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Dedication

To my late father, Nigatu Tessema Gemechu, and my uncles, Amaha GebreKidan and Hailemichael GebreKidan, who fought on opposite warring sides during the civil war (1974-1991). This thesis is also dedicated to the many other Ethiopians who lost their lives or were affected by political violence in Ethiopia, which has continued unabated since the 1960s.

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAPO	All Amhara People's Organization
ADP	Amhara Democratic Party
AESM/MESION	All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (*Ye mela Itiyophiya socalist niqinaqe)*
AEUP	All Ethiopian Unity Party
AfDB	African Development Bank
ALDI	Agricultural Led Development Industrialization
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
ANLM	Afar National Liberation Movement
APDO	Afar People's Democratic Organization
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Forces
BGPDUF	Benishangul Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (emerging economies)
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
DDS	Democratic Developmental State
EDP	Ethiopian Democratic Party
EDORM	Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EFFORT	Endowment Fund For Rehabilitation of Tigray
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ESDP	Ethiopian Somali Democratic party
ESM	Ethiopian Student Movement
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GPDM	Gambella People's Democratic Movement
GTP I	Growth and Transformation Plan I
GTP II	Growth and Transformation Plan II
HPR	House of People's Representatives
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
METEC	Metal and Engineering Technology Corporations
MLLT	Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NNP	Nations Nationalities and Peoples
NPC	National Planning Commission
ODF	Oromo Democratic Front
ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated Sustainable Development to End Poverty
PINEs	Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

SALF	Somali Abo Liberation Front
SDPRP	Sustainable Development Poverty Reduction Program
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SLF	Sidama Liberation Front
SNLF	Sidama National Liberation Front
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TLF	Tigray Liberation Front
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UEDF/MEDREK (in Amharic)	Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces
UN	United Nations
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front
WB	World Bank

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to interrogate post-1991-2015 political development in Ethiopia, focusing on the political discourses espoused by the government and opposition, using the discourse analysis method and securitization theory. Discursive narratives and counter-discourse narratives are used by the political elite as instruments for political mobilization to bolster their ideological claims, while negating those of their opponents.

The study draws two important linkages between the political discourses of the major political forces and the "speech act" in securitization theory, where the EPRDF Government used extraordinary measures to quell opponents criticism of its doctrine, which is based on revolutionary democracy, ethnic federalism and the developmental state as subversive and existential terrorist acts intended to undermine its system rule. Concomitantly, opposition political discourses portray the EPRDF Government as a threat to the emergence of competitive open democratic politics, which would eventually lead to undermining the existence of Ethiopia as a unitary state.

The thesis argues that government and opposition political discourses and the securitization of democracy have resulted in the emergence of "the politics of the extraordinary", which closed the political space for the growth and development of normal politics. The cumulative effect of the politics of the extraordinary is that it stifles any opportunity for authentic democratization to emerge. In Ethiopia, it privileged the securitization of democracy and legitimized the use of violence as an extension of a centralist revolutionary democratic discourse.

Accordingly, this thesis explains the failure of post-1991 political development by unveiling the role of discursive narratives in shaping an entrenched nexus between politics and security. The thesis also examines the ruling party's political discourses and its institutionalizations, and investigates the discourses of the opposition – the Pan-Ethiopianists and ethno-nationalists – and the interplay of these discourses.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background

The political processes in Ethiopia since the late 1960s have been marred by a series of violent political events, which have manifested in different forms, including political repression, violent revolt, rebellion, insurgent movements and civil war in the country, allegedly to transform the politico-socioeconomic situation of Ethiopia (Clapham 1988, Andargachew 1993, Babile 1997, Andargatchew 2000, Gebru 2009, Abbink 2015). A brief highlight of the historical events from the last days of the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie (late 1960s to 1974) to the demise of the Derg military regime in 1991 further reveals the extent of the violence used in the country's political sphere. The imperial regime's response to the peasant rebellion in Bale in the late 1960s and early 1970s and to the Gojjam Uprisings was repression – a strategy aimed at deterring any further similar aspirations (Kiflu 1993, Bahru 2002). The leaders of the rebellion were either killed or fled the country. Similarly, the regime responded to the 1960 attempted *coup d'etat* by executing the coup leader. The strategy of employing political repression continued against the student protests and other opposition, as manifested by the targeted arrests and killing of the student protest leaders. This practice ended only when the regime itself fell in September 1974 as a result of the revolution (Abbink 2015). Indeed, from the 1960s until 1974, the political scene was characterized on the one hand by a policy of continued political repression by the regime, and on the other by violent revolt, rebellion, and protests by the forces opposed to the governance and ideas of the imperial regime. In the process, numerous executions and arrests occurred and many people fled the country. All the political violence perpetrated by the regime was ultimately to no avail, because it eventually led to its removal from power by force.

The scale of political violence observed during the rule of the Derg military junta that seized state power in 1974 was, however, far worse than its predecessor government's rule, to the extent that some Ethiopian scholars rightly described it as the most 'aberrant phase of political violence 'in the country's recent history (Abbink 2015: 2, Gebru 2008). A group in the Derg military junta wasted no time in unleashing unparalleled terror and

political violence, even against its own colleagues, in order to eliminate internal contenders within the Derg by killing, among others, its own first chairman, General Aman Andom. Later, it targeted the functionaries and officials of the Imperial regime – most of whom had peacefully given themselves up and were in its custody (Andargachew 1993:77-80). Indeed, the Derg regime's 17-year tenure witnessed unprecedented levels of political violence as the regime continuously employed political repression against forces opposed to its rule. These forces included two organizations that emerged out of the Ethiopian Student Movement – the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopia Socialist Movement (AESM), known as MEISON – the insurgent movements in the north of the country (the TPLF and EPLF), and other liberation movements, including the OLF, ONLF. Other opponents of the Derg regime were the secessionist political forces operating elsewhere in the country. In response to mounting opposition against its rule, the Derg regime initiated a "Red Terror" campaign, initially against the EPRP and later against all its opponents. The latter responded accordingly with "White Terror" measures against Derg officials and MEISON members. MEISON's collaboration with the Derg against the EPRP and its own counter measures or '*netsa irmija* 'in Amharic, are notable tragic political events that have had far-reaching repercussions in the political life of the country to date (Babile 1997, Andargachew 1993, Bahru 2009). In addition to their war against the Derg, the insurgent movements were also openly engaged in a war against each other, making this particular period a true civil war (Gebru 2009). The political landscape during the rule of the Derg military junta (1974-1991) was characterized by mass violence, as all actors resorted to the use of force. This political violence resulted in the incarceration, displacement, torture and death of hundreds of thousands of people, while others fled the country (Babile 1997, Gebru 2009). This era of bloody conflict (Clapham 2006:144) and political failures set the scene for a new political journey in 1991, this time under the leadership of the incumbent TPLF/EPRDF.

The post-1991 era was expected to mark the end of the political violence that had, as Markakis succinctly noted, 'stained the pages of the country's history with the blood of generations '(Markakis 2011: 1). After exiting decades of bloody civil war and political violence, the population generally believed political violence would end and that the op-

pressive strategies of the former Imperial and Leninist-Marxist regimes would be discontinued. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the country's progress, many of the failures of the past continued to afflict Ethiopia's politics in the post-1991 era. During the transitional process from 1991-1994 many of the major political actors withdrew, some to continue their armed struggle. They were joined by new political actors who had hoped for peace in post-1991 Ethiopia. The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) adopted in 1995, ostensibly an outcome of the transitional process, was highly contested and regarded as a mere institutionalization of the ruling Tigrayan People's Liberation Front/Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF/EPRDF) party program. It was these ethno-nationalist groups that had successfully ousted the military government and taken the driver's seat in the post-1991 political process. Despite a declared political reform agenda, which included the 'democratization 'of the ruling party and its endeavors, the country's political process has continued to suffer from a legitimacy crisis. Elections, electoral bodies and the judiciary all remain deeply contested. Amidst these contestations and legitimacy crises, politically motivated arrests and killings have become hallmarks of the post-1991 political process. As the ruling party continues to claim successive electoral victories, with the latest claim of a 100% election win in 2015, opposition to its rule has also grown, as it has unfolded so bitterly in the recent series of political protests that were taking place in the country at the time of writing. Indeed, the post-1991 political process and its institutionalization prompted widespread protests that paralyzed the political regime and, to some extent, exhausted its capacity to unleash the security forces to quell the popular demand for opening the political space for civic democratic engagement.

Therefore, this thesis elucidates the antecedents of, and political forces behind, the opposition to the regime, which resulted in the current political and economic reform processes. It distinctively uses discourse analysis methods to examine the political discourses to account for the opposition and the regime's response.

1.2. Problem Statement

Several studies have attempted to explain this failure of the post-1991 political process by problematizing the role of the ruling TPLF/EPRDF party, its ideology, or its policy choice and consequences (Abbink 1999 and 2011, Alemante 2003, Bach 2011, Clapham 2009, Meheretu 2012, Aalen 2006, Haberson 1998). Some scholars have attributed the failure of the post-1991 political experiment to the larger problem of the unfinished formation of the country (Clapham 2017, Markakis 2011). Others have attributed the failure to the power struggle among the political elite of the dominant ethnic groups (Oromo, Amhara and Tigray), a struggle lamented by Merara (2016). Some veteran politicians in the opposition camp seem to attribute the problem to their own generation's mistakes in the past by pointing to the radicalism and consequential political feuding that could have been averted or dealt with differently among the leftist generation (Kiflu 2016). A few others have described the situation in relation to the role of external actors (see Lyons, 1995, 2014, Holcomb 2004, Zondi 2006, Borchgrevink 2008)[1]. Moreover, Mesay Kebede (2003) and Teshale Tibebu (2008) suggest the role of the Ethiopian elite contributed to the problem. In particular, they criticize the Ethiopian elite for their 'Eurocentrism paradigm 'approach to the country's problems. They also criticize the Ethiopian elites 'espousal of Marxist ideology as a solution to the Ethiopian problem, instead of embracing traditional Ethiopian knowledge and wisdom, or in Teshale's words, a 'return to the

[1] The role of external actors in domestic Ethiopian post-1991 politics seems minimal. In particular, when it comes to the framing of political issues by the elites it often looks as an internally driven process by the elites themselves, though the external actors appear to support different political actors for various reasons in their mobilisations against one another. The major foreign involvement in the country's politics was the United States 'sponsoring' / or rather a US-led mediation between the victories TPLF group and the different rebel/political groups during the formation of the transitional government in 1991. Another instance worth mentioning is the European Union's attempt to bring together the ruling party and the opposition political parties during a crisis that had followed the 2005 national election. The attempt was not successful and was soon abandoned. The United Nations Missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) involved a peace keeping mission in 2000 following UN Security Council resolution no.1312 whose mandate and activities were concerned with the peace keeping operations. The influence on Ethiopian discourses, however, seems very limited. The UN in the past, however, played a critical role in the period 1950-1952 on the issue of Ethiopia- Eritrea relations, an important topic beyond this study.

source (2008:1). Teshale seems to be critical of what he calls a shift from 'Marxism to Liberalism', which for him is another 'Eurocentric 'ideology.

Although these competing explanations must have a grain of plausibility, I argue that understanding the political dynamism of post-1991 requires different approaches and perspectives to further explain what went wrong and why.

Perhaps one of the foremost reasons is that while the ruling TPLF/EPRDF is admittedly the dominant actor on the political scene, and has thus rightly been the major subject of these studies, it is not the only actor on the country's political scene. Therefore, this thesis attempts to go beyond the extant criticism of the TPLF/EPRDF's system rule, ideology and policy choices and their consequences. It argues that the TPLF/EPRDF failed to grasp the problems emanating from Ethiopia's unfinished state formation process, which overshadowed the country's history. The TPLF/EPRDF had, in a sense, misconstrued democratic centrism, ethnic federalism and state developmentalism (or developmental state policies) as substitutes for competitive authentic democratic pluralism as an instrument for democratic state formation. A major fallacy in the TPLF/EPRDF doctrine is the assumption that the more Ethiopia heads towards democratic centrism and developmentalism, the more it will be able to curb secessionist tendencies.

The politics of the country also has multiple stakeholders, a list that goes well beyond the dominant ethnic groups mentioned above, as discussed by Merara. Similarly, the country's political dynamism attests to the fact that it is a process in which there is an interplay of different generations, new actors and new issues, in addition to the old 'Leftist Problem 'or its continuous effect, which rightly helps explain the problem. The suggestion that Ethiopia's elite are harbouring the 'Eurocentric paradigm 'fails to adequately capture the whole problem as it oscillates between 'Marxism and Liberalism'. Both are theoretical strands that neglect the inner resources and fears of the political elite of various ethnic groups. It then becomes imperative to attempt to capture the main elite discourses and the prevailing political dynamics that propel ethno-political cleavages and the ensuing conflicts. Therefore, the main research question of this dissertation is: What discourses are employed by the political elites of different ethnic, political and ideological orientations

and how have they contributed to the failure of pre-2015 democratic transition in Ethiopia?.

By using discourse analysis (as explained in the following section of this chapter) and securitization theory, this thesis analyzes how discursive narratives from security and democracy perspectives are defining elements of the failure of the TPLF/EPRDF post-1991 doctrine. The thesis finds that neither a political elite-centred ideological orientation nor a TPLF/EPRDF-centred can fully explain the failures of post-1991 TPLF/EPRDF democratic politics and its outcomes. Essentially, only elite discourse interactions and dynamics are able to explain the pre-2015 democratic transition failure.

To be sure, the research question by necessity requires the 'unpacking of the political discourses of the Ethiopian political elites among both the government and opposition by examining how political elites make issues politically significant. By identifying the recurrent political themes in the discourses, the study reveals how the discourses interact, and the type of politics that arise from the interplay of these discourses *vis-à-vis* security and democracy.

