, federal police arrested a bus full of wedding guests singing Oromo songs in honour of brides and grooms. Police claimed that Oromo activists were about to foment protests. The incident sparked clashes between crowds of local farmers gathered around the bus and the federal police. Police quickly used their weapons indiscriminately, causing multiple deaths and inflicting heavy damage in the nearby towns of Siraro, Shala and Shashamene (BBC News Africa, 2016). Police violence continued for almost a week. Led mostly by high school and university students, the new protests quickly gained momentum after they quickly spread to over 400 different locations across the Oromia region, with farmers, government officials and other groups now joining the students (Kelecha, 2019).

One of the key political developments in this round, according to one activist, was that the non-Oromo groups began to openly express their actions of solidarity with the protests in the Oromia region[49]. The persistence of Oromo protests in the face of the government's harsh reaction inspired other regions to air their grievances, especially Amhara region, where the persecution and imprisonment of many outspoken individuals who were members of the Committee advocating for the reintegration of the Wolqait area into Amhara and other groups advocating for the identity issues of the Qemant people, together spawned an uprising in Amhara region since late July 2016.

Amhara activists claimed that the administrative district of Wolqait was part of Gonder in the present Amhara region, but following the seizure of state power by the TPLF in 1991 and the introduction of a new federal structure, it was placed under the Tigray region[50]. The public had already deep grievances with these actions, so protests erupted as security forces tried to arrest Wolqait's self-determination and identity committee leader, Colonel Demeke Zewdu, on terrorism charges. There were as well repeated rumours about the transfer of border lands to Sudan which were spread by opposition groups and the diaspora in the United States. The Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio (ESAT), a Washington-based opposition television station, repeatedly aired these issues. A politician said online activism and ESAT provided space to articulate Amhara's grievances, which soon escalated into the Amhara uprising and spread to Debre Tabor, Bahir Dar, Debre Markos, as well as other towns and districts across

---

[49] Interviewee Nr. 22, Activist, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[50] Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.

the region, taking advantage of a prolonged surge of anger against what they perceived as a discriminatory regime towards the entire population of Amhara[51].

Mass protests in the country's two largest regions, Amhara, and Oromia, quickly began to reflect and reinforce each other's indignation against the regime's repressive practices and this spawned a strong national movement. As the regime continued to militarily respond to all political demands in both regions, these still competing movements, the Amhara uprising, and Oromo protests, began to feel more united to express dissatisfaction with the dominant position of the TPLF and the lack of rule of law and gross violations of human rights, for which there was no accountability.

In a nutshell, the third round of protests was widespread and engulfed the country, attracting other regions to join the movement and voice their grievances. As usual, the government continued to use excessive force against demonstrators and accused foreign elements of inciting protests. An activist, who used to organize public solidarity actions in London, said that as government repression against protesters worsened significantly as the movement grew, protesters also continued to expand their demands and were determined to find their own delivery[52]. By expanding their support base, the third round of protests mainly focused on issues of autonomy and rights enshrined in the constitution, as well as on the demand to bring to justice those security officials and politicians who violated the law and committed atrocities against the protesters.

5.3.4 Fourth round protests

The fourth round of protests, which ran from August to September 2016, marked a turning point in the youth protest movement for several reasons. In August 2016, two major events took place: the first was a Grand rally, and the second was the solidarity protests of athlete Feyisa Lelisa at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Third, after September 2016, activists applied new tactics of civil disobedience that attracted widespread attention, further fuelling the protests.

August 6, 2016 was very important to the youth organizing the protest movements because the grand rally showed a clear departure from previous demonstrations in terms of coordination and mobilization. This rally was the first ever Oromia-wide protest, which mobilized more than

---

[51] Interviewee Nr. 13, Politician, March 27, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[52] Interviewee Nr. 6, Activist, May 26, 2019, London.

200 districts and 20 zonal cities in the region on the same day including the capital Addis Ababa. It marked the culmination of a year-long demonstrations and served to express the youth's collective grievance and suffering at the hands of the EPRDF regime, reflecting, according to one activist, 'a shared desire for a just peace'[53]. The protests were unprecedented in scope, and hundreds of thousands of people took part in these largely non-violent protests (Horne, 2016). The rally demonstrated the ability of online diaspora and social media activism in an authoritarian country with limited internet penetration, an activist argued[54].

One of the protest leaders said that the grand rally came at a time when the regime lost all possible reasons to hide its authoritarian practices, placing self-interest and repression over justice, equality, and democracy[55]. This indicates that the demonstrators united in their anger and indignation against the brutality of the military towards the civilian population. Thousands of people also marched in solidarity with the youth demonstrators, especially in Gondar and Bahir Dar in Amhara region, with protesters seen carrying banners expressing this solidarity (BBC News Africa, 2016). This created a sense of marching in the company of all the people who were offended by the regime's ruthless dictatorial practice. As one activist explained, "the youth protesters categorically and unequivocally expressed their rejection of the regime at this rally, urging them to uphold justice, equality, and freedom for all"[56].

There were also other reasons that made this grand rally unmatched when compared to other protests in the past. One of the reasons was that the residents of Addis Ababa managed to openly voice their grievance at a demonstration that took place in Meskel square at the heart of the capital, braving the harsh security measures of the authorities. The second reason was that the grand rally had a significant impact on the protest movements, signalling the end of the EPRDF regime, clearing the doubts among the public as to whether it was a movement or a protest. On August 6, 2016, when Oromo and Amhara activists organized a nationwide protest joining in solidarity, they realized that they had created a unified, disciplined, and national movement so that they had the confidence and ability to unleash their utmost effort to put an end to the EPRDF's rule in Ethiopia. Thus, the rally made it clear that the protests were no longer a protest against one issue, rather a movement aiming to end the rule of EPRDF regime.

---

[53] Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[54] Interviewee Nr. 20 (a) Student-activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[55] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[56] Interviewee Nr. 20 (a), Student-activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

The defiance of athlete Feyisa Lelisa at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, crossing his arms over his head - a symbol of the youth resistance - was another vital political event in this round that added another monumental significance to the mass protests. The athlete's gesture came directly from the nonviolent resistance movement that was organizing demonstrations across Oromia and Amhara regions. A dozen international media interested in the meaning of his symbol went further, covering the protest movements in Ethiopia, presenting the story of how Feyisa Lelisa won silver for running, but gold for bravery. An athlete, who is herself a gold medallist, said Lelisa used the Olympics stage as a venue to draw the attention of the international community to injustice and symbolize the death of democracy in Ethiopia[57].

While the grand rally in August 2016 created a movement of national protests, the defiance of athlete Feyisa created international awareness of the youth protests. This led to the fact that the regime came under heavy pressure due to the youth protests in the country and pressure from the international community and the media from the outside. Lelisa's solidarity action served as a call for global public consciousness. An academic explained that the story was covered by international media for several weeks and marked a turning point for the activists, who until then needed global attention[58]. Hence, activists used this opportunity to fit into their narrative of the protest movements. One activist explained that for the first time the protesters got the opportunity to be heard by a global audience[59].

Along with attracting the attention of the international community, Lelisa's bold actions had a diplomatic influence on the Ethiopian government: it put the Western allies in an awkward position, exposing their silence about massive human rights violations in Ethiopia. EPRDF authorities could no longer dismiss the causes of protests as an act of what they described as a handful of extremist saboteurs in the diaspora and neighbouring countries such as Egypt and Eritrea.

It is clear that the youth protesters had global networks and global connections, as technological advances allowed new structures such as satellite TV channels and social media to play an increasingly important role in mobilizing youth across the country, facilitating engagement with the diaspora. Noting the role of the mainstream and social media in mobilizing the public, the government passed cyber legislation restricting online activity and also designated media such as the Oromia Media Network (OMN) and Ethiopian Satellite TV (ESAT) as terrorist

[57] Interviewee Nr. 37, Athlete, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[58] Interviewee Nr. 7, Academic, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[59] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

media. Diaspora solidarity rallies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe have been held in support of the youth movement and to hold the Ethiopian government and its allies accountable for development and security assistance given to the regime. Moreover, there was a humanitarian aid team in the diaspora that, through local networks, provided coordinated and effective assistance to victims of security forces. There were also groups that supported diplomatic efforts in a strategic and coordinated manner to help fight to end TPLF's dominance. Feyisa's actions contributed to the mobilization of such diaspora solidarity actions, which further strengthened the protest movement as it attracted the attention of the international community.

In addition to solidarity protests across the diaspora, political prisoners Bekele Gerba and others declared a three-day national mourning, which began on August 25, 2016. In response to a letter smuggled from prison, citizens shaved their heads and dressed in black clothes as a sign of solidarity with the imprisoned protesters and of grief over those who were killed by government security forces. In Ethiopian cultures, shaved head and black clothes are part of the process of mourning after the death of a loved one. One opposition politician explained that the protesters used local culture as a way to resist the regime, urging people to mourn those who were martyred and visit the families of the martyrs and those who were hospitalized with injuries sustained during the peaceful protest[60].

Building on these achievements, the protest movements entered a new phase in September 2016, as the protesters started to apply a new set of tactics of civil disobedience known as nonviolent coercion. Nonviolent coercion is a mechanism of change in nonviolent action by which protesters' demands are met against the will of the regime, undermining, or wresting the regime's effective control over the situation through widespread non-cooperation and defiance (Sharp, 2012). Changes in tactics and strategy of resistance used during this round were the result of the continued atrocities that the protesters faced with the security forces. Accordingly, protests in Oromia and Amhara regions, changing their strategies, demanded a weekly boycott of the market, measures aimed at using their resources more effectively to support the people's struggle for freedom, while putting pressure on the financial basis of the regime, which has since become an integral part of their struggle.

Protesters deliberately chose the festive seasons, especially the weeks leading up to major holidays since intense economic activity is always observed at this time. One opposition

---

[60] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.

politician explained that the activists mobilized people not to spend a cent if that would impede their struggle[61]. An activist also explained that the market boycott campaign was used not only to weaken the economic power of the regime, but also to distinguish between businesses that meet people's needs for social justice and those that support the oppressive system[62]. Activists negotiated with farmers, business owners and merchants to refrain from delivering their products to the markets of major cities. Merchants and businesses who violated the call for a boycott were considered as the TPLF supporters, therefore, their business activity and movements were interrupted. A civil engineering graduate who made a living driving Bajaj explained that elders played an important role in mediating between protesters and business owners, mostly encouraging business owners to cooperate positively by closing their businesses during market boycotts[63].

The stay-at-home campaign aimed at avoiding mobility, except for time in churches or mosques for prayer with people of their faith. Everyone remained at home, remembering their martyrs, and reflecting on the strategies and tactics of their struggle for the next steps. For example, the initial premise of these measures was that, because of the huge contribution of the Oromia region to the country's economy, the Oromo protesters believed that they themselves had financed the killing machine, which the TPLF used to kill their children, so it was necessary to stop it. An activist explained that "these actions were not an ordinary measure, as they required enormous economic sacrifices, nonetheless activists had no choice but to resort to these temporary economic sacrifices because the lives of the entire generation were at stake"[64]. This was a legitimate concern expressed by the campaigners and successfully served the purpose. The attack on the economic system that feeds the TPLF regime was considered as a reward to protesters who waged a national struggle for emancipation.

The measures were also aimed at conveying the movement's message and spreading the new acts of resistance in ordinary places of people's daily life, so the newly adopted nonviolent actions seriously made resistance a household item. For example, boycotting the Ethiopian Commercial Bank (CBE) service was one of such measures taken by activists in this round of protests. People were encouraged to use private banks instead of the CBE for their banking needs, so that they could reduce government revenues. Ethiopian diaspora communities around

---

[61] Ibid
[62] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[63] Interviewee Nr. 25, A Bajaj driver, May 9, 2019, Adama.
[64] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

the world were also advised to use alternative methods of sending remittances and avoided transferring to CBE accounts. In this regard, one academic explained that "the residents of towns like Nekemte and Ambo literally took all their money from state-owned banks, observing the demands of the boycott campaign. When such news spread, the government immediately turned off the Internet and the telephone line, and CBE refused to allow people to withdraw their own money"[65].

As human resources are also the most important source of power for an authoritarian regime, activists pushed for the country's bureaucracy to join non-cooperation or stay at home actions to make the administrative apparatus ungovernable as they represent important people and groups who obey, cooperate, or help the system operate. Such measures helped the protest movement boldly project social issues, allowing everyone to participate in the protests in every possible way. Acts of resistance manifested themselves in all their diversity in the public daily life, as soon as the boycotts and stay-at-home campaigns began, which made the story of youth protests part of the history of everyday political resistance. The protests in this round, beside carrying voices in the search for justice, had an incredibly successful, mostly non-violent, resistance that restored their power and undermined the regime's ability to control and oppress. They remained committed to horizontal peace, despite provocations by the regime's sympathisers, against other ethnic groups, especially ethnic Tigrayans (Gardner, 2018).

All of the above tactics of protest have demonstrated the growing maturity of civil disobedience in Ethiopia, as activists followed a commendable non-violent form of resistance, thereby not only demonstrating complete rejection of the regime, but also dampening the false narrative that the regime used to label them as terrorists. The regime's partners also continued to express deep concern and were urged to allow the United Nations to investigate serious human rights violations in the country. However, the regime knew that allowing the UN investigation would expose the unspeakable atrocities that the world did not pay due attention, so the regime rejected all international calls for independent investigations (Horne, 2017).

5.3.5 Fifth round protests

The fifth-round protests that lasted from October 2016 to the end of July 2017 are linked to the stampede that killed many people during the October Irreecha festival in Bishoftu, a town fifty kilometres from the capital, and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency by the

---

[65] Interviewee Nr. 42, Activist, April 26, 2019, Nekemte.

federal government. Irreecha is a most important cultural Thanksgiving festival of the Oromo people, where millions gather to celebrate the end of the rainy season and welcome the harvest season (Regassa and Zelek, 2016). Attendees usually use the gathering as an opportunity to sing resistance songs, express their grievances, condemn human rights violations, and demand respect for their rights. Thus, October 2, 2016 hoped to be an important day for the youth, especially those at the forefront of the protest movement, to seize the opportunity to reaffirm their determination to continue the struggle with a new spirit and strength.

However, the regime also sought to use the opportunity for its own political gain, as this time coincided with UNESCO's inscription of the *Gada* system, the indigenous democratic socio-political system of the Oromo people, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural World Heritage of Humanity in 2016 (UNESCO, 2016). An activist claimed that government officials massively transported their members and supporters to Bishoftu, where a celebration was held with instructions to block anti-government protesters[66]. A government official explained that, deliberately ignoring the sacred cultural norms of the Thanksgiving events, some authorities tried to take over the festival stage, but youth activists blocked them and booed the impostors off the stage[67]. The chaos, tensions and anger over these machinations quickly turned to unified expressions of protest. The crowds held up crossed wrists above their heads – a popular gesture that had by then become the symbol of resistance.

The mood at the festival shifted as youth started chanting and singing resistance songs. One activist explained that "it was in the midst of such a peaceful protest that Ethiopian military helicopters began to fly over the crowd at low altitude, escalating fear, and tensions. But, defying the military efforts to intimidate the crowd, the protesters moved forward and some of them took the stage"[68]. Another interviewee who attended the festival further explained that while these machinations were taking place, a student named Gemeda Wario grabbed the microphone from one of the speakers on stage and echoed the budding revolution that heralded the end of TPLF rule; chanting in English: "Down, Down, Woyane!"[69]. Woyane is the colloquial term for the authoritarian TPLF leaders. The security forces then raised their heavy hand against civilian protesters, causing a stampede in which dozens of people died. As usual, the funeral service of the victims turned into anti-government protests.

---

[66] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[67] Interviewee Nr. 39, Politician, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[68] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[69] Interviewee Nr. 15, Professional, April 19, 2019, Shashemene.

According to protesters, the Irreecha atrocities were a planned and coordinated act of revenge for the youth protests that had handicapped the state machinery. One activist firstly stated that government officials knowingly carried out the act of sabotage to override sacred cultural norms. Second, he claimed that federal special commandos were deployed to mingle with festival attendees dressed in Oromo cultural clothing to target the protest leaders[70]. What reinforced these claims were the fact that federal authorities disarmed Oromia police ahead of festival day, fearing a possible clash with federal security forces, as there were signs that some Oromia police officers had begun to refuse to shoot at peaceful demonstrators. This arrangement suggests a well organised plot of security forces to provoke a stampede that ensured the deaths of people fleeing bullets and tear gas. The stampede at the festival sparked sporadic public actions that caused destruction of government institutions, including dozens of foreign factories and flower farms they believe had exacerbated their suffering. Anger against foreign firms was mostly fuelled by those firms that underpaid their employees, or those that protesters said were government accomplices and operated to evict people from their lands without creating the promised jobs for the local population. On the other account, many local people who were employed in those firms lost their jobs after the destructions. An activist explained that protesters defended their actions as evidence that an economic model based on a denial of democracy that robs people of their basic human rights will not be sustainable[71].

Declaring a six-month's state of emergency on November 9, 2016, the EPRDF regime intensified its repression, deploying federal military to subside the protest movements. Another activist explained that the main goal of the state of emergency was to curb the wave of protests in Amhara and Oromia regions by instilling fear in the people's minds, silencing critical voices and locking up suspected dissidents, whom the government considered "ringleaders"[72]. Following the visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel amid the state of emergency in October 2016, Prime Minister Hailemariam pledged democratic reforms to ensure proper parliamentary representation for Ethiopians. Some opposition representatives also called on the government to hold early elections, believing that the crisis could only be resolved through new elections. This the government ruled out, indicating the elections would be held on schedule in 2020 (Rinke & Maasho, 2016).

---

[70] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[71] Interviewee Nr. 20 (a), Student-activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[72] Interviewee Nr. 6, Activist, May 26, 2019, London.

Instead, the regime began to lean toward an "accommodation" approach to achieve a settlement of some demands of youth protests, and as such a settlement was mainly intended to bring some positive benefits to the government to defuse tensions and create an impression of "fairness" to improve the regime's international image. For example, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn announced cabinet reshuffles that gave high-profile ministerial appointments to Oromos, replacing some of the TPLF positions with OPDO members. As such, the communications minister and government spokesman Getachew Reda, who called the protesters "witches" with "satanic" actions (Gabisa, 2016), was removed, and replaced by Negeri Lencho, and Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom was also replaced by Workneh Gebeyehu (Financial Times, 2016). But unfortunately, this time the cabinet reshuffles did not satisfy public discontent, because the protesters had already shifted their demands to regime change. Farmers in the troubled West Shewa Oromia region were the first to reject a political response in a cabinet reshuffle, as protesters sought a change of government and a new system. In the words of one politician, the appointment of few cabinet ministers with Oromo origin was a move "too little, too late" to curb protests and was unable to reassure the demonstrators[73].

On the other hand, after the regime ruled out the possibility of holding early voting, according to one activist[74], the protesters, changing their tactics during this state of emergency, began working clandestinely with the Oromo and Amhara nationalist members of the ruling party. The activist further explains that an agreement was reached through bargains and negotiations between the reforming wing of the ruling party and organizers of the youth protests during secret meetings they held in Europe and US. The reform group was convinced that it would not be able to continue its closed policy and repressive methods due to pressure from popular protests. Thus, the option of political openness and the transition to a democratic system was agreed with the organizers of protest movements (Siraj, 2020). After setting these common goals, they worked together on a mechanism that allowed nationalist OPDO and ANDM members to take charge of the party in defiance of the norms of democratic centralism of the ERPDF. This made the OPDO the first party to start destroying democratic centralism when on 23 October 2016 it elected Lemma Megersa as party chairman and president of the Oromia region. On this occasion, the OPDO for the first time elected its own chairman and president of the region, relinquishing leaders that had previously been appointed by the head of the TPLF/EPRDF. How the OPDO's new leadership came to power was consequential, making it

---

[73] Interviewee Nr. 33, Politician, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[74] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

the first political space in the coalition to challenge the power hierarchy, assisted by the public protests that threatened the cohesion of the ruling elite, expanded the capacity of those in need of change, and gradually joined popular protests. As the nationalists took over the party, they continued to push for changes from within the government, while activists and diaspora groups from outside mounted diplomatic pressure on the regime.

Taking advantage of the regime's misdiagnosis of the state of emergency as playing a stabilizing role, activists made a conscious decision to regroup and strategize their struggle, transforming street protests into a power struggle between the federal government and regional authorities, which were under pressure from mass protests. The former tried to incapacitate the regional administration in order to allow the federal army to operate without restriction to contain the movement, while the latter opposed the federal government's encroachments on its constitutional autonomy and self-rule. Thus, for the first time, the demands of the Oromo protests, encapsulated as *Abbaa biyummaa* (i.e., self-governing Oromia), began to be openly defended by the nationalist leaders of the region, which simply turned street resistance into a power struggle between hardliners and soft-liners within the government.

The altercation forced the EPRDF to go through a period of a self-examination and criticism in line with the party's norms, to which they agreed for the first time on the need to create an independent committee to investigate human rights violations during the state of emergency. Again, instead of responding adequately to public discontent, the federal government attempted to wash its bloody hands by issuing a report from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in early April 2017 that publicly accused ODPO officials of being responsible for the deaths during the Irreecha celebration on the pretext that they could postpone the festival[75]. One ODP official explained that during the hearing of the EHRC's report in the parliament, as well as in cabinet meetings, OPDO officials were held accountable for the atrocities, rather than federal officials and security forces that orchestrated the stampede[76].

The report not only angered the nationalist OPDO members, but also solidified the split within the ruling EPRDF, federal and regional governments, as the report was a tactic to exempt and justify federal authorities who were directly responsible for the stampede and repressions inflicted on the non-violent protesters. As the TPLF began losing the battle at the federal and regional levels, it changed its strategies and arguably orchestrated conflicts between ethnic

---

[75] See: Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), 142nd special report on the human rights violations during the state of emergency in Ethiopia, April 2017.
[76] Interviewee Nr. 5, Politician, May 20, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Somalis and Oromo, providing military support to the Somali Liyu police to incite violence on the Somali-Oromo border areas. Oromo activists have also claimed that Somali Liyu police is the creation of the TPLF, toeing the TPLF line, and that many of Liyu's police leaders include TPLF military officers (Lefort, 2017). This was to frame the nationalist leaders of Oromia region as complacent of the then-outlawed OLF, who unprecedentedly defended their autonomy and prevented the federal government from interfering in the region's affairs, one activist explained[77]. Trapped in a power struggle and intra-elite competition within the ruling EPRDF, the two regional governments (Somalia and Oromia) entered into open conflicts, as a result of which Somali and Oromo masses suffered collateral damage in this clash. One of the Somali officials interviewed stated that more than a million people fled from the Somali region of Ethiopia after clashes between Somalis and Oromos, while hundreds of people from both sides were killed as a result of clashes[78]. These conflicts were perpetrated by state actors using regional security forces and militias, so it was the government that perpetrated violence against the protesters. As such, it should be noted that violent government reactions do not indicate the failure of nonviolent method, nor it can be the reason to characterize the movement as violent. If one thing the government's violent response indicates is that the nonviolent movement poses a serious threat to the dictatorship. In short, with fewer protests during the emergency, there could have been real progress in meeting public demands if the regime had been ready. In contrast, the TPLF engaged in proxy war with the Oromia regional government and extended the state of emergency by four months in March 2017, believing that they would emerge victorious with its help.

5.3.6 Sixth round protests

The final, which is the sixth phase of the protests took place from August 2017 to April 2018. In this round of protests, much of the relationship between the protesters and the police turned into friendship. For example, Oromia police began to defend protesters from federal security forces. During the economic boycott and the stay-at-home campaign, which activists announced after the lifting of the state of emergency in early August 2017, federal security forces tried to carry out deadly actions against protesters. Oromia police protected protesters in Ambo and this protection has since become more widespread (The Guardian, 2017). This was supported by progressive forces within the regime, who began to realize that failing to accommodate public grievances would lead the country to a deeper crisis, so new leaders from

---

[77] Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[78] Interviewee Nr. 24, Politician, May 12, 2019, Jijiga.

Oromia and Amhara regions began to openly oppose the disproportionate security response seen in indiscriminate shooting during mass protests.

One Oromia cabinet member convincingly illustrates the above fact as follows: "then-President Lemma Megersa openly welcomed the protesters' demands, tried to exercise the region's constitutional power, resolve some of the popular grievances and managed to prevent military intervention during demonstrations in different parts of the country"[79]. President Lemma also took measures on investment projects that acted in violation of the rules and regulations, revoking their license, and returning unused land illegally controlled by investors to the state land bank (Addis Fortune, 2017). Regional television such as the Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN) and the Amhara Media Corporation (AMC) in an unprecedented way began to broadcast public discontent directly without censorship.

More importantly, the solidarity between the Amhara uprising and the Oromo protests got official recognition from the forces governing the two regions in November 2017, when the OPDO reached out to ANDM in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation. This gave the protestors legitimacy in the official politics of the country, which they did not have in the past, and therefore strengthened the desire to put an end to the dominance of the TPLF. However, the broader alliance established by the OPDO and ANDM to wrestle power away from the TPLF was tactical from the outset, and not strategically anchored on a shared political vision. Evidence of this is the continuing tension between the Amhara and Oromo branches of the newly formed Prosperity Party over the type of federal system needed for the country's future, as well as the country's constitution. Ethiopia's political history shows the difficulties faced by the main elites of Oromo and Amhara to ally themselves durably. The TPLF often tried to use ethnic and ideological cleavages between Oromo and Amhara as a political tool to legitimize and strengthen its political and economic dominance, as well as to precipitate the fall of popular movements (Kelecha, 2019).

However, the persistence of the youth protest movements provided an incentive for community solidarity to overcome divisions, at least temporarily. The tactical alliance between the ANDM and OPDO was an unprecedented blow to the TPLF, as it forced the TPLF to hold a long meeting that took about 35 days from November to early December 2017. At the last critical moment of the country and with deep paralysis within the party, the TPLF was subject to self-examination and criticism, which remained the only way to fight for survival. And then, in

---

[79] Interviewee Nr. 39, Politician, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.

December 2017, the EPRDF Executive Council held a meeting that lasted 17 days amid divisions between hardliners and groups within the party that needed change. In response to the ANDM and OPDO's demands for an end to TPLF dominance during the meeting, one official from Oromia clarified that TPLF had proposed to dissolve EPRDF and form a strong merger party, which OPDO and ANDM rejected as the merger would reverse their gains and weaken their assertiveness[80].

After the meeting, the leaders of the four coalition parties appeared on television to admit and acknowledge their wrongfulness, as well as to take responsibility for it, and appealed to the population with a request for time and calm while they try to solve the problems. EPRDF leaders made it clear that the lack of unity of purpose and action, the lack of democracy, mutual distrust, and erosion of the party's commitment to people's demands, were the main problems diagnosed at the meeting, emphasizing that TPLF dominance played a negative role in the development of the country's democratic process. Although they admitted their problems, they could not work in harmony with each other. They began to act alone and in competition, demonstrating the fact that the ruling EPRDF was eaten alive from the inside, leading the party to a troubled state, lost, stumbling, and at a crossroads. As a result, the TPLF's position within the EPRDF weakened and it lost the ability to act as its own power structure began to collapse, lacking even the appearance of control over them. This signalled almost the collapse of the regime. At last, the EPRDF's balance of power divided, eventually empowering the group that needed change to take the lead, offering an alternative future for the EPRDF and Ethiopia.

With support from the youth movements in Amhara and Oromia regions, the soft-liners in the ruling EPRDF pushed the party towards further serious reforms, leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on February 15, 2018 (Washington Post, 2018). A second state of emergency was also declared the day after Hailemariam's resignation, mainly to subdue tensions within the EPRDF by placing the country under military control. The resignation was another great concession to the Oromo protests and Amhara uprising that already created a rift between hardliners and soft-liners in the ruling coalition. Encouraged by the protests in the two regions, which created a general atmosphere of ungovernability, the ANDM and OPDO outplayed the TPLF in the selection process of the party chairman that led to the election of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister on April 2, 2018.

---

[80] Interviewee Nr. 39, Politician, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.

In short, Abiy's rise to power brought a promise of fundamental changes, which were characterised by numerous political reforms. By embarking on legislative reform to increase political participation and inclusion, measures such as opening up political spaces, the release of political prisoners, the repeal of harsh laws restricting civil society organizations and the media, the return of exiled opposition political groups, and peace rapprochement with Eritrea had received widespread international media coverage and earned Abiy the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. This created an atmosphere of "Abiy-mania" with almost all Ethiopians rallying behind him, leading to a gradual slowdown in street protests. However, the honeymoon period quickly ended, and Abiy's popularity has gradually given way to growing scepticisms and open opposition (Østebø and Tronvoll, 2020: 619).

5.4   Post-protest road to democracy

There are several ways in which anti-authoritarian protests affect the transition to democracy. First, anti-authoritarian protests can lead to democratic reforms through complete disintegration and overthrow of the incumbent regimes. Huntington (1993) called this path of linking anti-regime protests to democracy "replacement". Second, anti-authoritarian protests can push for democratic reform, forcing the incumbent elite to make concessions, creating divisions among the elite through negotiations between regime soft-liners and the opposition. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argue that with the drive coming from popular mobilization, soft-liners distinguish themselves from hardliners in their increased awareness that the regime they have created or in which they hold important positions must benefit from some form of democratic legitimacy. Huntington (1993) called this process "transformation." This path also corresponds to what Gene Sharp (2012) referred to as "conversion". Third, another possibility that can potentially achieve democratization, given sufficient pressure through protests and pressure from the international community, is a negotiated transition between the opposition and ruling parties. Huntington (1993) also called this process "transplacement". This process is believed to coerce the ruling party and the opposition to negotiate the transition, which is guided by a jointly developed roadmap. Fourth, anti-authoritarian protests can also push elites, such as the military, as in Sudan, to overthrow the incumbent and offer political concessions under the existing regime or through a new coalition (Berridge, 2020).

Some of the above scenarios' characteristics can be traced in the chronological analysis of recent political dynamics presented in this chapter. However, as indicated in the introduction, activists applied the nonviolent social movement what Huntington called transformation, or

what Gene Sharp referred as conversion. In the case of Ethiopia, the overthrow of the regime was dangerous given the fact that the state, government, and party are merged. Moreover, since Ethiopia is an ethnically fragmented state with a mobilized, polarized, and intensified contending nationalism, the overthrow of the ruling party raised fears among protesting public that the process could lead to the collapse of the government and even the state. The non-existence of credible and viable opposition political parties operating in the country, as well as the fragmentation of the ruling party following the death of strongman Meles Zenawi, made the transition through transplacement also unviable, as reaching binding and reliable negotiations was difficult. Hence, activists openly advocated a transition through transformation or conversion, as this scenario was viable in the case of Ethiopia, because activists knew that popular protests had already created a rift within the ruling party, and the soft-liners began to distinguish themselves from the hardliners. The results of the Arab Spring, such as the collapse of Libya, Syria and Yemen, also reinforced the belief that attempts to overthrow the EPRDF regime would pose a threat to Ethiopia, protester leaders argued[81].

There are also various mechanisms that the protesters use to bring about the collapse of authoritarian regimes, such as undermining the legitimacy of the incumbent regime and creating new relationships and resources that increase the solidarity of protesters to overcome barriers to mobilization (della Porta, 2014), exposing regime crackdown to shape international diplomacy, condemning repression (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Security officials may object to repression for moral reasons or fear of persecution and public retribution, and this latter case was crucial for the military defection during the Arab Spring (Nepstad, 2013). Such mechanisms allowed the removal of authoritarian regimes and leaders such as Omar al-Bashir in Sudan, Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt, and the TPLF in Ethiopia. But ultimately democratization must take place through reforms and negotiations between politicians, with popular mobilization to strengthen the negotiating power of the opposition groups in need of democratization (Slater & Wong, 2013).

Be that as it may, while these actions may increase the likelihood of regime collapse, for anti-regime protests to increase the likelihood of a democratic transition, they must be non-violent. Social movement theorists argue that the goals and organizational structure of nonviolent movements are more likely to contribute to democratic process than the goals and organizational structure of violent movements. As such, the goals of nonviolent regime change

---

[81] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

and democratization movements are more attractive to social groups and regime elites than violent movements (Gleditsch et al, 2015). Moreover, the organizational structures of nonviolent movements also tend to be more horizontal, which promotes power sharing, bargaining and negotiations, compromise, and openness (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013). In this perspective, the key result of the Oromo and Amhara protest movements was the mobilization of youths in defiance of the TPLF, solidifying their resistance and expanding the social base of the movement, which proved to be broad enough to challenge the status quo and topple a deeply entrenched authoritarian regime. In particular, the expanding social base of the protest movements, which remained largely leaderless and clandestine, relied on non-traditional forms of organization and communication, and focused on broad demands such as regime change and broad-based democratic reform. These characteristics of protest movements meant that it allowed the protesters to spiral out of control and withstand the state's repressive apparatus, gathering international condemnation and solidarity action against the EPRDF regime.

However, these same natures of the movements, such as becoming clandestine and somewhat leaderless, also limited the movement's potential to exploit the political opportunities created after the fall of the authoritarian regime. Indeed, the post-protest environment is one in which the dominant theme is the return of the "old". This is largely taking the form of re-applying old regime tactics to solidify the interests of new elites who played a role during the protests, positioning themselves well to secure an advantage over the opposition in the post-protest environment.

Moreover, the results of this chapter are partly consistent with della Porta's (2014) assertions that nonviolent protests mobilized for regime change and democratization continue in a post-protest environment to bring about democratization, mobilizing against authoritarian tendencies and its legacies in the transition process. From this perspective, while the protests continued as in della Porta's claim, the role of activists and academics who had played a pivotal role during the protests diminished. They were either side-lined or lacking personal political ambitions to engage in formal politics after change was achieved. In the absence of strong countervailing forces and the diminishing role of activists, the new elites leading the transition, instead of addressing the demands of protesters, they arguably began to redefine the process in ways that enhance their prospects in future elections. Particularly, Abiy's *medemer* political philosophy, leadership style, the hasty dissolution of the EPRDF, postponement of elections under the pretext of covid-19, the crackdown on prominent opposition leaders following the assassination of prominent musician and activist Hachalu Hundesa in late June 2020, and more

importantly, the ineffective management of the transition process has drawn much criticism from Ethiopia's increasingly polarized political landscape (Østebø and Tronvoll, 2020: 619). This allowed, the EPRDF's elites and allies continued to dominate the country during the current political transition. Such unequal power relations within the ruling coalition had often been a source of political crisis and rifts among party leaders until recently, when the front dissolved in late 2019 and was replaced by a new merger party, the Prosperity Party.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter presented a chronological analysis of recent political dynamics in Ethiopia with a focus on public protests in Amhara and Oromia regions, as well as the crucial roles of reformist factions from the ruling party. As such, the chapter explains how Amhara and Oromo youth activists as well as the reform wing of the dissolved EPRDF have played a role in advancing the conditions for a transition to democracy in Ethiopia. The findings are also partly consistent with the claims of transition scholars such as O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) that the transition to democracy required splits within an authoritarian regime as a condition. Moreover, as Della Porta (2014) argued, nonviolent protests against the authoritarian regime can increase the likelihood of democratic transition, as initially happened with the youth movements in the two regions, the effects of which stimulated political liberalization in early 2018. The post-protest context is also shaped by the numerous reforms carried out by the new prime minister, earning him to win regional and international recognition, as well as the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, creating an atmosphere of "Abiy-mania" with almost all Ethiopians rallying behind him. However, the honeymoon period quickly ended, and as we will explore in the next chapter, Abiy Ahmed's popularity has gradually given way to growing scepticisms and open opposition. More importantly, in the absence of strong countervailing forces to bargain on behalf of the protesting public, as the Amhara uprising and Oromo protests illustrate, non-violent protests and splits within an authoritarian regime in and of themselves do not necessarily guarantee a transition to democracy. Ethiopia's case seems to demonstrate a failure to bring about either democracy or peace after years of protests (The Economist, 2020). Despite the fact that the mass protests provided an opportunity to transform the country to a genuine democracy, the groups leading the current transition have so far been unable to bring about the decisive changes expected in the functioning of the political system.

Chapter Six: Unsettled Democratization in Abiy's Ethiopia

6.1 Introduction

As we have seen in previous chapters, democratic participation completely diminished under the EPRDF, leading to a sharp closure of the political space. These measures, along with increasing barriers and contradictions in the practical implementation of the developmental state, sparked a growing crescendo of mass protests and political unrest that engulfed the country. The mass protests erased the status quo as the advent of change also gave way to renewed hope that Ethiopia could finally be democratized, with Abiy taking the lead.

With Abiy's rise to power, the winds of change began to blow in Ethiopia, creating a euphoric atmosphere in which Ethiopians everywhere were discussing possibilities for a genuine transition to democracy. This change marks that Ethiopia is entering a third transition period, after the first in 1974 and the second in 1991, but both transitions failed to transform Ethiopia into a democratic state. The current transition has begun with hope and several inspiring reforms. Measures that have created a euphoric mood include, inter alia: media freedom has expanded with the unblocking of news sites. Thousands of political prisoners were released, and armed opposition groups were decriminalized from a list of designated terrorist organisations. Repressive laws – such as those on counterterrorism and civil society organisations – are replaced by more liberal ones. The youth, who were at the forefront of the anti-government protests, for their part felt victorious because their protests led to the defeat of the TPLF, as this was one of their main demands during the protests. Abiy Ahmed's inaugural speech and his early political reforms reinforced this growing hope and morale of Ethiopians as he made great strides in decompressing the authoritarian regime that he inherited from the past, which are also seen as an expression of a strong desire to create a stable democratic space on a wider scale.

However, as the euphoric sentiment gradually subsided, public opinion began to differ in relation to events occurring in the transition process, mainly taking two forms. Regime supporters argue that change is happening too quickly, and some even believe the movement has already reached a high degree of democratization, as the lifting of media restrictions allowed people to write and enthusiastically debate about the promises made during the early honeymoon period. Regime critics see the prime minister's actions as misplaced priorities to divert the public attention from groping for a genuine democracy due to his rejection of warnings from activists and the media that the transition could be thwarted if proper political

negotiations are not held on an agreed roadmap for managing inclusively the transition process. This slowly but surely led to the fading of the initial optimism regarding genuine democratization, increasing the spread of violent ethnic conflicts throughout the country. With the advent of political liberalization, the long-standing ethnic tensions that had once been buried began to resurface as hostile rhetoric, leading to mass displacement and the breakdown of the rule of law across the country, threatening progress on major reforms (Crisis Group, 2019; Yusuf, 2019). This obscures the transition, creating an uncertainty of whether Ethiopia will successfully undergo a democratic transition after years of protests and decades of repressive authoritarian rule.

It is in this context that this chapter analyses the changes that have occurred, and the challenges associated with the reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The analysis emphasizes current gains and opportunities for democracy, as well as the challenges facing the transition, both within the regime and from the outside. Accordingly, the chapter assesses the progress made in deepening democracy in Ethiopia in terms of three elements of the theoretical framework, namely the role of civil society organizations, cultural democracy, and liberalized autocracy, which are the determinants of democracy identified in the second chapter. Cultural democracy claims that only democracy compatible with a country's history and culture can create the political conditions conducive to successful democratic development (Osabu-Kle, 2019). From this perspective, this chapter uses the opportunity to understand and appreciate the guiding principles of the liberal model, as well as the institutional characteristics of Oromo democracy, to contribute the democratization of politics by extracting functional elements from the Gadaa system to help shape local governance in Oromia. Moreover, the chapter also critically examines the conceptions of democracy in Ethiopia in line with Robert Dahl's (1989) definition of democracy, which means a political system that includes participation, representation, deliberation, and civil and political rights, so that democratization becomes political reform aimed at achieving these goals. This approach sheds light on the hurdles and structural obstacles of modern electoral democracy and encourages reflection on the democratic institutions and forms that would better suit the complexities of Ethiopian societies that are not readily suitable for simply emulating foreign ideologies from the outside.

From the perspective of liberalized autocracy, the chapter also examines whether the reform launched after Abiy Ahmed came to power was a genuine initiative to move the country to democracy. Or were there deliberate actions taken by the regime to meet some of the demands of the people and the international community, allowing the ruling elites to remain in power to

avoid the high costs of dealing with social crises, viewing "limited reforms" as less costly? The reason Dahl's definition of democracy is considered more useful for this study is that it provides a wide range of relevant criteria for identifying the elements that should be included in the current transition period for successful democratization.

With these goals in mind, this chapter is divided into seven sections: Following this section, the second section analyses the liberalization measures that Abiy Ahmed took in the first months of his premiership, as well as the main factors that led to the current transition. The third section provides an analysis of the main factors hindering the current transition. The fourth section discusses the different understanding and form of democracy in Ethiopia. The fifth section is a discussion that focuses on the rationale for the need to base Ethiopian democracy on Ethiopian foundations, drawing inspiration from the country's various indigenous practices to overcome the country's democratic deficit, as well as the problem of emulation. The sixth section presents an analysis that interrogate the Western liberal model as well as Oromo indigenous democratic culture as one example to decipher the relevant elements that need to be preserved. The final section, section six provides concluding remarks.

6.2 Factors that cause the current transition.

The appointment of Abiy Ahmed as prime minister marked a turning point in the political development of Ethiopia, marking a sharp shift in the country's rhetoric, increasing tolerance for dissidents, and expanding reform of governance structures. Thus, for Ethiopia, 2018 was a significant year of political change, which showed resolve for positive results in human rights and in the intention to fundamentally change the political and economic trajectories of the country.

Despite the steadily declining trend over the decade to early 2018, Ethiopia was among the most improved countries for 2019 on the Fragile State Index (FSI) (The Fund for Peace, 2019). The improvement of the FSI's score by 5.3 points in 2019 was considered as a success story for Abiy's political reform. The main driving forces of this dramatic shift were the changes that led to the bold measures of economic, social, and political openness, adopted by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. In the international arena, Ethiopia has made historic strides in securing peace and security, ending a 20-year border dispute with Eritrea. These early audacious actions demonstrated a significant increase in Abiy's popularity and inspired hope of transformation, making headlines in many international media outlets and earning him the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

The causes of this political shift are multiple, as there are cases and factors that are diverse and complex in nature leading to political changes, as well as the outcomes. Since the factors of political changes are inherently diverse and complex, the current changes in Ethiopia also cannot be explained by one factor. As such, it is important to highlight the main driving forces behind these changes in Ethiopia, as several actors have played their part in bringing about the current transition. As remarked above, the ruling EPRDF has long rejected change, suppressing opposition and curbing reformist elements within the party. The repression forced some groups to take up arms against the regime, as they believed that there was no alternative to challenge the EPRDF authoritarianism other than armed struggle. But the current transition is not associated with any of the rebel movements that waged armed struggles against the regime. As evidence of this fact, many of them were invited to the country after protest movements forced then-Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn to resign and brought Abiy Ahmed to leadership. Opposition forces failed to meaningfully challenge the EPRDF due to their extreme polarization and fragility, in part due to their own repressive policies. Thus, no opposition parties, their leaders or ideology can fake political history and claim the victory of a political current that they did not initiate, control, or deliver.

However, there are other several interrelated and important factors that triggered the change. First, there were economic, cultural, social, and political factors that exacerbated the crisis of the regime and the inability of the EPRDF to effectively confront them. The regime was unable to deal effectively with these crises. It lost its legitimacy further as popular opposition against it intensified, supported by largely nonviolent movements. Having descended into crisis, the EPRDF was forced to embrace political openness and accommodate opposition to overcome its problems.

Second, after the death of the strongman, the late Meles Zenawi in August 2012, concerns emerged about the relative balance of power between the political parties that formed the ruling EPRDF. In particular, the Amhara and Oromo branches of EPRDF complained that they did not enjoy political influence commensurate with their size, even though they represent the country's two largest ethnic groups. This has always been a source of dissatisfaction, causing constant friction especially in OPDO and ANDM against TPLF meddling in their party affairs. For nearly three decades of existence, ANDM and OPDO represented an embarrassment in the eyes of their publics due to their deplorable marginal position in the EPRDF alliance to carry out the bidding of the TPLF almost endlessly. This carefully designed scheme to keep OPDO and ANDM in a subordinate position began to collapse with the death of Zenawi in August

2012. The so-called EPRDF's intergenerational succession strategy, which sought to identify and develop junior but loyal cadres to hold key leadership positions at regional and federal levels, seemed to have worked well to stabilize the country at the beginning of Hailemariam's reign after Meles Zenawi's death. But soon the project began to crumble, which led to a power struggle between several factions within the ruling party who wanted to influence the federal government, which, in turn, reduced the power of the prime minister to a placeholder status. Although the idea was that Meles chose a "neutral" successor by choosing someone from SEPDM, ANDM and OPDO felt they deserved the position of prime minister. However, such grievances in the ruling party did not lead to a significant restructuring of the balance of power, largely due to the party discipline of democratic centralism, and the TPLF continued to control the economy, military, and security structures.

However, after public protests swept the country, EPRDF faced serious internal problems, especially with regards to regional administrations and regional parties, which worsened the situation in the federal government. Prime minister Hailemariam also could not maintain the same hierarchy as before, so he could not fill the power vacuum left behind by Meles' death. The surge in public protests made the federal government weaker than ever and unable to control unrest, leading to competition among regional leaders. The loosening of the command chain at the federal level helped the Amhara and Oromo leaders begin their emancipation. Moreover, popular protests in two regions - Oromia and Amhara - threatened the cohesion of the EPRDF, allowing those in need of change to gradually join the protests, which led to increased public support for youth protest movements, increasing their persistence and the effectiveness of their mobilization against the repressive regime. As protests intensified, the rift between hardliners and soft-liners within the EPRDF widened, and in the end reformist groups became convinced that moving on the road to democracy was the only safest way to avoid the possibility of regime change through popular mobilization.

Moreover, the absence of strong opposition forces capable of coordinating and spearheading the transition increased the bargaining power of reform groups within the EPRDF to continue incumbency during the two years of transition, with the promise of expanding democratic space. In short, ANDM and OPDO leaders did not change the humiliating path they had been on for more than a quarter of a century overnight. The marked transformation of the party is as gradual as it is systematic, and inconceivable had it not been for the youth led protests that have ravaged Ethiopia since April 2014. As such, the ANDM and OPDO's resurgence in post-Meles Zenawi was triggered by the emergence of mass protests against the TPLF authoritarianism.

Third, popular protests in the two largest regions - the Amhara uprising and the Oromo protests that shook the country - are the main trigger of the current transition. This change comes on the basis of a negotiated agreement between reform groups in the EPRDF and lead organizers of popular protests, with the tipping-point provided by TeamLemma after Lemma Megersa was appointed president of the Oromia region. The reform groups were convinced that it could not continue with closed policies and repressive methods due to the pressure of popular protests in the two regions. Thus, the option of political openness and the transition to a democratic system has been agreed with the lead organizers of the protest movements.

As discussed here, the current change is the result of a combination of factors, in particular the pressure from popular protests and the political leadership of reform groups within the EPRDF. Hence, it is a transition from within the existing system and the youth protest movements. The transition process began when the reform group known as TeamLemma became convinced that the cost of opening up and democratization was less than the cost of continuing authoritarian practices. Since then, this reform group has been instrumental in changing the balance of power within the EPRDF and in engineering radical reforms, especially in 2018. The transition process was assumed to follow a gradual transformation of the political system in several stages: from movement to political openness, a promising transition to democracy through free and fair elections, and another stage of consolidating democracy. So far, one thing is clear: the old authoritarian elements of the regime have collapsed, but building a new democratic order faced a major test as there are enormous challenges, ranging from political, security, economic and social problems that required appropriate responses from the new leadership. In light of this, therefore, the next section examines whether the reform launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is a genuine initiative to move the country towards democracy, or measures to keep the ruling elites in power through mild reforms.

6.3   Challenges to the transition

The current transition process in Ethiopia began with the expropriation of power from the TPLF and decompression of authoritarian practices that have existed for almost three decades. Early measures, such as the release of political prisoners and the expansion of freedom of expression, were encouraging steps that reinforced Abiy's early promises to lead the country to democracy. However, over time, Abiy began to face serious challenges in managing the transition process, as the obstacles that need to be overcome are growing, creating frustration over the possibility of moving towards democracy in the current political environment. Three years later, since

April 2018, the team leading the transition appears to have failed to set the country on the right path to democracy. Central to this is the fragility of the countervailing forces involved in the transition process, the failure to accommodate diverse perspectives in the transition agendas, and the complex challenges to the rule of law. In line with this, I classify these main challenges of transition into two categories: weak countervailing forces and ineffective transition management. These challenges are elaborated as follow.

6.3.1 Ineffectual countervailing forces

One of the challenges of democratization is the absence of strong countervailing forces, such as opposition groups and civil society organizations, that pressure the incumbent to agree to democratization, as democracy can hardly be realized at the initiative of the ruling party. A balance of power between competing groups in which no one can dominate others is a prerequisite for democracy. Without such a condition, democracy is extremely vulnerable to a rollback (Diamond, 1994: 5).

The situation in Ethiopia contrasts with these facts, as there is no balance of power between the government and the opposition, either before or after Abiy Ahmed took office. Prior to 2018, although civil society was slowly emerging in the years before the May 2005 elections, the EPRDF government, with the support of security and the introduction of numerous draconian proclamations, closed the political space and harmed the actions of the opposition and civil society (Abbink, 2006: 178). After 2018, despite the expansion of the democratic space in the early period, the opposition forces are still weak and unable to meaningfully challenge the regime to adhere to the measures of democratization because of their extreme polarization and fragility.

Thus, the lack of strong countervailing forces to the hegemonic aspirations of the incumbent has always been one of the main obstacles to the transition to democracy in Ethiopia, resulting in weak contestation. The current political liberalization is taking place against the backdrop of such a social power vacuum in which organized opposition and independent civil society are extremely weak, leaving the fate of Ethiopia's democratization in the hands of the ruling party itself, the very entity that perpetuates domination and oppressive rule. Although attempts are being made to change the state of opposition parties, there are few signs that the situation is improving as the imbalance of power persists. Not surprisingly, activists and individuals seem to have a greater influence on the transition process than organized opposition parties. A politician said in an interview that opposition groups continue to face barriers to free activity,

opening offices, recruiting members, or fundraising[82]. As a result, the structure of the transition reflects the continuing imbalance of power, with the opposition and its leaders lagging behind in negotiating with the government the steps and measures needed to build a democratic system, leading to the dominance of the Prosperity Party in the process.

The weak organization of civil society is also a key challenge for the current transition in Ethiopia. The strength and independence of civil society determines its ability to curb state dominance and ensure political accountability, which is a prerequisite for sustainable democracy. In this regard, there are two different perceptions about the role of civil society in democratization in Ethiopia: some see civil society as the realm of freedom, while others see it as the realm of social welfare (Pellerin, 2020: 143). To understand this difference, it is important to explain the political situation and the experience of civil society before and after 2018.

Until 2018, the EPRDF regime used several suffocating proclamations, including the 2009 civil society law, to suppress freedom of association in the country, as this law prohibited any work related to human rights or democracy promotion if civil society received more than 10 percent of its funding from abroad. Complying with this proclamation was not easy and had frustrating consequences. A human rights defender explained that the CSO Law not only forced many civil society organizations to move into the field of social welfare services, abandoning activities related to democracy and human rights, but also decimated many NGOs, as they could not survive without foreign funding[83]. As a result of this experience, the perception of civil society as the realm of welfare services has emerged due to the involvement of many local, national, and international organizations in development and relief activities, which the EPRDF regime has redirected to align CSO operations with developmental state policies. According to this view, civil society is primarily a social welfare site for the disadvantaged, not an independent space that can be mobilized as a countervailing force against state power. This perception of civil society sees the struggle for political rights as an isolated realm. As a result, civil societies did not join the recent citizen's mobilization against the EPRDF's rule, nor did it actively participate in the political transformation process enacted in early 2018, severely undermining their capabilities, roles, and contributions to the current democratization process.

---

[82] Interviewee Nr. 32, Politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.
[83] Interviewee Nr. 22, Activist, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.

After Abiy took power in 2018, the expansion of political space in response to mass protests forced the government to repeal previous stifling proclamations. This has allowed the creation of many new independent civil society groups working on human rights and democracy, redefining the spaces of civil society as the realm of freedom to exercise human and democratic rights. In addition, the adoption of a new, much more progressive proclamation on civil society organizations in early 2019 has inspired the attempt to open up the political space for the sector. Among the most notable changes in the new legislation are the removal of the 10 percent restriction on foreign funding and an attempt to facilitate licensing and the operations of civil society organizations. This allows activists to join civil society organizations to put pressure on the regime to expand political reforms, moving the struggle from the streets to constructive participation in formal civil society groups. An academic and activist claim that the shift in the protest movement toward more formal civic activism, mainly in the form of oversight bodies to pressure reform efforts and hold new government in check, has also spurred the creation of other competing civil society groups associated with the ruling party[84]. As the political forces of the protesting public and government use the expanding civic space to advance their goals, they also bring divisive views into the new civic arena, replicating the polarized political landscape of the current transition.

6.3.2 Ineffectual transition management

Successful democratization demonstrates the importance of broad consensus among elites on transition guidelines and procedures for public participation. Liberalization and decompression of an authoritarian regime, if left unchecked, can quickly lead to instability, sacrificing the very legitimacy that the new regime needed most. This is why a transition roadmap is essential to bridge the retreating and emerging political orders, as the absence of a clear and inclusive post-authoritarian agenda can impede the process leading to the birth of a new democratic system. In the case of Ethiopia, this inherent danger was ignored from the outset, despite activists and political forces demanding that Abiy convene the main political parties to develop a transition roadmap. His answer was simple: "I will be the bridge that will ensure a successful transition[85]." Thus, with Abiy showing little inclination to proposal of a roadmap, ineffective transition management became a major factor exacerbating frustration over the possibility of moving toward democracy. As explained above, opposition political parties were weak,

---

[84] Interviewee Nr. 42, Activist, April 26, 2019, Nekemte.
[85] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9paZtttg_c ; PM Abiy Ahmed - Question and Answer session from community reps in DC

polarized, and disorganized, which convinced many people that if Ethiopia must experience a peaceful transition, changes must come from within the ruling regime. The appointment of Lemma Megersa as president of the Oromia region made this hope of a transformation from within the regime tangible, providing a tipping-point that created the ideal condition that led to the election of Abiy Ahmed as chairman of the EPRDF, vested with the responsibility of managing the transition to democracy.

However, limiting this responsibility for managing the transition only to the reformist faction within the ruling party has led to incidents of ineffectual transition management process. One such case is that the reformist faction, according to one activist, avoids an inclusive approach in an effort to control the transition process[86]. Although Abiy was entrusted with the responsibility of managing the process, being deceived by the euphoric response to his early reforms, he was unable to create a clear transition roadmap and a multi-party platform for inclusive regular dialogue, where opposition political parties can also participate in the transition process. That means there was no clear and all-inclusive vision of how to tread the uncharted waters of post-authoritarianism. As a result, each politician acted to maximize their political fortune, and clashes between their supporters resulted in loss of life and destruction of property throughout the country, mostly in Oromia, Amhara, Benishangul, and the southern regions, exacerbated by recriminations and hate speech on social media and diaspora websites owned by Oromo and Amhara activists.

In contrast to the democratic imperative foreseen by the change, Abiy continued to act unilaterally, redefining his vision and programs for the country with personalized measures and decisions. As he continued to defy calls for inclusive dialogue and a transition roadmap, his actions begin to lack legitimacy in the eyes of the public. As result, opposition lost confidence in the transition process, so the initial optimism of participation in the process quickly faded. Rather than becoming a transformative leader who is capable of rallying support and bringing together feuding factions, Abiy has often arguably acted as a transactional leader to achieve short-term political benefits, redeploying informal army units outside constitutionally established security forces, and exploiting the continued presence of the EPRDF party structure to influence and dominate the political system. The result of all this is a void in the structure of the idea that governs the country, as this makes the transition hostage to the prime minister's generosity.

---

[86] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Another consequence of Ethiopia's troubled transition is a surge in violence and frustration in the country. A look at change and continuity in Ethiopia's political life shows that the release of dissidents and a thriving press at the beginning of the 1991 transition did not lead to a new democratic order, except that they first raised public expectations, a kind of euphoria that the country experienced in early 2018. However, the failure to deliver on promises led to growing frustration over the next three decades of EPRDF rule. Thus, for decades, the EPRDF's Ethiopia had known no free expression, governmental transparency, and channels of political participation, all of which were under tight control through its party and security structure. The expropriation of power from the TPLF and the early swift political liberalization measures again gave Ethiopians high, but unrealistic, hopes about the future that political and civic leaders could not temper, leading to a steady decline in their positive attitudes on the prospects of the transition. Decompression of authoritarianism by itself does not lead to a transition to a democratic system if rising expectations are not properly managed and the rule of law is not respected. This was captured succinctly from an interview with a political analyst who explained that the wide gap between expectations and reality has generated a strong sense of frustration, which both the opposition and the ruling party are quickly seizing and exploiting for violent purposes[87]. As respect for the rule of law should be the top priority of the government, ensuring peace and order should be a priority for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed by establishing the rule of law to resolve conflicts that are spreading across the country.

Disappointment prevails in the country, as progress toward democracy stalled when Abiy arguably indulged in misplaced priorities such as his infatuation with past controversial kings, the rushed dissolution of the ruling EPRDF, and the creation of a new merger Prosperity Party, with less focus on inclusive political negotiations and cooperation. Accordingly, Abiy's misplaced priorities began with lobbying the African Union in early 2019 for a statue of former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie to be erected at the headquarter complex in Addis Ababa. This action was followed by a vanity project during the restoration of the palace, featuring life-size wax replicas of Menelik and Haile Selassie's statues, which caused a rift among the population and political classes. Historically, for most Oromo and southern people, the statues of the late emperors represent a long-gone dark age, an era of feudal dictatorship, during which numerous atrocities were committed against religious and ethnic groups. Abiy did not fully understand the consequences of such symbolic gestures for his politics, erecting symbols of

---

[87] Interviewee Nr. 19, Political Analyst, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.

controversial kings at a time when the country hoped to correct past injustices and focus on what unites the country for the future. In other words, the fatal mistake of this transition is that the new administration did not understand that the goal of the transition was to create a state that would meet the long-standing demands of freedom, equality, justice, and human dignity. For more than half a century, political struggles in Ethiopia have demanded the realization of these democratic values, as well as directed against a centralized political system that excluded, marginalized, and oppressed most Ethiopians. Rather than anticipating a reconstructed state, the new reform leaders set out to restore Ethiopia's "glorious past as a state" by glorifying Ethiopia's controversial kings, but this was seen as a rejection of the sacrifices made over the past five decades since the national legacy of these feudal emperors are hardly represent a symbol that the majority of current and future generations of Ethiopia could embrace and look upon with respect.