1.3. Scope

Timewise, the focus of this study is the period between 1991- 2015, which is referred to as 'post-1991 Ethiopia' throughout this thesis. The year 1991 marked the overthrow of the military junta by the incumbent regime, which immediately initiated a process of 'democratization'. The displaced military junta assumed power following the 1974 revolution, putting an end to rule by the monarchy. After the junta, the country was ruled by a military dictatorship that claimed to be building a socialist Ethiopia. However, the outcome of the junta's dictatorship was civil war. The period up to 2015 was selected because it signaled new political developments, induced by a series of political protests. It also marked the beginning of a period when the ruling EPRDF started to rethink its own approaches to democratization and the country started experiencing major unforeseen and

unplanned changes internally. These changes posed fresh challenges to studying the period post 2015. Another potential limitation of this study arises from the researcher's own previous affiliation to the ruling EPRDF party, as explained in the following section on methodology.

1.4. Research Methodology

This section starts by explaining how and why the discourse analysis method is employed as an appropriate technique for analyzing how security and democracy have interacted in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia. In particular, it attempts to justify the choice of the discourse analysis method on two grounds, the first being related to the research question itself. The research project aims to examine how competing political discourses interact with the democratization processes. The study assumes that discourses related to the 'threat construction by political elites – their discursive undertakings – might have impacted the political transition the country initiated in 1991. Hence, it is about critically scrutinizing the security discourses and probing their relation vis-à-vis a democratization process. In realizing this plan, it is appropriate to employ the discourse analysis method as a particular research tool. The second reason, which is related to the first one, makes a link between the chosen research technique and a theoretical framework discussed below. Thus, the following subsections present a discussion of the rationale for selecting the discourse analysis method, a further elaboration on the application of discourses analytic techniques in some selected studies, their application, and finally, a discussion of limitation of the technique as regards this study.

1.4.1. Why Discourse Analysis?

Because the "democratization" process began only in 1991 after years of backward feudal regimes and a brutal Marxist military dictatorship, Ethiopia is relatively new to the culture of competitive democratic politics. Despite transitioning to "democracy" from this embedded undemocratic history, Ethiopia has yet to anchor its emergent political transition in democratic politics.

Arguably, one of the major possible explanatory factors for the shaky democratization process is the congestion of competing political discourses by the various antagonistic political elites regarding their vision of democratization. Elites in the political arena have different mutually exclusive political visions that are not simply mutually exclusive, but are also radical visions that disregard one another. The characterization of others 'visions is often securitized and presented as a threat to national survival. These characterizations give rise to competing discourses in which the parties regard each other as a threat to the future of the country. This has been the case for more than two decades and continues in the reign of the current regime, which began the "democratization" process. It noteworthy that these discourses of the political elites are not mere differences on political issues – a healthy core value of the notion of democracy itself. Instead, these different visions, which are rooted in the political discourses, are rather interpretations of core contentious issues in the political historiography of the country, including ethnicity, the history of Ethiopian statehood, land issues, and others.

Ethno-nationalist elite political discourses explain how ethnicity and by extension, democracy are securitized. For instance, ethnicity, referred to in the Ethiopian debate as the "nationality question", is an important issue for some, one that not only must be recognized, but should be a building block of the Ethiopian state makeup. The proponents of this view make a link between the liberation struggles that brought the country to the verge of disintegration and its political accommodation as the essential glue to unite all Ethiopians. This view, simply understood, makes the country's national survival contingent upon accommodating ethnicity as a necessary precondition for national unity and an instrument for conflict management. Hence, their ethno-natioanationalists' vision of democratization is based primarily on the promotion of an ethnic-centred arrangement, better known as ethnic federalism. Furthermore, for this political discourse, any democratization vision contrary to this interpretation is seen as a return to the political crisis that ignited the sentiments of the liberation struggle/civil war, thereby endangering the country's national survival.

Pan-Ethiopianists, on the other hand, believe that using ethnicity as a building block of Ethiopian statehood paves the way for the country's disintegration. Hence, they vehemently oppose that particular approach. Their vision of democratization is, therefore, to save the country from the blueprint of "disintegration" advocated by those who advance ethnicity as a building block of Ethiopian statehood. Apparently, each of these discourses regards the other as a threat to the country's survival. As much as the elite political discourses differ, so do their visions of democratization. The list of discourses touched upon so far are only illustrative, and one can go on discussing several more. There are more competing discourses, one of which has been institutionalized by the current ruling elites. Unpacking these competing discourses and examining their vision of democratization in relation to the country's general democratization process (their role in democratization), a normative analysis thereof, and (in)security conceptualizations and practices, is a goal of this research project. So, an appropriate research technique is required for this research.

To adopt the right strategy for a research project of this nature, the discourse analysis method is preferable; if the endeavour is to analyze the discourses briefly mentioned above, then it would be appropriate to employ the discourse analysis method. These discourses are found in the speeches, reports, interviews, political manifestos of parties, images, media debates and discussions, literature of a political nature, and pamphlets. Hence, the nature of the research problem dictates the choice of the discourse analysis method.

The second important factor that justifies the choice of the discourse analysis method is the theoretical approach adopted. As Manheim et al. (2012) rightly observed, the choice of certain research techniques can well be underpinned by the theoretical approach one chooses to tackle a research problem for the purpose of facilitating the search and to better elaborate concepts and terms used to aid the general inquiry. Accordingly, informed by the research problem itself, this study employs securitization theory (or Copenhagen School) as a framework of analysis to guide the enquiry process for reasons discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. In addition to the suitability of the ontological underpinnings of the theory as presented, perhaps one can briefly zoom in on the epistemological dimension of the theory as a major weigh-in factor in choosing the discourse analysis method.

Epistemologically, securitization theory sees security as a discursive act, an approach developed from the speech act theory of language (Waever 1993, Balzac 2010, Buzan and Hansen 2009). It is the utterance itself that is security. By saying something, policy makers securitize it. Inspired by Austin's (1962) earlier work, it is this performativity/illocutionary aspect of the speech act which is the focus of the theory. Thus, it follows that it is the discourses that constitute the object of the enquiry in a process that involves the textual and intertextual analysis of the discourses (Salter and Mutlu 2013). It is this, the theory's understanding of security as a discursive act, that dictates the choice of the discourse analysis method as the preferred tool for this research project.

While textual and intertextual analysis constitute the major strategies of undertaking discourse analysis, the extent to which this informs the enquiry process, however is different. This makes discourse analysis different from methods such as, for instance, intensive text analysis as often used in the framework of content analysis. Content analysis/intensive text analysis methods focus on quantitative analysis of words, phrases, their semantic (grammatical) constructions of a certain political document or other texts (Bryman 2012, Hsieh and Shannon 2005, Manheim, et al. 2012). As such their focus is, inter alia, on 'counting, assessing and interpreting' a form and content of a given communication and is a method often used in communication studies (Manheim 2012: 201). While the content analysis/intensive text analysis methods certainly have their own merits, the exclusive focus on words/themes in a text has made them less appealing for an analysis that needs to go beyond words/themes in a given text. To this end, Prior has rightly pointed out the limitations of content/intensive text analysis methods by comparing them with discourse analysis:, "Content analysis on its own is somewhat one-dimensional and static form of analysis" (Prior 2014:369). Discourse analysis, by comparison, not only focuses on texts, [2] but it also attempts to understand the use of words/language and its consequences in politics. For instance, while recurrent themes are mainly quantified and analysed accordingly in content analysis, in discourse analysis they are analysed by employing different strategies such as by connecting texts and meaning through referencing with other texts

[2] Content or text analysis can do this too in principle, but this is more difficult to extract in practice.

(intertextuality), or by tracing the changes, continuity or transformation over time of discourses or ruptures/ silences/breaks in the discourses (Mutlu and Salter 2013: 114). In other words, discourse analysis allows for a strategy that uses language-based analysis together with theoretical or conceptual frames that help enable one to distinguish and disentangle certain characteristics of a political discourse. Thus, one can say that discourse analysis is more reflexive and interpretative in character than content analysis/intensive text analysis. This is the reason why this dissertation uses discourse analysis (in addition to interview techniques) to gain insights into prevailing political discourses in Ethiopia and their interaction over time.

If the choice of research method is influenced by the research problem and the theoretical framework (speech act in securitization), one might wonder what discourse analysis is? What is its usefulness as a method in examining how security and democracy interact in post-1991 Ethiopia? In attempting to answer these questions, the following section presents a more detailed review of the discourse analysis method.

1.4.2. The Discourse Analysis Method

Discourse analysis (DA) as a method of enquiry is a relatively new phenomenon in the field of security studies, despite its established use in some of the other social science fields, such as policy analysis and media studies (Wodak and Meyer 2001, Van Dijk, T.A. 1995, Harrison and Callan 2013, Burnham et al. 2008). This is not surprising, given the development of international relations (IR), to which international security studies (ISS) belong. It was after the great debates about international relations theory, and wider debates on epistemological issues in social science in general and international relations in particular, that ISS began to embrace non-positivist discursive approaches to security studies. Being the dominant approach within the social constructivism approach, its prominence is linked to the introduction or rise of constructivism itself, specifically in IR, in what is described as the 'linguistic turn 'in the study of political science (Neumann 2002:627).

The field of ISS was widely dominated by the material conception of security, whose logic of security understanding is explained in terms of the perception of objective/subjective threats. For a long time, until the end of the Cold War, scholars focused on 'the absence/presence of concrete threats '(Buzan and Hansen 2009: 33, Buzan and Waever 2007). Following changes in the nature of the threats after the Cold War, discursive approaches to the field of security studies began to flourish after scholars began questioning the objective/subjective threats construction of security. The discursive approaches argue that (in)security cannot be understood in objective terms, and reject the objective/subjective threats construction. Of the discursive approaches to security studies, for instance, the Copenhagen School understands security as a speech act in which the utterance (by saying) itself is a security, as briefly discussed above. The burgeoning of these approaches in the field of security studies, as manifested in widening and deepening the security agenda and the conception of (is)security more broadly, has elicited greater attention to methods such as discourse analysis in the study of the (de)construction of threats.

Discourse analysis focuses on the role of written and spoken language in the processes of construction of the social world (Van Dijk 1997, Manheim et al. 2012, Burnham et al. 2008, Salter and Mutlu 2013, Chilton 2004, Tonkiss 2012). It assumes that language is not a transparent tool (Hansen 2006:18) or neutral, or only a medium of communication. It rather sees the use of language as 'political '(Gee 1999:1). In the social and political world, language is a representation of a particular view (perspective). It is very much political in the sense that it is a means of (a tool) for the production of certain truth, while marginalizing other truths (Hansen 2006). In other words, it is a way of legitimizing one's view and delegitimizing others 'views. Despite the variant approaches that characterize the discourse analysis method, Milliken (1999: 229-230) summarizes the focus and meanings of discourse analysis described above, as 1) a 'system of signification that constructs social realities', and 2) a system that has a (re)productive nature in which discourses uphold certain claims and knowledge practices, thereby shaping the subject/authority by enabling/disenabling particular thinking/claims about politics and its practices. Milliken (1999) adds that discourses have a tendency to 'stabilize and fix dominant meaning'. As such, the focus of any discourse analysis method is to study the nature of discourses.

Discourse analysis is a method of enquiry that deals with the use of language (discourses) by examining speeches, texts, contexts, their historical specifics (on how they emerged), their role in the construction of social and political reality and their role in sustaining it. At times, as is the case with critical discourse analysis (CDA), it exposes exploitations (Burnham et al. 2008)[3]. As this, exposure is the central tenet of discourse analysis, it should be noted that there are different approaches to discourse analysis (Manheim et al. 2012). For instance, if one focuses on the grammar and structure of the language, then the analysis is more language related, and more focus is applied to its use in conveying certain messages. Likewise, if the focus of an analysis is on the psychological aspect of the discourse, then it is referred to as psychoanalysis. Similarly, if the goal of discourse analysis is to explore exploiting discourse, then it is critical discourse analysis[4]. For the purpose of examining how democracy interacts with security in the Ethiopian context, the focus is on analyzing the political discourses thoroughly and scrutinizing their role in the construction of social/political reality, in this case, democracy.

Another issue worth mentioning is whether discourse analysis is a method of data analysis only or theory as well. While the literature is limited on this issue, a few scholars have argued that discourse analysis should be regarded as a 'whole package – a theoretical and methodological whole'(Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:15). This issue of whether it is a

[3] For more on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) method, see the works of the leading scholars often associated with the development of CDA as an approach of study. These writers include Van Dijk, T.A, Fairclough, N., Wodak, R., and Meyer, M. See samples of their published works below. Fairclough, N. (2013*). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. New York: Routledge. Wodak, R. (2001). 'What CDA is about – A summary of its history, important concepts and developments', in Wodak, R. and Meyer, M (ed.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: SAGE, 1, 1-13. Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, London: Blackwell.

[4] Also of interest in discourse analysis could be the works of the "Essex School", a group of scholars whose works are based on the earlier works of Laclau and Mouffee (1985). This school promotes a post-foundational approach to study the socio-political world by employing discourse analysis. The following are some examples: Marttila, T. (2015). *Post-foundational Discourse Analysis: From political difference to empirical research.* New York: Palgrave. Glynos, J., Howarth, D., Norval, A., and Speed, E. (2009). Discourse analysis: Varieties and methods. *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review paper*, *NCRM/014*. Howarth, David R. (2002) "An Archaeology of Political Discourse? Michel Foucault and the Critique of Ideology", *Political Studies*, 50(1), 117–35. Howarth, David R. (2000). *Discourse*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

theory or method becomes less important if one acknowledges the fact that there is no single unified discourse analysis method. Instead, as discussed above, there are different variants of discourse analysis that agree on certain of the aforementioned features. What determines one's employment of discourse analysis either as a theory, a method or a combination of both, is a matter of strategy and choice guided by, *inter alia*, the research problem and how one intends to deal with it. In the proposed study at hand, discourse analysis is employed as a method of data analysis.