Hence, it was this lingering feudal mindset from the era of absolute monarchy, the lack of robust institutions for the development of democracy, rampant violence and lack of order that began to raise questions and frustration among the populace about the prospects for the transition to democracy in the country. The speed with which Ethiopian societies have moved from hoping for a democratic transition to democratic disillusionment is so quick as the soaring expectations are met with crushing disappointment, reinforcing the growing perception that the country is heading in the wrong direction as a result of the regime's misplaced priorities as well as its inability to manage high expectations.

There is also strong frustration with government actions, as public services remain weak, unemployment is rising, politicians pay little attention to the needs of people and their interests to provide enough opportunities for the youth who brought about the changes. Failure to meet their demands led to a sense of abandonment, creating a deep sense of hopelessness and despair among youth, since the lack of response from the state to their demand is perceived as a betrayal of leadership. For example, the lack of attempts to make Afaan Oromo a federal working language and to implement the constitutional special interests' clause of Addis Ababa, as well as the ongoing land grab, is seen as a push back against the gains of protesters in Oromia according to a regional council member[88]. Leaders made promises, but none of them kept their promises.

---

[88] Interviewee Nr. 26, Politician, May 16, 2019, Addis Ababa.

The failure to reorient the highly mobilized youth protesting the previous authoritarian regime toward building a democratic system is another consequence of the problematic management of transition. The advent of political liberalization resurfaced hostile rhetoric and long-standing ethnic tensions that were once buried due to repressive rule. As these old grievances are combined with a fresh sense of abandonment, the deep disappointment fuels the growing embrace of radical and contending nationalist ideologies, which create a perfect storm and ideal conditions for inter-ethnic violence that have displaced millions from across the country, particularly in Oromia, Amhara, southern Ethiopia, Benishangul Gumuz and Gambella regions (Yusuf, 2019: 3). The striking reality is such deep divisions are being used as a political tool to advance political interests and influence policy change, as this was particularly evident in the regime's slow response to ethnic conflicts and the ensuing media rhetoric.

The significant increase in the level of access and use of social media and modern technologies and tools such as the Internet, mobile phone, Facebook, and Twitter has become an important vehicle for mobilization, especially during the protest movements across the country. Parties and candidates have embraced them, but the influence they have on the political arena comes with treacherous possibilities. Certain aspects of the wave of ethnic conflicts spreading across the country can be explained by the increasing use of social media. Moreover, the rise in the number of fake news poses a threat to the spread of legitimate news. This is due to the fact that a growing number of Ethiopian journalists are frequently using social media platforms to get news, which creates the possibility of writing incorrect stories. Thus, with the increasing reliance on social media for news and opinion formation, it becomes increasingly difficult for the new leadership to ensure that the political news broadcast on social media does not threaten peace and public order.

Another big challenges in managing this transition come from the competing nationalisms and their ties to organized politics. The current reform leaders came to power through a social movement inspired by Oromo nationalism. They also embraced pan-Ethiopian nationalism and were supported by another youth movement under Amhara nationalism. For some time, the three nationalist movements united in their shared rejection of the dominance of the TPLF. But this alliance did not last long because their it was not strategically based on shared political visions. This aggravates the challenges facing the current transition period. On the one hand, bitter rivalry between the three rival nationalist movements has become an obstacle to creating fertile ground for the development of a democratic culture. On the other hand, the government's failure to curb nationalist movements to such an extent that it undermines the possibility of a

democratic transition also becomes threats to the incumbency of the prosperity party in the upcoming elections. In fact, the threat to the prosperity party's survival comes from several sources: one from its failure to tame nationalist movements, two from its regional rivals, and three from its own ranks. As political openness threatens the survival of the Prosperity Party, new leaders return to the use of force to overcome the threat that undermines the aspiration to democratic transition.

Moreover, the crisis of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 arrived at a critical moment just as Prime Minister Abiy appeared to be wrapping himself in the cloak of previous political violence against opponents and critics. Already working to buttress his position, his responses to the crisis rapidly moved in the wrong direction, as he quickly took the opportunity to postpone the election, originally scheduled for August that year. The postponement of national elections further exacerbated an already volatile political transition, sparking a deepening debate about a looming constitutional crisis. The squabble continues despite the decision to extend the incumbent mandate. And this casts doubt on the legitimacy of the Abiy administration, which has already become fragile, adding another layer of complexity to the existing political uncertainty as the underlying problems remain unresolved. Abiy arguably used the pandemic as cover to continue to alter the balance of power in his favour, ignoring calls for an inclusive process on key elements of much-needed democratization and engaging opposition and civil society, signalling a return to authoritarian practices.

Last but not least, the rushed dissolution of the EPRDF and the formation of a centralized Prosperity Party was another misplaced priority in the transition process that has become an obstacle to push Ethiopia into a clear democratization. The merger process was accompanied by a sudden ideological shift in the ruling party, both politically and economically, without internal consensus. This exacerbated the divisions within the EPRDF, creating a loser-winner dichotomy with accompanying adjectives such as anti-reformer and reformist.

Following a poorly orchestrated merger process, relations, especially between Tigray and the federal government, were practically severed. Both sides began to blame each other and focus on defensive measures to neutralize perceived threats, instead of cooperating and negotiating. The TPLF accuses Abiy and his allies of being reactionary forces seeking to resurrect the old imperial regime, while their main fear is in fact retribution for past wrongdoings (Kelecha, 2019). Abiy accuses them of creating conflicts in many places and acts of sabotage perpetrated through their deep state. This has exacerbated tensions and contradicted the ideas of

reconciliation and peace, which rhetorically dominate Ethiopia's political landscape. As Abiy purged the TPLF officials from security and bureaucracy, they began to build up their military capabilities in their home region. TPLF fears were compounded by their exclusion from the peace process with Eritrea. According to one senior TPLF politician, the peace process with their archenemy was motivated by a desire to forge an alliance against them, rather than a sincere effort to end years of hostility[89]. Reconciliation and reintegration of the TPLF into the political process were as important as their removal from power for the success of a peaceful transition. Failure to do so eventually led to the outbreak of war in the Tigray region in early November that year. Hence, the war in Tigray is not an isolated incident, but a direct result of a poorly managed transition process.

In short, Abiy's failure to lead Ethiopia onto an unambiguously democratic path is the result of a combination of factors, and the responsibility for the rollback rests with a number of actors who rallied behind both the ruling party and the opposition. First, as noted in chapter four, Ethiopian politics over the past 50 years has largely been a question of equality and freedom. How to establish a democratic order that recognizes the equality of Ethiopian national groups has been the subject of almost constant debate. There have been two broad elite stances. The first recognizes the existence of national oppression in Ethiopia. These groups organized and fought for the respect of their ethnic right, which led to the creation of an ethnic based federalism recognizing the rights of ethnic groups. The second rejects the thesis of national oppression, and desire to undo the representation of ethnic groups in politics - and therefore supports individual rights. Of these two camps, most groups, including the Oromo elites, are firmly established themselves in the first. Most of Amhara elites are pitched into the second stance. Instead of being a transformational leader able to rally support and bring together these rival groups, Abiy rejected the demand for a transition roadmap, shifting his loyalty between Amhara and Oromo groups. He could have brought all the feuding groups around the table for dialogue, but he flits between Amhara and Oromo political bases depending on circumstances, and this does not bring him the trust or acceptance of any of the groups. Rather, the swing back and forth is the cause of open feud between the Oromo and Amhara branches of the newly formed Prosperity Party, and in extension the reason for flaring conflicts between Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups.

---

[89] Interviewee Nr. 11, Politician, March 25, 2019, Mekelle.

Second, the continued presence of many actors and structures of the previous regime prevented a clean break with the past. TPLF stepped down, but the legacy of its regime continued to cast a shadow over the Abiy's regime, as deep-seated undemocratic practices persist long after the change of leadership, continuing to influence values and behaviour. The lack of new faces, especially at the lower levels, and the complex patronage system that operated under the EPRDF has largely remained intact, means that political competition creates instability, causing frustration in society. Even more worryingly, the continued tensions and hostilities between the TPLF and federal authorities also raise serious concerns and limit the scope for change, pulling the country into open warfare since November 2020. Third, with the division of Ethiopian society along ethnic, cultural and linguistic lines, the opening up of political space has intensified ethnic conflicts over competing demands. When Abiy came to power in early 2018, he was supposed to address the legacy of political exclusion and economic marginalization that characterized successive Ethiopian regimes by striking a balance between the competing demands of the country's national groups. However, his inability to tame fiery and competing nationalisms became another exacerbating factor. While many hoped that Abiy would be able to pacify raging nationalisms by satisfying their basic demands or creating the conditions for a national dialogue where they could discuss and agree on the country's future, he arguably played a counterproductive role instead, shifting priorities depending on what would solidify his power. As a result, the diverging ethno-nationalist aspirations of various groups, a lack of common demands among the leading ethnic elites, and historical discontent created a dynamic that prevented Abiy from advancing his reform. For example, the opposition, in particular the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), has its share of responsibility for ineffective transition management in this regard. OLF wavered between pursuing a peaceful struggle by demobilizing its fighters and seeking a power-sharing agreement with the Prosperity Party to secure important positions; and, alternatively, the continuation of the armed struggle to take over the country. This ambivalence exposed its vulnerabilities, allowing the Prosperity Party to do everything in its power to prevent it from organizing, such as closing its offices, harassing, and imprisoning its cadres. Thus, the intransigence and impending hegemony of the Prosperity Party and the continued failure of the likes of OLF have created an unstable vicious circle that led to the backsliding of the reform enacted in early 2018.

6.4 Conceptualizing democracy in Ethiopia

One of the events of this episode of political reform is the creation of an important new space for political discourse, which reveals the nature and aspirations of political players on the paths

to democratization of the country. Most Ethiopians agree that democracy is the solution to the existential problems facing the country: poverty, instability, and authoritarianism. However, reaching a consensus on what this democracy means is not so easily recognized. As the next sections will show, Ethiopians mainly understand democracy in three different ways. The first understanding sees Western liberal democracy as an active model of a governance system whose ideas, methods, and institutions can be borrowed to solve the country's problems. The second understanding of democracy is that because Western democracy lacks a framework to address the multifaceted injustices in ethnically divided countries such as Ethiopia, consociational democracy that encourages a participatory approach with equitable power sharing is a more appropriate method of democracy to respond to the country's problems. There is a third perspective on democracy that has recently emerged in Ethiopia's political landscape, which Abiy advocates as the guiding "philosophy" of his reforms that he called "*Medemer* Democracy.*"* In light of this diverse understanding, the next section analyses the ideas wrapped in these three "models" of democracy to explain in detail their implications for the current transition. And then explore the ideals of cultural democracy to justify the need to explore an alternative paradigm of democracy rooted in indigenous traditions to contribute to the broader discussion of democratic innovation.

6.4.1 Ethiopia's experience of electoral and consociational democracy

The understanding of electoral democracy as an active model for resolving the long-standing problem of democratization in Ethiopia prevails among youth who were at the forefront of anti-government protests. They advocate this formal democracy as an alternative to decades of authoritarian practice in the country to be able to elect their leaders through institutional mechanisms of free, credible, and competitive elections. In the view of one activist, electoral democracy can serve as a starting point for the realization of their democratic rights, allowing them to elect responsible leaders who prioritize respect for the rule of law and the consolidation of democratic norms and institutions[90]. One of the claims of the mass protests that effected the current change was that the EPRDF regime often could not satisfy these needs of the Ethiopian people (Siraj, 2020). Democracy in the above senses is in a minimalist understanding, which narrowly institutionalizes procedures expressing a democratic content and the criteria for evaluating an electoral process (Bohman, 2005). However, some incumbent party members hold a fearsome view of electoral democracy: one politician claims that democracy means

---

[90] Interviewee Nr. 20 (a), Student-activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

increasing the chance of losing the strength and resources needed to defend against your opponents in the electoral contest[91]. This perception of democracy negatively impacted the EPRDF democracy project in the past, giving the impression that they were building democracy while effectively restricting freedom of political action, the media and civil society organizations with the draconian laws.

The reason liberal democracy became an ideology of protest and was considered an important first step in the fight against authoritarianism is in the belief that it will provide the opportunity and tools to create an enabling environment to reflect on realities and conditions of the country. One youth who has been at the forefront of anti-government protests reasons that there are serious structural obstacles to creating democracy, even in its liberal form[92]. He continues, explaining that there is a widespread complaint, especially among youth, that if Abiy is ever serious about transitioning the country into a democracy, then he needs a paradigm shift in his approach, allowing a bottom-up approach of engagement, a deep and broad process that involves the peripheries of the country and encourages indigenous mechanisms of public deliberation in the development of policies and decision-making on political, economic, and social issues[93]. Failure to do this only contributes to the social, economic, and political crisis in the country.

Moreover, some scholars and political elites argue that the procedural construction of democracy ignores the Ethiopian context because practice allowed the EPRDF regime to express itself in the form of Western democracy, reducing the whole concept of democracy to an electoral ritual that created fertile ground for electoral authoritarianism (Gudina, 2011; Aalen and Tronvoll, 2008; Kassa, 2020). These practices ultimately contributed to the conditions that sparked political unrest: the simple terminological camouflage of "electoral democracy" that lured the EPRDF regime to classify itself as democratic was a dubious legitimacy generated by simple electoral rituals held every five years.

Ethno-nationalist groups take a different view of democracy from the aforementioned understanding, commonly known as consociational democracy, and believe that such a democracy is compatible with a multi-ethnic society such as Ethiopia. Consociational democracy involves a grand coalition of major ethnic elites to ensure fairness in the system through proportional representation in politics, as well as an expanded form of autonomy in

---

[91] Interviewee Nr. 14 (b), Politician, April 10, 2019, Bahir Dar.
[92] Interviewee Nr. 43 (b) Student-Activist, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[93] Ibid

managing their internal affairs (Lijphart, 2018: 3). Ethno-nationalists defend this scheme as a viable solution to the country's political crisis, believing that a grand coalition of equals, proportionally composed of major ethnic groups, may satisfy the demands for power in the centre.

It is also important to note that some aspects of consociational democracy are not new to Ethiopian politics, as the EPRDF has tried to create such an image, at least in principle, for the past three decades. Some attempts have been made under the EPRDF's rule, which include the ruling party's rhetorical tendency towards intraparty division of powers within the EPRDF, proportionality in the representation of ethnic groups in the House of Federation and the reservation of certain seats in the House of Peoples Representative for ethnic minorities, and a federal constitution that grants not only the right to self-government, but also the right to secede from the state itself. However, these elements of the consociational arrangement of the post-1991 political dispensation were actually circumscribed by the centralised practices of the regime. As John Markakis notes: "the elite in the centre continues to rule; the elite in the periphery continues to administer" (Markakis, 2011: 282). This remains a structural fault that continues to serve as a source of instability in the country, creating obstacles to a peaceful transition to democracy.

Moreover, since a consociational system is also a form of elite rule, it tends to actually disempower people of their right to rule in practice, which reduces the quality of democracy in such arrangements compared to non-elite forms of democracy (Dixon, 2020: 120). Such an elitist democracy cannot meet Ethiopia's aspirations for a democratic society since power sharing among ethnic elites alone cannot address the multifaceted structural problems of creating stable democracy. Also, the problems of economic redistribution and meeting the needs of disadvantaged social groups are not part of the definition of elitist democracy: it does not cope with the long-standing grievances, simply by sharing power or electing representatives with no power to solve deep issues of historical, economic and social injustice. Hence, a satisfactory response to political, social and economic injustice in Ethiopia will most likely come from a "democracy of ends" rather than a "democracy of means", since the former provides an opportunity to define democracy through an inclusive, participatory approach to political, economic and social issues. Such an understanding of democracy in a maximalist sense means that the concept of democracy cannot be reduced to election methods or power-sharing mechanisms but must embrace its actual exercise to satisfactorily meet political, social, and economic needs as defining criteria. If these needs are not satisfactorily met, one cannot

speak of democracy as if it were merely a mechanism for electing representatives or sharing power among the ethnic elites.

6.4.2 Thoughts on "*Medemer* democracy"

Medemer is an Amharic word for addition, but is also translated as coming together or synergy, which is rhetorically similar to the Latin motto *e pluribus unum* — "out of many, one". This has been Abiy's motto since he ascended to power in April 2018, reflecting his ambitions and vision to rebrand Ethiopia. Abiy claims that his "*Medemer* reform" focuses on people and has three interconnected elements: vibrant democracy; economic viability; regional integration and openness to the world (Abiy, 2019). Abiy argues, in a sharp departure from revolutionary democracy, and hence the developmental state ideology of the EPRDF that puts economic development first over democracy, that his "*Medemer*" reform sees democracy and development as interlinked (Abiy, 2019: 24). Hence, he reasons that building a vibrant and pluralistic democracy is required to bridge the gap with swift and decisive measures to increase citizens' confidence in government.

In his book *Medemer*, published in October 2019, Abiy elaborated on the need for an Ethiopian-centred approach to address the country's democratic deficit, even though he could not explain an approach that set him apart from his predecessors who applied ideologies and theories from outside. Abiy (2019: 13) claims that modern ideological systems have sought to address issues of freedom and equality in different ways. He argues that liberalism in its original formulation developed as a belief in the right of individuals to freely pursue their goals by means of their own choice, without infringing on the freedom of others. He reasons that liberalism resolutely resists state economic control and seeks to find answers in a market economy but creates inequality by concentrating power and wealth in the hands of a few capitalists. He argues that socialism is a reaction to liberalism and seeks to find a solution by creating an economy that maximizes equality even at the expense of political freedoms, which makes it vulnerable to becoming authoritarian. Thus, he presents his "*Medemer* democracy," which appears to be a meandering idea, as a third way between socialism and liberalism, with attempts to reconcile these two opposing ideologies in their approach to freedom and equality. Abiy (2019: 18) argues that Medemer does not subscribe to any particular prevailing ideology but aims to avoid ideological rigidity and to suit itself with a changing and multipolar world, as necessary. Nevertheless, it leans towards the middle ground between socialism and liberal democracy -

seeking to balance the liberal market economy with redistribution and state regulation to overcome the issues of inequality.

The pillars for building a "*Medemer* democracy" in Ethiopia are national reconciliation to address long-standing grievances, consensus building to encourage indigenous participatory practices, civic nationalism to develop shared national values and an understanding of critical issues that represent common interest of all citizens of the country (Abiy, 2019: 103). He explains that when these pillars of his "*Medemer* Democracy" are fully operational, it contributes to the emergence of a stable and unique Ethiopian democracy that is consistent with local cultural values, balancing freedom and equality through structures and processes that seek to correct past mistakes, building on existing positive achievements, and expanding cooperation to address future challenges with new innovative ideas.

However, Abiy's *Medemer* is not well received by many people, especially among influential figures who argue that now is not the time to experiment with new ideas, but to focus on addressing some of the big demands that the public has placed on the new leaders (Ephream, 2019). An academic interviewed, for example, sees "*Medemer*" as an attempt to create yet another model of hegemony that mimics the previous failed top-down approach, relegating Ethiopians as passive recipients of the decisions of "all-knowing experts[94]". In the past, such approach has not only limited people's freedom to participate in decisions that affect their life, but also undermined Ethiopia's aspirations for democracy and prosperity. An activist also claims that "*Medemer*" is a marketing tool that not only lacks concrete solutions to the country's pressing problems, but also contradicts the principle of self-determination enshrined in the national constitution[95]. He added that Abiy only rhetorically presents democracy as a high value to Ethiopia, but in practice he is trying to redirect public opinion from politics to the economy, as was the case with the developmental state, to solidify his personalized rule by reducing political competition[96].

Regarding the claim of striking a balance between individual and group rights, expressed in the form of freedom and equality, the activist continues that, since it is impossible to reconcile socialism and liberalism, the Prime Minister simply hides under the buzzword "*Medemer*" to push the values of the liberal West into the Ethiopian political market[97]. This not only gives

---

[94] Interviewee Nr. 7, Academic, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[95] Interviewee Nr. 2, Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.
[96] Ibid
[97] Ibid

primacy to individual rights, but also goes against the collective rights enshrined in the federal constitution. Given the deep-rooted historical injustice, respect for individual rights will not automatically lead to respect for the group rights in the context of Ethiopia, says one activist, but on the contrary: if group rights are respected, so will individual rights[98].

Similarly, the demand for civic nationalism is not without concerns since the type of nationalism promoted by the prime minister in practice does not consider the value of shared citizenship. One respondent, an online commentator, argued that Amhara's identity and values are being promoted under the guise of civic nationalism due to its historical spread and dominance in the country[99]. If Ethiopia is to be remedied from its past injustice, then the civic nationalism that this country needs, both in principle and in practice, must recognize all the country's cultural communities as equal and rights-bearing citizens, united by a common set of national identities, political values, and practice.

In his book, Abiy argues that "*Medemer* democracy" would strike a balance between pan-Ethiopian nationalism and ethno-nationalism (Abiy, 2019: 107). Ostensibly, *Medemer* democracy is intended to serve as an antidote to thoughts of polarization and alienation of citizens, finding a middle ground between ethno-nationalism and a reformed overarching pan-Ethiopian nationalism, providing them with a safe political landscape in which they both find a conceptual space in which they can mutually reinforce, rather than exclude each other. However, this search for a middle ground is not an easy task, given the contending nature of nationalism in Ethiopia. In fact, one of the biggest challenges on the road to democratic transition in Ethiopia is balancing the demands of those groups that Fukuyama calls megalothymia and isothymia, the former representing a group that wants to be recognized as superior of others, and the latter representing groups that want to be recognized as equal to others (Fukuyama, 2018: 21-23). This clearly summarises the purpose and content of the contending nationalisms in contemporary Ethiopian politics.

6.5 Rationale for establishing Ethiopian democracy on Ethiopian foundations.

Following the end of the Cold War, the promotion of liberalism and liberal values as an ideology - with the universal truth and the only future civilization of mankind - has seriously undermined the emergence of an alternative vision with a multitude of political imagination to decipher the necessary democratic values of civilizations, consistent with the aspirations of

---

[98] Interviewee Nr. 6, Activist, May 26, 2019, London.
[99] Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.

building a democratic and prosperous society, especially in the global south (Saul, 1997). Since this singular ideology combined with the autocratic rules of authoritarian regimes, borrowing from other ready-made solutions has become a seemingly insurmountable problem and has hindered the ability to reflect on local circumstances.

Similarly, Ethiopia's rulers also tried to apply borrowed foreign ideologies, without much thought of local conditions, in their quest to build a democratic and prosperous state. As such, the autocratic rule of emperors since the creation of the modern Ethiopian state in the late 19th century and its successor, the military regime, has been marked by the absence of voices for democratic ideas. The emperors destroyed the traditional institutions that could serve as the basis for democratization, since their goal was complete domination. Ethiopian intellectuals also did not write broadly on democratic thoughts, mainly due to oppressive political experience, and also because some have fallen into Eurocentric assumptions that downplay indigenous practices.

Despite limited democratic thoughts written by Ethiopians, democracy has always been the driving force of political movements since the 1960s, but its protagonists have, all-too-often, indulged in violence and bloodshed (Abbink, 1995: 136-7). The political forces that emerged from the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM), such as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON) called for democracy but engaged in mutual assassination in its name. Inspired by the Ethiopian student movement, the emergence of republicanism led to the overthrow of monarchy by the army that adopted socialist policy without much thought how to apply it in local conditions. To stay in power, the military regime copied red and white terror campaigns from other socialist countries to fight against its opponents. When the socialist economy failed, it tried a mixed capitalist economy. But it was too little, too late, since several guerrilla forces were groping for power, putting ethnic self-determination rhetoric on their agenda. In its later period, the military claimed to have pursued "socialist democracy," but in 1991 it was overthrown by the TPLF-engineered EPRDF regime, which introduced "electoral democracy", yet remained a minority ethnic dictatorship.

After the overthrow of the military regime, the West pressed liberalization of the economy and politics, which forced socialism to morph into a "revolutionary democracy" under the EPRDF, which, in turn, mutated into a "developmental state" with the intention of achieving economic transformation similar to the Asian Tigers. The imposition of revolutionary democracy from

above by the TPLF reproduced oppression disguised as freedom. The difference between the military regime, which did not practice electoral democracy, and the EPRDF, which practiced electoral democracy, is only of rhetoric and of the masks that authoritarianism wears. The military regime used the rhetoric of "class" and the mask of "socialist democracy," and the EPRDF uses the mask of " self-determination" and the rhetoric of "revolutionary democracy." In all the regimes, political, social, and economic violence are the main instruments of governance as there is no space for public reasoning and democratic discourses.

Finally, the TPLF was confronted with its Frankenstein moment, as resurgent groups within the ruling EPRDF coalition it created in the 1990s captured the centre and caused the creator (i.e., TPLF) trouble, aided by street protests that helped propel Abiy Ahmed to power in early 2018. Like his predecessors, Abiy also promised to deepen democracy, stressing that building a democratic system is an existential matter for Ethiopia. Abiy's rise to power led to the rejection of both the developmental state and revolutionary democracy; instead, he replaced them with the new ideology, which he called "*Medemer*" as the new guiding "philosophy" for the changes he initiated in the country.

However, despite the jump from one ready-made model to another, Ethiopia's fundamental problems, such as poverty, instability, and authoritarianism, remained unresolved. The viable solution to the myriad problems facing the country is not just moving from one ready-made panacea to another, that is, from socialism to liberalism or from revolutionary democracy to developmental state, etc. Rather than jumping from one pre-packaged foreign ideology to another, I argue that Ethiopian democracy should be based on Ethiopian foundations, formulating views and ideas that are compatible with Ethiopia's needs and realities. To do this, unpacking the package itself should be the first step to see its contents and sort what is needed from what is not.

As such, the next section critically assesses the limits of Western liberal democracy and the extent to which it is relevant to Ethiopia. Moreover, as the jump from one foreign paradigm to another did not solve the country's problems in the past, embracing the past in the name of cultural authenticity will not solve it either. Even some elements of traditional and cultural institutions, values and practices are likely to be rejected by many religious communities. In other words, since the imposition of foreign ideologies has not worked in the past, the imposition of indigenous ideas may similarly fail unless there is thorough public debate on the country's shared cross-cultural values. Plus, while I argue that Ethiopia's salvation comes from

within, this does not mean a complete rejection of the Western paradigm per se. Rather, I suggest to critically reflect on both the Western paradigm and indigenous practices through a thorough and compassionate study of Ethiopian history, cultures, communities, religions, etc. These efforts of identifying positive cultural and political values and practices from Ethiopia's complex past that can serve as the basis for building robust democracy and social justice should not be expected to be easy, but this gruelling journey must begin with a sincere engagement of Ethiopian history.

Bonnie Holcomb (2004: 123), in her work Contending Democracies, in which she analysed the form and content of Western liberal democracies versus indigenous Oromo democracy, argued that the main factor explaining why the post-1991 political transition ended in one-party rule is due to the contradictory notions of democracy represented in the struggle over the fate of social system that had prevailed in Ethiopia. She noted that each of the political forces that joined the transitional government in 1991 used the term "democracy" to describe their political goals, while devising different and fundamentally conflicting plans for the country's future, leading to the collapse of the project of building a vibrant democracy. As explained here, although democracy is seen as a solution to the country's problems, the struggle for it has done little to develop or maintain the reality of democracy. A good lesson from past decades is also that the transplantation of foreign ideologies has caused enormous damage to Ethiopian politics or has done little to develop the reality of a democratic culture. Without a democratic culture, no forms of democracy can be sustainable, and this is evident in the many challenges that Ethiopia faces. For example, Christopher Clapham (2006: 144) argues that Ethiopia tried to solve its long-standing political and economic problems by imitating models from other countries, but they all failed. Thus, regardless of the regime types, the obstacle to building democracy in Ethiopia is that the country suffers from uncritical emulation of ideas and concepts created in a different cultural environment, copied, and pasted in Ethiopia. Borrowed models cannot take root unless they are socially and culturally grounded. Ethiopia's democratic efforts often fail due to the lack of ground given to indigenous ideas and models that consider the country's realities. My fieldwork has revealed a general interest in building a democratic culture in Ethiopia, with a political imaginary that generates the expression of social realities through the indigenization of democratic theories. Like theories, democratic cultures cannot simply be imported from outside.

In the past, political thoughts that could articulate approaches to building a sustainable and unique Ethiopian democracy, taking seriously the Ethiopian context as a basis for democratic

exercise, were beyond the reach of most Ethiopians, despite decades of reforms and revolutions. The working definition of democracy adopted in this thesis also makes such an approach the centre of its overall objectives. As indicated in the study framework, Dahl's criteria of democracy (Dahl, 1989) help to reflect on democratic institutions and values that fit better with the complexity of Ethiopian societies. We must learn from gruesome failures of the past and be able to create an environment conducive to reflecting and deciphering values and meanings that are important to Ethiopia's history, culture, and realities.

Public discourse and reasoning are not alien to Ethiopian culture, and Ethiopian traditions are full of such cultural practices that the country can draw inspiration from them. For example, Somalis have the most effective traditional legal system known as Xeer (Leonard & Gilbert, 2013), Amhara has a traditional mode of litigation known as Yatayyaq Muget (Jembere, 1992), Gurage has effective traditional conflict resolution mechanisms known as Yajoka Kitcha and Gordena Shengo (Gudina, 2017), the Sidama people has the indigenous moote political system (Kia, 2019), Oromo has an indigenous democracy known as the Gadaa system (Legesse, 2000) etc. The recent expansion of the political space has also provided such an opportunity for inspiration to reflect on the source of the country's cultural heritage. For example, the Prime Minister wrote a book about it, call it Medemer, which has now become the guiding ideology of his party and the government he leads. In this book, the Prime Minister claims that the idea of "Medemer" originated from Ethiopian cultural values and he believes that it can help meet the aspirations of building a democratic Ethiopia (Abiy, 2019: 49). Given the importance of cultural institutions among Ethiopians, deepening the indigenous democratic institutions through inclusive participatory mechanisms may have a greater contribution to the development of an organic democratic culture. However, this should not be taken as a complete rejection of modern theories and their importance but considers the possibilities of using the indigenous system as a basis for deciphering the values and practices of the existing paradigms to make them relevant in Ethiopia's context.

As noted above, the Oromo people, like other communities in Ethiopia, are endowed with many traditional institutions and practices. Especially, Gadaa, an indigenous Oromo political system, demonstrates great potential for local governance in particular. In this context, the next section attempts to reflect on the governing ideals of Oromo indigenous democracy, deciphering its most important elements as an example, in order to establish the importance of various indigenous practices from which Ethiopians may draw inspiration to shape a unique Ethiopian democracy. In his works on the democratic characteristics of the Oromo political tradition,

Asmerom Legesse argues that *Gadaa* has several features that are applicable under the circumstances of the twenty-first century (Legesse, 2000). Building on decades of such anthropological work on democratic characters of the Oromo political tradition, I provide a detailed analysis in the next section on the substantiveness of participation, representation, and deliberation in Oromo democracy.

6.6 Deepening indigenous Oromo democracy.

A careful analysis of the institutional features of Gadaa can serve as the basis for inspiration to rethink relevant values and principles of indigenous political traditions that can be preserved to institutionalize the ideal of popular power, particularly at the lower administration level. Democracy as the rule of the people is what the political scientist Robert Dahl suggested, arguing that it is a system in which all members of a society have an equal right to participate in the decision-making process (Dahl, 1986: 37). This section explores such a concept by carefully examining what is missing in representative democracy and what features are present as remedies in Oromo democracy. I would argue that Oromo indigenous democracy has several important features that can be preserved to help shape local governance in the Oromia region.

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis, it is necessary to make some caveats here. Despite the fact that electoral democracy grossly fails to live up to the idea of a genuinely popular rule, which I discuss in detail below, it is nonetheless not an endangered system because it still functions fairly in its minimalist sense. More importantly, modern representative democracies have progressively eliminated some archaic restrictions on who can stand for elections and hold political office, with the exception of the remaining age restriction. Likewise, *Gadaa* is not without its limitations, as it possesses some archaic undemocratic features that must be eliminated. One such undemocratic feature is that women are actively excluded from political life. This means that they do not have the right to elect their representatives and be elected as members of the *Gadaa* decision making bodies.

Some scholars argue that since *Gadaa* was originally conceived as a military organization, women were excluded from the system because they were not supposed to become warriors, which was the prerogative of men (Gnamo, 2014: 37). However, this assertion in no way justifies the prevailing strong patriarchal ideology and patrilineal social norms that often prevent women from playing an important political role in society. As such, the exclusion of women from Gadaa decision-making process is unacceptable, and the system need to adapt itself to be inclusive of all genders. It should be noted, however, that there have been no ideal

egalitarian societies in history, while some societies are less hierarchical and more egalitarian than others. Oromo is no exception in this sense because the lack of ideal equality does not diminish the importance of egalitarianism, which is easily observable in Oromo culture and thought systems.

Another caveat: *Gadaa* has lost many of its historical, traditional, and political attributes due to various factors that are beyond the scope of this thesis for discussion. Nowadays it is practiced in a reduced form among southern Oromo in places like Borana and Guji, which have become often-visited sites for anthropological studies because their memories are still relatively fresh there. Thus, since Gadaa has lost many of its attributes due to various factors, this thesis does not claim it to be applicable in current circumstances. The argument presented here is that there are relevant elements to be extracted from the Gadaa institutions that will help rethink democratic governance at the lower levels of administration in the Oromia region. With these caveats, let me move on to points that might make Gadaa a more substantive form of indigenous democracy. I begin the discussion with a brief analysis of some of the familiar flaws of modern democracies, and then offer my arguments on the governing ideals of Oromo democracy, which I think may address some of the flaws of representative model.

Recently, it is widely believed that liberal democracy in the Western World is in crisis. The reasons for this are largely attributed to the rise of right-wing, nativist, populist candidates and movements in Europe and the United States, which have caused deep public discontent with the elites slipping back onto an authoritarian path (Diamond, 2017). On the other hand, Landemore (2020:33) argues that there is reason to believe that even the most democratized version of modern democracies cannot fully meet the ideal of popular rule, that is, a rule in which all members of society enjoy equal right to participate in politics. This means that the crisis of democracy is not only the result of popular frustration with elites who have often failed to deliver on their promises of democracy, but also the product of the limitations in the construct of the model itself that is unable to meet the growing democratic expectations.

Landemore (2020: xiv) claims that the main flaw of the liberal model is more related to its liberal-republican design, which primarily focuses on the protection of certain individual rights, rather than a democratic construct that envisions the empowerment of citizens as such. As a result, with the institutionalization of elections as the sole marker of a democratic feature, in the representative version of the design, the idea of people's consent to power takes precedence over the idea of people's exercise of power. With this subtle conceptual construction, elite rule

is reproduced as the indirect rule of ordinary citizens, and thus the decisions of the elite are viewed as the citizens' choice. This distorted view of equating elite decisions with popular choice has long been taken for granted due to the complexity and size of modern states. In short, representative democracy was originally conceived as a form of elite rule, as opposed to that of ordinary citizens. These are conceptual errors that were made in the design of this form of regime and have not yet been overcome, even if over time some of its undemocratic features have been gradually eliminated.

However, with the rise of democratic expectations, which, unfortunately, are often met with frustration, many experiments with democratic innovation in recent years have begun to question this distorted equation. This is mainly because the design of the model is considered insufficiently democratic and, apparently, tends to mutate into an oligarchic and plutocratic regime in countries such as the United States and France in recent decades (Cagé, 2020; McCarthy et al, 2016).

Democratic innovations in recent years have formulated the concept of liquid democracy to address these problems of Western democracies, which they consider obsolete. Liquid democracy is a type of electoral democracy, but it applies a more fluid version of electoral representation. With liquid democracy, people delegate their vote to the candidate they like, either for a certain period or on specific issues, but retain the ability to withdraw their votes at any time, so they always have the right to participate directly (Meyer, 2012). While many scholars claim that this system is innovative and new, the fact remains that it existed in a similar form for hundreds of years in the Oromo indigenous democracy. Thus, joining the ranks of scholars who are sceptical of the democratic nature of existing democracies, I argue below that Oromo democracy has institutional features of flexible representation that make it a more substantive form of democracy.

Gadaa is an indigenous paradigm of democracy that flexibly combines the advantages of both representative and participatory democracy, while avoiding their flaws. This free and fluid account of the system shapes its governing ideals that institutionalize egalitarian and less rigid structures, thereby reducing barriers to the exercise of power by ordinary citizens and expanding their participation and representation rights. Oromo democracy has several principles that constitute its governing ideals and provide the structures needed to institutionalize an indigenous form of popular rule at the local level: participation; deliberation; representation; consensus decision making; and egalitarianism. These governing ideals can be

described as the right to democratic representation and equal participation in deliberation to shape the values of democratic politics: equality, empowerment, and inclusion. Thus, given the normative preferences of these democratic values for measuring ideal popular rule, as Robert Dahl (1989) argued in his definition of democracy, the analysis below focuses on the quality of participation, representation, and deliberation in both the modern representative system and the indigenous Oromo democracy.

6.6.1 Participation in Oromo democracy

Participation is one of the governing ideals of Oromo democracy. The question we need to answer, however, is what distinguishes participation in Oromo democracy when it is widely claimed that this right is already being applied in electoral democracies. Participation rights in electoral democracies are translated into actual political rights, such as the right to vote, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of association, etc (Landemore, 2020:134). These rights were originally conceived as consent to power, and not as its exercise. For example, the right to vote means, in the first place, the right to elect representatives. It does not include the right to agree or disagree directly on political agendas, except in the rare case of referendums. For this reason, the right to vote cannot be seen as a genuine right to participate. Likewise, the remaining political rights were designed primarily to counterbalance potential abuse of power and were not intended to directly induce citizens participation rights (Ibid.: 136).

On the contrary, the hallmark of Oromo democracy is its participatory political culture. In Oromo democracy, there are several important mechanisms through which ordinary citizens exercise their right to participate. The first of this mechanism is through the age-grade organization called *hiriyaa*. *Hiriyaa*, that is, peer groups, is the most important institutional features of Gadaa, which allows citizens to enjoy the maximum participation rights. This organization represents not only the stages of development that a group goes through, but also defines the type of activities, responsibilities and duties that groups constantly assume during their active career (Legesse, 1973: 51). It allows every member of the society to participate in public affairs through a structure that socializes people into different stages of life from childhood to old age.

Under the *Gadaa* system, members of society are organized in 11 age grades with an eight-year separation that ranges from birth to death. These are: *Dabballe* (0 to 8 years old); *Gamme xixiqqaa* (9 to 16 years old); *Gamme gurgudda* (17 to 24 years old); *Kuussa* (25 to 32 years

old); *Raaba Doori* (33 to 40 years old); *Lubaa* (41 to 48 years old, also called *Gadaa* because it is the stage in which a peer group entered this stage, elect their *Gadaa* leaders to assume political leadership); *Yuuba* – consists of four stages of semi-retirement from 49 to 80 years (*yuuba* VII, *yuuba* VIII, *yuuba* IX and *yuuba* X). During these stages of partial retirement, members do not actively participate in the day-to-day affairs of the *Gadaa* government, but they continue to play an important legislative and advisory role to leaders in power. The last age grade is *Gadamojjii*, which is the stage of full retirement and is over 81 years old (Legesse, 1973:50).

These classifications mean that all members of the community take on different roles that are appropriate to their age. Accordingly, the transition from one stage to the next is symbolized by an externally visible emblem, signifying their corresponding roles in the society. Various hairstyles or turban headgears are used to indicate where the person is on the cycle. The visibility of the emblem invites community members to participate in the socialisation of the individual into a certain position, either rewarding the person for acting appropriately or punishing failure to act according to the requirements of that position. It is for this reason that Legessee (2006) argued that *Gadaa* is the embodiment of a democratic political culture that not only allows but also requires the participation of a person in all stages of generational roles, including assuming the highest responsibility of political leadership in society.

Besides the distribution of authority and responsibility, the other significance of this cultural practice is that it provides a mechanism to prepare future political leaders for 21 years before they assume public office. Nomination of the future leaders takes place within the framework of an institutional election process known as *Lallaba*, when they become young adults aged between 25-32. This is when they are initiated into an age category called *Kuussa*, that is, when they begin to take serious social responsibilities. Senior leaders and experts are assigned to guide and counsel these youths in the importance of political leadership and other social responsibilities so that they can grow with the wisdom and social capabilities they need to lead society when they take power. This tradition, while it allows the future leaders to learn to govern and prepare for public administration, also allows people to watch their performance and check if they are worthy of the office. Once they are vetted for approximately 21 years, those who are qualified will hold public office for only eight years, when they become *luuba/Gadaa*, which is ruling age grade from 41 to 48. As the responsibility for socialization also extends to the general public, given the current youth bulge in the country (World Youth Report, 2018), part of its importance lies in protecting youths from different vulnerabilities,

from violence to drug addiction or other problems, especially in adolescence, allowing them to become part of an institution that enables them to participate constructively in social responsibilities. While a 21-year period is currently unrealistic, however, modern political parties that compete for political office may create an institutional mechanism to prepare their members for future social responsibility beyond formal education. This can be done by creating a department that reviews the performance of their members, making them responsible for carefully reviewing government policies and actions, and offering alternative policies.

The second important mechanism through which ordinary citizens exercise their rights to participate are the various assemblies known by different names, such as *Qixxee*, *Chaffee* and *Gumii*. These are important democratic forums that serve as laboratories of Oromo democracy, as they are the assemblies of equals in which all members of the public have an equal opportunity to participate in shaping public agenda, except for women, which needs to be corrected for application in this era.

Qixxee are local assemblies, comparable to contemporary citizen assemblies that grew out of Robert Dahl (1989: 340) ideas of *minipopulus*, which inspire an innovative mechanism to involving citizens in public issues. But unlike Dahl's *minipopulus*, which is made up of randomly selected citizens, the *Qixxee* forums are open to all as a platform for grassroots democracy. However, mass participation all the time is not a precondition in the *Qixxee* forums as this depends on the importance of the agenda. Except in cases where the agenda of deliberation is directly related to the person obligated to attend the forum, it gives citizens options to decide for themselves how much and how often they can participate at a given time. For example, the *Qixxee* forum can sometimes deal with a specific topic of interest to some members of the community, so members of that community are involved. During normal times, citizens can appoint representatives, or when collective security or interests are at stake, large numbers of citizens can directly participate in *Qixxee*, even from neighbouring communities, to make decisions on matters of common interest and concern. Such practice increases citizen participation in collective decision-making, while reducing barriers to the exercise of power by ordinary citizens. Modern technological developments can also help improve such forums to make them effective and useful.

Chaffee is the traditional Oromo parliament. What sets *Chaffee* apart from *Qixxee* is that *Chaffee* strictly follows the specified calendars, while *Qixxee* can be held any time when the need arises. Also, *Chaffee* has a set of criteria for elections and participation, while *Qixxee* is

open to all people. Another important point to noted here is that, unlike modern democracies, Gadaa establishes citizen legislature as opposed to elective legislature, in which the most important policy-making institutions such as Qixeee, Chaffee and Gumii are open to all citizens, so that members of the community have the right to participate in these institutions both as group through delegation and individually. The goal of these assemblies is to empower ordinary citizens so that deliberation in shaping public policies is as accessible as possible.

The National Chaffee, known as *Gumii*, is a gathering of multitudes and a manifestation of the sovereignty of the people, as it is a body superior to all other political structures. In Oromo's political traditions, the highest authority resides in this open national assembly, in which all *Gadaa* classes and assemblies, aspirants and in power, including able citizens, active and retired are represented (Legesse, 2006). All binding decisions concerning almost all areas of Oromo's life are deliberated and decided at *Gumii* assemblies. *Gumii's* decision cannot be reversed by any other assemblies. But other assemblies can make binding decisions regarding almost all areas of their local life, in accordance with the decisions made in the *Gumii* assembly. *Gumi* is open to all citizens who have opinions about the ruling *Gadaa* class or the laws of the country and have the ability to express these views.

As *Gumii* is the supreme body over all political structures, it has the authority to make decisions on all unresolved issues by other bodies of the political system, and mediate when an impasse arises between the members of the *Gadaa* group in power and the councillors in the *Gumii* assembly. This can be a very important political tradition that the Oromo people can offer to the modern world to address gridlock problems. For example, gridlock is a constant feature of American political life. The US Congress was dysfunctional and could not pass legislation during most of Obama's rule. This is because the Founding Fathers did not make any provision to it, perhaps because they never foresaw this would happen (Ezra Klein, 2015). Perhaps by adopting a supra-institutional structure such as the *Gumii*, Western states may improve their political culture, making it less uncompromising.

Gumii is such a democratic assembly in which the Oromo community as a whole has the opportunity to participate in decision-making on an equal basis. It encourages people to work together, allowing people to participate in political decisions even when they are not in power, which fosters the unity and tolerance that helped Oromo develop a culture of pluralism. An interesting example of this fact is that *Yuuba* groups (outgoing gadaa party) become most active during *Gumii* assemblies, that is, during their lifetime when they are semi-retired from active

Gadaa leadership. The reason they are considered semi-retired (*yuuba*) is because given their experience and knowledge they gained during their previous leadership, their expertise is required in the legislation and leading *Gumii* assemblies. Although they are semi-retired from the *Gadaa* leadership, they remain members of the multitude and play an important role as *councillors* in the various tasks of the assembly. Hence, unlike modern democracies, leadership in Gumii assemblies is provided to senior leaders with the necessary knowledge and wisdom from members of outgoing Gadaa leaders (parties). In modern democracies, members of the incumbent dominate and take over the leadership of the legislature. However, legislative leadership in the Gadaa tradition is acquired only after leaders have effectively fulfilled their role in the executive office. This helps ensure the continuation of best policies and practices of the previous regime and serves as a mechanism to control the authoritarian tendencies of Gadaa leaders, who may change laws in their favour, for example, like the problems that have recently become prevalent in Africa to extend presidential term limits through constitutional amendments.

In short, what distinguishes Oromo democracy from the electoral model is the existence of an institutionalized system of participation at all levels of the social system. Marco Bassi (1996: 160) explained that a unique feature of *Gadaa's* polity is its diffused and capillary participatory structures in all types of decision-making in various assemblies from the bottom to top, with a general flow from peripheral assemblies to the higher pyramidal assemblies of the multitude. Participation is embedded in the entire *Gadaa* system and permeates its age-grade organizations and various citizen assemblies, which place great importance on citizen participation in decision-making. This feature makes the traditional Oromo political culture, certainly, a democracy, even by the standards of Lincoln's conception of democracy as government of the people, by the people, for the people. Greater participation in decision-making and the political process that effectively moves from base to centre makes it more democratic than even modern electoral democracy.

6.6.2 Representation in Oromo democracy

Given the size and complexity of modern states, democracy is likely to remain representative in one form or another, but here again important question needs to be answered is whether the representation allows ordinary citizens to be in charge of their matters. As noted above, even the most democratized versions of existing democracies do not measure up to the full potential of genuine popular rule. Landemore (2020:36) attributes the inherent fragility of the system to

its two principles: periodic elections and independence of representatives. While periodic elections are the basis of democratization, the main problem, however, is the ideological dominance of elections as the sole marker of political legitimacy. As such, not only is the practice of electoral rituals arising from problems such as campaign finance, vote rigging and biased media coverage that pose serious problems from a democratic viewpoint (Gastil and Wright, 2018: 305), but the very design of the system is incompatible with the principle of democratic representation. With elections being used as a means of authorizing the mandates of representatives, an elusive conception of electoral representation emerged, in which elections are understood as transferring the consent of voters to the elected representatives (Landemore, 2020:83).

In other words, consent at the ballot box is not only an expression of the equal principle of one person, one vote, which is necessary to create democratic credentials. Thanks to the majority principle, it also provides the benefits of political legitimacy by allowing elected representatives to act on behalf of all citizens, including those voters who voted unequivocally for other candidates. This remains the main problem with the consent theory of legitimacy, since it cannot explain why elected representatives automatically claim to represent the entire body of citizens, while there are at least a portion of the citizens who voted for other candidates.

Failure to adequately address this problem of consent theory gives rise to the second controversial principle - the independence of representatives, which is intended to give elected elites yet another political legitimacy under the pretext of their independence. It means that the relative independence of the elected representatives from their constituencies is necessary to create meaningful space for debate among elites (Urbinati, 2006:45). This implies that they can agree or deviate from the preferences of their constituents if necessary. Rights such as freedom of expression seek to counterbalance potential abuses of power by elected elites, such as misuse of their independence rights, by ensuring responsiveness and accountability through public criticism of their decisions and choices (Diamond, 2015: 60). However, it is also worth noting here that while freedom of expression is an excellent tool for exerting discursive pressure on elected representatives, it may or may not represent the necessary voices in actual decision-making. This is because actual decision-making power is ultimately exercised by the elected elites in conformity with or against expressed preferences. In short, as Manin explained, democratic representation in the electoral model hardly measures the understanding of

democracy as genuine popular rule due to severe constraints in terms of inclusiveness, so it may not produce the best possible results, working with fewer votes and viewpoints (Manin, 1997: 79).

The solution to these problems lies in rethinking the concept of representation in terms of ideal democratic traditions to make it more inclusive, egalitarian, and empowering. For example, *Gadaa* combines democratic features of both representative and participatory models. This allows the system to embrace a richer ecology of various forms of democratic representation, as opposed to the representative model, which offers limited and rigid account of electoral representation. Oromo democracy has two age-based organizations that integrate the lessons of the institutional success of both participatory and representative democracy, allowing the system to institutionalize multiple forms and sites of representation mechanisms.

The two age-based organizations in Oromo democracy are *Hiriyaa* (peer groups) and *Goggessa*, which are the five *Gadaa* parties. As explained above, *Hiriyaa* (*peer groups*) are a site for participatory democracy, where each member of society takes on different social responsibilities appropriate to their age. It also serves as an accountability mechanism for the entire system, ensuring that their members are aware of their duties and responsibilities, keeping them under the supervision of their peers and the general public.

Goggesa is very similar to modern political parties that run for political office and leadership. In the Oromo political tradition, there are five *gogessaa* groups, which means there are five *Gadaa* parties that assume political power in sequential and cyclical order, each for a period of eight years. This means that political power rotates between the five *Gadaa* parties through a succession system that determines who gives power to whom. If we assume that these parties are A, B, C, D, E, then the order of succession is always as follows: 'A' transfer power to 'B'; 'B' to 'C'; 'C' to 'D'; 'D' to 'E'; and 'E' back to 'A', thus completing a forty-year cycle of five eight-year office term. No two parties can ever be *Gadaa* (assume power) at the same time, because the system is structured in such a way that when one group passes the *Gadaa* stage, the next one follows it, etc. In other words, each *Gadaa* party has to wait forty years to return to *Gadaa* power. Periodic rotation is designed to ensure that ordinary citizens who are granted access to power to serve the entire political body do not lose sight of the interests of the general public (Legesse, 2006). This happens through two mechanisms. First, *Gadaa* offer a one-time,

non-renewable eight-year term of office (mandate) that alternates between five *Gadaa* parties. There is no institutional mechanism for the extension or renewal of the mandate of the *Gadaa* officers, including the Abbaa Gadaa (the president). Second, there is also a mid-year review mechanism for the group in power in which citizens can hold their leaders accountable and impeach them when necessary and justified.

Another important point to note is that, unlike modern democracies, in the Oromo political tradition, party loyalty and membership is passed down from the father to all his children, although the children are free to change their loyalty and membership later. This means, the entire Oromo population belongs to one of the five *Gadaa (goggessaa)* parties in their area, and they retain this as their identity along with members of their peer group who were jointly initiated into the Hiriyaa organization. In other words, every Oromo man is a member of one of the five *Gadaa* parties that he inherited from his father. But unlike modern electoral democracies, in the Oromo political tradition, *Gadaa* parties do not compete with each other for political power. Electoral competition always takes place between members of the same peer group. This does not even include members of the same party other than their peers. In other words, each peer group competes for political power within itself, not even with other peer groups in the same party. As noted above, there are up to eleven peer groups, each of them separated by eight years (age-grade organization).

Moreover, electoral competition is limited not only to who competes with whom for political power, but also to when members of a particular peer group can exercise this right. In other words, each peer group exercises its right to elect and run for political office only when they reach the *Lubaa (Gadaa)* grade. All members who jointly initiated into the same peer group *(Hiriyaa)* enjoy this right concurrently when they are *lubaa (Gadaa*) for eight years.

Although the formal exercise of this right is strictly limited to the *lubaa (Gadaa)* class, the practice begins at an early stage. In other words, the voting age, and the age at which members of the peer group assume power are separate. In the Oromo tradition, the voting age is when peer groups reach the *kuussa* grade, that is, when they are between 25 and 32 years old. It is at this stage that each peer group begins to assume serious social responsibilities and can nominate future leaders from among their peers. But nomination into the cohort of future leaders does not necessarily guarantee the political office as they have to go through the

scrutiny of the general public and their peers for a period of 21 years until they become *lubaa (Gadaa)*. The system is designed to ensure that all parties have an equal opportunity to hold public office but must go through all the necessary stages and gain the wisdom and knowledge that the position deserves, which are vetted by senior councillors assigned to them and members of the public.

Also, all peer groups that pass the lubaa (Gadaa) grade and become yuuba after eight years of political leadership automatically lose their right to elect and run for political office, so they do not possess this right all the time. The reason is that elections are organized for the executive position, and the executive's mandate cannot be extended beyond an eight-year term, so outgoing members automatically lose those rights as they relinquish their executive role in Gadaa government. However, this does not mean that the outgoing leaders do not play a role in government. Oromo political traditions allow outgoing leaders to continue to play various roles, with the exception of political leadership, in the *Gadaa's* government through other structures such as the legislature. This remains the same for all peer groups, so it is only over time that all peer groups enjoy these rights equally through the practice of rotating political power in a sequential and cyclical order among the five *Gadaa* parties. Thus, because of the rotation of political power every eight years between the five *Gadaa* parties, de facto access to power is strictly equalized over the span of forty years in the long run. Periodic rotation, as well as a non-renewable executive mandate, are designed to facilitate the peaceful transfer of political power and reduce violent ways of seizing power.

The system does this because it distributes political power across its structures from lower to higher levels, rather than stagnating with fewer elites. Unlike the representative model, which restricts policymaking institutions to elected elites, Oromo political traditions make such institutions open to all able citizens, both elected and unelected, aspirants and in power, active and retired to be represented and make their impact on political decisions. From this perspective, *Gadaa* imposes severe restrictions on the scope of the right to vote in political elections and run for office, compared to modern democracies, which allow all eligible citizens to exercise this right on a regular, periodic basis. This is perhaps the most important feature of Oromo democracy that can be reconstructed for use in this era to overcome the ideological dominance of elections as the sole marker of democratic exercise. As noted below, by distributing political power through its structure, which stretches from the lowest to the highest

echelon, Gadaa makes important political institutions accessible to ordinary citizens. This not only helps prevent stagnation with fewer elected elites, but it also provides multiple venues for representations and increases the accessibility of such platforms for ordinary citizens. Another mechanism is that, as indicated above, by reducing contestation between political parties, Gadaa increases the intra-party contestation for electing the most fit candidate for political office. Modern democracies often overlook intra-party competition, investing much into the competition with other rival parties for political office. Moreover, *Gadaa* parties differ only in leadership styles, not ideologically. Such a continuity of the founding ideology from one *Gadaa* party to another may have contributed to a peaceful transfer of power every eight years, while the outgoing *Gadaa* party automatically takes the place of opposition. The oppositions to the ruling *Gadaa* party do not come through revolt, but in the form of public reasoning and arguments in favour of public values and social justices (Jalata, 2012, 132).

Thus, as I tried to explain in detail above, the Lubaa (Gadaa) class practices the type of democracy comparable to the version of democracy we today call representative, but this election is for the executive, not the legislature. The legislature is open to all capable citizens, so those who can, they can directly participate, and those who cannot, can delegate someone they trust or believe they have the necessary knowledge of the subject in the policymaking process. Moreover, since the majority principle that imposes the will of the majority on the minority is unknown in the Oromo tradition, all decisions are approved by consensus. The advantage of this practice is that it effectively transforms individual subjective preferences, which are used by elected elites to automatically assert representational legitimacy over the entire body of the citizens, into a more objective consensus that is either discovered or constructed by bringing the final decision closer to collective judgment through open deliberation.

In addition to the aforementioned age-based organizations, Oromo democracy has other structures through which it distributes political authority, institutionalizing open and flexible representation. For example, institutions such as *Qixxee*, *Chaffee* and *Gumii* provide a good experience of democratic representation. The most distinctive feature of these assemblies is that they make the legislative power accessible to ordinary citizens in the deliberation that follows a consensus decision. Any member of the community could participate on an equal footing in these assemblies, either directly through self-representation or through a designated

representative. Anyone with knowledge of *Gadaa* laws, rituals, history, chronology, and time reckoning can be participate directly in these forums. More interestingly, members of the *Gadaa* party in power do not have any special decision-making prerogative compared to those who are not in power, especially in the *Gumii* assembly. In other words, the decisional influence of the party in power is very limited, since they constitute only a minority among the various officers who have equal rights in the policy decisions in the assembly of the multitude.

In general, the following two features distinguish Oromo representation from electoral representation. First, a unique feature of Oromo representation is that it offers a flexible representative structure that significantly emphasizes the value and exercise of popular power, ensuring that citizens do not have to wait until the end of the term to recall their representatives. The mid-term review mechanism is one way to recall incompetent and underperforming representatives in Oromo democracy. This ability to recall means that accountability will be much stronger than electoral representation. Second, the number of representatives is not limited or fixed, since Oromo democratic assemblies can number in the hundreds or thousands, and their number varies from agenda to agenda. Thus, representation in Oromo democracy is open to all and expresses the values of inclusion and equality. The benefit of this practice is that it gives people the freedom to participate flexibly in the political process, directly or indirectly, by delegating decision-making authority to the most competent individuals on the agenda presented for deliberation.

6.6.3 Deliberation in Oromo democracy

Deliberation is the discursive process that distinguishes Oromo democracy from electoral democracy, as there are various factors that make the latter insufficiently democratic. One of such factors is that the discursive process in electoral democracy relies on parties to structure public debate as a competition between political platforms that is subjected to partisan interests. Thus, it manifests itself to a large extent in purely minimalist Schumpeterian versions that emphasize elite competition and voting moments, as opposed to a deliberation in which ordinary citizens participate.