Discourse analysis as a method of enquiry is not without criticism, and one needs to be conscious of this. For instance, it is often argued that discourse analysis has no clear 'firm' procedures of how research is undertaken (Burnham et al. 2008). Some scholars have also raised the issue of the credibility of its findings (Cruickshank 2012). Further, the argument goes that the task of ensuring its research quality meets common acceptable standards (rigorousness, systematic analysis) is left to the individual researcher. But this claim (even if it is regarded as a fact) that there are no clear common research standards, does not automatically make it susceptible to low standards in terms of the power of its research quality. On the contrary, the growing interest in how social and political reality is constructed and sustained has made methods such as discourse analysis very important, given its salient features (Glynos et al. 2009, Yongtao 2010). Furthermore, one can refute the above argument about the absence of clear guidelines on the following grounds: First, notwithstanding the debate surrounding common acceptable research procedures, the absence or presence of certain guidelines does not warrant rigorous and systematic research as an outcome. The mere presence or mention of guidelines does not make a particular piece of research acceptable. It is rather how an individual researcher applies it to ensure quality research that matters. To that end, applying discourse analysis does not leave it to an individual researcher to do it her/his own way. Rather, it bestows on individual researchers the responsibility of ensuring quality research that is systematic, rigorous, convincing and ethical – an activation of reflexivity throughout the entire research process. Secondly, discourse analysis is a qualitative, intensive undertaking that does not engage in quantifying data. True to its nature, it does not attempt to establish a causal relationship between variables (Hansen 2006). Furthermore, it does not deal with massive texts as is the case with content analysis, for instance. As with any academic research, discourse

analysis begins with research question(s). Within the established theoretical framework, it analyses discourses, attempting to look for any pattern/relations that emerge. Or it simply investigates the presence of any discernible implications in the course of the analysis. In the process, it pays attention to the representation of discourses sufficiently enough to attribute a group categorization and representation of the issue of the discourses. In doing so, one has to ensure the quality of the research. Thus, it is not impossible to produce acceptable research output using the discourse analysis method. Indeed, the examples below that have employed the discourse analysis method are briefly discussed as a means of illustrating how discourse analysis is used to produce quality research.

A good exemplar that uses the discourse analysis method is the seminal work of Lene Hansen titled '*Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian war*', a study published in 2006. In her work, Hansen employs discourse analysis to analyze foreign policy in the context of the Bosnian war. In relation to foreign policies (particularly of the West) she argues that identities are not given objective things but are instead created inter-subjectively, and identities and foreign policies are constitutively constructed. From the perspective of post-structuralism, she shows how discourses about identities are created and change over time, and how such change interacts with foreign policy formulations – the Western approaches to war as manifested in their foreign policy adoption and the legitimizing thereof (Hansen 2006).

In her elaboration of the methodology of her analysis of Western approaches to the Bosnian war, Hansen contends that while discourse analysis does not engage in theorizing in terms of cause and effect, it does systematically and cautiously analyze these approaches. In her focus on Western Balkans discourse and other competing discourses, the author identifies discourses on identities, puts them in their historical contexts in tracing their origin, and discusses how they were sustained or changed over time. She also discusses their interactions with policy formulations. The author argues that to identify discourses one has to carefully select important texts and justify the selection. She did so by using official foreign policy documents, media sources (articles by journalists), academic publications, and relevant travel books. She traced the origins of these discourses and, most importantly, their contemporary standing *vis-à-vis* the Western understandings on the

Bosnian War. The focus on official documents, articles by journalists, and academic articles, emanates from the fact that discourses need agency, and often it's this category of persons: politicians, journalists, academics and other interested groups, that play a crucial role in presenting the discourses to the public.

Similarly, Fairclough (2000) in his book '*New Labour, New language?*' exposes the 'exploiting 'discourse embedded in Blair's New Labour rhetoric by employing a critical discourse analysis method, in which he examines Blair's speeches and relevant documents of Blair's New Labour. Furthermore, he argues that New Labour is an extension of Thatcherism in a new language. The latter example is different to the first in the sense that it has a mission of emancipation as the author himself suggests. As can be observed from the two examples discussed briefly above, discourse analysis is being applied as a tool of enquiry in political science research that focuses on discursive narratives. Although one can add many examples to the list, it is wise to limit the examples, given the purpose of this chapter[5].

1.4.3. Operationalizing Discourse Analysis

The current research project 'Political Discourses and Securitization of Democracy in Post-1991 Ethiopia broadly aims to:

[5] For more on the writings that employ CDA/DA as a method of enquiry, see the following: Bhatia, A. (2006). Critical discourse analysis of political press conferences. Discourse and Society, 17(2), 173-203. Fairclough, N. (2009). A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, *2*, 162-187. Wodak, R., and Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Methods of critical discourse studies*. London: Sage Publications. Bloor, M., and Bloor, T. (2013). *The practice of critical discourse analysis: An introduction*. New York: Routledge. Howarth, D., and Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Discourse theory in European politics: Identity, policy and governance*. New York: Palgrave. Diez, T. (2001). Europe as a discursive battleground: Discourse analysis and European integration studies. *Cooperation and conflict*, *36*(1), 5-38. Carta, C., and Morin, J. F. (Eds.). (2016). *EU foreign policy through the lens of discourse analysis: Making sense of diversity*. London: Routledge. Waever, O. (2005). European integration and security: Analysing French and German discourses on state, nation, and Europe. In *Discourse theory in European politics* (pp. 33-67). London: Palgrave Macmillan. Larsen, H. (2005). *Foreign policy and discourse analysis: France, Britain and Europe*. London: Routledge.

1. Identify the political discourses that characterize contemporary Ethiopian politics, establish what constitutes these discourses and the way they are framed and examine their nexus with (in)security conceptualization and practices;

2. Scrutinize how these discourses interact with one another; and

3. Assess their impact on the democratization process in post-1991 Ethiopia

To achieve these broader aims, the study employed the discourse analysis method together with securitization theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. Discourse analysis is employed for its utility in explaining the political practices and conceptualization created by political discourses, and in that sense its analytical utility, not the functionality of 'exposing exploitation 'as advanced by CDA. Particularly, discourse analysis is used in connection with the speech act theory of securitization theory, as discussed in detail under Chapter Two of this thesis. This is because the study aims to understand and explain political developments in post-1991 Ethiopia. Accordingly, this rationale dictates the choice of this methodology and the theoretical approach of this thesis. As such, the study first tries to identify recurrent political issues (themes) in Ethiopian politics and how they are made politically significant and thereby used in the construction of discourses by political elites. In doing so, the study attempts to attribute the discourses to a particular group or category with utmost care and by ensuring fair representation, so as to systematically study them. As Mutlu and Salter succinctly put it, discourse analysis can facilitate our understanding of political dynamism in the Ethiopian context 'given the textual and intertextual origins of security practices '(Mutlu and Salter 2013:118).

The recurrent issues (themes) are identified from relevant political discourses, texts (written and verbal/visual) found in political party manifestos, political party documents that present political positions, political elite debates, other media sources, campaign pamphlets, official documents, academic articles, journals and other similar sources. The study also uses information gleaned from interviews using the elite interview technique, particularly in instances where the elaboration of discourses complements textual and intertextual analysis as a triangulation strategy. Moreover, selecting text was based

mainly on its authoritative grounding in relation to the object of analysis.

Based on their authority or significance to the political discourses analysed, three categories/types of data were used to undertake a discourse analysis as shown below under Table 1.1 on pages 21-23. The first category of documents/materials analysed are political organization documents, including political programs, political manifestos, foundational documents, party newsletters/magazines and party resolutions. These documents were selected for their authority as primary official documents (texts) of the respective political organisations. They are seen as guiding political documents from which the legitimacy of other documents and organisational functions are derived. These documents are often the embodiments of political conceptualisations/discourses of the political organisations' ideological orientation, albeit often in the abbreviated form. As such these first category of documents/data remain the principal focus of the analysis from which the recurrent themes are identified.

The second category of data constitute verbal (interview, political debates and discussions), written (political memos, memoirs, books, articles etc,) and other publications by current or veteran party leaderships. These groups of data are less official in terms of their authority compared to the documents under the first category and thus, they can only be used as complimentary to the first category of documents aslong as their validity/legitimacy is justified thereto and therefore, they are used according to their significance to the official party/organizational discourses. Nevertheless, their importance is paramount in terms of their elaboration of the official political discourses and for triangulation purposes.

The third type of documents are somewhat similar to the second category of documents: they encompass interviews with the political leadership, opinions of the individual political leadership and press releases/statements as found in newspapers and magazines (public and privately owned, local/international). Similar to the second category of documents, these texts are less official and authoritative compared to the primary official documents/materials of the political organizations, but selected for their significance to further elaborate the political discourses and for their utility in the triangulation of data. As discussed in the discussion of strategies of discourse analysis, the findings are based on

the analysis these sources by employing intertextual methods and by tracing the evolution of the political discourses, examining changes and continuities over time, also with a

view to discovering any ruptures/breakups or so in relation to security and implications of this on democracy in the period under study.

The methods (peaceful or armed struggle) and the different relations these opposition political forces have had over time with different ruling regimes to reflect the dynamism and efforts to ensure representation in the opposition's political discourse.

A key feature of these discourses is that they need agency. Discourses are essentially undertakings by political elites as manifested by political groups, political institutions, political parties, academics, media and other organizations. In the Ethiopian context the political elites engage in framing those issues perceived to be political. Political elites constantly form political organizations based on how they frame political issues or simply according to the bounds of their discursive undertakings in which they share a common vision and understanding. It is not just political institutions that signify the human agency for discursive acts, but the very existence (creation) of discourses themselves that is intertwined with elites. Political elites create discourses, and as such, they represent these discourses. Hence, it is important to establish that agency relationship between a discourse and a particular political individual or group elite, because it will contribute towards a systematic understanding of the discourse. A categorization of the political actors (political parties and organizations) is systematically made and justified

(see table 1.1)

Table 1.1 Discourse, Source, Type and Analytical Approach

Source	Sources of discourses within liberation movements, fronts, organizations and parties.	Rationale for selection	Analytical approach for the discourse analysis	Remarks
Political organization documents	- Political programs - Political manifestos - Party policies and strategies - Foundational documents - Party newsletters/magazines - Press releases - Party resolutions etc.	- Selected for their authority as primary/official party documents - These documents remain the principal focus of the analysis	- Comparative analysis of conceptualization of politics (political discourses) - Interpretive - Position summary	- Most of these documents are available in Amharic and other local languages. A few are published in English - These documents were obtained from the respective party offices, party websites, personal connections and other credible online sources
Party leadership	- Verbal (interviews, political debates and discussions) - Written (political memos, memoirs, books, articles etc) - Other publications by current and veteran party leadership	- Selected based on their significance to the official party discourses - Mainly used for elaboration and triangulation purposes.	- Interpretive, triangulation, position summary	- Most of the verbal and written sources are in Amharic and other local languages - Some of the interviews were conducted one-on-one with the highest political leadership in Ethiopia and the Netherlands during the field visit/data collection

Newspapers and magazines (public and privately owned, local/international)	- Interviews with the political leadership - Opinions of the individual political leadership - Press releases/statements	- Selected based on their significance to the party discourses - Mainly used for elaboration and triangulation purposes	- Interpretive, triangulation, position summary, content analysis	- Most of the verbal and written sources are in Amharic and other local languages - These materials were mostly reviewed at the Ethiopian National Archive and Library during the researcher's field visit
Ethiopian government documents and legislations	- Transitional Charter of the GoE - FDRE Constitution - FDRE government policies, strategies and programs. - Proclamations and regulations (media laws, anti-terrorism laws, the laws of charities and civil societies) - Government reports etc. - Other government publications	- Selected based on their authority as primary/official government documents - These documents remain the primary focus of the analysis	- Comparative analysis of conceptualization of politics (political discourses) - Interpretive - Position summary	- Most of these documents are available both in English and Amharic - Obtained from the respective government offices, websites and other credible online sources

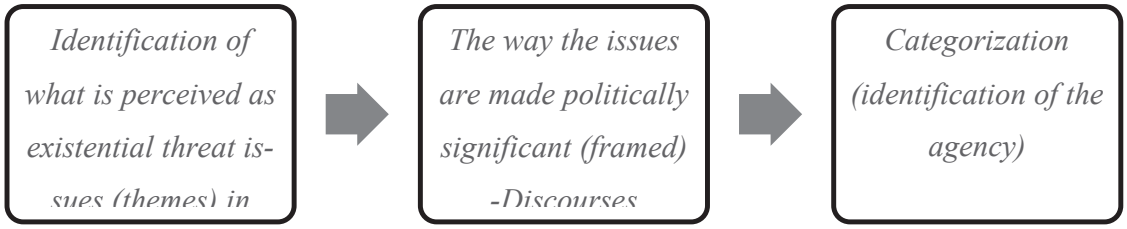
Ethiopian government officials	- Verbal (interviews, discussion and debates)	- Selected based on their significance to official government discourses - Mainly used for elaboration and triangulation purposes	Interpretive, triangulation, position summary	- Most of these material are available in Amharic and were obtained from the government (public) archive, private media, plus international news outlets and other credible sources
Other secondary data sources	- Academic publications - Reports of International organizations, analysis	- Selected for their significance as secondary data sources	Interpretive, triangulation, comparative	- These materials are available in English online and in print

Source: Overview compiled by the Author 2019

Central to the aim of this study is an assessment of how these interactions or lack thereof, interact with the notion of democracy, particularly the process of democratization in Ethiopia. In other words, the study assesses the impact of the interactions of these discourses on the democratization process in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, to analyze the political discourses, this study has identified textual and visual sources from political parties and organizations as primary data. The texts have been selected based on their authority as official discourses of the respective parties/organizations, and include official party documents, party newsletters, press releases, interviews with party leaders and key government political documents (constitution and policy documents). Memoirs and autobiographies of key individual

Figure 1.1 Identification, framing and categorization as existential threats or securitisation



Source: Developed by the author, 2019.

party leaders have been used to complement such sources. Moreover, in view of triangulating the data, a reference has been made to the archives of these political parties 'press releases and interviews by their leaders over the past two decades. To this end, the researcher spent weeks at the National Archive and Library Agency in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to consult press archives in the country dating back to the 1990s. Interviews with a number of current political leaders were also conducted between 2016 and 2019. Except for a few official government documents and magazines/newsletters that were accessible only in the English language, all other party documents, archives and interviews came from sources in the Ethiopian languages (mainly Amharic and the Oromifa-Oromo language), both of which the researcher speaks fluently.