Unlike the electoral paradigm, Oromo democracy embraces deliberation as a key institutional principle. The different levels of deliberation that include ordinary citizens as equal participants, one at the national level, which is the largest and supreme body on all pan-Oromo issues, where all sectors of society are involved, and the others are local level assemblies. All

binding decisions are made at these assemblies by consensus with the direct or indirect participation of the person involved. The absence of a quorum concept that defines a minimum number of members for a deliberative assembly and the process of reaching consensus can make the process challenging, but the system has ways to deal with these issues.

Reaching consensus is not a spontaneous process, as there are a number of procedural rules and norms that are used to prevent or overcome impasse. All assemblies always begin with the chairperson encouraging participants to abide by established principles of productive discussion and to avoid offensive or quarrelsome speech. Important decisions are not made in haste but are seriously considered in lines of past precedents and careful deliberations.

Civility in deliberation is encouraged as this helps facilitate mutual respect in democratic deliberations. Asmerom Legesse argued that the fundamental principle of Gadaa's discourse is: "Look for the best of what others have said to gain common ground, not the worst of what they said to win an argument." Participants are asked to leave all of their "cleverness" behind, as "cleverness" is the undoing of democracy" (Legesse, 2000: 214). There is also a mechanism to pacify public discourse when politicians become violent as we see nowadays especially in emerging democracies, where people fight in Parliament. When that happens, Oromo uses the blessing of the *Gadaa* leader who chairs the meeting as a mechanism to pacify emotions. The longest blessing is given when tempers get out of hand. As emotions subside, they return to discussion with civility and attention to each other. The whole purpose of the blessing is to pacify frayed nerves and return to rational discourse. This not only helps to maintain peace in democratic discourses, but also balances individual freedom of expression, on the one hand, and an orderly discussion environment, on the other.

In a nutshell, while the West may have contributed greatly to the development of modern democratic thought and its complex structure, the fact remains that Oromo among other societies had such all-encompassing democratic republics in the 16th century, even before European travellers arrived on the shores of North America and only later built democracy in the seventeenth or eighteenth century (Jalata, 2012: 130). Thus, as I have argued in this thesis, reconstructing the indigenous institutions, values, and culture can have transformative impacts on the democratization of Ethiopia, helping to overcome past mistakes made by imitating foreign ideology from the outside, without appreciating their dangers and limitations.

Rethinking democracy in the context of the current political transition is necessary to counter the characterization of indigenous political traditions as inferior. Political thinking which does not recognize this, and continues to merely emulate others, cannot contribute to the development of democratic culture in the country.

6.7 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter show that Ethiopia under the EPRDF had never fulfilled Robert Dahl's interpretation of what democracy means, as the three elements such as participation, representation and civil and political liberties were under repression, restrictions, and tight control. In rhetoric, the regime presented democracy as an indispensable value to the Ethiopian people, but in practice, authoritarianism was promoted as a revolutionary democracy. Contrary to Robert Dahl's criteria, the regime introduced several harsh laws restricting civil society, completely closed political space, closed most independent media outlets, and suppressed opposition political parties. These measures sparked a growing crescendo of mass protests that changed the status quo, bringing Abiy Ahmed to power.

In the first months of Abiy's rule, the political reforms undertaken somehow fit Dahl's definition of democracy. Political measures such as revision of repressive laws and expanding political space are consistent with the constituent elements of democracy, although this was in the Schumpeterian sense, nevertheless encouraging participation, public debates, and respect for civil and political rights. However, weak countervailing forces and mismanagement of the transition created uncertainty as progress on early reform rolled back.

In short, taking stock of Ethiopia's progress towards democracy, a pattern of return to authoritarianism appears to have emerged, as Abiy's liberalization measures were only aimed at inviting more guests into the living room for a "coffee talk", with a few people welcome to stay over for dinner. Despite the fact that the public protests that brought Abiy to power provided an opportunity for a transition to true democracy, the prime minster is unable to achieve the decisive changes expected in the functioning of the political system, misplacing the priorities. The early start on the liberalization project was not to genuinely advance democratization; rather, it appears to have aimed to offset public discontent and consolidate his power through continued presence of the ruling party structure and the deployment of informal army units created outside the constitutional mandate to influence and control the political system.

In line with the research framework adopted for this thesis, this chapter has reflected on cultural democracy to present an argument against the drive to emulate foreign models, especially Western liberal democracy. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed seemed to understand this fact when he stated that the idea of "*Medemer*" is rooted in Ethiopian history and cultural values, although he does not mention the Ethiopian values from which this idea originated. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to filling this gap by extracting relevant elements from Gadaa as an example to demonstrate the importance of indigenous traditions to overcome the problem of emulation. Accordingly, this chapter provided the rationale for the need to base Ethiopian democracy on Ethiopian foundations, creating a common political framework from the country's indigenous political traditions, emphasizing equal participation, democratic representation, and deliberation as institutional mechanisms for empowering citizens.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis was to explore the challenges and prospects of democratization in the current political reform process in Ethiopia. With this general objective in mind, the thesis presented an analysis of how the struggle for democracy was activated, how Amhara uprising and Oromo protests led to the downfall of a powerful authoritarian regime in Africa, What were the role of party competition, factional squabbles, and intra-elite rivalry of the ruling party in bringing about the current transition, how major political actors attempted to respond to the challenges of democracy and the nature of political relations in the post-protest transition process.

For addressing these research questions, this study employed a qualitative approach of a deductive nature, which allowed the formulation of a theoretical framework for analysing Ethiopia's political development over a longer historical trajectory that helped to determine the extent to which Ethiopia meets the nine conditions identified as the determinants of democratization. This reflects on and advances Robert Dahl's (1989) theoretical understanding of democracy adopted in this thesis, which provides a set of criteria for assessing the quality of democratic institutions. The nine conditions defined in the theoretical framework are as follows: economic development, management of social heterogeneity and polarization, the existence of robust statehood, the existence of a vibrant civil society, cultural democracy, press freedom and social media, nonviolent social movements, the role of the diaspora, and liberalized autocracy. This synthesis of nine conditions allows an examination of the extent to which any or all of these preconditions existed in Ethiopia during the current transition process, shedding more light on the types of institutions and policy approach needed to address the challenges that impede the development of a vibrant and stable democracy in the country. In short, since there is no single ideal or teleological condition that should be emulated by all countries, this thesis has combined relevant components of the three dominant approaches to democratization: structural, transitional and modernization. This not only helps to overcome the limitations of these approaches, but also better explains Ethiopia's current transition to democracy, as well as provides a broader and more solid framework for understanding the challenges of democratization in African countries. In this perspective, this concluding chapter offers a synthesis of the findings in relation to the nine determinants applied in this study, as follow.

7.2 Synthesis of the determinants of democracy in the Ethiopian context

For the past half century, Ethiopia has been in a continuous struggle to establish a democratic system. When the imperial regime was toppled in 1974 with the student revolution of 1960s and 1970s, which the military regime took over to replace Emperor Haile Selassie, the goal was to transform the country into a republic in which the government of the people would become a new order to address major grievances of Ethiopia's oppressed people. But over the next seventeen years, Ethiopians had to endure the brutality of the military regime and civil war, despite some steps toward religious equality for Muslims and the passage of a law that abolished imperial landlordism.

Seventeen years of gratuitous atrocities came to an end in 1991, leading to the emergence of the second republic with a multinational federal settlement, with the rise to power of a rebel movement led by the TPLF, which was later joined by three other regional parties to form the EPRDF, promising to advance multiparty democracy and development in Ethiopia. However, over the next three decades, the country again faced serious human rights violations with the violent regime changes that saw the brutal military dictatorship replaced by another ethnic minority, leading to the commission of authoritarianism.

Ethiopia has entered its third transition again following the recent victory of the Oromo protests that led to a change of leadership in the EPRDF in April 2018, an early period of which heralded an unprecedented political change in Ethiopia's modern history. Ethiopia's transition in April 2018 was the result of long-standing social grievances such as lack of political freedoms, land grabbing, widespread suppression of dissent and rampant federal mismanagement. This led to public protests that effectively set-in motion a nationwide order of disobedience, creating an atmosphere of ungovernability until Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018, riding the wave of national discontents and echoing the rhetoric of democratic change.

As such, the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s that led to the first transition in 1974, as well as the guerrilla forces that made the second transition in 1991, both brought about a regime change, but neither led to the creation of a democratic system. However, there is a marked difference between the current and previous transitions. Unlike previous violent regime changes, the change in 2018 was the result of largely non-violent social movements that brought forward new leaders who won votes in the then ruling EPRDF coalition. Undoubtedly, the Amhara uprising and Oromo social movement, led mostly by youth who protested against

the repression of government, as well as reformist elements in the EPRDF, were the driving force behind the radical transformation seen in early 2018.

7.2.1 Non-violent social movement

As discussed in this thesis, the movement that led to the current transition originated in early April 2014 and has its roots in the Oromo protests against the controversial Addis Ababa Master Plan, as well as the Amhara uprising against the TPLF authoritarianism. The protests that began at the universities soon spread to urban centres, but only to face extreme brutality from the government. As the protest gained momentum and the May 2015 elections approached, the government had to issue statements pledging to halt the master plan, so it helped subside the protests. However, on November 12, 2015, the protests resumed in the small town of Ginchi against the government's decision to clear the forests and soccer field for an investment project. Since then, protests have continued and expanded and spread throughout Oromia, with the participation of farmers and other sectors of society. The government's violent response to protesters increased the intensity and scope of the protests, rather than suppressing them.

Although the immediate cause of the protests was the publication of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, the ultimate goal was to end the repressive system imposed by the TPLF and ensure the transition to democracy. This goal of democratic change only became clearer during the Grand Oromo rally, which began on August 6, 2016, and was attended by Oromo and Non-Oromo groups in solidarity, mainly Amhara youth from Gondar and Bahir Dar. Its instilled confidence in the depth and scope of the protest movements as the rallies simultaneously organized in over 200 rural towns across Oromia, including Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. As the Grand Oromo rally was organized in the face of the suppression of the regime, it confirmed that the protests had already become a movement that instilled confidence to bringing down the repressive regime in the next phase of resistance. The rally was a decisive turning point, proving that the movement has the strength it needs to put constant pressure on the regime through a nationwide movement.

With the confidence gained from the Grand Oromo rally, protest organizers began to plan how to achieve the desired transition by pressuring and encouraging reformers within the regime to begin seizing power from the TPLF and its loyalists. This was first accomplished through takeover of power in the Oromia region, where the protests were intense, allowing Lemma Megersa to become the region's president, so he quickly pushed the hardliners aside and

replaced them with reformist figures. After the takeover of power in Oromia, the next move was to create an alliance of moderates from members of the ruling EPRDF, in particular between OPDO and ANDM, with the aim of eventually wresting the federal power. The TPLF opposed the reformist takeover of Oromia, so they began to use more brutal repression to stop progress arguably through a proxy war, creating conflicts on the borders of Somalia and Oromia regions, as well as blaming[100] reformist groups for the stampede that resulted in the death of several people during the cultural festival on October 2, 2016.

After that, a state of emergency was declared, but this did not produce the desired results. Rather, it intensified the power struggle between EPRDF hardliners and soft-liners, giving protesters more room to regroup and strategize, forming a security network that connects mainly OPDO and protest leaders. In the weeks following the lifting of the state of emergency, protesters boycotted markets and held demonstrations. This made it clear that the youth movement not only survived the emergency, but also used the time to build a better organizational structure with security links with the moderates in the ruling EPRDF, allowing them to return with greater strength and confidence.

The reformers, in particular Lemma, supported the protesters and blamed the government for the crisis, indicating that the only way out was to address the grievances of the protesters. As the reformers sympathized with the demands of protesters, by the summer of 2017 the rift between reformists and hardliners within the ruling party had widened, tightening reformist control over federal power through the party structure and the formation of the OPDO and ANDM alliance.

Thus, as protests intensified and the reformist coalition consolidated, the TPLF lost confidence and began to show signs of retreat. With support from the youth movement, the soft-liners in the ruling EPRDF pushed the party towards further serious reforms, leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on February 15, 2018. Empowered by the protests, which created a general atmosphere of ungovernability, ANDM and OPDO also outplayed the TPLF in the selection process that led to Abiy Ahmed's appointment as Prime Minister on April 2, 2018.

In short, by rallying youth in support of democratic transformation, the 2014-2018 youth-led protest movements employed one of the rare types of nonviolent mechanisms called conversion

---

[100] See Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), 142nd special report on the Human rights violation during the state of emergency in Ethiopia, April 2017

to spearhead political change in early 2018, with the result that the Oromo and Amhara elites in the ruling EPRDF were convinced of the just cause of the youth movement in bringing down the TPLF authoritarianism. As shown below, this thesis explored the changes taking place in the country and the direction that has been taken since the new administration came to power, which helps to understand how they all fit into the dynamics in which Ethiopia lives today.

The early phase of the post-protest context was unprecedented in modern Ethiopian history, as prime minster Abiy introduced several political reforms that has earned him acclaims. This includes expanding political space, reforming restrictive legislatures, and replacing the principle of revolutionary democracy by *Medemer* as the guiding ideology of the ruling party. Relations with the diaspora were renewed, recognizing them as an integral part of the identity and development of Ethiopia. This was a clear departure from the hostile relationship between government and diaspora for most of the previous decades.

Most Ethiopians, dissatisfied with the previous regime, inevitably linked their hopes and expectations to a utopian vision of the future. Instead of replacing one dictator with another, hopes grew for a system of accountable and democratic governance, in which real power is transferred from a clique of self-serving elites to the people to enable Ethiopians to exercise their civil right to shape the country's destiny. However, such opportunities have all too often been presented in the past with the hope of democratic change, but one after another they have shattered. Amhara uprising and Oromo protests is also one of such opportunities that helped defeat the oppressive regime in Ethiopia's modern history, bringing Abiy to power with the promise of fundamental democratic change. If there is a lesson to be learned from the previous two transitions, it is that the current transition should not be taken for granted. Like the two previous regime changes in 1974 and 1991, which did not transform the country into a democracy, the current transition is also fraught with several risks that have emerged over the past three years.

As such, despite the tremendous opportunity created by youth-led protests for the country's transition to true democracy, it took Abiy only a few months to undo the progress made in his first months in office. However, Abiy's failure to lead Ethiopia onto a democratic path is the result of a combination of factors, and responsibility for the rollback rests with a number of actors. One is the refusal to adopt the roadmap led to mis-prioritization of transition agenda; second, the deep-rooted undemocratic practices and complex patronage systems operated under the EPRDF have remained largely intact, especially at local levels; third, the diverging

ethno-nationalist aspirations of various groups, the lack of common demands among the leading ethnic elites; fourth, OLF's ambivalence between peaceful struggle and armed struggle; fifth, recrimination and hate speech on social media, as well as historical grievances, created a dynamic that prevented Abiy from advancing his reform.

Moreover, the political events of past three years point to this grim future of the country, like the previous regimes, where all forms of atrocities and brutalities are justified in the name of Ethiopia's unity and integrity. There are several factors that easily work against the realization of the country's democratic aspirations. The culture of absolute power and authoritarianism is an important structural obstacle to democracy. For example, rather than embracing an all-inclusive vision of change for managing the transition, the new leaders put forward a unilateral vision of the future, demonstrating serious threats of a return to authoritarianism. The presence of strong countervailing forces, organized pressure from citizens, as well as civil society organizations are critical to forcing the regime into fulfilling its democratic obligations. However, since these forces are fragile in today's Ethiopia, the fate of democratizing the country is in the hands of the ruling party itself, which is hardly promising.

Open disagreements between the federal government and the regions, ethnic based violence, disputes, and further divisions within the EPRDF are also manifestations of the post-2018 transition. One of such tensions escalated into military operations in the Tigray region since November 2020, aimed at removing the retreated regional ruling party, the TPLF, from power. Before 2018, such issues were effectively managed through the ruling party channels, imposing democratic centralism as a mechanism for enforcing hardlines policies and suppressing dissent. However, as the ruling prosperity party lacks such cohesion compared to the dissolved EPRDF, the practice of democratic centralism has been severely restricted by the new elites from the Amhara and Oromo groups.

Hope for better days quickly turned into despair specially among youth as new elites continued to unilaterally define the country's future, and the stability the country had been seeking has slipped away with various ethnic clashes as well as the recent escalation of conflict between the federal government and the Tigray region. This pattern of political development seems to further reinforce the evidence that the regime is curbing free political competition, reversing initial liberalization measures to create a monopoly of power for Abiy and his party, the Prosperity Party. The coronavirus pandemic also complicated an already fragile transition, as Abiy arguably grabbed the health crisis to postpone national elections scheduled for August

2020, leading to a constitutional crisis that accelerated the rollback of reforms introduced on the onset of Abiy's rule.

7.2.2 Liberalized autocracy

Based on these findings, this thesis concludes that Abiy's early embarkment on the liberalization project was not necessarily to genuinely advance democratization. Rather, it aimed to offset some public discontent with the introduction of mild reforms to improve the regime's image, while effectively consolidating Abiy's power through the continued presence of the ruling party structure and the informal army unit created outside the constitutional mandate to influence and control the political system. This is consistent with the understanding of liberalized autocracy, which scholars such as Brumberg (2002) have argued as deliberate actions of authoritarian regimes aimed at bringing some benefits to the regime, but the main goal is to allow the ruling elites to remain in power.

7.2.3 Civil societies

However, this thesis emphasizes that the key to the success of the current reforms lies in building a political order in which all citizens, political actors and civil society in the country can find their place in the reform process, but this seems daunting, as evidenced by the trajectory of transition over the past three years. As this thesis points out, when citizens are denied the opportunity to express their grievances through institutional mechanisms such as civil society, they are unlikely to succumb to such actions. The continual diminution of civil society space during the brutal rule of the EPRDF led to massive anti-government protests across the country, forcing the regime to pursue political reforms. One of the results of this reform process is the repeal of the repressive 2009 CSO law, which made civil society organizations virtually impossible to operate, except those associated with the ruling party, and its replacement with a new liberal law in February 2019. According to the 2009 law, only Ethiopian charities were permitted to work on political issues related to democratic and human rights, while foreign charities were permitted only to work on social and economic development issues. This classification strictly based on funding sources, as those who raise more than 10 percent of their funds from outside were not allowed to work on democracy. The new civic space provides civil society organizations with a space in which they can advance the cause they believe in. However, this same civic space also became the site of the contradictory and polarized political landscape that dominated the country. Both the government and opposition groups have taken advantage of the newfound freedom and right

of assembly guaranteed by the constitution to create affiliates civil societies to promote their political agendas among the communities. Indeed, while the new law was inspired by the opening of the political space in early 2018, the real challenge lies in its practical implementation ahead.

7.2.4 Role of diaspora and international engagement

The role of the diaspora in national politics has always been very active, especially during the EPRDF, but almost all of them were against the regime. Many Ethiopians were forced to leave the country en masse, fleeing oppression and repression. As such, it is now clear why Oromo protests have global networks and global connections, besides technological advances that have allowed new structures such as satellite TV channels and social media to play an increasingly important role in mobilizing youth across the country, facilitating engagement with the diaspora. Diaspora solidarity rallies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe were held in support of the youth movement and to hold the Ethiopian government and its allies accountable for development and security assistance given to the regime. Moreover, there was a humanitarian aid team in the diaspora that, through local networks, provided coordinated and effective assistance to victims of security forces. There were also groups that supported diplomatic efforts in a strategic and coordinated manner to help fight to end TPL's dominance.

7.2.5 Press freedom and social media

Ethiopia's political challenges stem from different understandings not only of its past and future, but also of the present, which underlines the urgent need to reorient political discourse from polarized ideological rhetoric to a deeper understanding of the structural problems. An independent and free media can play an indispensable role in shaping such a democratic political culture in Ethiopia, paving the way for reconciling disagreements over policies and practices for peaceful discussion among citizens. Social media played a central role in the public protests that led to the 2018 reforms, largely because there were no reliable alternative channels of critical information due to the growing intolerance of the EPRDF government. Following changes in early 2018, the bans were lifted from several websites as well as media designated as terrorist, although some of the independent media are recently closed by the same government that lifted the ban as they became critical of the way the government is managing the transition. However, the government claims that their closure is due to a wave of ethnic conflict spreading across the country as a result of an increase in the number of fake news and incorrect stories on social media that threaten peace and public order. While the openness launched in April 2018 is

commendable given the fact that press freedom is an important and powerful tool in the struggle for democracy, the mismanagement of political liberalization could have also contributed greatly to deepening polarization in the country.

7.2.6 Economic development

This thesis places the application of developmental state ideology as well as economic development in the broader context of the demands of political freedom, democracy, and social justice. One of the main factors behind the instability of Ethiopia is the general inefficiency of investment projects that led to land grabbing and waste of public resources. Despite rapid economic growth over the past decade and a half, the economic system is essentially held captive by the ruling vanguard political party that has failed to address Ethiopia's rampant poverty. The regime economic policy not only had little impact on the lives and freedoms of people, but also exacerbate the problems of land grabbing. Critical challenges facing land policy and governance in Ethiopia include the alienation of land from farmers by leasing large tracts of land to wealthier people at significantly higher prices, which was a great recipe for mobilizing the public protests. In its futile pursuit of political legitimacy through economic performance, the EPRDF has brought in unprecedented levels of institutional venality, resulting in colossal public investment failures and significant losses in megaprojects.

As for the economic development as a determinant of democracy, Ethiopia has pursued the developmental state thesis, which argues for "development first, democracy later", subscribing to the argument of modernization theorists that most countries that have succeeded in creating stable democracies have achieved high economic development before they transitioned to democracy. However, the Ethiopian experience shows that economic development does not necessarily lead to democracy; rather, it seemed to support the deepening of authoritarian rule by creating a dominant party regime that controlled security, military, politics, and economy under the ideological guide of revolutionary democracy, which remained an anti-thesis of democratic development. As a result, EPRDF governance exemplified contradictions in economic growth, pursuit of political and economic dominance, limited participation, and violation of civil and political rights of citizens, relying on low and high intensity coercive methods to foster its authoritarian policies.

Moreover, Ethiopia's attempts to achieve a developmental state in the context of a multinational federal system of government not only deviated from the prevailing centralist model in East Asian models, but also sparked popular discontent, leading to political instability and social

unrest. The findings of this thesis also indicate that it was difficult to replicate East Asian development model in Ethiopia, because conditions that allowed the creation of a successful developmental state in Asian countries are absent in the Ethiopian context, especially in the absence of competent, autonomous, and capable bureaucracy. An ineffective framework for managing the private sector's contribution to the economy and widespread rent-seeking behaviour among ruling elites is another problem that makes it difficult to replicate the success achieved in East Asia.

7.2.7 Existence of robust statehood

Along with the absence of these crucial elements, there are also problems of state and nation-building, which continue to undermine the development of "common sense" of national identity, which is a prerequisite for democratization. The lack of a common national identity is the result of the contradictory understanding of the state-building process that reinforces the global north-south dichotomy in Ethiopia's version. This dichotomy represents the political distance from the Ethiopian state, where the north was the political core, and the southi the political periphery. The political distance is further compounded by social and cultural differences, leading to radically different perspectives on the interpretation of historical dynamics that have shaped the political lens through which the national groups see their relationship with the Ethiopian state. For example, most elites from the political north, who followed in the footsteps of early 20th century intellectuals such as Gebrehiwot Baykedagn, argued that Ethiopia was a nation in quest of modernization to overcome its underdevelopment.

On the other hand, there are several ethno-nationalist groups that view Ethiopia as a state that has inflicted so much suffering and oppression, especially on its southern national groups, that it has spawned "nationality questions". Several liberation forces also see the Ethiopian state as a colonial empire that has conquered independent neighbouring communities and territories with the support of Western imperialists. Ethiopia's elite paradox is perhaps the most enduring factor in all the changes that have made to date, efforts that can be described as attempts to lift Ethiopia out of its underdevelopment or transform it into an inclusive and prosperous state free of oppression.

However, the desire to overcome past oppression, as well as the country's underdevelopment, is always constrained by the concentration of political power in the hands of a small number of elites belonging to a particular ethnic group. A hallmark of political development under the EPRDF rule was the attempt to create a dominant party regime in which the ruling party

controls government institutions down to the local level through its members or affiliates. This significantly diminished hope for a democratic transition as the ruling elites consolidated power and control over resources through overlapping roles in government and party structures until 2018. The transition, which began in early 2018, is also in trouble due to misplaced priorities, which are being pushed from top to bottom. This remains the seed of its decline, as all previous changes that enacted a top-down approach to reform in which reform ideas were imposed from above by self-proclaimed "all-knowing" experts have always been unsuccessful.

7.2.8 Management of social heterogeneity and polarization

In short, the origins of Ethiopia's political contradiction date back to the late nineteenth century, when the more monolithic Abyssinian polity expanded southward through conquests led by King Menelik, leading to the creation of the modern Ethiopian state. The contradiction that originated with the conquest of the south has since remained at the centre of political discourse and development in Ethiopia, demonstrating the centrality of identity politics in determining the pace and direction of political changes. As such, Dahl's (1989) arguments that unequal social relations are detrimental to democracy are consistent with the findings of this thesis. Before 1991, modern Ethiopia with its Abyssinian core pursued a policy of assimilation as the basis for a nation-building project. Ethiopia in the post-1991 period recognized its diversity and created a federal structure that was intended to address past injustices. But, the dominance of the identity and language of the historically privileged group continued to be a source of political tension, easily turning into violent struggles for monopoly of narrative and state power.

Building on this historical contradiction, this thesis provides a critical analysis of pan-Ethiopian and ethno-nationalist views of Ethiopia's past and future, which explains the country's difficulties in overcoming its democratic deficit. Pan-Ethiopian nationalism extols Ethiopia's past achievements in an attempt to cover up the atrocity inflicted by the state on various members of ethnic and religious communities. On the other hand, ethno-nationalists impose wary nationalist discourse within the ethnic group that they purportedly represent to refute hegemonic narrative that the pan-Ethiopians have produced and reproduced to mask the dark side of the past regimes. These contending nationalisms reinforce each other in opposite way: the narrative of one group becomes a recipe for another to create counter narratives to dominate the political discourse and mobilize their political base, which often leads to violence. For example, since 2018, tensions between different ethnic communities have increased more than

ever for various reasons, but they also stem from contradictory narratives that are aggressively pursued by contending nationalisms over the country's federal system.

While the debate over the institutional structure of the Ethiopian federation has continued for nearly three decades, since 2018 this debate has intensified in the context of the political liberalization and freedom of expression that accompanied the reform process. One of the most controversial political issues in Ethiopia since 1991 is the restructuring of the previous unitary state into a multi-national federal structure. Opponents of the federal system, most of whom are pan-Ethiopian nationalists, despise it as the source of all the problems the country has faced over the past three decades, stressing its divisive nature, which they believe severely undermines national cohesion by privileging ethnicity over national identity (See section 4.3.4).

Proponents, most of whom are ethno-nationalists, see multinational federalism as a panacea for the country's long-standing problems, such as the deep-seated inequality and oppression that marginalized groups have endured for decades. For this group, the federal system is an important political settlement that ensured the survival of Ethiopia, which was on the brink of collapse in early 1990s due to the proliferation of liberation movements, most of which were separatist. From this perspective, Oromo's struggle for democracy is trapped between groups that associate the problems with the inherent defect of the Ethiopian state as a colonial empire in the late 19th century, so resolute to regain independence from the very state that inflicted the oppression, and the groups, which largely resort to finding a solution to the crisis of the state itself, including Oromo grievances, by democratizing current multinational federalism.

As in the past, the paradoxical experience of post-imperial Ethiopia, where citizens are empowered but constantly constrained by political action despite legal recognition of their freedom and equality, the actual implementation of the federal system was also circumscribed by the authoritarian practices of the same regime that vows to defend it. Such a paradoxical experience, which forms a vicious circle between maintaining the status quo, making progress, and then completely abandoning any gains of the past, blocks the path to a more transformative politics and robust democratic order, further impoverishing national politics. This vicious circle of expansion and contraction of democracy has long been a constant feature of the Ethiopian state. Thus, shaping Ethiopia's future requires a critical reflection on what went wrong in the past to allow political compromise and overcome the problems of polarization and contradiction that impede the development of robust democracy in the country. This thesis

notes that among the elements that have gone wrong in the past are uncritical emulation of foreign development and democratic theories to solve the country's problems.

7.2.9 Cultural democracy

In this respect, Ethiopia's experience is unique compared to other African countries, as its rulers fell into the trap of imitating foreign development models as early as the mid-19th century. For many African countries, emulation of foreign models is largely a post-Cold War phenomenon, with the World Bank's development assistance programs driving Western liberal values around world since the 1990s. It began with the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of governance system for mankind, as Fukuyama argued. This hegemonic drive of Western liberal values has been linked to the identification of a lack of democracy as the root cause of poverty in Africa, which has made the continent dependent on the West for development assistance.

However, the application of Western liberal democracy in Africa is marked by electoral violence and fraud, which has led to the deterioration of the security and well-being of poor African societies, as well as their indigenous systems of government that had survived the colonization of West in previous years. Interestingly, the failures of Western models in Africa are also attributed to African cultural values as anti-democratic, as opposed to the paradigm itself. Contrasting this disposition, this thesis notes that donor-imposed uncritical imitation of Western values and ideas is one of the main factors explaining the failure of liberal democracy in Africa.

Thus, rather than emulating Western liberal democracies and structures, Africans seek to develop their indigenous development and governance frameworks that reflect African realities, culture, and values. Cognizance of this importance, Escobar (2020) argues, in his new book, "*Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*", that the plurality of worlds affirms the existence of multiple realities appropriate to other worlds, which he calls the pluriverse, explaining that politics is thus predicated on multiplicity, as opposed to the current globalists and the neoliberal world, which tries to impose its realities on others. This has always been detrimental to the emergence of an alternative epistemology that permits a plurality of thought and existence, especially in the post-Cold War period.

While Eurocentrism denies the democratic political history of Africa and portrays African culture as anti-democracy and anti-development, the truth is that democracy is an integral part

of African culture. The failure of Western democracy in Africa does not make the cultural democracies of African societies any less democratic or suggest that being different from the West should mean inferiority and be devalued. It simply means that African cultural democracy has institutional features that make it suitable for the pluriverse African societies, as there is no single best political organization or ideology that every country should emulate. Thus, this thesis argues that an eclectic approach to indigenous traditions may prove useful because of the fluidness and flexibility of its institutional governing ideals to address the flaws of liberal democracy. Such an approach should seek to decipher positive cultural values and practices that help deepen democratic norms and institutions, as the institutional arrangements for representation, participation and public deliberation may differ across societies and cultures.

This thesis is also complemented by a theoretical exploration of various concepts of democracy in Ethiopia, including the ideological guide of the current reforms, which the Prime Minister called *Medemer*. They are analysed from the point of view of the criteria of Robert Dahl (1989) that a democratic system should embody. Reflections on cultural democracy also serve as an argument against the drive to emulate foreign models, as well as expanding the democratic ideals of representation, participation, inclusion, and enlightened understanding that Robert Dahl included in his definition of democracy.

Accordingly, the study argues for the need to establish Ethiopian democracy on Ethiopian foundations, creating a common political framework more rooted in the country's indigenous political traditions. There are also some important elements from Gadaa that this study has extracted as an example that can serve as an inspiration for a democracy more rooted in indigenous culture. For example, in Oromo democracy, popular rule does not mean, as in the representative model, consent to power at the ballot box. Rather, it means that the ordinary citizen has access to the exercise of power through various mechanisms that place them at the center of political institutions. Among the many Oromo traditional political institutions that foster equal participation, flexible representation, and democratic deliberation that enable citizens to exercise power include age-based organizations known as *Hiriya* and *Goggessa, and Qixxee*, *Chaffee*, and *Gumii* assemblies. These institutions allow the system to have both a representative and participatory version of democracy, providing a robust example of democratic representation that is flexibly exercised through direct participation, appointed representatives, and rotation of power. This system also allows the recall of a delegated person when that person does not properly represent their requests or questions. Such flexible representation may inspire a solution to the problem of representation in the modern

democracies that use a rigid representational system. And the goal of these institutions is to empower ordinary citizens so that deliberation in shaping public policies is as accessible as possible. The openness of these assemblies is an important institutional feature that radically distinguishes Oromo democracy from elective assemblies of representative system, which rarely have direct contact with the public.

More importantly, these institutions not only allow individual citizens to impact the decision-making process, but also serve as mechanisms of allocating authority and responsibility across the life cycle of the Oromo society on a sequential scale, helping to ensure that power is never concentrated in one place. Of these institutions, Gumii is a gathering of the multitude and a manifestation of the sovereignty of the people entrusted with the highest authority. Thus, what makes Gadaa unique is that it not only establishes a system of checks and balances between the branches of government, but also establishes a supra-institutional structure in which the three branches of government are represented, including ordinary citizens in solving social issues that are not resolved by other Gadaa institutions. The lesson from this is that modern democracies, beside the established system of checks and balances between the branches of government, they also need to create a supra-institutional structure such as Gumii, in which three branches of government are represented. And the responsibility of such supra-institutional structure is to resolve issues that the three branches do not resolve through their institutional mechanisms and cause a gridlock, thus, it may combine both legislative and judicial authorities. In conclusion, I argue that the application of some features of Oromo democracy, given that women become an integral part of the system as men, even in its reduced version can serve as an inspiration to limit the resources that the centre controls and the powers delegated to the political centre, and that it may normatively redefine the current transition by changing the way political leaders see opportunities for change and the role of ordinary citizens in democratic politics.

Bibliography

Aalen, Lovise, and Kjetil Tronvoll. "The 2008 Ethiopian local elections: The return of electoral authoritarianism." *African Affairs* 108, no. 430 (2009): 111-120.

Aalen, Lovise, and Kjetil Tronvoll. "The end of democracy? Curtailing political and civil rights in Ethiopia." *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009): 193-207.

Aalen, Lovise. "Ethnic federalism in a dominant party state: The Ethiopian experience 1991-2000." *CMI Report* 2002, no. 2 (2002).

Aalen, Lovise. "The Revolutionary Democracy of Ethiopia: A Wartime Ideology Both Shaping and Shaped by Peacetime Policy Needs." *Government and Opposition* (2019): 1-16.

Abbink, Jon, and Tobias Hagmann, eds. *Reconfiguring Ethiopia: the politics of authoritarian reform*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Abbink, Jon. "'Land to the foreigners': economic, legal, and socio-cultural aspects of new land acquisition schemes in Ethiopia." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 4 (2011): 513-535.

Abbink, Jon. "Breaking and making the state: the dynamics of ethnic democracy in Ethiopia." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 13, no. 2 (1995): 149-163.

Abbink, Jon. "Discomfiture of democracy? The 2005 election crisis in Ethiopia and its aftermath." *African Affairs* 105, no. 419 (2006): 173-199.

Abbink, Jon. "Paradoxes of electoral authoritarianism: the 2015 Ethiopian elections as hegemonic performance." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35, no. 3 (2017): 303-323.

Abbink, Jon. "The Ethiopian Second Republic and the fragile "social contract"." *Africa Spectrum* 44, no. 2 (2009): 3-28.

Abbink, Jon. "The impact of violence: the Ethiopian 'Red terror 'as a social phenomenon". In Bräunlein, Peter J., and Andrea Lauser (eds). *Krieg und Frieden: Ethnologische Perspektiven*. Kea-Edition: Bremen (1995): 129-145

Abebe, Semahagn Gashu. *The last post-Cold War socialist federation: Ethnicity, ideology and democracy in Ethiopia*. New York: Routledge(2016).

Abegaz, Berhanu. "Political parties in business." *Working Paper Number 113*. College of William and Mary, Department of Economics (2011): 1-67.

Abiy Ahmed. መደመር (*Medemer*), Published October 21st 2019 by Tsehai Publishers, California, United State of America

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Adamson, Fiona. "Constructing the diaspora: Diaspora identity politics and transnational social movements." *Politics from afar: Transnational diasporas and networks* (2012): 25-42.

Addis Ababa City. Addis Ababa and its surrounding Oromia Special Zone integrated plan (Amharic version), 2006-2030 EC. A consultancy report document that presented to Addis Ababa city and Oromia regional Administration., Addis Ababa: Lyon Town Planning Agency. (2014).

Addis Standard, 2018. Ethiopian parliament passes amnesty bill into law. [Online] Available at: http://addisstandard.com/news-ethiopian-parliament-passes-amnesty-bill-law/ [Accessed 28 June 2018].

Adebajo, Adekeye, Ismail OD Rashid, and Ismail Rashid, eds. *West Africa's security challenges: building peace in a troubled region.* Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004.

Agbu, Osita A. Ethnicity and democratisation in Africa: challenges for politics and development. *Discussion Paper* 62, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2011.

Aglionby, John. Ethiopia's prime minister reshuffles cabinet after protests. *Financial Times,* November 1. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.ft.com/content/53e0fe6e-a026-11e6-891e-abe238dee8e2. (2016).

Agozino, Biko. "The Africana paradigm in Capital: The debts of Karl Marx to people of African descent." *Review of African Political Economy* 41, no. 140 (2014): 172-184.

Ahmed, Hussein. "Coexistence and/or confrontation?: Towards a reappraisal of Christian-Muslim encounter in contemporary Ethiopia." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36, no. 1 (2006): 4-22.

Ake, Claude. "Rethinking African democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 1 (1991): 32-44.

Ake, Claude. "The unique case of African democracy." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) (1993): 239-244.

Aklilu, B. The EFFORT Conglomerate Monopoly in Ethiopia. July 1. Accessed 01 07, 2021. https://ecadforum.com/2017/07/01/the-effort-conglomerate-monopoly-in-ethiopia. (2017).

Alcoff, Linda Martín. "Eurocentrism as an Epistemology of Ignorance." *The Routledge Handbook of epistemic Injustice* (2017): 397.

Alemu, Dawit, and Kassahun Berhanu. "The Political Economy of Agricultural Commercialisation in Ethiopia: Discourses, Actors and Structural Impediments." (2018).

Aljazeera Debate: Do the Oromo have a voice in Ethiopia? - The Stream - Al Jazeera; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idvJozrs284. 26th June, 2013

Aljazeera, 2018. Ethiopia lifts state of emergency imposed in February. [Online] Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ethiopia-lifts-state-emergency-imposed-february-180605081810759.html [Accessed 5 June 2018].

Aljazeera. 2016. Dozens killed in Ethiopia protest crackdown. 09 16. Accessed 05 04, 2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/8/9/dozens-killed-in-ethiopia-protest-crackdown.

Aljazeera. 2020. Ethiopian parliament allows PM Abiy to stay in office beyond term. June 10. Accessed 11 30, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/10/ethiopian-parliament-allows-pm-abiy-to-stay-in-office-beyond-term.

Allo, Awol and Abadir Ibrahim. "Redefining protest in Ethiopia: What happens to the terror narrative when Muslims call for a secular state." *Open Democracy* (2012): 1-6.

Allo, Awol. Protests, Terrorism, and Development: On Ethiopia's Perpetual State of Emergency. *Yale Hum. Rts. & Dev. LJ*, Volume 19, p. 133. (2017).

Allo, Awol., "Ethiopia's Unprecedented Nationwide Oromo Protests: Who, What, Why?" London: *African Arguments*. (2016)

Almond, Gabriel Abraham, and Sidney Verba. *The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation)." *The anthropology of the state: A reader* 9, no. 1 (2006): 86-98.

Ambaye, Daniel W. *Land rights and expropriation in Ethiopia*. Springer, 2015.

Amnesty International, 2016. Ethiopia: 25 Years of Human Rights Violations: Public Statement, Volume AI INDEX: AFR 25/4178/2016.

Amsden, Alice Hoffenberg. *Asia's next giant: South Korea and late industrialization.* Oxford University Press on Demand, 1992.

Anderson, Benedict Richard O'Gorman. *The spectre of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the world*. Verso, 1998.

Anderson, Lisa, ed. *Transitions to democracy*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

Apollos, Machira. "Ethnicity, violence and democracy." *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement* 26, no. 1/2 (2001): 99-144.

Ararssa, Tsegaye, 2015. Why resist the Addis Abeba Master Plan? – A constitutional legal exploration. [Online] Available at: http://addisstandard.com/why-resist-the-addis-abeba-master-plan-a-constitutional-legal-exploration/ [Accessed 20 June 2018].

Arriola, Leonardo R., and Terrence Lyons. "Ethiopia: The 100% Election." *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 76-88.

Aryeetey, Ernest, Machiko Nissanke, and Beatrice Weder, eds. *Asia and Africa in the global economy*. United Nations University Press, 2003.

Ayenew, Meheret. "The growth and transformation plan: opportunities, challenges and lessons." In *Dessalegn Rahmato et al., Reflections on Development in Ethiopia. New Trends,*

Sustainability and Challenges, Forum for Social Studies, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Addis-Abeba, pp. 3-30. 2014.

Bach, Jean-Nicolas. "Abyotawi democracy: neither revolutionary nor democratic, a critical review of EPRDF's conception of revolutionary democracy in post-1991 Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 641-663.

Barkan, Joel. Bringing home the pork: Legislator behavior, rural development, and political change in East Africa. In J. Smith & L. Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in development* (pp. 265-288). Durham, NC: Duke University Press., 1976.

Bassi, Marco. "Power's ambiguity or the political significance of Gada." In Baxter, Paul Trevor William, Jan Hultin, and Alessandro Triulzi, eds, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquires.* Nordic Africa Institute (1996): 150-161.

Bates, Robert H., John H. Coatsworth, and Jeffrey G. Williamson. "Lost decades: postindependence performance in Latin America and Africa." *The Journal of Economic History* (2007): 917-943.

Baxter, Paul Trevor William, Jan Hultin, and Alessandro Triulzi, eds. *Being and Becoming Oromo: historical and anthropological enquiries*. Nordic Africa Institute, 1996.

Baxter, Paul Trevor William. "Ethiopia's unacknowledged problem: the Oromo." *African Affairs* 77, no. 308 (1978): 283-296.

BBC News Africa. Ethiopia protest: Ambo students killed in Oromia state. May 02. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-27251331. (2014).

BBC News Africa. What do Oromo protests mean for Ethiopian unity? March 09. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-35749065. (2016).

BBC News Africa. What is behind Ethiopia's wave of protests? August 22. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-36940906. (2016).

BBC. What is behind clashes in Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regions?. [Online] Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-41278618 [Accessed 14 March 2018]. (2017)

BBC. Why has Ethiopia imposed a state of emergency?. [Online] Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-43113770 [Accessed 14 March 2018].(2018).

Beeson, Mark. "The rise and fall (?) of the developmental state: The vicissitudes and implications of East Asian interventionism." In Linda Low (ed.) *Developmental states: relevancy, redundancy or reconfiguration* Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers (2004): 29-40.

Beeson, Mark. Politics and Markets in East Asia. Is the Developmental State Compatible with Globalisation?. In: Richard Stubbs and & Geoffrey R. D. Underhill, eds. *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*. Ontario: Oxford University Press. (2004).

Beinart, William, and Colin Bundy. *Hidden struggles in rural South Africa: politics & popular movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930*. No. 40. University of California Press, 1987.

Beissinger, Mark R. "A new look at ethnicity and democratization." *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (2008): 85-97.

Beissinger, Mark R. *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Bekele, Shiferaw, ed. *An Economic History of Ethiopia: Vol.1: The Imperial Era, 1941–74.* Dakar: CODESRIA. 1995.

Benti, Getahun. "A Blind without a Cane, A Nation without a City: The Oromo Struggle for Addis Ababa." In Gebissa, E. (ed.), *Contested Terrain. Essays on Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourse, and Politically Engaged Scholarship*, Trenton: Red Sea Press (2009): 147-168.

Benti, Getahun. "A nation without a city [a blind person without a cane]: The Oromo struggle for Addis Ababa." *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2002): 115-131.

Benti, Getahun. Addis Ababa: Migration and the making of a multiethnic metropolis, 1941-1974. *Red Sea Press* (NJ), 2007.

Berg, Bruce. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences.* London: Allyn and Bacon. (2001).

Berger, Mark. From nation-building to state-building: The geopolitics of development, the nation-state system and the changing global order. *Third World Quarterly*, 27(1), pp.5-25. (2006).

Berman, Bruce J. "Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: the politics of uncivil nationalism." *African affairs* 97, no. 388 (1998): 305-341.

Berman, Bruce, Dickson Eyoh, and Will Kymlicka, eds. *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa.* Ohio University Press, 2004.

Bermeo, Nancy, 2010. Armed conflict and the durability of electoral democracy. In: Elizabeth Kier and Ronald R. Krebs (eds.) *War's Wake: International Conflict and the Fate of Liberal Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2010), pp. 67-94.

Bernhard, Michael, Christopher Reenock, and Timothy Nordstrom. "The legacy of western overseas colonialism on democratic survival." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 225-250.

Berridge, Willow J. "Briefing: The Uprising in Sudan." *African Affairs* 119, no. 474 (2020): 164-176.

Besley, Timothy, and Andrea Prat. "Handcuffs for the grabbing hand? Media capture and government accountability." *American Economic Review* 96, no. 3 (2006): 720-736.

Birdsall, Nancy. "Do no harm: Aid, weak institutions and the missing middle in Africa." *Development Policy Review* 25, no. 5 (2007): 575-598.

Bishaw, Alemayehu, and Jon Lasser. "Education in Ethiopia: Past, Present and Future Prospects." *African Nebula* 5 (2012).

Blokker, Paul. "Populist nationalism, anti-Europeanism, post-nationalism, and the East-West distinction." *German Law Journal* 6, no. 2 (2005): 371-389.

Bloomberg, 17 April 2018. IMF Sees Ethiopia Beating Ghana as Fastest-Growing Africa Economy. [Online] Available at: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-17/ethiopia-pips-ghana-as-africa-s-fastest-growing-economy-for-imf [Accessed 17 April 2018].

Bloomberg, 29 May 2018. Ethiopia Already Is the 'China of Africa'. [Online] Available at: https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-05-29/ethiopia-already-is-the-china-of-africa [Accessed 29 May 2018].

Boafo-Arthur, Kwame. "Tackling Africa's developmental dilemmas: Is globalization the answer?." *Journal of Third World Studies* 20, no. 1 (2003): 27-54.

Bogaards, Matthijs. "Counting parties and identifying dominant party systems in Africa." *European Journal of Political Research* 43, no. 2 (2004): 173-197.

Bohman, James, and William Rehg, eds. *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics*. MIT press, 1997.

Bohman, James. "The democratic minimum: Is democracy a means to global justice?." *Ethics & International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2005): 101-116.

Bollen, Kenneth. "World system position, dependency, and democracy: The cross-national evidence." *American Sociological Review* (1983): 468-479.

Booth, Anne. "Initial conditions and miraculous growth: why is South East Asia different from Taiwan and South Korea?." *World Development* 27, no. 2 (1999): 301-321.

Borras, Saturnino, and Jennifer Franco. "Towards a broader view of the politics of global land grab: rethinking land issues, reframing resistance." *Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies* Working Paper Series 1 (2010): 1-39.

Bove, Vincenzo, and Tobias Böhmelt. "Does immigration induce terrorism?." *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 2 (2016): 572-588.

Branch, Daniel, and Nic Cheeseman. "Democratization, sequencing, and state failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya." *African Affairs* 108, no. 430 (2009): 1-26.

Bratton, Michael, and Robert Mattes. "Support for Democracy in Africa: intrinsic or instrumental?." *British Journal of Political Science* (2001): 447-474.

Bratton, Michael. "The politics of government-NGO relations in Africa." *World Development* 17, no. 4 (1989): 569-587.

Brownlee, Jason. "… And yet they persist: Explaining survival and transition in neopatrimonial regimes." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, no. 3 (2002): 35-63.

Brumberg, Daniel. "Democratization in the Arab world? The trap of liberalized autocracy." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 4 (2002): 56-68.

Bryman Alan. Mixed methods in organizational research. In David A. Buchanan and Alan Bryman (eds.) *The Sage handbook of organizational research methods*, London: Sage (2009), pp. 516-531.

Bryman, Alan & Bell, Emma., 2003. *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, Alan. *Social research methods.* Oxford University Press, 2016.

Brynen, Rex, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble, eds. *Political liberalization and democratization in the Arab world*. Vol. 1. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and George W. Downs. "Intervention and democracy." *International Organization* Vol. 60, No. 3 (2006): 627-649.

Bunce, Valerie. "Rethinking recent democratization: Lessons from the postcommunist experience". *World politics*, 55(2), pp. 167-192. (2003).

Burgess, Doris, and Lionel Cliffe. "The Horn: agenda for peace?" *Review of African Political Economy* 51 (1991): 93-95.

Burnham, Peter, Karin Gilland Lutz, Wyn Grant, and Zig Layton-Henry. *Research methods in politics*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Burton, Michael G., and John Higley. "Elite settlements." *American Sociological Review* (1987): 295-307.

Byrne, Michelle., 2001. Sampling for qualitative research. AORN journal 73, no. 2 (2001): 494-498.

Cagé, Julia. *The Price of Democracy: How Money Shapes Politics and what to Do about it*. Harvard University Press, 2020.

Callaghy, Thomas, and John Ravenhill. *Hemmed in: responses to Africa's economic decline*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1993.

Campos, Alicia. "The decolonization of Equatorial Guinea: the relevance of the international factor." *Journal of African history* (2003): 95-116.

Capital Ethiopia, 2018. Andualem, Eskinder among the 746 prisoners to be released. [Online] Available at: http://capitalethiopia.com/2018/02/12/andualem-eskinder-among-746-prisoners-released/ [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Carothers, Thomas, and Diane De Gramont. *Development aid confronts politics: The almost revolution*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

Carothers, Thomas. "Democracy assistance: political vs. developmental?." *Journal of democracy* 20, no. 1 (2009): 5-19.

Castells, Manuel. "Four Asian tigers with a dragon head: A comparative analysis of the state, economy, and society in the Asian Pacific Rim." *States and development in the Asian Pacific Rim* 2 (1992): 33-70.

Castells, Manuel. "*The rise of the network society. Vol. 1. The information age, Economy, Society and Cultures*." Wiley-Blackwell (2000).

Cauthen, Bruce, Diamond, Larry & Plattner, Marc. Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy. *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs (1994).

Celestino, Mauricio Rivera, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. "Fresh carnations or all thorn, no rose? Nonviolent campaigns and transitions in autocracies." *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 385-400.

Ceron, Andrea, and Vincenzo Memoli. "Flames and debates: do social media affect satisfaction with democracy?." *Social indicators research* 126, no. 1 (2016): 225-240.

Chandra, Kanchan. "Ethnic parties and democratic stability." *Perspectives on politics* (2005): 235-252.

Chang, Ha-Joon. "State, institutions and structural change." *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 5, no. 2 (1994): 293-313.

Cheeseman, Nic. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, failures, and the struggle for political reform*. Vol. 9. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Christiano, Thomas. *The rule of the many: Fundamental issues in democratic theory*. Routledge, 2018.

Clapham, Christopher. "Ethiopian development: the politics of emulation." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 44, no. 1 (2006): 137-150.

Clapham, Christopher. "*Human Rights Report No 4: The 1994 election and democracy in Ethiopia*." (1995): 303-304.

Clapham, Christopher. "Post-war Ethiopia: the trajectories of crisis." *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009): 181-192.

Clapham, Christopher. "Rewriting Ethiopian History." In *Annales d'Ethiopie*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 37-54. Editions de la Table Ronde, 2002.

Clapham, Christopher. "The challenge of democratization in Ethiopia." *Whitehall Papers* 62, no. 1 (2004): 71-82.

Clapham, Christopher. "The Ethiopian developmental state." *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 6 (2018): 1151-1165.

Clapham, Christopher. "The political economy of Ethiopia from the Imperial period to the present." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy*. 2019.

Clapham, Christopher. "War and state formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea." In *colloquium: La guerre entre le local et le global, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Paris*, pp. 29-30. 2000.

Clapham, Christopher. *The Horn of Africa: State formation and decay*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Clapham, Christopher. *Transformation and continuity in revolutionary Ethiopia*. Vol. 61. CUP Archive, 1990.

Clinton, David. "Tocqueville on democracy, obligation, and the international system." *Review of International Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 227-243.

CNN. Ethiopian prime minister resigns after years of turmoil. [Online] Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/15/africa/ethiopian-prime-minister-resigns-intl/index.html [Accessed 14 March 2018].(2018).

Cohen, Herman. ''*Press Release on the London Conference*.'' May 28, 1991

Cohen, John M. "" Ethnic Federalism" in Ethiopia." *Northeast African Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995): 157-188.

Cohen, Joshua. "Deliberative democracy." In *Deliberation, participation and democracy*, pp. 219-236. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2007.

Cohen, Joshua. "Procedure and substance in deliberative democracy." *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics* 407 (1997).

Collier, Paul. *Economic causes of civil conflict and their implications for policy*. Vol. 5. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000.

Collier, Paul. *The political economy of ethnicity*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998.

Connor, Walker. "Nation-building or nation-destroying?." *World Politics: a quarterly journal of international relations* (1972): 319-355.

Council of Ministers. Ethiopia declares state of emergency today for the second time. [Online] Available at: http://www.tigraionline.com/articles/state-of-emergency-again.html [Accessed 16 February 2018]. (2018).

Craven, Matthew. "Between law and history: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade." *London Review of International Law* 3, no. 1 (2015): 31-59.

Crewett, Wibke, Ayalneh Bogale, and Benedikt Korf. Land tenure in Ethiopia: Continuity and change, shifting rulers, and the quest for state control. *CAPRi working paper 91*. Washington, DC: International food policy research Institute (IFPRI), 2008.

Crisis Group. Managing Ethiopia's Unsettled Transition. February 21. Accessed 01 07, 2021. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/269-managing-ethiopias-unsettled-transition. (2019)

Dahl, Robert. "*Polyarchy: Participation and opposition New Haven*." Connecticut, United States: Yale University Press. (1971).

Dahl, Robert. A democratic dilemma: system effectiveness versus citizen participation. *Political science quarterly*, 109(1), pp. 23-34. (1994).

Dahl, Robert. *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven, Connecticut, United States: Yale University Press. (1989).

Dahl, Robert. *Democracy, liberty, and equality*. Oxford University Press, 1986

Daley, Patricia. "Ethnicity and political violence in Africa: The challenge to the Burundi state." *Political Geography* 25, no. 6 (2006): 657-679.

Daron, Acemoglu, and Robinson James. "*Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*." New York: Crown Business (2012).

David, Mason T. "From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict. By Jack Snyder. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2000. 384p. $29.95." *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 2 (2003): 467-468.

David, P., & Lionel, B. Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed: Africa's new talisman, The Financial Times. Retrieved from 2019, February 21: https://www.ft.com/content/abe678b6-346f-11e9-bb0c-42459962a812. (2018).

Dawit Endeshaw. Displaced families suffering subhuman conditions in Ethiopia – Egeland: Retrieved from Reuters: https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-displaced/displaced-families-suffering-subhuman-conditions-in-ethiopia-egeland-idUKKCN1TL21C. (2019).

de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Tocqueville on America after 1840: Letters and other writings*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

De Waal, Alex. "The future of Ethiopia: developmental state or political marketplace?." *Occasional Paper*, World Peace Foundation at Tufts University, 2018.

De Waal, Alex. "The theory and practice of Meles Zenawi." *African Affairs* 112, no. 446 (2013): 148-155.

De Waal, Alex. "The theory and practice of Meles Zenawi: A reply to to René Lefort." *African Affairs* 112, no. 448 (2013): 471-475.

De Waal, Alexander. *Evil days: Thirty years of war and famine in Ethiopia*. Vol. 3169, no. 69. Human Rights Watch, 1991.

Della Porta, Donatella. *Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011*. OUP Oxford, 2014.

Denscombe, Martyn. *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2014.

Desalegn & Demeke Mekonenn. Tenadam. January 03. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3pyABUwvsw.

Di Nunzio, Marco. "What is the alternative? Youth, entrepreneurship and the developmental state in urban Ethiopia." *Development and Change* 46, no. 5 (2015): 1179-1200.

Diamond, Larry and Marc F. Plattner (eds.). *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Diamond, Larry, and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *Nationalism, ethnic conflict, and democracy*. JHU Press, 1994.

Diamond, Larry, Brumberg, Daniel, and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *Islam and democracy in the Middle East*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Diamond, Larry. "Rethinking civil society: Toward democratic consolidation." *Journal of democracy* 5, no. 3 (1994): 4-17.

Diamond, Larry. "The democratic rollback-the resurgence of the predatory state." *Foreign Affairs.* 87 (2008): 36.

Diamond, Larry. *Developing democracy: Toward consolidation*. JHU Press, 1999.

Diamond, Larry. *In search of democracy*. Routledge, 2015.

Diamond, Larry. *The Crisis of Liberal Democracy*. Edited by Steven Blalock. 2016-17 Mershon Center Speakers and Conferences. 04 10. Accessed 21 12, 2020. http://hdl.handle.net/1811/85615. (2017).

Dinnen, Sinclair. The twin processes of nation building and state building. *Working/Technical Paper,* Australian National University, State, Society and Governance (SSGM) Program): no. 1/2007.

Dixon, Paul. "Power-Sharing in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism and Sectarian Authoritarianism." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 20, no. 2 (2020): 117-127.

Donaldson, Lex. *The contingency theory of organizations*. Sage, 2001.

Donham, Donald. *Marxist Modern: an ethnographic history of the Ethiopian revolution*. University of California Press, 1999.

Dorman, Sara Rich. "Post-liberation politics in Africa: Examining the political legacy of struggle." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 6 (2006): 1085-1101.

Downey, John, and Natalie Fenton. "New media, counter publicity and the public sphere." *New media & society* 5, no. 2 (2003): 185-202.

Dudouet, Véronique. "Nonviolent resistance in power asymmetries." *Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen and Farmington Hills* (2011).

Easton, David. "The Authoritative Allocation of Values for a Society." *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science* (1953): 129-134.

Eckstein, Harry. "Case study and theory in political science." *Case study method* (2000): 119-164.

Edigheji, Omano. "A democratic developmental state in Africa." *A concept paper. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies* (2005).

Edigheji, Omano. "Constructing a democratic developmental state in South Africa: potentials and challenges." *In: Constructing a democratic developmental state in South Africa*. Cape Town (2010): pp. 1-33.

EHRC. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, *142nd special report on the Human rights violation during the state of emergency in Ethiopia*, April 2017.

Elster, Jon. *Ways of constitution-making. Democracy's victory and crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 123-42. (1997).

Emerson, Rupert. Nation-building in Africa. In*: Nation Building in Comparative Contexts*. London: Routledge, pp. 95-116. (2017).

Englebert, Pierre. "Feature review: The contemporary African state: Neither African nor state." *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1997): 767-776.

Ephream Sileshi: Lemma Megerssa dismisses medemer, prosperity party (translation of the full interview), Addis Standard, retrieved from http://addisstandard.com/news-alert-lemma-megerssa-dismisses-medemer-prosperity-party/. (2019).