The interview questions centred mainly on political stakeholders 'perceptions of political issues, and the perspectives of others in the political arena (discourse), particularly toward the current political process in the country. The interviewees 'elaboration of their party positions, expressed in party documents, helped ensure triangulation of the official data. The interviews were, nevertheless, not tape-recorded, given the sensitivity/fragility of the political environment in the country. Also, apart from the fieldwork undertaken, this researcher's ongoing role as a political adviser to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy's Ethiopia program since 2016 has, enabled him to build close working relationships with Ethiopian opposition party leaders. Additionally, a previous affiliation to the ruling party and close relations with some key individual leaders enabled this researcher to remain in touch with some of the leadership of the ruling party. Particularly, this researcher's engagement in another project aimed at building the capacity of Ethiopia's regional government leaders brought him in touch with the key regional leadership of the three major regions in the country: the Oromia, Amhara and Tigray regions. The leadership of these three regions constitute the core of the ruling EPRDF coalition. This leadership's capacity-building program project, which was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has brought over 60 key leaders to the Netherlands over the past two years. Most of these leaders are members of the *polit* bureau and/or central committee of the ruling EPRDF coalition and their respective regional parties. This has enabled this researcher's existing networks to further enrich the present study by enlightening him on the thought processes of political practitioners in the country, a key component for better understanding their political texts/documents. Nevertheless, the researcher aims to stay neutral for the sake of academic analysis and is not influenced by any affiliations/relations of any nature.

Furthermore, based on the discourses the major political actors promote and their 'weight 'in the political scene of the country, the researcher has categorized them as members of the ruling party, on the one hand, and as members of the opposition camp, on the other hand, for the reasons discussed under Chapters four to seven. The opposition camp has been further split into two categories: The Pan-Ethiopians (Chapter Five) and the

ethno-nationalists (Chapter Six). In total, 16 major political parties/organizations are directly under the spotlight in this study. The findings from this study are then based on the textual and intertextual analysis of the discourses of these political actors.

Concerning the possible limitations of this research, two factors warrant mentioning. First, as far as this researcher's connections to the political actors can help facilitate unique access to the political leaders, it has its own challenges in the highly divided and polarized political environment of the country. Often, one needs to build confidence and trust with political actors to avoid mistrust and suspicion. This is particularly important, given the researcher's past connections to the ruling party and ethnic affiliations (ethnic affiliations are often automatically linked to a particular political leaning). Fortunately, the two projects in which this researcher was involved turned out to be long-term ones, allowing sufficient time to build trust and confidence with both opposition party leaders and the ruling camp.

However, it has to be noted here that most of the primary data for this research are the documents (texts) of the respective parties. Nevertheless, building relations with the political actors was a rewarding exercise in terms of gathering more knowledge about the parties. The paucity of material available from some of the political parties required a degree of reliance on the memoirs and autobiographies of leaders, which are arguably less authoritative in terms of representing the official positions of the parties. This problem is particularly visible in the memoirs and autobiographies written on issues in the distant past, specifically when the leaders themselves had differences or quarrels among themselves. To mitigate this problem, maximum care has been taken in selecting the texts, and ensuring it was followed by triangulation of data from archives and interviews.

In short, discourse analysis is a preferable method for examining how political discourses interact with democracy and security in the Ethiopian context. The study also briefly discusses how discourse analysis is suitable for operationalizing the process of enquiry and a theoretical framework informed by securitization theory was adopted to guide the study. In doing so, it also highlighted the different variants of discourse analysis and provided practical examples that applied the discourse analysis method.

1.5. Organization of the Study

This study is organized in Seven chapters: Chapter One introduces the research problem, objectives, questions, scope and overall organization of the study. Chapter Two is about the theoretical framework used to carry out the study. It places the study within the field of security studies, especially securitization and discourse analysis. It elucidates the relationship between discourse analysis and securitization, and their operationalization (methodology).

Chapter Three offers an overview of the political and economic changes that have occurred in post-1991 Ethiopia. It focuses on the mismatch between Ethiopia's rapid economic growth and anomalous political deficits. Chapter Four explores how the political discourses of the EPRDF are reflected in the securitization of development and democracy, which derailed the political reform process. Chapter Five introduces the Pan-Ethiopianist political discourses as discourses counter to the ruling EPRDF in an attempt to desecuritize democracy. The chapter shows that the securitization and desecuritization processes contributed to the production and reproduction of the Ethiopianists 'counter-securitization of the EPRDF political discourses. Chapter Six delineates the political discourses of the ethno-nationalist opposition forces and their political orientation towards present and future political development in Ethiopia as a counter narrative to the EPRDF and ethnonationlists. Chapter Seven consists of a synthesis, a conclusion and potential future research on the configuration of post-2018 economic and political reforms. It pieces together the interplay between the political discourses of the EPRDF and opposition political forces. It probes the securitization and counter securitization of democracy and development and how these may influence Ethiopia's present and future political development.

Chapter Two: A Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter lays the foundations of the relationship between securitization, democracy and development in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia in an attempt to broaden the debate on the contentious issues linking the EPRDF doctrine (democratic centralism, developmentalism and ethnic federalism) and insecurity. As the Introduction briefly shows, for most Ethiopians, elite-centred analysis has ignored the security implications of the EPRDF doctrine. The chapter also reveals that securitization has a strong emphasis on discourse analysis, particularly what is referred to as the 'speech act'. It shows that as a speech act, securitization is an utterance that represents and recognizes phenomena as 'security', thus giving it special status and legitimizing extraordinary measures. Within this understanding, the utterance itself is the act (Buzan et al., 1998: 26), meaning that security exists within a discourse identified by the ruling elite as an extraordinary threat and, therefore, calls for emergency measures. In other words, the absence of democracy (authoritarianism) and underdevelopment can be considered referential points for securitization. Once the political elite declares these as sources of existential threat, they are securitized through speeches and become threats in elite discourses (Buzan et al., 1998: 1).

This chapter is divided into three sections: Section One briefly highlights the critical approaches to the field of security studies and introduces securitization theory. Section Two discusses securitization theory and its relationship to discourse analysis as a method and speech act. It further revisits the debate on whether as a discourse, securitization can exist outside the speech act, a view this thesis contests. Section Three elucidates the politics of securitizing democracy and development and its significance in explaining the pitfalls of securitizing development and democracy per the EPRDF doctrine. The chapter concludes that securitizing democracy and development reflects insecurity and resentment, thus problematizing post-1991 politics as it has been understood and practiced by the EPRDF and other political elites.

2.2. An Overview of Critical Approaches to Security Studies and Securitization Theory

The concept of security is so contentious some scholars have labeled it an 'essentially contested concept'(Baldwin 1997:7). Its discussion is often fraught with disagreements. The attendant issues, such as what constitutes the notion of security, who does security relate to, what is to be secured, and what are the causes of security, trigger a multitude of views and approaches to its study across time and in different places. The result is various temporal and spatial understandings of the concept of security, as seen in the history of its conceptual development. To facilitate the presentation of these varied approaches to the understanding of security one can broadly distinguish between the traditional approaches and critical approaches to the study of security studies.

This section sheds light on how the notion of security is conceptualized by the two major approaches to the field of security studies: the traditional approach and the critical security studies approach. It then focuses on securitization theory and presents the theory's conceptualization of security. It explores the problematic issues in securitization theory's conceptualization of security by linking it to the notion of democracy and democratization, with the aim of setting questions for the applicability of securitization theory in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia.

The traditional approaches to security studies are distinguished by their state-centric and militaristic understanding of the concept of security (Waever 1995, Buzan 1997, Krause and Williams 1997, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2014, Collins 2018). They clearly focus on the state as the object of the study of security and military issues at the core of their conceptualization of security. Accordingly, any security issue has a meaning, if it is understood in relation to a state as a referent object – and issue wise – as a military threat. This means that for other issues to be considered a security threat or issue, they have to be understood in terms of a military agenda. This was a predominant approach in the era preceding the culmination of the Cold War period.

The critical approaches to security studies, on the other hand, contest this confinement of the conceptualization of security. Notwithstanding the differences within the critical approaches to understanding the notion of security, all such approaches attempt to expand the meaning of security beyond the traditionalist approaches. Following the post-Cold War developments around the 1980s, the critical approaches called for what was later termed a 'deepening 'of the referent objects beyond the state and 'broadening 'security issues (the agenda) beyond the military (Buzan and Hansen 2009). It was argued that given the phenomena of Cold War developments, the notion of security would be better understood if it could capture individuals, groups (society), and environments as referent objects, as well. Likewise, the broadening of the agenda was about a call for the inclusion of economic, political, environmental and societal factors, in addition to the military agenda. Hence, unlike the militaristic and state-centric traditionalist approaches, critical approaches to the conceptualization of security have deepened and broadened the notion of security.

The leading approaches in this category include the Welsh School (Critical Security Studies), critical feminist and gender approaches, post-colonial perspectives, international political sociology (The Paris School) and the poststructuralism and securitization theory (The Copenhagen School). While these critical approaches problematize the traditional militaristic state-centric conceptualization of security, they all differ in the alternative perspectives they expound. For instance, except for securitization theory, all the other approaches focus on highlighting the issues that have been missed – either in the form of a referent object or security agenda – in the traditional conceptualization of security.

The Welsh School of critical security studies is opposed to the state-centric understanding of security. It brings human beings (individuals) to the epicentre of (in)security discourses with the goal of freeing or emancipating humans from any constraints in exercising their freedom (Booth 1991, 2005, 2007, Wyn Jones 1999, Floyd 2007a). The feminist and gender approaches, in all their varieties, call on an understanding of (in)security that can address the marginalized issues of women and gender in the conceptualization of security and practices (Sjoberg 2009, Tickner 1992, Enloe 2000, 1989). The post-colonial perspectives question the lack of a grasp of the concerns of 'Third World 'perspectives

(Ayoob 1995, 2002, Acharya 1997, 2002), while the international political sociology approach brings to the fore the problematic illiberal security practices that arose in the aftermath of the 'war on terror', as a crucial part of the conceptualization of (in)security – particularly in the context of the Western world (Bigo 2008, 2014). Similarly, the post-structuralist approaches, among others, emphasize the importance of the intersubjective processes involved in the construction of the meanings of (in)security as, for instance, the way identities are formed and reformed (Campbell 1992, Hansen 2006). The foci of securitization theory, however, are different: securitization theory focuses on the processes involved in the way in which certain issues become security issues or not. As such, the focus is not on the issue itself. Its conceptualization of security is not centred on the issues that are missing in the understanding of (in)security (as is the case with most of the other critical approaches discussed above), but rather in explicating how a security issue becomes such. Accordingly, its goal (as discussed below) is an analytical one (Floyd 2007b). It attempts to understand security by analyzing its processes, which are referred to as securitization/desecuritization in the terminology of this school of thought. It is this goal of securitization theory that makes it compatible with this study's goal and serves as a framework of analysis in the study.

Accordingly, this chapter further discusses securitization theory's approach to security studies with the aim of tracing its intellectual origins, the conceptualization of (in)security, and the processes of securitization and desecuritization. Furthermore, it examines the theory's logic of (in)security by linking it with the notion of democracy and democratization generally, and specifically to the context of post-1991 Ethiopia. The aim here is to set out the issues/questions this study attempts to grapple with and thus contribute to the discussion on the conceptualization of security/desecurity and its interactions with the concept of development and democracy in the context of countries such as Ethiopia.

2.3. Securitization Theory, the Speech Act and Discourse Analysis

Securitization theory was developed in the late 1980s by writers associated with the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research (later called the Conflict and Peace Research Institute or COPRI) in Copenhagen, the Danish capital. The widely published authors, Barry

Buzan and Ole Waever (Huysmans 1998a, McSweeney 1996, Taureck 2006) were responsible for developing and popularizing this theory. Buzan et al. published a seminal paper in 1998 entitled 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis'. Although these authors and Waever (1993, 1995) are seen as being at the core of this school of thought, their contributions have been enriched and consolidated by different ideas from, and debates by, various scholars and researchers.

Securitization theory, as a novel way of thinking about security, emerged against the backdrop of debate between the 'traditionalist' and 'wideners' camp (i.e., all emergent critical approaches). The traditionalists were concerned about the wideners 'continuous expansion of the notion of security because they felt it might result in a lack of intellectual coherence in the study of security. Securitization theory, by acknowledging this concern of the traditionalists, offers the alternative of considering the contributions of the wideners when evaluating the concept of security. Instead of asserting the traditionalists' solution to the problem of a lack of intellectual coherence, its proponents assert:

> "we seek to find coherence not by confining security to the military sector but by exploring the logic of security… The need is to construct a conceptualization of security that means something more specific than just any threat or problem. Threats and vulnerabilities can arise in many different areas, military and non-military" (Buzan et al. 1998:4-5).