Epstein, David, Robert Bates, Jack Goldstone, Ida Kristensen, and Sharyn O'Halloran. "Democratic transitions." *American journal of political science* 50, no. 3 (2006): 551-569.

Escobar, Arturo. *Pluriversal politics: the real and the possible*. Duke University Press, 2020.

Ettang, Dorcas. "Factors for successful nonviolent action in Africa." *Peace review* 26, no. 3 (2014): 412-419.

EU election observation mission. EU election observation mission to Ethiopia in 2005: *Final Report on the Legislative Elections*, Brussels: European Commission. (2005).

European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2016 on the situation in Ethiopia (2016/2520(RSP))

Evans, Peter B. *Embedded autonomy: States and industrial transformation*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Eze, Emmanuel. Postcolonial African philosophy: A critical reader. [Online] Available at: https://philpapers.org/rec/EZEPAP-3 [Accessed 15 05 2018]. (1997).

Ezra Klein. Congressional dysfunction. May 15. Accessed 12 03, 2020. https://www.vox.com/2015/1/2/18089154/congressional-dysfunction.(2015).

Fantini, Emanuele. "Developmental state, economic transformation and social diversification in Ethiopia." *ISPI Analysis* 163, no. 7 (2013): 1-7.

FDRE Constitution. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia'., Addis Ababa: HoPR. (1995).

FDRE President Mulatu Teshome. Opening Statement for the Joint Session of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) and the House of Federation (HoF), Addis Ababa: House of People Representative (HPR). (2016).

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Growth and Transformation Plan 20110/11 - 2014/15, Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. (2010).

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16-2019/20), Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. (2016).

Felix Horne. Ethiopian Forces Kill 'Up to 100' Protesters. Human Rights Watch (HRW). August 13. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/13/ethiopian-forces-kill-100-protesters. (2016).

Felix Horne. Fear of Investigation: What Does Ethiopia's Government Have to Hide? Human rights Watch (HRW). April 21. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/21/fear-investigation-what-does-ethiopias-government-have-hide. (2017).

Feng, Yi, and Paul Zak. "The determinants of democratic transitions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43, no. 2 (1999): 162-177.

Ferguson, James. *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Fessha, Yonatan. *Ethnic diversity and federalism: Constitution making in South Africa and Ethiopia*. Routledge, 2016.

Feyissa, Dereje. "Aid negotiation: the uneasy "partnership" between EPRDF and the donors." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 788-817.

Financial Times. Ethiopia to release prominent political prisoners. [Online] Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/cb9ee632-0cdb-11e8-8eb7-42f857ea9f09 [Accessed 14 March 2018]. (2018).

Financial Times. Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed: Africa's new talisman. David Pilling and Lionel Barber. FEBRUARY 21. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.ft.com/content/abe678b6-346f-11e9-bb0c-42459962a812. (2019).

Fine, Ben. The Developmental State and the Political Economy of Development. In: S. Kwame & B. F. Jomo, eds. *The New Development Economics. After the Washington Consensus*. London: Zed Books, p. 101-122. (2006).

Fisher, Jonathan, and David M. Anderson. "Authoritarianism and the securitization of development in Africa." *International Affairs* 91, no. 1 (2015): 131-151.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. "Five misunderstandings about case-study research." *Qualitative inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2006): 219-245.

Foster, John Bellamy. "The financialization of capitalism." *Monthly review* 58, no. 11 (2007): 1-12.

Freund, Bill. *The making of contemporary Africa: The development of African society since 1800*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2016.

Fritz, Verena, and Alina Rocha Menocal. *(Re) building developmental states: from theory to practice*. Overseas Development Institute, 2006.

Fukuyama, Francis. "The imperative of state-building." *Journal of democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 17-31.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The origins of political order: From prehuman times to the French Revolution*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Fukuyama, Francis. *Identity: Contemporary identity politics and the struggle for recognition*. Profile books, 2018.

Gagliardone, Iginio. "New media and the developmental state in Ethiopia." *African Affairs* 113, no. 451 (2014): 279-299.

Gamlen, Alan. *Why engage diasporas?*. Routledge, 2018.

Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. "Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats." *Comparative political studies* 40, no. 11 (2007): 1279-1301.

Gardner, Tom. 'Freedom!': the mysterious movement that brought Ethiopia to a standstill. The Guardian. March 13. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/13/freedom-oromo-activists-qeerroo-ethiopia-standstill. (2018).

Gastil, John, and Erik Olin Wright. "Legislature by lot: envisioning Sortition within a bicameral system." *Politics & Society* 46, no. 3 (2018): 303-330.

Gebissa, Ezekiel. "The Problem of Fin de Regime in Ethiopia: Assessing the Debate within the Oromo National Movement." *Journal of Oromo Studies* 15 (2008): 191-247.

Gebregziabher, Tefera Negash, and Wil Hout. "The rise of oligarchy in Ethiopia: the case of wealth creation since 1991." *Review of African Political Economy* 45, no. 157 (2018): 501-510.

Gebregziabher, Tefera Negash. "Ideology and power in TPLF's Ethiopia: A historic reversal in the making?." *African Affairs* 118, no. 472 (2019): 463-484.

Gebrekidan, Fikru. "From Adwa to OAU: Ethiopia and the Politics of Pan-Africanism, 1896-1963." *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (2012): 71-86.

Gebremariam, Eyob Balcha, and Linda Herrera. "On silencing the next generation: Legacies of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution on youth political engagement." *Northeast African Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 141-166.

Gebresenbet, Fana. "Securitisation of development in Ethiopia: the discourse and politics of developmentalism." *Review of African Political Economy* 41, no. sup1 (2014): S64-S74.

Gellner, Ernest. "Nationalism as a product of industrial society." *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration* (1997): 52-68.

Geshe, Bona., April 30, 2014. Addis Ababa's master plan, a project to further marginalize Oromos. [Online] Available at: https://www.opride.com/2014/04/30/addis-ababa-s-master-plan-a-project-to-further-marginalize-oromos/ [Accessed 04 September 2018].

Gjersø, Jonas Fossli. "The scramble for East Africa: British motives reconsidered, 1884–95." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43, no. 5 (2015): 831-860.

Glaeser, E. L., Ponzetto, G. A. & Shleifer, A., 2007. Why does democracy need education?. *Journal of economic growth*, 12(2), pp. 77-99.

Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede, Roman G. Olar, and Marius Radean. Going, going, gone? Varieties of dissent and leader exit. *Working paper*, 2015.

Gnamo, Abbas Haji. *Conquest and Resistance in the Ethiopian Empire, 1880-1974: The Case of the Arsi Oromo*. Brill, 2014.

Gordon, Edmund, and Mark Anderson. "The African diaspora: Toward an ethnography of diasporic identification." *Journal of American Folklore* (1999): 282-296.

Gore, Charles. "The rise and fall of the Washington Consensus as a paradigm for developing countries." *World development* 28, no. 5 (2000): 789-804.

Green, Jeffrey. *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914*. Taylor & Francis, 1998.

Grindle, Merilee S. "Good enough governance: poverty reduction and reform in developing countries." *Governance* 17, no. 4 (2004): 525-548.

Gudina, Merara. "The new directions of Ethiopian politics: democratizing a multiethnic society'." *New trends in Ethiopian studies: Ethiopia* 94 (1994).

Gudina, Merera. "Elections and democratization in Ethiopia, 1991–2010." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 664-680.

Gudina, Merera. "Electoral authoritarianism and democratic governance in Ethiopia." *Setting of New Social Science Research Agendas for Africa in the 21st Century* (2011): Mafela, Lily, and Herman Musahara, eds. (2011): 105.

Gudina, Merera. *Ethiopia: Competing ethnic nationalisms and the quest for democracy, 1960-2000.* Shaker Pub., 2003.

Gulema, Shimelis Bonsa. Ethiopia in Change: Reinventing Narratives, Remaking a "Nation": In "*Ethiopia in the Wake of Political Reforms*"; Co-Editor: Melaku G. Desta, et. al., Tsehay Publishers, 2020: 361- 401

Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis F. Thompson. *Why deliberative democracy?*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The postnational constellation: Political essays*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

Hagmann, Tobias, and Filip Reyntjens, eds. *Aid and authoritarianism in Africa: development without democracy*. Zed Books Ltd., 2016.

Hagmann, Tobias, and Jon Abbink. "Twenty years of revolutionary democratic Ethiopia, 1991 to 2011." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 579-595.

Hall, Ruth. "Land grabbing in Southern Africa: the many faces of the investor rush." *Review of African political economy* 38, no. 128 (2011): 193-214.

Halperin, Morton, David Scheffer, and Patricia Small. "*Self-determination in the new world order*." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992.

Halperin, Morton, Joe Siegle, and Michael Weinstein. *The democracy advantage: How democracies promote prosperity and peace*. Routledge, 2009.

Harbeson, John. "Ethiopia's extended transition." *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 4 (2005): 144-158.

Hassan, Seid Y. "Corruption, state capture, and the effectiveness of anticorruption agency in post-communist Ethiopia." *Economic and Political Studies* 6, no. 4 (2018): 368-416.

Hassen, Mohammed. "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience, 1870s-1990s: part One, 1870s to 1935." *Journal of Oromo Studies* 6, no. 1-2 (1999): 109-158.

Hassen, Mohammed. "Conquest, tyranny, and ethnocide against the Oromo: A historical assessment of human rights conditions in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002." *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2002): 15-49.

Hastings, Adrian. *The construction of nationhood: Ethnicity, religion and nationalism*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Haynes, Jeffrey. *Democracy in the Developing World: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Heidhues, Franz, and Gideon A. Obare. "Lessons from structural adjustment programmes and their effects in Africa." *Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture* 50, no. 892-2016-65193 (2011): 55-64.

Held, David. *Models of democracy*. Stanford University Press, 2006.

Helleiner, Eric. "Understanding the 2007–2008 global financial crisis: Lessons for scholars of international political economy." *Annual review of political science* 14 (2011): 67-87.

Henok Gabisa. Opinion: Oromo protests: Marking the next Ethiopian political chapter. January 2016. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://addisstandard.com/opinion-oromo-protests-marking-the-next-ethiopian-political-chapter/. (2016).

Henze, Paul. "Is Ethiopia democratic? A political success story." *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 4 (1998): 40-54.

Herbst, Jeffrey. "Economic incentives, natural resources and conflict in Africa." *Journal of African Economies* 9, no. 3 (2000): 270-294.

Herbst, Jeffrey. *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and control*. Princeton University Press, 2014.

Hewitt, Tom. Half a Century of Development. In: A. Tim & T. Alan, eds. *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 289-308, 2000.

Hindeya, Tilahun Weldie. "Large-scale agricultural land acquisitions and Ethiopia's ethnic minorities: A test for the rule of law." *African Human Rights Law Journal* 18, no. 1 (2018): 346-364.

Holcomb, Bonnie K. "Contending democracies: US-sponsored 'democracy' encounters indigenous Oromo democratic forms: Bonnie K. Holcomb." In *State Crises, Globalisation and National Movements in North-East Africa*, pp. 141-183. Routledge, 2004.

Holcomb, Bonnie K., and Sisai Ibssa. *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*. Red Sea Press, 1990.

Horne, Felix, and Laetitia Bader. *Waiting Here for Death: Forced Displacement and" Villagization" in Ethiopia's Gambella Region*. Human Rights Watch, 2012.

Horne, Felix. "*Such a Brutal Crackdown": Killings and Arrests in Response to Ethiopia's Oromo Protests*. Human Rights Watch, 2016.

Horowitz, Donald L. "Structure and strategy in ethnic conflict: A few steps toward synthesis." In *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 345-370. The World Bank Washington, DC, 1998

Horowitz, Donald L. Ethnic groups in conflict, updated edition with a new preface. Univ of California Press, (1985).

Horowitz, Donald. *Ethnic groups in conflict, updated edition with a new preface*. University of California Press, 1985.

Hort, Sven Olsson, and Stein Kuhnle. "The coming of East and South-East Asian welfare states." *Journal of European social policy* 10, no. 2 (2000): 162-184.

Howard, Philip N., and Muzammil M. Hussain. "The upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The role of digital media." *Journal of democracy* 22, no. 3 (2011): 35-48.

Huff, Gregg, Dewit, and Oughton. "Discussion: Building the Developmental State: Achieving Economic Growth Through Co-operative Solutions: A Comment on Bringing Politics Back I." *Journal of Development Studies* 38, no. 1 (2001): 147-151.

Human Rights Watch, 2017. *World Report 2017: Ethiopia Event of 2016*, New York: HRW.

Human Rights Watch, 2018. *World Report 2018: Ethiopia Event 2017*, New York : HRW.

Human Rights Watch, May 9, 2005. *Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in Ethiopia's Oromia Region*. [Online] Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/05/09/suppressing-dissent/human-rights-abuses-and-political-repression-ethiopias-oromia [Accessed 21 July 2018].

Huntington, Samuel P. "*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 1996." London, England: Penguin Books India. (1997).

Huntington, Samuel. *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press, 2006.

Huntington, Samuel. *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*. Vol. 4. University of Oklahoma press, 1993.

Index, Legatum Prosperity. "*Legatum Prosperity Index 2014*." (2020).

Inglehart, Ronald & Welzel, Welzel. Political culture and democracy: Analysing cross-level linkages. Comparative Politics, 2003: pp. 61-79.

Iyob, Ruth. "The foreign policies of the Horn: the clash between the old and the new." *Gilbert M* (2001).

Iyob, Ruth. *The Eritrean struggle for independence: domination, resistance, nationalism, 1941-1993*. Vol. 82. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Jalata, Asafa. "Gadaa (Oromo democracy): an example of classical African Civilization." *Journal of Pan-African Studies* (2012): 126.

Jalata, Asafa. "The struggle for knowledge: The case of emergent Oromo studies." *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1996): 95-123.

Jalata, Asafa. "The struggle for knowledge: The case of emergent Oromo studies." *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1996): 95-123.

Jalata, Asafa. "Two national liberation movements compared: Oromia and the Southern Sudan." *Social Justice* 27, no. 1 (79 (2000): 152-174.

Jalata, Asafa. *The Oromo Movement and Imperial Politics: Culture and Ideology in Oromia and Ethiopia*. Lexington Books, 2020.

Jembere, Abera. "Yatayyaq muget: the traditional Ethiopian mode of litigation." *Journal of Ethiopian Law*. 15 (1992): 82.

Jembere, Abera. "Yatayyaq muget: the traditional Ethiopian mode of litigation." *J. Ethiopian L.* 15 (1992): 82.

Johnson, Chalmers. "The developmental state: Odyssey of a concept." In: W. Meredith, ed. *The developmental state*. New York: Cornell University Press: 12 (1999): 32-60.

Joireman, Sandra Fullerton. "Opposition politics and ethnicity in Ethiopia: we will all go down together." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 3 (1997): 387-407.

Jordan, Bill. *Authoritarianism and how to Counter it*. Springer, 2019.

Joseph, Richard A. "Africa: states in crisis." *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (2003): 159-170.

Kagwanja, Peter. "Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New security frontiers, old strategies." *African Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 72-86.

Kanyinga, Karuti. "Ethnicity, Patronage and Class in a Local Arena:"High "and "Low "politics in Kiambu, Kenya, 1982–92." *The New Local Level Politics in East Africa* (1994): 66.

Karpowitz, Christopher, Chad Raphael, and Allen S. Hammond IV. "Deliberative democracy and inequality: Two cheers for enclave deliberation among the disempowered." *Politics & Society* 37, no. 4 (2009): 576-615.

Kassa, Derese. "Beyond the Limits of Theory: Qualifying Electoral Authoritarianism in Ethiopia (2005–2015)." *South African Review of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2020): 1-13.

Käufeler, Heinz. "*Modernization, legitimacy and social movement: a study of socio-cultural dynamics and revolution in Iran and Ethiopia*." Ethnolog. Seminar d. Univ. Zürich, 1988.

Kaufman, D. & Gray, C. W., 1998. *Corruption and development*. [Online] Available at: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11545 [Accessed 02 07 2018].

Kebede, Gudeta. "Political corruption: political and economic state capture in Ethiopia." *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 35 (2013).

Keeley, James, Wondwosen Michago Seide, Abdurehman Eid, and Admasu Lokaley Kidewa. *"Large-scale land deals in Ethiopia: Scale, trends, features and outcomes to date*." International Institute for Environment and Development (2014).

Kefale, Asnake. "The (un) making of opposition coalitions and the challenge of democratization in Ethiopia, 1991–2011." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 681-701.

Kelecha, Mebratu. "Protest, Repression and Revolution in Ethiopia." Review of African Political Economy (2018).

Kelecha, Mebratu. 2019. Ethiopia's reform rollback creates a vicious circle. September 7. Accessed 01 11, 2021. https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/author/mebratu-kelecha/.

Kelecha, Mebratu. 2019. Teflon TPLF. December 12. Accessed 01 07, 2021. https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2019/12/12/teflon-tplf/.

Keller, Edmond J. "The ethnogenesis of the Oromo nation and its implications for politics in Ethiopia." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995): 621-634.

Keller, Edmond. "Drought, war, and the politics of famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30, no. 4 (1992): 609-624.

Keller, Edmond. "Ethnic federalism, fiscal reform, development and democracy in Ethiopia." *African Journal of political science* 7, no. 1 (2002): 21-50.

Keller, Edmond. *Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Political Transition in Ethiopia: Historic and Contemporary Process. Self-Determination and National Unity: A Challenge for Africa.* Trenton: World Press. (2010).

Kelsall, Tim. "Going with the grain in African development?." *Development Policy Review* 29 (2011): s223-s251.

Khan, M. H., 2007. *Governance, economic growth and development since the 1960s.* [Online] Available at: https://www.un-ilibrary.org/economic-and-social-development/governance-economic-growth-and-development-since-the-1960s_9156b122-en [Accessed 12 06 2018].

Khazaeli, Susan, and Daniel Stockemer. "The Internet: A new route to good governance." *International political science review* 34, no. 5 (2013): 463-482.

Kia, Tsegaye. "Contemporary local governance and indigenous institutions: the case of the Sidaama, Southern Ethiopia." *Africa Review* 11, no. 1 (2019): 77-94.

Kim, Soon-Yang. "Consolidating the authoritarian developmental state in the 1970s Korea: Chosen strategies." *International Review of Public Administration* 12, no. 1 (2007): 119-132.

King, Mary. "*Gene Sharp Is No Utopian*." Waging Nonviolence (2011).

Klopp, Jacqueline, and Elke Zuern. "The politics of violence in democratization: lessons from Kenya and South Africa." *Comparative Politics* (2007): 127-146.

Kloppenberg, James. *Toward democracy: The struggle for self-rule in European and American Thought*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Kohlbacher, Florian. "*The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research*." In Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: *Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 1-30. Institut für Qualitative Forschung, 2006.

Koinova, Maria. "Diasporas and democratization in the post-communist world." *Communist and Post-communist studies* 42, no. 1 (2009): 41-64.

Kothari, Chakravanti Rajagopalachari. *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International, 2004.

Kumsa, Martha. Learning not to Be-come Oromo? Chasing the Ghosts Chasing John Sorenson. In GEBISSA, E. (ed.), *Contested Terrain. Essays on Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourse, and Politically Engaged Scholarship*. Trenton: Red Sea Press

Kunzmann, Klaus R., and Michael Wegener. "*The pattern of urbanization in Western Europe*." Ekistics (1991): 282-291.

Landemore, Hélène. *Open Democracy: Reinventing Popular Rule for the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press, 2020

Lash, Scott. *Sociology of postmodernism*. Routledge, 2014.

Lata, Leenco. *The horn of Africa as common homeland: The state and self-determination in the era of heightened globalization*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2006.

Lauer, Helen. "Depreciating African political culture." *Journal of Black Studies* 38, no. 2 (2007): 288-307.

Lavers, Tom. "'Land grab' as development strategy? The political economy of agricultural investment in Ethiopia." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39, no. 1 (2012): 105-132.

Lavers, Tom. "Patterns of agrarian transformation in Ethiopia: State-mediated commercialisation and the 'land grab'." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39, no. 3-4 (2012): 795-822.

Lazer, David MJ, Matthew A. Baum, Yochai Benkler, Adam J. Berinsky, Kelly M. Greenhill, Filippo Menczer, Miriam J. Metzger et al. "The science of fake news." *Science* 359, no. 6380 (2018): 1094-1096.

Lefort, René. "Free market economy, 'developmental state' and party-state hegemony in Ethiopia: the case of the 'model farmers'." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (2012): 681-706.

Lefort, René. "Powers-mengist-and peasants in rural Ethiopia: the May 2005 elections." *Journal of Modern African Studies* (2007): 253-273.

Lefort, René. "The theory and practice of Meles Zenawi: A response to Alex de Waal." *African Affairs* 112, no. 448 (2013): 460-470.

Leftwich, Adrian. "Bringing politics back in: Towards a model of the developmental state." *The journal of development studies* 31, no. 3 (1995): 400-427.

Leftwich, Adrian. *States of development: On the primacy of politics in development*. Polity, 2001.

Legatum Institute, 2017. *The Legatum Institute Prosperity Index*, London: Legatum Institute.

Legesse, Asmarom. "*Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous Political System*. (2nd Edition)" (2006).

Legesse, Asmarom. *Gada: Three approaches to the study of African society*. New York: Free Press, 1973.

Legesse, Asmarom. *Oromo democracy: An indigenous African political system*. Red Sea Press, 2000.

Lemarchand, Rene. "African transitions to democracy: an interim (and mostly pessimistic) assessment." *Africa Insight* 22, no. 3 (1992): 178-185.

Lemarchand, Rene. "Uncivil states and civil societies: how illusion became reality." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30, no. 2 (1992): 177-191.

Leonard, Emma, and Gilbert Ramsay, eds. *Globalizing Somalia: multilateral, international and transnational repercussions of conflict*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2013.

Levine, Donald, "*An Ethiopian Dilemma: Deep Structures, Wrenching Processes*" (2007). International Conference on African Development Archives. 102. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/africancenter_icad_archive/102

Levine, Donald. *Greater Ethiopia: The evolution of a multi-ethnic society*. University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Levitsky, Steven R., and Lucan A. Way. "Beyond patronage: Violent struggle, ruling party cohesion, and authoritarian durability." *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 4 (2012): 869-889.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Levy, Spiller. *Empirical studies in institutional change*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Lewis, Peter. "Political transition and the dilemma of civil society in Africa." *Journal of International Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1992): 31-54.

Lie, Jon Harald Sande, and Berouk Mesfin. "*Ethiopia: A Political Economy Analysis." NUPI Report*, Norway: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. (2018).

Lijphart, Arend. "Comparative politics and the comparative method." *The american political science review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682-693.

Lijphart, Arend. "Consociationalism After Half a Century." In *Consociationalism and Power-Sharing in Europe*, pp. 1-9. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

Linz, Juan, and Alfred Stepan, eds. *The breakdown of democratic regimes*. Vol. 1. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Linz, Juan, and Alfred Stepan. "Toward consolidated democracies." *Journal of democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 14-33.

Linz, Juan, Juan Linz, and Alfred Stepan. *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. JHU Press, 1996.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy." *The American political science review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69-105.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. "The social requisites of democracy revisited." In *Einigung und Zerfall: Deutschland und Europa nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts*, pp. 287-314. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1994.

Lipson, Leslie. *The politics of equality*. Victoria University Press, 2011

Low, Linda. *Developmental states: Relevancy, redundancy or reconfiguration?*. Nova Publishers, 2004.

Lowndes, Vivien, David Marsh, and Gerry Stoker, eds. *Theory and methods in political science*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2010.

Lyons, Terrence. "Closing the transition: the May 1995 elections in Ethiopia." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (1996): 121-142.

Lyons, Terrence. "Ethiopia in 2005: the beginning of a transition?." *CSIS Africa Notes* 25, no. January (2006).

Lyons, Terrence. "From victorious rebels to strong authoritarian parties: prospects for post-war democratization." *Democratization* 23, no. 6 (2016): 1026-1041.

Lyons, Terrence. *The Puzzle of Ethiopian Politics*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Incorporated, 2019.

Mac Giollabhuí, Shane. "How does an opposition party become successful in a dominant party system? The case of South Africa." *African Affairs* 118, no. 470 (2019): 147-167.

Magaloni, Beatriz, and Ruth Kricheli. "Political order and one-party rule." *Annual review of political science* 13 (2010): 123-143.

Makki, Fouad, and Charles Geisler. "Development by dispossession: Land grabbing as new enclosures in contemporary Ethiopia." In *International Conference on Global Land Grabbing*, vol. 68. Future Agricultures Sussex, UK, 2011.

Makki, Fouad. "Empire and modernity: dynastic centralization and official nationalism in late imperial Ethiopia." *Cambridge review of international affairs* 24, no. 2 (2011): 265-286.

Mandefro, Hone. "Politics by numbers: poverty reduction discourse, contestations and regime legitimacy in Ethiopia." *International Review of Sociology* 26, no. 3 (2016): 386-406.

Manin, Bernard. *The principles of representative government*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Mansbridge, Jane. "A deliberative theory of interest representation." In *The politics of interests: Interest groups transformed*, pp. 32-57. Routledge, 2018.

Marcus, Harold G. "*The Life and Times of Menelik II, Ethiopia, 1844–1913*." Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Markakis, John, and Nega Ayele. *Class and revolution in Ethiopia*. Nottingham: Spokesman press, 1978.

Markakis, John. "Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa." In *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa*, pp. 65-80. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1999.

Markakis, John. "The military state and Ethiopia's path to 'socialism'." *Review of African political economy* 8, no. 21 (1981): 7-25.

Markakis, John. *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1987).

Markakis, John. *Ethiopia: The last two frontiers*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2011.

Marshall, Catherine, and Gretchen Rossman. *Designing qualitative research*. Sage publications, 2014.

Mazzuca, Sebastián, and Gerardo Munck. "State or democracy first? Alternative perspectives on the state-democracy nexus." *Democratization* 21, no. 7 (2014): 1221-1243.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press, 2016.

McLeod, Saul. "Maslow's hierarchy of needs." *Simply psychology* 1 (2007): 1-8.

Melucci, Alberto, and Leonardo Avritzer. "Complexity, cultural pluralism and democracy: collective action in the public space." *Social Science Information* 39, no. 4 (2000): 507-527.

Meraz, Sharon. "The fight for 'how to think': Traditional media, social networks, and issue interpretation." *Journalism* 12, no. 1 (2011): 107-127.

Merkel, Wolfgang, and Brigitte Weiffen. "Does heterogeneity hinder democracy?." *Comparative Sociology* 11, no. 3 (2012): 387-421.

Mesfin, Berouk. "Rebel Movements in Ethiopia." In *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa*, pp. 163-193. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017.

Meyer, David. "How the german pirate party's "liquid democracy" works." May 7 (2012): 2012.

Meyer, David. "How the german pirate party's "liquid democracy" works." *May* 7 (2012): 2012.

Michael Jay & Waller, David. *Designing and Managing a Research Project: A Business Student's Guide.* Thousand Oaks, California, United States: SAGE Publications. (2010).

Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. "Pre-colonial ethnic institutions and contemporary African development." *Econometrica* 81, no. 1 (2013): 113-152.

Milkias, Paulos, and Getachew Metaferia, eds. *The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's historic victory against European colonialism*. Algora Publishing, 2005.

Mitchell, William C. "Politics as the allocation of values: A critique." *Ethics* 71, no. 2 (1961): 79-89.

Mittal, Anuradha, and Frederic Mousseau. "Understanding land investment deals in Africa." Country report: Ethiopia, Oakland CA: The Oakland Institute, Presentation, October 19 (2011).

Mittal, Anuradha, and Frederic Mousseau. "Understanding land investment deals in Africa." *Presentation of Country report: Ethiopia,* Oakland CA: The Oakland Institute, Presentation, October 19 (2011).

Mkandawire, Thandika. "From the national question to the social question." *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 69, no. 1 (2009): 130-160.

Mkandawire, Thandika. "Thinking about developmental states in Africa." *Cambridge journal of economics* 25, no. 3 (2001): 289-314.

Monin, Boris. "The Visit of Rās Tafari in Europe (1924): between Hopes of Independence and Colonial Realities." In *Annales d'Éthiopie*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 383-389. Persée-Portail des revues scientifiques en SHS, 2013.

Moore, Barrington. *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world*. Vol. 268. Beacon Press, 1993.

Morrissey, Oliver. "Lessons for Africa from East Asian economic policy." In *Africa and Asia in Comparative Economic Perspective*, pp. 34-48. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2001.

Mukwedeya, T. "Nation Building in Africa: Lessons From Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa and Namibia." *Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) Youth Dialogue* (2016): 3-4.

Munck, Gerardo, and Jay Verkuilen. "Conceptualizing and measuring democracy: Evaluating alternative indices." *Comparative political studies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 5-34.

Nathan, A. J. Authoritarian resilience. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1) (2003): pp. 6-17.

National Planning Commission, May 2016. *Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II)* (2015/16-2019/20), Addis Ababa: MOFED.

Ndegwa, Stephen. "A decade of democracy in Africa." *Journal of Asian and African studies* 36, no. 1 (2001): 1-16.

Nepstad, Sharon Erickson. "Mutiny and nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring military defections and loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria." *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 337-349.

Newey, Glen. "Is democratic toleration a rubber duck?." *Res Publica* 7, no. 3 (2001): 315-336.

Niane, Djibril Tamsir, ed. *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*. UNESCO, 1984.