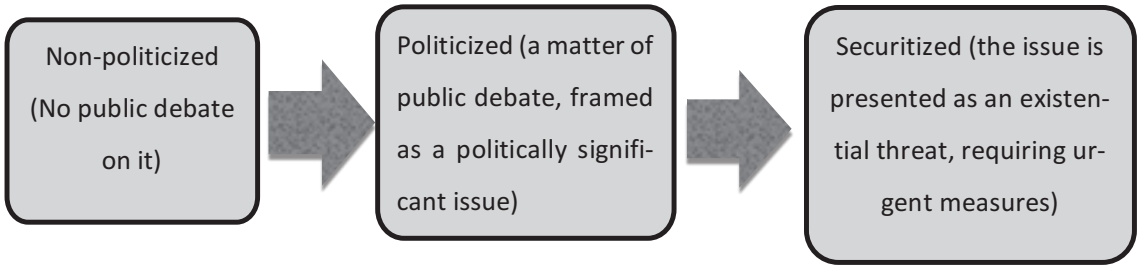
As the above quote shows, securitization theory takes a different path in its conceptualization of security. Its approach differs from the traditionalists as it seeks to widen the security agenda beyond military issues. It also differs from the wideners, as it does not focus on bringing in those issues that need to be considered in the conceptualization of security. Instead, securitization theory is interested in spelling out the criteria to be fulfilled for a certain issue to become a security issue. To be more specific, it is a 'formula' for security, or an analytical tool that aims to uncover a particular logic of security, as is spelled out below:

> "…to count as a security issue, they have to meet strictly defined criteria …they have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind" (Buzan et al. 1998:5).

Securitization theory's understanding of security is based on the traditional conceptualization of security, and hence, it essentially understands security as a survival issue. If an issue is staged as posing an existential threat to a particular referent object – which could be a sovereignty issue or a certain a group – then that issue becomes a security issue that justifies the use of emergency measures.

Furthermore, according to securitization theory, security is 'the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics '(Buzan et al. 1998: 23). In line with this conceptualization of security, securitization theory posits that issues move from the 'ordinary 'or 'normal ' state, first to a political issue that is debated within the public realm as a matter of public policy, then to a securitized issue, thereby moving it above politics. In other words, the issues exist in a realm of normal politics but can be debated in the realm of exceptional politics, wherein they are perceived as an existential threat requiring and justifying an emergency response or actions that suspend normal politics. Examples include the declaration of a state of emergency by the ruling elites.

Figure 2.1 The spectrum along which issues become a public threat per securitization



Source: Adapted from Buzan et al. (1998).

In Figure 2.1, an issue moves from a non-politicized to a security issue; one interesting element with far-reaching consequences in the conceptualization of security is the staging or presentation of an issue by a securitizing actor. According to securitization theory, the meaning of security lies in this staging or presentation – implying an intersubjective process involved in the construction of 'threats 'or, simply understood, of the meaning of security. Proponents argue that the meaning of security is constituted in its use.

> "'Security' is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the security issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat." (Buzan et al. 1998:24)

As discourse consists of utterances of a verbal, written, audio or visual nature, it becomes obvious the utterance itself is an act-securitizing act (Waever 1995). Therefore, in conceptualizing security, securitization theory borrows speech act theory from linguistic studies, specifically from the work of Austin, to whom speech act theory is attributed. According to speech act theory, by saying the words (utterance) itself, an act is done, such as is the case of naming a ship or declaring a promise during a marriage ceremony, acts which signify the performative role of language (Austin 1962). At the core of speech act theory and significant for securitization theory is the fact that it is with performative utterances that we do something by saying something, and thus the utterance itself is an act. As a consequence of this understanding of security as a discursive undertaking, methodologically, its approach to security studies is stated as follows:

> "The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: when does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed? If by means of an argument

> about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break away free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization" (Buzan et al. 1998: 25).

A discursive speech act alone, however, is not sufficient for successful securitization to happen. Securitization theory provides that some preconditions, which Weaver calls 'felicity conditions '(2000: 252), have to be fulfilled for successful securitization. The first condition is that the logic of security as propounded by the theory needs to be presented; there must be an existential threat to a specific referent object that needs emergency measures. The second condition is that there has to be a securitizing agent with authority; and that authority does not need to be an official one. Rather, it has to do with the social and political capital (acceptance) one has. The last condition that may facilitate successful securitization is the nature of the threat itself; if, for instance, there are historical hostile sentiments attached to the invoked threat, then that issue can easily be securitized.

In terms of widening the security agenda, securitization theory identifies five sectors of possible social interaction for applying its security logic to determine how issues can become security issues. The five sectors include the military sector, environmental sector, economic sector, societal sector and political sector. In the case of the military, when an issue is perceived as an existential threat to a state, its population, territory or military capacity (in the form of military mobilization), then it can become a security issue. Similarly, if an issue is perceived as posing a threat to the biosphere, species or the natural environment, it can result in the securitization of an environmental issue. The same works for the economic sector; issues perceived as an existential threat to markets, finances or resources can be securitized. The dynamics of securitization of societal and political issues appear when, in the case of a societal issue, a collective identity is existentially threatened. An example of this would be a threat to its language or culture. Similarly, in the case of a political issue, if the relationship of an authority, governing state or recog-

nition is at stake, it can result in securitization of the relevant issue. This is the case particularly if there is an existential threat to sovereignty, organizational stability or the ideology of a social order.

Whilst securitization theory expands the security agenda to these five sectors, it is important to note that the theory's approach to the study of security is orientated towards methodological collectivism; it does not study security at the individual level, unlike the Welsh School, whose approach is at the individual level. Securitization theory's analysis in non-military sectors is thus at the collective level.

Table 2.1 Sectors and forces of securitization in the security logic ('equation') of securitization theory

Sectors	**Forces of securitization in the security logic of securitization theory**
Military	Existential threat to a state/population/territory/ military capacity
Environmental	Existential threat to biosphere/species/natural environment
Societal	Existential threat to a collective identity/culture or language
Political	Existential threat to the organizational stability of states, systems of government, ideology of an order
Economic	Existential threat to access to resources, finance and markets

Source: Adapted from Buzan et al. (1998).

Finally, two points concerning securitization theory are worth mentioning. The first relates to the enunciator, the securitizing actor. According to the security understanding of securitization theory, "someone – some group, movement, party, or elite – who acts with reference to the nation and claims to speak or act on behalf of the nation" (Buzan et al. 1998: 41) is regarded as a securitizing actor. Thus, apart from an official authorized security actor representing a state, other actors (non-state) can also be securitizing actors. This can be better illustrated when elites claim to speak on behalf of a certain social group, such as a specific ethnic group. Political elites, either in the ruling camp or opposition camp, are often interested in becoming securitizing actors. The second crucial point in the conceptualization of security by securitization theory is the issue of desecuritization, which is the process of shifting or moving back a security issue from the status of a securitized to a non-security issue. It normalizes a security issue by bringing it back to the realm of normal politics. Apart from its goal of providing an analytical framework through which security can be understood, securitization theory also engages in normative judgment, and questions the 'securityness 'of the securitization process itself. It essentially questions whether too much security is good or can lead to the achievement of securityness – the quality (feeling) of being secured. In this regard, it clearly takes a stand, privileging desecurity over security. The argument goes that, because securitization often results in a particular mode of thinking (of urgency and exception), this situation of emergency politics restricts the space for normal politics (debates, bargaining etc.). In a militarized mode of thinking one cannot expect normal politics to happen and hence, securitization theory advocates for 'desecuritization, the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere '(Buzan et al. 1998: 4).

While securitization theory offers an innovative approach to the conceptualization of security, which differs from the other critical approaches discussed above, there are also

problematic issues that need to be discussed in relation to its understanding of security/desecurity in general and also as it relates to this study. The next part of this chapter will elaborate on these problematic issues.

Although securitization theory's explanatory power has been widely praised as innovative (Knudsen 2001, McDonald 2008), there have been concerns raised about its conceptualization of (in)security. The problematization of the school's understanding of security ranges from fierce criticism to sympathetic moves aimed at consolidating its explanatory power as a theory. Criticism of its conceptualization of security in the former category, among others, relates to whether its conception of speech act captures all political discourses (Williams 2003), its focus on dominant actors (McDonald 2008, Hansen 2000), whether it is constructivist enough (McDonald 2008) and the 'exceptional politics 'that are associated with the school's understanding of security/desecurity (Aradua 2004, 2006, Williams 2003, Huymans 1998b). Sympathetic criticism aimed at consolidating securitization theory's understanding of security includes the works of Balzacq (2005, 2011), Balzacq et al. (2016) and Stritzel (2000, 2011). Balzacq's work focuses on contributing to the conditions under which a speech act can be successful, while Stritzel's work is concerned with consolidating the internal coherence of the theory. In line with this latter group of works, and also dictated by the aim of this study, the following part of this chapter attempts to highlight those issues pertaining to the problematic conceptualization of security by securitization theory that has a bearing on the issue of democracy/democratization. As such, it is a selective one in its approach to discussing issues and dilemmas associated with securitization theory's notion of security/desecurity. Thus, the aim here is not to present all issues/criticisms targeting securitization theory.

The rationale for wanting to be selective can further be justified in the approach this study employs. This approach applies the security conceptualization of the theory in the context of post-1991 Ethiopia to thoroughly examine how (in)security/desecuritization interacts with the country's democratization processes. It aims to take securitization theory out of the Western context, specifically the European context which gave birth to it, and move

it to the context of the developing world to make sense of its political processes and realities in general. By so doing, it also aims to contribute to discussions on consolidating the theory from the empirical findings this study intends to generate.

But before raising the issue of operationalization of the theory by applying it to an empirical case, one needs to ask if securitization theory can be applied as a framework of analysis to the Ethiopian case. In other words, an explication of whether securitization theory can travel to Ethiopia as it is or so, need to be provided. This question of contextualizing the theory needs to be tackled first, in light of debates in the literature on the utilization of the theoretical framework on issues outside the Western, or more specifically, the European domain.

The relevance of this debate often rightly arises from the nature and evolution of securitization theory itself. The theory was developed within the context of European security dilemmas, and as such the conceptions and understandings that constitute the theory are obviously highly influenced by the socio-political context that gave birth to it (Vouri 2008, Wilkinson 2007). A good illustration of this Europeanness of the theory is its conceptual commitment or 'bias 'towards liberal democracy anchored in the rule of law, among others. This can be easily noticed from its conceptualization of normal versus exceptional politics, exceptional measures justified by law, and political and legal legitimacy of the process of securitization, for instance. Despite this inbuilt 'bias 'of the theory towards Western/Europeanness of the socio-political conceptualization, the utility of the theory's application to the non-Western context is now becoming clear for a number of reasons[6] (Greenwood and Waever 2013, Bigin 2011, Herington 2010, Wilkinson 2007).

6 See for instance, Wilkinson C. (2007) 'The Copenhagen School on tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is securitization theory useable outside Europe?' *Security Dialogue* 38(1): 5-26. Bilgin, P. (2011). 'The politics of studying securitization? The Copenhagen School in Turkey'. *Security Dialogue*, 42 (4-5), 399-412. Herington, J. (2010). 'Securitization of infectious diseases in Vietnam: The cases of HIV and avian influenza'. *Health Policy and Planning* 25(6): 467-475. Emmers, R., Caballero-Anthony, M. and Acharya, A. (eds) (2006*) Studying Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Trends and Issues*. London: Marshall Cavendish Academic. Emmers, R., Greener, B. K. and Thomas, N. (2008). Securitising human trafficking in the Asia-Pacific: Regional organisations and response strategies. In: Curley, M. G. and Wong, S-l (eds) *Security and Migration in Asia: The Dynamics of Securitisation.* London: Taylor and Francis, 59-81. Greenwood, M. T. and Wæver, O. (2013). Copenhagen–Cairo on a roundtrip: A security theory meets the revolution. *Security Dialogue*, *44*(5-6), 485-506.

The foremost reason is the fact that the theory itself is regarded as a research program that can be further developed and thus, the utility of its framework's application in various settings, including the non-Western context, falls in that space for intellectually developing and further enriching the theory. One of the leading theorists credited with co-developing the theory, Waever, states that "there is by now a surprising amount of empirical studies done with the full or partial use of securitization theory. These do not follow a standardized format and it is possible to focus on different phases of the process and different levels of aggregation" (2003:21). Also related is the fact that the democratic ideas embedded in the conceptualization of the theory arguably do exist in non-Western countries, albeit in restricted forms. In this regard, Vuori (2008) argues that the legitimacy issues emphasized in the securitization process of the theory also exist and are taken seriously in non-democratic countries. He uses the case of China, adapting the theory to the context of the country, specifically by focusing on the theory's concept of 'audience 'and 'special politics'. Thus, he argues that the theory can aptly be applied in non-democratic contexts too. Moreover, the cases above cite empirical studies[7] from non-Western contexts that concur with this view, although they all focus on different aspects of the process and the different levels involved in the (in)security conceptualization of the theory as they apply to the different contexts under consideration. It is this path that this study plans to follow, to bring securitization theory to Ethiopia and use its explanatory power in examining the post-1991 political process.

Those issues related to securitization theory's understandings of security and the particular type of politics associated with it will form the scope of the study and subsequent discussions in this thesis.

2.4. Politics of Securitizing Democracy and Development

An issue often raised against securitization theory's understanding of security with regard to the securitization process is the exceptional politics associated with it. According to

7 See the above cases mentioned under footnote 1 above.

the theory, the logic of security is the presentation of political problems (issues) as existential problems requiring urgent measures. As discussed above, it is an act of moving issues from the sphere of normal politics to emergency politics, thereby constraining the conduct of normal politics. Consequently, this results in the curtailment of the political space. This understanding of politics, informed by the Schmittian conception of exceptional politics, is often questioned (Hansen 2012)[8]. The state of affairs of exceptional politics is characterized by urgency, constructions/perception of threats and exceptional measures. It is a conception in which politico-legal tensions are created, the consequence of which is a suspension of the normal legal norms that in turn result in the suspension/limiting of normal political life. It is predicated on the idea that an emergency situation of an existential nature that threatens the survival of a certain referent object (a political order, sovereignty, for example) requires extraordinary measures, and hence necessitates a loosening of the rules of law to allow for the use of force. Examples include a declaration of emergency, states of siege etc. The logic of exceptional politics is indeed underpinned by the discretionary power of the executive (particularly the security apparatus of the state), a militaristic mode of thinking, prioritizing (in)security over politics, the use of force and the abrogation of civil and political rights. This notion of exceptional politics/politics of the extraordinary has been the subject of heightened debate both by scholars and political practitioners about the kind of political/governance envisioned. A concern here is that historically and, arguably after the events of 9/11, there seems to be

[8] Carl Schmitt wrote a series of publications during the time of Germany's Weimar Republic (and afterwards) in which he questioned the efficacy of parliamentary/liberal democracy in response to crisis situations, such as in the case of a siege state, and advocated for emergency power which meant the suspension of a legal/democratic order to preserve political order. The invocation of this idea seems to have re-emerged in the wake of the 9/11 Twin Tower attacks in Manhattan. For more on Schmitt's understanding of a state of exception, see Schmitt C. (1985a). *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. G. Schwab. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Schmitt C. (1985b). *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. E. Kennedy. Cambridge: MIT Press. Schmitt C. (2007). *The Concept of Political,* trans. G. Schwab. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Schwab G. (1989). *The Challenges of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936,* 2nd ed. New York: Greenwood. Particularly useful for a comprehensive and systematic introduction to Schmitt's thinking on the subject is the Oxford Handbook on Carl Schmitt (see Meierhenrich J., and Simons O. (Eds.) (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. In addition Georgio Agamben's writing on a state of exception seems useful (see Agamben G. (2005). *State of Exception*, trans. K. Attell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

a tendency to adopt this type of exceptional politics as a policy option in established Western democracies. This has been problematized by various scholars for the inherent illiberal and undemocratic practices that accompany the adoption of exceptional politics[9]. It is logical then, for one to ask whether this type of politics is desirable at all. In this regard, Aradua (2004:393) rightly asks: 'Do we want politics of exceptional measures'? The concern is even more plausible if one brings in the context of countries new to the practice of political democracy, such as Ethiopia. In particular, the securitization of issues in the political and societal sectors, raises the level of concern in democratizing polities or political processes that attempt to portray themselves as such. Often the political elites are highly divided on what constitutes a threat to a political system/structure, or on what ought to be an organizing ideology. Post-1991 Ethiopia can arguably be seen as a more complicated and delicate situation if seen in that context. At the beginning of the 1990s the country had just exited a protracted civil war and had vowed to depart from its undemocratic past and launch a political process aimed at 1) rebuilding a post-war political and legal order, and 2) simultaneously build a democracy. As obvious as it is, this is a serious task, the success of which can only be guaranteed to the extent that it enjoys the participation of all political stakeholders, is inclusive and commands legitimacy in the diversified political context of the country. The following chapters investigate whether these ambitious goals can be attained in a state of exceptional politics or otherwise.

[9] See, for instance, Huysmans J. (2004). 'Minding exceptions: the politics of insecurity and liberal democracy'. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 3(3), 321-341. Huysmans, J. (2008). 'The Jargon of Exception – On Schmitt, Agamben and the Absence of Political Society'. *International Political Sociology*, 2 (2), 165-183. Williams, M. C. (2003). 'Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics'. *International Studies Quarterly,* 47(4), 511-531, Bigo, D. (2006). 'Security, exception, ban and surveillance'. In *Theorizing Surveillance* (pp. 60-82). Willan. Bigo, D. (2002). 'Liaison officers in Europe: New officers in the European security field'. *Issues in Transnational Policing* (pp. 81-113). Routledge. Levi, M., and Wall, D. S. (2004). 'Technologies, security, and privacy in the post-9/11 European information society'. *Journal of Law and Society*, 31(2), 194-220. Neal, A. W. (2009). *Exceptionalism and the Politics of Counter-terrorism: Liberty, Security and the War on Terror*. New York: Routledge. Aradau, C. (2007). 'Law transformed: Guantánamo and the 'other' exception'. *Third World Quarterly*, 28(3), 489-501. Neocleous, M. (2006). 'The problem with normality: Taking exception to "permanent emergency". *Alternatives,* 31(2), 191-213.

Also of interest to this study, is the examination of how the politics of exception interacts with the notion and practice of democratization, understood here as a transition to democracy and its consolidation, in a situation where the characteristics of normal politics are absent. The life of normal politics is inherently rooted in debate, compromise and bargaining on public policy issues. It is these essential ingredients that characterize the building of a democratic system. In his study on the process of democratization in about three dozen countries, ranging from Africa and Europe to Latin America, Huntington observed that democracy is hardly possible without what he calls 'the method of democracy'. He refers specifically to the negotiations and compromises that make democratization possible.“ *How* were democracies made? They were made by methods of democracy; there was no other way. They were made through negotiations, compromises, and agreements.” (Huntington 1991:164)

Similarly, the process of desecuritization, of shifting back issues from the sphere of emergency politics to the sphere of normal politics, equally activates the same concern. The school sees security as a failure of normal politics, and consequently advocates for desecuritization – a belief grounded in the logic of ‘less security, more politics ’(Waever 1995:7). At this point, the Theory ceases to be only an analytical tool as it clearly engages in normative analysis too. However, apart from the normative privileging of desecuritization over securitization, the theory does not offer much in unpacking the details of desecuritization processes, and is thus aptly regarded as ‘undertheorized ’(Aradua 2004:22) and of having an ‘underdeveloped status ’(Hansen 2012: 527). While the normative privileging of desecuritization can be taken positively, the process of desecuritization should not be approached only in terms of a normative nexus political analysis, but should also be weighed against the rule of law as a process. In other words, one has to think about whether the process of desecuritization is just the prerogative of political elites, especially the ruling ones, who, motivated by political gain, normatively engage with the process of depoliticizing security issues, or whether this process should also be considered in the light of legal and ethical issues too. Therefore, the process of securitization/desecuritization can be very consequential to the type of politics that comes with it and to the democratization process.

Using the analytical framework of securitization theory, the following chapters scrutinize how democracy and development are securitized. The chapters also discuss the political elites 'narrative, which attempts to de-securitize Ethiopia's official democracy and development discourses post-1991. Specifically, the chapters examine the "speech acts" and discourses of the political elites, the interplay of the discourses and how that in turn interacts with the doctrines guiding their vision of democracy.

Chapter Three: Post-1991 Economics and Politics: An Overview of an Anomaly

3.1. Introduction[10]

The ruling Ethiopian Peoples 'Revolutionary Democratic Front (The EPRDF) came to power after defeating the Marxist-Leninist military junta in 1991, hence marking a new beginning in the contemporary political development of Ethiopia. The EPRDF has remained in power ever since and introduced several economic and political reforms, with varying levels of success and failure. Despite considerable challenges in the economic sector over the past two decades, Ethiopia has been hailed for registering spectacular economic growth, earning itself the designation of one of the fastest-growing economies worldwide (World Economy Forum 2018, World Bank 2015). Ethiopia's economic achievements have improved the socio-economic conditions, as evidenced in its attainment of most of the Millennium Development Goal targets (National Planning Commission and the United Nations office – Addis Ababa (NPC and UN) 2015: i-v).

However, the EPRDF's promised political freedoms and democracy have not matched up to the success of the economic reforms. After 27 years of EPRDF rule, Ethiopia is still in a precarious situation, with the period from 2016 to the present marked by political unrest of unprecedented magnitude. The EPRDF's monopoly on power and legitimacy has been contested, and the EPRDF's doctrines questioned, calling for fundamental rethinking of Ethiopia's prevailing economic and political orientation.

This chapter aims to provide a brief depiction of Ethiopia's economic and political landscape and the challenges faced by the EPRDF during its reign. Accordingly, the chapter serves as a background for the economic and political contexts within which the government and opposition wrestle for power, with the EPRDF government striving to maintain

[10] This chapter is largely based on Tessema (2018b).

a monopoly of power and control the state and its resources and personnel. At the same time, the opposition forces have been vying to contest EPRDF rule.

3.2. An Overview of Post-1991 Economy

Despite its proud history, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. In 1992, immediately after assuming power, the new Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) adopted a free market economic model as the guiding principle for developing the economy of the country. This was a clear departure from the socialist economic model pursued under the previous regime for over a decade. Several reform measures were introduced to improve conditions in the war-ravaged economy. Among these, the Agricultural Led Development of Industrialization (ALDI) strategy was adopted to try to industrialize the country's predominantly agrarian economy. The rationale was that by improving the productivity of the agricultural sector, the transformation to an industrialized economy could be achieved. Agriculture plays a huge role in Ethiopia's economy. In 2013, it absorbed over 85 per cent of the country's manpower and was the largest contributor of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – between 50 and 90 percent of the country's export earnings (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) 2013, OECD/AfDB, 2002). By increasing the agricultural sector's productivity, the country would move away from its subsistence culture, which would facilitate a structural change of the economy overall. The reasoning was that inducing a surplus in the agricultural sector would stimulate consumerism, thereby creating a foundational demand for industrial growth. Strategies aimed at alleviating the abject poverty of the country were also implemented. These strategies were launched as a series of specific time-bound plans (National Development Plans). Examples included the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP) and the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). Similarly, the Ethiopian Government adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) declared by the United Nations (UN 2000), which were meant to be implemented over a period of 15 years, from 2000-2015. These strategies became an integral part of the government's plan to bring about sustainable development. The government also implemented measures such as the privatization of

state properties, and increasingly encouraged domestic and foreign investments. The government has also recently adopted a series of new plans designed to build on the progress made under the SDPRP and PASDEP. These plans aim not only to further transform the structure of the economy, but also to achieve low middle-income country status by 2025. The government's defined vision, as set out in the Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP I and GTP II), is as follows:

> "building an economy which has a modern and productive agricultural sector with enhanced technology and an industrial sector that plays a leading role in the economy, sustaining economic development and securing social justices and increasing per capita income of the citizens so as to reach the level of those in middle-income countries" (MOFED 2010: 21).

In spite of the criticism leveled at the efficacy and wisdom of the policies and strategies adopted, the Ethiopian economy has grown spectacularly since 1991. In recognition of this dramatic change, on March 13, 2014, *Time Magazine* devoted its topical coverage to examining the success of four pre-eminent global emerging markets, which included Ethiopia. In his detailed analysis, the author, Michael Schulman, stressed that there were success stories emerging from the developing world, which were different from those emanating from the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries. This difference was captured in Schulman's title: "Forget the BRICs; Meet the PINEs" (Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria and Ethiopia). In explaining the success and potential of the PINEs, the author suggested that Ethiopia deserved inclusion for its achievements in overcoming the status of a country 'once synonymous with poverty '(Ibid. 2014). There is strong evidence to support this viewpoint. Ethiopia, once one of the poorest countries in the world, has now managed to change its economic outlook due to the reform measures initiated post-1991. The country's economy grew steadily from a baseline average growth of 0.5 percent between 1981 and 1991, to an average growth of 5.1 percent per annum (MOFED 2013) from 1992 to 2004. The country achieved impressive levels of sustained double-digit growth of around 10.9 percent between 2005 and 2015 (World Bank 2015, AfDB, OECD and UNDP 2016, MOFED 2013). These growth rates are some of the fastest in the world

for a non-oil-producing country (UNDP 2015). Also worth noting is the fact that economic growth was maintained, despite the occurrence of three major events that could have halted growth and had devastating consequences for the country's development. The first was the severe drought in 1997, which led to the economy contracting temporarily by 1.4 percent (OECD and AfDB 2002). The second event was the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea from 1998-2000, which also slowed the pace of growth. The most serious incident was the drought of 2015, the worst the country had experienced in 30 years. The drought was caused by an *El Nino* weather system and resulted in Ethiopia's economic growth dropping to single digits (8 per cent) in 2016 (AfDB, OECD and UNDP 2017).