Nodia, Ghia. "Nationalism and democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 4 (1994): 3-22

Noman, Akbar, Kwesi Botchwey, Howard Stein, and Joseph E. Stiglitz, eds. *Good growth and governance in Africa: Rethinking development strategies*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Norris Pippa. Social Capital and the News Media. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. 2002;7(1):3-8. doi:10.1177/1081180X0200700101

Norris, Pippa. "Driving democracy." *Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work* (2008): 29-50.

Norris, Pippa. *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Norris, Pippa. *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Nyong, Peter Anyang. "O.(ed) Popular Struggle for Democracy in Africa." *London: United Nations University and Zed Books*; Atlantic Highlands, 1987.

O'donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead. *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. JHU Press, 2013.

O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter, Laurence Whitehead, and Abraham F. Lowenthal, eds. *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Southern Europe*. JHU Press, 1986.

Oakland Institute and Environmental Defender Law Center, 2016. *Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Law: A Tool to Stifle Dissent*, Oakland, USA: The Oakland Institute.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. "On the state, democratization and some conceptual problems: A Latin American view with glances at some postcommunist countries." *World Development* 21, no. 8 (1993): 1355-1369.

Ogar, Joseph Nkang, Leonard Nwoye, and Samuel Akpan Bassey. "Archetype of globalization: illusory comfort of neo-colonialism in Africa." *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)* 2, no. 3 (2019): 90-95.

Olalere, Anthony. "Complexity and leadership crisis in Africa." *International Journal of Public Leadership* (2015).

Olukoshi, Adebayo. "Changing patterns of politics in Africa." *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 5/6 (2004): 15-38.

Osabu-Kle, Daniel Tetteh. "The politics of one-sided adjustment in Africa." *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 4 (2000): 515-533.

Osabu-Kle, Daniel. *Compatible cultural democracy: The key to development in Africa*. University of Toronto Press, 2019.

Østebø, Terje & Patrick Desplat, eds. *Muslim Ethiopia: the Christian legacy, identity politics, and Islamic reformism*. Springer, 2013.

Østebø, Terje, and Kjetil Tronvoll. "Interpreting contemporary Oromo politics in Ethiopia: an ethnographic approach." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14, no. 4 (2020): 613-632.

Østebø, Terje. *Islam, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Ethiopia: The Bale Insurgency, 1963-1970*. Vol. 151. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Pace, Michelle, and Francesco Cavatorta. "The Arab uprisings in theoretical perspective–an introduction." *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 2 (2012): 125-138.

Pankhurst, Richard, ed. *The Ethyiopian Royal Chronicles*. Oxford University Press, 1967.

Pankhurst, Richard. "Menilek and the Utilisation of Foreign Skills in Ethiopia." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1967): 29-86.

Parekh, Bhikhu. "The cultural particularity of liberal democracy." *Political Studies* 40 (1992): 160-175.

Paulson, Susan, Lisa Gezon, and Michael Watts. "Locating the political in political ecology: An introduction." *Human organization* (2003): 205-217.

Pausewang, Siegfried, Kjetil Tronvoll, and Lovise Aalen. "*Ethiopia since the Derg: a decade of democratic pretension and performance.*" ZED Books (2002).

Pearce, Fred. *The land grabbers: The new fight over who owns the earth*. Beacon Press, 2012.

Pearson, Kathryn L., and Eric Schickler. "The transition to Democratic leadership in a polarized House." In *Congress Reconsidered*. CQ Press, 2009.

Pellerin, Camille Louise. "Civil Society in Ethiopia Reversing the Securitization of Civic Activism?" In *Ethiopia in the Wake of Political Reforms*, edited by Melaku Geboye Desta and Dereje Feyissa Dori, 141-168. Los Angeles: Tsehai publishers. (2020).

Pempel, T. John, ed. *Uncommon democracies: The one-party dominant regimes*. Cornell University Press, 2019.

Pempel, Thomas. The Developmental Regime in a Changing World Economy. In: M. Woo-Cumings, ed. *The Developmental State*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1 (1999): 137-181.

Pevehouse, Jon. *Democracy from above: Regional organizations and democratization*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Pickering, Jeffrey, and Emizet F. Kisangani. "Political, economic, and social consequences of foreign military intervention." *Political Research Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2006): 363-376.

Plamenatz, John. "Two types of nationalism." *Nationalism: The nature and evolution of an idea* (1973): 23-36.

Planel, Sabine. "A view of a bureaucratic developmental state: local governance and agricultural extension in rural Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 3 (2014): 420-437.

Posner, Daniel N. "Regime change and ethnic cleavages in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 11 (2007): 1302-1327.

Potter, David. Explaining democratization. *Democratization*, pp. 1-40 (1997).

Prempeh, Kwasi. "Africa's "constitutionalism revival": False start or new dawn?." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. 3 (2007): 469-506.

Presbey, Gail. "Philosophy of Nonviolence in Africa." *The Routledge Handbook of Pacifism and Nonviolence.* Routledge, 2018: 64-79.

Pronk, J. P. "Changing relationships between state and society and their implications for development policy." *Centre for Development Studies, University of Groningen, Netherlands: Public lecture*, February 26 (1997).

Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. "Modernization: Theories and facts." *World politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): 155-183.

Przeworski, Adam, Pranab K. Bardhan, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, Jerzy Józef Wiatr, and László Bruszt. *Sustainable democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Przeworski, Adam, R. Michael Alvarez, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, and Fernando Papaterra Limongi Neto. *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990*. Vol. 3. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Przeworski, Adam. "Minimalist conception of democracy: a defense." *Democracy's value* 23 (1999): 12-17.

Przeworski, Adam. *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Quintelier, Ellen, and Sara Vissers. "The effect of Internet use on political participation: An analysis of survey results for 16-year-olds in Belgium." *Social science computer review* 26, no. 4 (2008): 411-427.

Rabushka, Alvin, and Kenneth Shepsle. "Politics in plural societies." *Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill* 232 (1972).

Ragazzi, Francesco, Governing Diasporas, *International Political Sociology*, Volume 3, Issue 4, December 2009, Pages 378–397, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2009.00082.x
Ragin, Charles C., and Howard Saul Becker, eds. *What is a case?: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge university press, 1992.

Rahmato, Dessalegn. "The perils of development from above: land deals in Ethiopia." *African Identities* 12, no. 1 (2014): 26-44.

Rakner, Lise. "Democratic rollback in Africa." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2019.

Rawls, John. *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States: Harvard university press, 2009.

Razavi, Shahra. "Women in contemporary democratization." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 15, no. 1 (2001): 201-224.

Regassa, Asebe, and Meron Zeleke. "Irrecha: A Traditional Oromo Religious Ritual Goes Global." *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora: Imagining the Religious 'Other'* (2016): 45.

René Lefort. Unrest in Ethiopia: the ultimate warning shot? *Open democracy*. February 02. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/unrest-in-ethiopia-ultimate-warning-shot/. (2016).

Reuters, 2018. *Ethiopia's 2020 vote will be free, won't be delayed by reforms: PM.* [Online] Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics/ethiopias-2020-vote-will-be-free-wont-be-delayed-by-reforms-pm-idUSKCN1LA0O3 [Accessed 25 August 2018].

Rey, Charles Fernand. *The Real Abyssinia*. Seeley, Service & Company, limited, 1935.

Ribot, Jesse C., Jens Friis Lund, and Thorsten Treue. "Democratic decentralization in sub-Saharan Africa: its contribution to forest management, livelihoods, and enfranchisement." *Environmental Conservation* (2010): 35-44.

Richards, Rebecca. "Bringing the outside in: Somaliland, statebuilding and dual hybridity." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9, no. 1 (2015): 4-25.

Rinke, Andreas & Aaron Maasho. (2016, October 11). *German leader calls for Ethiopia to open up politics after unrest. Retrieved from Reuters*: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-germany-merkel/german-leader-calls-for-ethiopia-to-open-up-politics-after-unrest-idUSKCN12B0W5

Robinson, Mark, and Gordon White. *The democratic developmental state: Political and institutional design*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Rose, Richard, and Doh Chull Shin. "Democratization backwards: The problem of third-wave democracies." *British journal of political science* (2001): 331-354.

Ross, Michael L. "Will oil drown the Arab Spring? Democracy and the resource curse." *Foreign Affairs* (2011): 2-7.

Ross, Michael. "Is democracy good for the poor?." *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 4 (2006): 860-874.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens. *Capitalist development and democracy*. Vol. 22. Polity: Cambridge, 1992.

Rustow, Dankwart A. "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model* Dankwart A. Rustow* Source: Comparative Politics, 1970, vol. 2, pp. 337-363." *The State: Critical Concepts* 3 (1994): 345.

Samatar, Abdi Ismail. "The Ethiopian election of 2005: A bombshell & turning point?." *Review of African Political Economy* 32, no. 104/105 (2005): 466-473.

Samir Amin. *An Arab Springtime*?, Red Star Over the Third World. (2011).

Sandbrook, Richard. *The politics of Africa's economic recovery*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Sassen, Saskia. "Land grabs today: Feeding the disassembling of national territory." *Globalizations* 10, no. 1 (2013): 25-46.

Saul, John. "'For fear of being condemned as old fashioned': liberal democracy vs. popular democracy in sub-saharan Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 24, no. 73 (1997): 339-353.

Schmitter, Philippe, and Terry Lynn Karl. "What democracy is... and is not." *Journal of democracy* 2, no. 3 (1991): 75-88.

Schock, Kurt, ed. *Civil resistance: Comparative perspectives on nonviolent struggle*. Vol. 43. U of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Schumpeter, Joseph. "*Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (new edition).*" New York: Routledge (2006).

Schumpeter, Joseph. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. Creative destruction, Issue 825, pp. 82-85. (1942).

Schumpeter, Joseph. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. London: Routledge. (2010).

Schumpeter, Joseph. *The Theory of Economic Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (1959).

Schwab, Peter. "Political change and famine in Ethiopia." *Current History* (pre-1986) 84, no. 000502 (1985): 221.

Sen, Amartya. Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation. Oxford university press, 1982.

Shain, Yossi. *Kinship & diasporas in international affairs*. University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Sharp, Gene. *From dictatorship to democracy: A conceptual framework for liberation*. The New Press, 2012.

Shelley, Becky. *Democratic Development in East Asia*. Routledge, 2004.

Shiferaw, Admasu. *Productive Capacity and Economic Growth in Ethiopia*, Williamsburg, Virginia: *UNDP CDP Backroung Paper*, Department of Economic & Social Affairs. (2017).

Shivji, Issa G., ed. *State and Constitutionalism: an African debate on democracy*. No. 1. Sapes Trust, 1991.

Shivji, Issa. "The democracy debate in Africa: Tanzania." *Review of African Political Economy* 18, no. 50 (1991): 79-91.

Sidaway, James D. "Hoogvelt, Ankie," Globalisation and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development"(Book Review)." *Third World Planning Review* 20, no. 2 (1998): 223.

Siegle, Joseph, Michael M. Weinstein, and Morton H. Halperin. "Why democracies excel." *Foreign Aff.* 83 (2004): 57.

Siraj, Jawar Mohammed et al. Sirna Abbaa *Ireetirraa gara Dimokraasi (Wixina Qabsoo Bilisumaatiif Malu) Gene Sharp*; https://www.yumpu.com/xx/document/read/9157962/abbaa-irreetirraa-dimokraasii-albert-einstein-institution. (2011).

Siraj, Jawar Mohammed. IN-DEPTH: how Ethiopia's transition to democracy derailed: reflections by Jawar Mohammed. *Financial Times*. October 28. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://addisstandard.com/in-depth-how-ethiopias-transition-to-democracy-derailed-reflections-by-jawar-mohammed/. (2020).

Slater, Dan, and Joseph Wong. "The strength to concede: Ruling parties and democratization in developmental Asia." *Perspectives on Politics* (2013): 717-733.

Slater, Dan, and Sofia Fenner. "State power and staying power: Infrastructural mechanisms and authoritarian durability." *Journal of International Affairs* (2011): 15-29.

Sørensen, Eva. "Democratic theory and network governance." *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 24, no. 4 (2002): 693-720.

Sørensen, Eva. "Metagovernance: The changing role of politicians in processes of democratic governance." *The American review of public administration* 36, no. 1 (2006): 98-114.

Sørensen, Georg. "Democracy and democratization." In *Handbook of politics*, pp. 441-458. Springer, New York, NY, 2010.

Stake, Robert E. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications (1995).

Stepan, Alfred C., and Graeme B. Robertson. "An" Arab" more than a" Muslim" democracy gap." *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (2003): 30-44.

Stoecker, Randy. "Evaluating and rethinking the case study." *The sociological review* 39, no. 1 (1991): 88-112.

Streeck, Wolfgang. "The crisis in context: Democratic capitalism and its contradictions." *Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung Discussion Paper* 11/15 (2011).

Stuppert, Wolfgang. *Political Mobilizations and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Springer, 2020.

Super, A., 2017. *Waagacusub Media: US doesn't need Ethiopia in its war on terror in the Horn of Africa.* [Online] Available at: http://waagacusub.net/articles/4244/US-doesnt-need-Ethiopia-in-its-war-on-terror-in-the-Horn-of-Africa [Accessed 08 May 2017].

Tadesse, Medhane, and John Young. "TPLF: reform or decline?." *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 389-403.

Tanneberg, Dag. *The Politics of Repression Under Authoritarian Rule*. Springer International Publishing, 2020.

Techanie, Befeqadu. *Analysis: Inside the controversial EFFORT.* January 16. Accessed 01 07, 2021. https://addisstandard.com/analysis-inside-controversial-effort/.(2017).

Teorell, Jan. *Determinants of democratization: Explaining regime change in the world, 1972–2006*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

The Finfinne Times, September 15, 2007. A Soft Landing Speech for Meles Zenawi?. [Online] Available at: www.finfinnetimes.com/politics/pol091507.htm [Accessed 28 07 2018].

The Fund for Peace, 2019. Fragile states index annual report 2019. Retrieved from https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9511904-fragilestatesindex.pdf

The Guardian, 2015. Violent clashes in Ethiopia over 'master plan' to expand Addis. [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/11/ethiopia-protests-master-plan-addis-ababa-students [Accessed 06 July 2018].

The Guardian, 2017. 'We fear for our lives': how rumours over sugar saw Ethiopian troops kill 10 people. Tom Gardner. November 07. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/nov/07/we-fear-for-our-lives-how-rumours-over-sugar-saw-10-people-killed-in-ethiopia-oromia.

The Guardian, 2018. Ethiopian prime minister resigns after mass protests. [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/15/ethiopia-prime-minister-hailemariam-desalegn-resigns-after-mass-protests [Accessed 15 February 2018].

The Gurdian, 2018. Ethiopian prime minister resigns after mass protests. [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/15/ethiopia-prime-minister-hailemariam-desalegn-resigns-after-mass-protests [Accessed 14 March 2018].

The Gurdian, 2018. State of emergency declared in Ethiopia amid political unrest. [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/16/state-of-emergency-declared-in-ethiopia-amid-political-unrest [Accessed 14 March 2018].

The Reporter Ethiopia (English), 8 September 2018 . MetEC to lay off workers. [Online] Available at: https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/article/metec-lay-workers [Accessed 8 September 2018].

The Washington Post, 2018. Ethiopia's prime minister resigns amid political turmoil. [Online] Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/ethiopias-prime-minister-resigns-amid-political-turmoil/2018/02/15/ad3fc10a-1246-11e8-9570-29c9830535e5_story.html?utm_term=.76ffea85859c [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Thompson, Dennis F. "Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 11 (2008): 497-520.

Tibebu, Teshale. "Modernity, Eurocentrism, and radical politics in Ethiopia, 1961–1991." *African Identities* 6, no. 4 (2008): 345-371.

Tibebu, Teshale. *Hegel and Anti-semitism*. Unisa Press, 2008.

Tilly, Charles. *Contention and democracy in Europe, 1650-2000*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Timberlake, Lloyd. *Africa in crisis: The causes, the cures of environmental bankruptcy*. East African Publishers, 1994.

Time Magazine, March 13, 2014. *Forget the BRICs; Meet the PINEs*. By Michael Schuman [Online] Available at: http://time.com/22779/forget-the-brics-meet-the-pines/ [Accessed 05 09 2018].

Toggia, Pietro, and Pat Lauderdale. *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa: Autopsy of Democracy, Human Rights and Freedom*. Routledge, 2017.

Toynbee, Arnold. *A Study of History: Volume I: Abridgement of Volumes I-VI*. Oxford Paperbacks, 1987.

Tronvoll, Kjetil, and Tobias Hagmann, eds. *Contested power in Ethiopia: Traditional authorities and multi-party elections*. Vol. 27. Brill, 2011.

Tronvoll, Kjetil. "The Ethiopian 2010 federal and regional elections: re-establishing the one-party state." *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (2011): 121-136.

Tronvoll, Kjetil. *The process of democratisation in Ethiopia: an expression of popular participation or political resistance?*. No. 5. Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, 1995.

Tura, Husen Ahmed. "Linking land rights and the right to adequate food in Ethiopia: normative and implementation gaps." *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 35, no. 2 (2017): 85-105.

Turton, D., ed. *Ethnic federalism: The Ethiopian experience in comparative perspective*.: James Currey Publishers. (2006).

U.S. Department of State, 2016. Ethiopia: *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016*, Washington DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

U.S. State Department, 2017. Fact Sheet: U.S. Relations With Ethiopia, Washington DC: *Bureau of African Affairs*.

Ullendorff, Edward. "*Ethiopians: an introduction to country and people*." (1960).

Umozurike, U.O. (1972). *Self-Determination in International Law*. Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press. (1965).

UNDP, 2017. *Human Development Index - / Human Development Reports*, s.l.: UNDESA.

UNDP. *Millennium Development Goals Report 2014 Ethiopia*: Assessment of Ethiopia's Progress towards the MDGs. [Online] Available at: https://www.et.undp.org/content/ethiopia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/10/22/ethiopia-has-made-good-progress-in-achieving-most-of-the-mdgs-but-still-faces-challenges-and-unfinished-business.html [Accessed 17 08 2018]. (2015)

UNESCO. *UNESCO has inscribed Gada System as Intangible World Heritage*. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/gada-system-an-indigenous-democratic-socio-political-system-of-the-oromo-01164. (2016).

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018. *World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/Executive-Summary_World-Youth-Report_07.12.18-1.pdf.

UNOCHA & IOM, 2018. *Ethiopia: Conflict Displacement Situation Report, New York: UNOCHA*. Available at: https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-15/hundreds-thousands-displaced-ethiopians-are-caught-between-ethnic-violence-and [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Urbinati, Nadia. *Representative democracy: principles and genealogy*. University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Valadez, Jorge. *Deliberative democracy, political legitimacy, and self-determination in multi-cultural societies*. Routledge, 2018.

van Beemen, Olivier. *Heineken in Africa: A multinational unleashed*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Van de Walle, Nicolas. "Elections without democracy: Africa's range of regimes." *Journal of democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 66-80.

Vatter, Miguel. "The idea of public reason and the reason of state: Schmitt and Rawls on the political." *Political Theory* 36, no. 2 (2008): 239-271.

Vaughan, Sarah, and Kjetil Tronvoll. *The culture of power in contemporary Ethiopian political life*. Stockholm: Sida, 2003.

Vaughan, Sarah. "Revolutionary democratic state-building: party, state and people in the EPRDF's Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 619-640.

Vestal, Theodore M. "Deficits of Democracy in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia since 1991." *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies* 2 (1994): 188-204.

Vestal, Theodore. "An analysis of the new constitution of Ethiopia and the process of its adoption." *Northeast African Studies* 3, no. 2 (1996): 21-38.

Vestal, Theodore. "Promises unkept: Freedom of association in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia." In *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Kyoto (Japan): Nakanishi Printing Co., Ltd*. 1997.

Vickers, Geoffrey. "Essays of Sir Geoffrey Vickers." *Policymaking, Communication and Social Learning*: Transaction Publishers, 1987.

Virtanen, Pekka. "Rewriting Oromo History in the North: Diasporic Discourse about National Identity and Democracy in Ethiopia." Diaspora: *A Journal of Transnational Studies* 18, no. 3 (2009): 253-286. muse.jhu.edu/article/603489.

VOA Africa, 2017. *What's Driving Clashes Between Ethiopia's Somali, Oromia Regions*?. [Online] Available at: https://www.voanews.com/a/whats-driving-clashes-ethiopias-somali-oromia-regions/4050017.html [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Volpi, Frédéric. "Pseudo-democracy in the Muslim world." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 6 (2004): 1061-1078.

Wade, Robert. "Failing states and cumulative causation in the world system." *International Political Science Review* 26, no. 1 (2005): 17-36.

Wade, Robert. "State intervention in 'outward-looking development: Neoclassical theory and Taiwanese practice." In *Developmental States in East Asia*, pp. 30-67. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1988.

Waldner, David. *State building and late development*. Cornell University Press, 1999.

Waller, Michael. *Democratic Centralism: An Historical Commentary*. Manchester University Press, 1981.

War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in Catherine Besteman (ed.) *Violence: A Reader*, pp. 35–60. New York: Palgrave.

Washington Post, 2018. Ethiopia's prime minister resigns amid political turmoil. [Online] Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/ethiopias-prime-minister-resigns-amid-political-turmoil/2018/02/15/ad3fc10a-1246-11e8-9570-29c9830535e5_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.4ca96ed1882c [Accessed 15 February 2018].

Way, Lucan A. "Authoritarian state building and the sources of regime competitiveness in the fourth wave: The cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine." *World Politics* 57, no. 2 (2005): 231-261.

Way, Lucan A., and Steven Levitsky. "The dynamics of autocratic coercion after the Cold War." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 387-410.

Weis, Toni. "Vanguard capitalism: party, state, and market in the EPRDF's Ethiopia." *PhD dissertation*, University of Oxford, 2016.

Williamson, Scott, and Beatriz Magaloni. "Legislatures and Policy Making in Authoritarian Regimes." *Comparative Political Studies* 53, no. 9 (2020): 1525-1543.

Wondwosen Teshome. "Ethiopian opposition political parties and rebel fronts: past and present." *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2009).

Woo-Cumings, Meredith, ed. *The developmental state*. Cornell University Press, 2019.

World Economic Forum, 04 May 2018. *Ethiopia is Africa's fastest-growing economy*. [Online] Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/05/ethiopia-africa-fastest-growing-economy/ [Accessed 04 May 2018].

Yack, Bernard. "The myth of the civic nation." *Critical review* 10, no. 2 (1996): 193-211.

Yasin, Yasin Mohammed. "Trans-Border Political Alliance in the Horn of Africa." *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (2010): 85.

Yeung, Henry Wai-chung. "Governing the market in a globalizing era: Developmental states, global production networks and inter-firm dynamics in East Asia." *Review of International Political Economy* 21, no. 1 (2014): 70-101.

Young, Crawford. "In search of civil society." *Civil society and the state in Africa* (1994): 33-50.

Young, Crawford. "Nation, ethnicity, and citizenship: Dilemmas of democracy and civil order in Africa." In *Making nations, creating strangers*, pp. 241-264. Brill, 2007.

Young, Crawford. "The heritage of colonialism." In *Africa in World Politics*, pp. 9-26. Routledge, 2018.

Young, Crawford. *The postcolonial state in Africa: Fifty years of independence*, 1960–2010. University of Wisconsin Pres, 2012.

Young, Iris Marion. "Difference as a resource for democratic communication." In *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics* 399, Routledge (1997).

Young, John. "Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia." *Review of African Political Economy* 23, no. 70 (1996): 531-542.

Young, John. *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

YouTube. 2018. Press Statements: Lema Megersa : Debretsion Gebremichael; Hailemariam Desalegn & Demeke Mekonenn. Tenadam. January 03. Accessed 11 2020, 11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3pyABUwvsw.

Yusuf, Semir. "Drivers of ethnic conflict in contemporary Ethiopia." *Institute for Security Studies Monographs* 2019, no. 202 (2019): v-46.

Yusuf, Semir. "What is driving Ethiopia's ethnic conflicts?." *ISS East Africa Report* 2019, no. 28 (2019): 1-16.

Yusuf, Semir. Rethinking Transitology: Structural Influencers of political changes in Ethiopia. In "*Ethiopia in the Wake of Political Reforms*"; Co-Editor: Melaku G. Desta, et. al., Tsehay Publishers, 2020: 361- 401

Záhořík, Jan. "Ethiopia and the colonial discourse." In *Colonialism on the Margins of Africa*, pp. 9-18. Routledge, 2017.

Zakaria, Fareed. "*The rise of illiberal democracy*." Foreign Affairs 76 (1997): 22.

Zegeye, Abebe, and Siegfried Pausewang, eds. *Ethiopia in Change*. British Academic Press, 1994.

Zenawi, Meles. "African development: Dead ends and new beginnings." *Preliminary draft* (2006).

Zenawi, Meles. "*Keynote Address by HE Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at the 5th International Conference on Federalism*." Delivered in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on December 13 (2010): 2010.

Zenawi, Meles. "*Speech to the Africa Task Force*." Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester University, England, August 3, no. 5 (2006).

Zenawi, Meles. "States and markets: Neoliberal limitations and the case for a developmental state." *Good growth and governance in Africa: Rethinking development strategies* (2012): 140-174.

Zenawi, Meles. "*The development lines of Revolutionary Democracy*." EPRDF party document, Addis Ababa (1992).

Zewde, Bahru. *Pioneers of change in Ethiopia: The reformist intellectuals of the early twentieth century*. James Currey Publishers, 2002.

Zewde, Bahru. *The quest for socialist utopia: the Ethiopian student movement, c. 1960-1974*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014.

Zewdie, Martha. A Study Guide for Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation, Unpublished. *Teaching Materials for the Course Educ.676*, Addis Ababa University. (2000).

Ziso, Edson. "From Dergue Socialism to an 'Ethiopian Neoliberalism': Transition and Reform Under the EPRDF Since 1991." In A *Post State-Centric Analysis of China-Africa Relations*, pp. 75-102. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018

Appendix 1

Interview Profile Description

Interviewee Nr. 1, High profile politician and member of SEPDM Central Committee, Hawassa, SNNPR, March 5, 2019.

Interviewee Nr. 2, Lead Oromo Activist, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 3, blogger, March 11, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 4, Expert at Ethiopian Election Board, March 11, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 5, High profile ODP politician, May 20, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 6, Activist and community organizer in the diaspora, May 26, 2019, London.

Interviewee Nr. 7, US based Academician, April 8, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 8, Foreign Journalist and analysis for Ethiopia, May 28, 2019, London

Interviewee Nr. 9, Activist and online commentator, March 15, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 10, Activist, March 22, 2019, Mekelle, Tigray.

Interviewee Nr. 11, High profile TPLF politician, March 25, 2019, Mekelle, Tigray region.

Interviewee Nr. 12 (a), High profile ADP politician, April 10, 2019, Bahir Dar, Amhara region.

Interviewee Nr. 13, Leader of oposition party, March 27, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 14 (b), ADP politician, April 10, 2019, Bahir Dar, Amhara region.

Interviewee Nr. 15, Health professional, April 19, 2019, Shashemene, Oromia region.

Interviewee Nr. 16, Teacher at high school, April 26, 2019, Nekemte, Oromoa region.

Interviewee Nr. 17, Academics and constitutional expert at Addis Ababa University, May 1, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 18, Editor-in-chief of a private magazine, May 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 19, Political Analyst at Institute for Security Studies, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 20 (a), Student-activist at Addis Ababa University, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 21, Oromo veteran politician, April 3, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 22, Human Rights Activist at a Private NGO, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 23, Press secretary for an opposition party, March 5, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 24, High profile Somali politician, May 12, 2019, Jijiga, Somali region.

Interviewee Nr. 25, A Bajaj (a three-wheeled taxi) driver, May 9, 2019, Adama, Oromia region.

Interviewee Nr. 26, A member of the Oromia Regional Council, May 16, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 27, A farmer who was evicted from the outskirts of Addis Ababa for the development of the Labu condominium, April 27, 2019, On public transport from Ambo to Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 28, A fresh graduate in civil engineering from Jimma University, April 23, 2019, Burayou, near Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 29 (a), A trade expert at the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry (EMTI), May 14, 2019, Addis Ababa

Interviewee Nr. 30 (a), Senior Trade Expert, Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry (EMTI), May 13, 2019, 2019, Addis Ababa

Interviewee Nr. 31 (a), A trade expert at the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry (EMTI), May 14, 2019, Addis Ababa

Interviewee Nr. 32, High-ranking Oromo opposition politician, April 29, 2019, Adama.

Interviewee Nr. 33, Veteran opposition politician and academics at Addis Ababa University, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 34, An Oromo veteran politician, March 6, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 35, Academics at Mekelle University, March 24, 2019, Mekelle, Tigray Region.

Interviewee Nr. 36, UK based Academics, February 21, 2019, Skype, London.

Interviewee Nr. 37, Gold medallist Athlete, March 7, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 38, Senior human resources expert at the Oromia Civil Service and Good Governance Office, May 2, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 39, A member of the Executive Cabinet of the Oromia Regional Government, May 9, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 40, A consultant working on a USAID agricultural project, March 4, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 41 (a), A trade Negotiator at the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry (METI), March 14, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 42, Activist and Academics at Wollega University, Nekemte, April 26, 2019, Wollega, Oromoa region.

Interviewee Nr. 43 (b), Student-Activist at Addis Ababa University, April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Interviewee Nr. 44, Academics at Jimma University, April 24, 2019, Jimma, Oromia region.