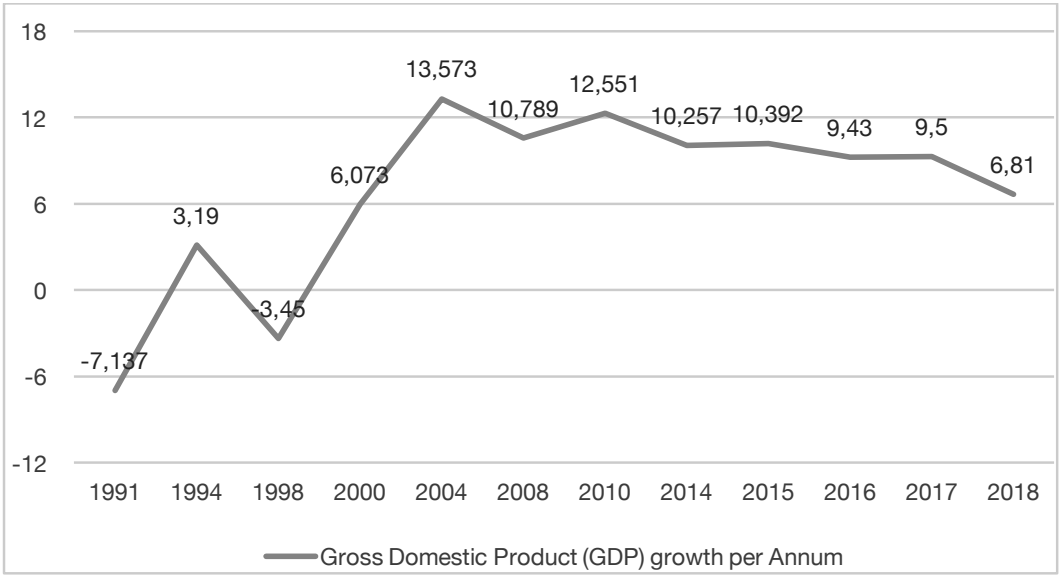
Overall, Ethiopia's economic growth has improved its socio-economic conditions, as evidenced by the country's remarkable progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals and other targets. A report jointly published by the United Nations office in Ethiopia and the National Planning Commission of Ethiopia (NPC) that investigated the progress made towards achieving the MDGs stated, "Ethiopia must be commended for making significant progress in the achievement of the MDGs" (NPC and UN 2015: i). The report outlined how Ethiopia had achieved six of the eight Millennium Development Goals and recorded significant progress in trying to meet the targets for the other two goals (MDGs, goal 3 – ensuring gender equality and empowering women; and MDGs goal 5 – improving maternal health).

The prevalence of extreme poverty and hunger in the country has dropped from 48 percent in 1990 to 23.4 percent in 2015 (NPC and UN 2015: xiii). Universal primary education targets have been achieved, despite some disparity in the male/female ratio. Ethiopia has been hailed for achieving many of its other goals, such as reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. All these goals are either ahead of schedule or on schedule (Ibid. 2015: i).

Ethiopia has also made significant improvements to its internal infrastructure and in its ability to attract foreign investment. In the area of infrastructure, the huge expansion of the nation's road network and the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

are two leading examples of the progress that has been made. The country's road network has grown from 18,000 km in 1991 to over 120, 000 km at the time of writing – an increase of 70 percent over a period of 25 years (Workineh Gebeyehu 2016)[11]. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the construction of which began in 2011, will be the largest hydroelectric dam in Africa, once completed, with a power generation capacity of 6,450MW.

Figure 3.1 Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 1991-2018



Source: Adapted from The World Bank Annual GDP Growth for Ethiopia (from 1982-2018), available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=ET (September 7, 2019)

[11] See Interview of Dr Workineh Gebeyehu, former Minister of Transport on Road Coverage network. Available at Fana Broadcast website http://www.fanabc.com/english/index.php/component/k2/item/5913 (December 29, 2017).

A change in the country's economic outlook also triggered a tremendous increase in the inflow of foreign direct investment, while domestic investment has also grown. Although Ethiopia is still regarded as one of the most difficult countries in which to do business, this obstacle has been counteracted by the country's perceived investment potential. It is now recognized as one of the top ten investment destinations in Africa (African Investment Report 2015). Chinese, Turkish, Indian, British and Dutch investors are leading foreign investment in the country. However, despite the remarkable achievements made since 1991, some serious economic issues remain.

3.2.1. Rapid Economic Growth and Governance Deficit in Party-Affiliated Enterprises

Success in the economic sphere has not come without challenges. These include entrenched structural problems and problems associated with the content of the post-1991 reform measures or their implementation. In broad terms, the challenges facing Ethiopia's economy can be categorized into three different areas.

The structural problems associated with the Ethiopian economy and the low level at which the country still finds itself economically are much in evidence. Despite the steady economic growth in the 1990s, the subsequent rapid and sustained double-digit growth from 2004/5 to 2015, and a concurrent improvement in socio-economic conditions, the country still remains one of the world's poorest. About 25 million people, about a quarter of the population, still live in absolute poverty (less than USD1.25 a day) (NPC and UN 2015). Before and after the economic boom of 2005, between five and 18 million Ethiopians have had to depend on food aid every year. Levels of food insecurity massively increased in 2015 when the country's worst drought occurred. Drought continues to produce some of the most devastating famines in the history of Ethiopia (Abbink 2017, Kassa 2004, Block and Webb 2001). The agrarian sector still dominates the economy, despite efforts to promote a rapid process of industrialization. As the government has admitted, the performance of the sector has not met expectations (MOFED 2013: 6). It remains dominated by small scale, traditional farms that are highly vulnerable to climate change. As a result, the country's agricultural sector, rather disappointingly, is still not even able to produce enough to ensure the country's food security, let alone produce enough to lead

an envisioned structural change of the economy by supporting growth through a surplus of food supply. Added to these structural problems are demographic issues, which Abbink rightly described as the 'economic Woes '(Abbink 2017:47) of the country's progress. The country has a persistent annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent, which has not been matched even by its rapid economic gains. The country's population grew from around 48 million in 1991 to nearly 100 million in 2017, making it the second most populated country on the continent after Nigeria (Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia 2017, World Bank 2017). Population pressure is now widely believed to be the main factor causing escalating inter-communal conflict over grazing land or other similar resource-related disputes across the country.

Ethiopia has a very young population: around 60 percent of the population is below 30 years of age. In terms of job creation, this is far beyond the absorptive capacity of the economy (CSA 2007). Youth unemployment is already posing a big threat to the country's stability as evidenced by the recent unrest in Oromia regional state, which compelled the regional and federal governments to announce initiatives worth billions of Birr to create jobs for the youth in a scheme dubbed the 'Youth Revolving Fund'[12].

Financial risks can also arise as a result of some of the measures taken by the government. For instance, some observers have expressed concern over the country's ever-growing levels of external debt (Befekadu 2011, Desta 2005, Ramakrishna 2003). External debt increased fivefold between 2008/09 and 2014/15, from USD2.8 billion to USD19 billion, an increase from 12.1% of GDP to 26.2% (AfDB, OECD and UNDP 2016). Other issues, such as a foreign exchange shortage and the poor performance of export earnings, all fall within the first layer of economic challenges.

Moving beyond observations on structural economic issues, the subsistence farming sector is unable to produce sufficient food to ensure food security. This has prompted the

[12] The Ethiopian Federal Government announced a 10 billion Ethiopian Birr funding scheme called the Youth Revolving Fund in 2016 to create more jobs for young people in response to the prevalent youth unemployment problem. Unemployment is believed to be among the main causes of the protests that erupted in the Oromia and Amhara regions in 2015. The scheme was also endorsed by the Federal parliament.

Ethiopian Government to encourage the development of large commercial farming with the support of both domestic and foreign investors. The policy includes developing large-scale mechanized farms with minimum-cost lease contracts, financial loans, and other incentives (MOFED 2010:54-55). Domestic and foreign investors seized the opportunity to tap the benefits of the generous packages offered by government.

As an illustration of the influx of foreign investors, the Karuturi[13] Global limited company, an Indian horticulture company, as well as hundreds of domestic investors, were among those that invested in the Gambella region, a lowland area with fertile soil in the western part of the country. Karuturi Global was given a substantial piece of land totaling around 300,000 hectares (some 120 kilometers wide) to grow wheat and other cereals on a lease contract of two million Birr per year for a period of 50 years (a very cheap deal of less than a dollar per hectare per year). In return, the company promised to create up to 60,000 jobs. While this scheme was meant to bolster economic growth, some serious setbacks emerged. Firstly, concern was raised regarding the 'Rural Resettlement Program or 'villagization – 'a program marketed as a means to relocate the scattered population to a centre at which they could more easily access social services. The government implemented the programme in areas where land was to be made available to investors. Human rights groups argued that the affected local populations were in fact being evicted against their best interests, a practice often labeled as 'land grabbing 'or a 'global rush for land ' (Makki, F., and Geisler, C. 2011; Tura 2018; Lavers 2012)[14]. Secondly, the hopes placed in these big commercial farming ventures remained unfulfilled, as their output did not live up to expectations. Karuturi Global's lease contract was terminated in 2015 after it

[13] For more information on Karuturi and the issues it had with the Ethiopian authorities see onhttp://hornaffairs.com/2015/01/20/karuturi-under-the-spotlight/ http://hornaffairs.com/2015/12/31/karuturi-loses-farmland-ethiopia-cancels-contract/ and, https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/faqs-indian-agriculture-investments-ethiopia.

[14] See also The Guardian's and the Oakland Institute's report on the 'land grabbing' issue in Ethiopia, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/14/ethiopia-villagisation-violence-land-grab, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/21/ethiopia-centre-global-farmland-rush, and https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/miracle-mirage-manufacturing-hunger-poverty-ethiopia. (30 December 2016).

failed to meet the government's expectations regarding wheat production. Furthermore, a government investigative report into the operations of domestic investors across the Gambella regional state revealed that of the 229,755 hectares of land leased to commercial farm developers, only half was being cultivated, despite the government giving out around 3.3 billion Birr in loans and other incentive schemes[15]. Furthermore, the report revealed the widespread mismanagement of government funds and corrupt practices. The report's findings were so incriminating they led to the removal of the President of the Development Bank of Ethiopia, Mr Esayas Bahre. The failures of the Karuturi Global company and those of domestic investors have clearly problematized the scheme's implementation.

More problematic is the involvement of the government and party-affiliated businesses in the economy. The change from a command economy to a market-led economy was expected to engender a growing role for the private sector after 1991, as the basic tenets of a market economy model dictate. Indeed, the post-1991 period has seen the private sector expanding, at least compared to its role under the previous socialist Derg regime. A push for greater privatization has been a key component of the reform packages introduced and implemented over the past two decades. However, the country's private sector is underdeveloped and weak. This is not the result of a lack of entrepreneurial effort from within the private sector, but partly because the state seems to be increasingly reinserting itself into the economy in ways that could prove to be unsustainable and burdensome in the long run. In this regard, the recently established Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC[16]), which has a mandate to play a leading role in the industrialization of Ethiopia, provides a good illustration of the government's determination to continue playing a major role in the economy – a move that will have consequences for the development of the private sector. Since its foundation in 2010, the company , has been heavily involved

[15] See Addis Fortune's issue of December 20, 2016 for more on the key findings of the report, available at https://addisfortune.net/articles/results-from-gambella-commercial-farms-disappointing/. (30 December 2016).

[16] See more about METEC on its website, accessed on 25/12/2017, at http://www.metec.gov.et/web/guest/metec-background A report produced by the Oakland Institute in 2016 on METEC's involvement in mega sugar plantations can also be found at https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/miracle-mirage-manufacturing-hunger-poverty-ethiopia

in the country's Mega projects such as the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD), new sugar plantations and other vast public manufacturing investments. It controls some 14 manufacturing enterprises – an unparalleled achievement, given that it has existed for just eight years (METEC 2017). Nevertheless, it is concerning that the military owns this huge business conglomerate. The decision to allow 'men in uniform 'to hold such levels of economic power is in stark contrast to the notion of a market economy.

Performance-related issues of METEC have also recently emerged. METEC used to run 10 multibillion Birr projects involving sugar plantations and factories, but this has been reduced to just two projects because of the company's failure to execute its contractual obligations. This brings into question the government's vision in transforming the economy if it chooses to endorse such inefficient public enterprises (Tefera 2019).

The role played by the affiliates of the ruling EPRDF party further complicate matters. The four parties that form the EPRDF coalition each have a trading wing. The major one worth mentioning is the Tigray People's Liberation Front's Endowment Fund For the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT). The front is the dominant party in the coalition. EFFORT is a multi-billion Birr conglomerate of businesses that owns over two dozen enterprises operating in selected areas across all sectors of the economy (agriculture, manufacturing and service). In 2010, EFFORT companies reported a total of 2.7 billion Ethiopian Birr (ETB) of capital and six billion ETB in assets (Vaughan and Gebremichael 2011). The ruling EPRDF party is unquestionably doing big business. This clear merger of politics and the economy in Ethiopia is detrimental to the growth of the private sector. Whereas, generally, the role of the government can at least be understood within a developmental state model, which advocates an increased role of the state during phases of economic transition, it is hard to accept the role being played by party-affiliated businesses with the tenets of this model.

The final layer concerns efforts to ensure equitable growth. While the endeavours of the Ethiopian Government are generally perceived as being pro-poor, and hence widely supported, paradoxically, the question of 'marginalization', whether real or perceived, is also often put forward (Merara 2007). Indeed, the recent unrest in the Oromia and Amhara

regions 'states is believed to have been triggered by the economic and political marginalization of ethnic Oromos and Amharas by the Tigrayan elites who were allegedly reaping the benefits of the country's economic growth through their associations with influential political figures (Fisher and Gebrewahd 2018, Yinebeb 2018). Feelings of economic and political marginalization among the Oromo elite remain a major issue that continues to destabilize the country. Since 2014, instability and unrest in the Oromia region (the largest in the country) has disrupted business (hundreds of commercial building have reportedly been burnt down across the region) and contributed towards a slowing of economic growth rates. Rampant corruption and illicit financial flows out of the country are prevalent and only serve to increase resentment against economic injustices within the country (Alemayehu and Addis 2016). While the issues discussed have left a dark shadow over the country's economy, political factors at the macro level remain the most pressing issues, and thus need to be analyzed.

3.3. Post-1991 Political Transitions: A Critical Overview

The demise of the Derg military dictatorship that had ruled from 1974 to 1991 resulted in the creation of what is referred to as a New Republic. The new ideas that underlay the New Republic are best captured by the current nomenclature of the Ethiopian state itself, 'The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 'as enshrined in the constitution of the country in 1994. The political reform package of the EPRDF Party, which has been in power since 1991, included provisions for the devolution of power in the form of a federal political dispensation and the introduction of a multiparty democracy, both hallmarks of the political era in post-1991 Ethiopia. Following a meeting sponsored by the United States of America between the victorious TPLF-led group and various other political forces in May 1991 in London, consensus was reached over a way forward that included adopting a Transitional Charter that would establish a Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGoE). Consequently, upon the invitation of the TPLF-led group, representatives of the various political groups, including the Oromo Liberation Front and the Sidama Liberation Front, met in Addis Ababa and adopted the Transitional Charter that would serve for the transitional period before being replaced by a new constitution in 1994. In accordance with the Transitional Charter, a transitional government composed of the various dominant political forces at the time, including the Oromo Liberation Front and other

political forces representing the southern nationalities (the Hadiya, the Sidama and the Gurage, among others), was established. The constituent parties formed a power-sharing agreement which will be discussed below. The Transitional Charter stated that the break away from military rule entailed not just a break from military dictatorship but the termination of all previous oppressive regimes. These steps represented a pivotal moment paving the way for rebuilding and restructuring the country (Transitional Charter of ToG 1991:1). In this regard, the Charter pledged that 'a proclamation of a democratic order is a categorical imperative '(Ibid. 1991). To contextualize the democratic order the Charter envisaged, a reference was made to the adoption of the 1948 United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular, the right of every individual to have freedom of conscience, expression, association and peaceful assembly was declared to be fully respected without any limitations. Similarly, the right to engage in, and exercise, unrestricted political activity and organize political parties was also fully recognized, as long as this did not violate the rights of others, as stated in the Charter. Moreover, a harbinger of the federal constitutional dispensation that would later be adopted – the problematic issue of the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination – was also incorporated into the Charter. The self-determination rights of the nations, nationalities and peoples, according to the Charter, included the right to preserve, promote and develop one's own identity, language, culture and history, administer one's own affairs and participate in the central government fairly and on an equal basis (Ibid. 1991 Article 1). In 1994, after four years of transitional administration, a new constitution was adopted, and a new constitutional arrangement came into effect a year later, in line with the terms stipulated in the Transitional Charter.

The 1995 Constitution further consolidated the political reform agenda initiated in 1991. The federal dispensation of power sharing was formally laid out, and the idea of a multiparty democracy was extensively enshrined in the constitution. The new constitution also established the FDRE state (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) (FDRE Constitution 1995, Art. 1). The FDRE state comprises member states that are organized largely along ethno-linguistic lines, confirming the population's right to form their own state under the 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples '(the NNPs) principle. Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are defined as:

> "A 'Nation, Nationality or People' for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory." (Ibid. 1995, Article 39(5)).

The nine member states of the federation are: 1) The State of Oromia; 2) The State of Amhara; 3) The State of Tigray; 4) The State of Somalia; 5) The State of Afar; 6) The State of Benshangul Gumuz; 7) The State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples; 8) The State of the Gambela Peoples; and 9) The State of the Harari People. The first five states are named after the numerically dominant ethnic groups found in their respective delimited territories. The ethnic Oromos in the state of Oromia, the ethnic Amhara group in the state of Amhara, the ethnic Tigre in the state of Tigray, the ethnic Afar, and ethnic Somalis in the states of Afar and Somalia are the predominant groups within each state. The remaining member states, except for the State of Harari, a small city state surrounded by Oromia State of which the ethnic Hararis constitute less than ten percent of the state's population, are highly diversified with no single dominant ethnic group. A notable example of this diversity is the State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, which has more than 56 ethnic groups cohabiting in its territory. In terms of the size of the member states, Oromia State accounts for one-third of the country's total land mass, whereas Harari State is by far the smallest, at only 340 square kilometers. While the State of Somalia, the State of Amhara and the State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are also large, the rest of the member states are smaller, signifying the asymmetric nature of the Ethiopian federation. Likewise, the ethnic composition of the federation reveals that, together, ethnic Oromos and Amharas constitute around 70 per cent of the country's total population. The Oromos are the single largest group at 34.4 percent (CSA 2007). In addition to the nine member states of the federation, there are two

city administrations: The Addis Ababa city administration and the Dire Dawa city administration, both of which are accountable to the federal government. The Addis Ababa city administration is in Oromia State, and is constitutionally recognized as the capital of the federation, whereas the status of the Dire Dawa city administration is contested constitutionally, as the arrangement arose from other subsidiary legislation[17].

The 1995 Constitution established two tiers of government, both with legislative, executive and judicial functions and specific delimited powers (Ibid. 1995: Articles 50-55). The federal government was constitutionally assigned the powers that conventionally go to the central government in most federations. Hence, the federal government has the power to formulate and implement the country's national policies and strategies relating to economic, social and developmental issues, such as enacting national standards and policy criteria for education, health, science and technology. Defense, foreign policy, refugee and immigration matters, the power to control arms and defend the constitution, the national bank, monetary and financial issues, regulation of inter-state trade and foreign commerce, transport policy (railways, ports, airways and roads that link two or more states) and communications infrastructure (telecommunications and postal) also all fall under the remit of the federal government along with the power to levy taxes on federal tax matters, impose and lift a state of emergency, and govern political parties and elections. The states are granted the power to form a state government that best advances their interests and enacts and executes policies, strategies and plans that relate specifically to their state's social, economic and developmental matters. They can administer their land and natural resources, exercise power over the revenues allocated to them, establish a state police force, and run a state civil service with its own budget. In addition, any power not exclusively given to the federal level (residual power) forms part of the states' reserve (Ibid. 1995: Article 52).

[17] Dire Dawa City Administration was established by Proclamation no. 416/2004 of the Federal parliament as a provisional legal entity. The ownership of the city was claimed by both the Oromia and Somali regions and the proclamation was issued as a temporary measure until the issue is resolved. Hence, the city status is autonomous only due to the ongoing failure to resolve this contestation.

Moreover, the Constitution created a bicameral house at the federal level: the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR), the lower house, and the House of Federation, the upper house. The HPR is the legislative body with the highest authority within the federal (central) government. It has 550 seats, of which 530 are directly filled by members elected by the people every five years from every constituency with a population of at least 100,000, while the other 20 seats are reserved for minority nationalities and peoples. The House of Federation is a non-legislative body tasked with interpreting the constitution and acting as an 'empire 'of the federation. Unlike the HPR, which represents the voting preferences of the citizens and which is therefore directly accountable to them, the House of Federation is where the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are represented. Each Nation, Nationality and People is represented by one member, plus an additional seat for every one million of its population (Ibid. 1995: Article 61(2)). At the state level, the legislative functions are entrusted to the State Council, which is the highest organ of state authority and is directly responsible to the people. The highest executive power at the federal level is held by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister, who is also head of government. The executive body comes from the party or coalition of parties that wins a majority of seats in the House of Peoples Representatives. The position of president at the federal level is largely a ceremonial one. The president of the republic is elected for a six-year term by a joint meeting of the two federal houses. At the state level, the highest executive power also rests with the State Administration, which is like a Federal Executive (Ibid. 1995: Article 50(6)).

The Constitution establishes parallel branches of the independent judiciary at both the federal and state level, each with judicial authority over their respective jurisdictions. The federal supreme judicial power is granted to the federal Supreme Court, which also has power of cassation over the state supreme courts – the only instance where an independent parallel existence of the judiciary of the two-tier government gives way to an intersection over which the federal judiciary reigns. The constitution further stipulates the non-interference of any governmental body at any level over judicial matters, stressing the principle of judicial independence (Ibid. 1995: Article 78).

The FDRE Constitution canonizes the human and democratic rights of individual citizens. It even puts this as a core objective of the pronouncement of the republic when it states:

> "Firmly convinced that the fulfillment of this objective (of establishing the democratic order) requires full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedoms and rights, to live together on the basis of equality and without any sexual, religious or cultural discrimination" (FDRE Constitution 1995, Preamble: 2)

The rights of the individual make up about one-third of the provisions of the constitution. The fundamental right to life and the security of the individual and liberty, to democratic rights such as the right to hold an opinion (freedom of thought), freedom of expression (including press freedom) and the right to association were all enshrined in the social contract of the new Ethiopian republic in a manner similar to the social contracts in modern liberal constitutions around the world. In the construction and application of these fundamental human and democratic rights, reference was also made to the international human rights the country has adopted as its guiding principles, including the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Human Rights[18]. While recognition of these fundamental rights and freedoms under the Transitional Charter (1991), the FDRE Constitution (1995) and the general political reform agenda can be seen as a positive step, it is debatable whether the post-1991 government has lived up to its proclaimed reformist agenda.

A closer look at the nature of the country's political reform since 1991 gives cause for both optimism and concern. On a positive note, there a democratic initiative was launched for the first time. The country's modern political history attests to the fact that the concept of political democracy was hardly known both under the absolutist monarchy of Emperor Haile Selassie and Colonel Mengsitu Haile Mariam's military dictatorship. The concept of multiparty democracy, as it is understood and practised under the new republic, entered the formal Ethiopian political sphere only after 1991. The number of opposition political

[18] The principal international human rights covenants ratified by the country are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

parties has grown from none to dozens within the past 25 years. Five periodic elections have taken place, in which the opposition has, on occasion, contested and won seats. Free press has mushroomed since 1991 despite the challenges it continues to face. Numerous civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations have come into existence over the past two decades. Though these steps may seem mundane, given the context of the country's chaotic past, they do reflect progress. Secondly, the measures taken to devolve power, later known as 'the federalism project', which was also a major component of the reform agenda, have arguably improved the system of governance. They have empowered previously marginalized groups – the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. For a long time, the northern political elites (Amhara and Tigray) had controlled the core of the Ethiopian state's political power by marginalizing dozens of majorities. The post-1991 era saw a reversal of the century-long concerted centralization process through the recognition of the right to self-determination for the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. This altered the relationship between the elite highland core and the elites of the marginalized periphery (Arriola and Lyons 2016, Clapham 2009). The regional states now attempt to assert their presence in their political interactions with the centre. What initially appeared to be a 'new phase 'in the political history of the country has resulted in a political impasse owing to the governance conceptualizations and practices of the regime in power, as evidenced by a legitimacy crisis that has persisted since 1991. The next section highlights issues pertaining to the EPRDF political reforms.

3.3.1. The Promise and Peril of Political Reforms

This section begins by explaining the initial promises experienced during the maiden years of the EPRD reign and the perils that followed. It argues that the perils of the political reform agenda were inherent in the manner in which the agenda was launched in 1991. In hindsight, these perils have contributed cumulatively to the current political stalemate, engendering a series of states of emergency under the control of the security apparatus, better known as the Military Command Post.

I start with the initial EPRDF promise political reform and argue that the transitional period was initially viewed as inclusive, and that a democratic opening was in sight. After overthrowing the Derg military junta, the EPRDF took for itself 32 of the 87 seats in the Council of Representatives (CoR) established under the Transitional Charter. The remaining 55 seats were apportioned to over 32 other political organizations represented in the unelected council. The executive power of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) also retained the EPRDF.

Second, the promise of political transition to democracy started faltering during the initial period, a failure that haunted the political architects who crafted the political regime. While the EPRDF had assumed the role as 'guardian 'of transition politics and the party responsible for dictating the rules, it excluded some politically significant political forces, such as the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian People Socialist Movement (MEISON), that had emerged out of the Ethiopian student movement of the 1960s. It also ensured that they were alienated and excluded from participating in the process that led to the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the enactment of post-1995 constitution politics. The EPRP and MEISON, together with a few other political groups (such as the EDU), tried to initiate another parallel transitional process, but these efforts proved futile as the EPRDF quickly shut them down. In the process, their representatives were arrested at the airport upon arrival and deported out of the country. Moreover, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the major opposition political force to the EPRDF at the time, withdrew from the Transitional Government. The withdrawal of the OLF, the second largest party after the EPRDF in terms of seats occupied in the Council of Representatives of the TGoE, and the AAPUO (All Amhara Peoples Union Organization) denounced the EPRDF's political tactics and policies. The withdrawal of these two political forces dealt a major blow to the precarious legitimacy of the transitional political process.

In essence, the opposition forces 'attempts to launch a parallel political initiative should be seen as an effort to delegitimize the political process by questioning the composition and neutrality of the electoral governance institutions of the transitional government. They rejected the electoral commission's proclaimed election by boycotting the very first

election held under the new republic. Rights groups also noted that the Transitional Government of Ethiopia had used political imprisonment 'on a large scale 'to silence its opponents and critics across its four-year rule, after it came to power in 1991[19]. The report further stated that over 100 journalists were imprisoned under the Transitional Government of Ethiopia's rule. The post-Transitional Government of the New Republic does not look any different as far as these political developments are concerned.

The Transitional Government was replaced by the constitutionally established government of the FDRE government in 1995 after the promulgation of the FDRE Constitution. The FDRE Constitution's process and content were contested because they were regarded more as instruments for the institutionalization of the EPRDF's political program (Merara 2003: 153) than as an expression of citizens 'rights and sovereignty.

Unfortunately, the period from the promulgation of the constitution to the present has been marred by recurrent political upheavals, particularly post-election political crises and instability. The rejection of the EPRDF's political institutions and the delegitimization of the democratization process by the opposition have continued to the present.

Opposition to the EPRDF government assumed greater significance in 2014, with popular uprisings against the ruling party erupting in two major regional states, Oromia Region State and Amhara Regional State.

The trajectory of the five regional and national elections held in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 reveal the country's bumpy political road to authentic democracy. The opposition largely boycotted the first two elections, thereby undermining the legitimacy of the political process and the EPRDF's claim to be the ruling party. An exception was Professor Beyene Petros's party, which competed and won some seats in the Southern part of the country (the Hadiya Zone) in the 2000 election. The EPRDF therefore won the first two elections without facing any serious challenges. In the third election (2005) the opposition forces regrouped and participated with real commitment. The initial optimism

[19] See for instance, Amnesty International Country Report in 1995. Available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR25/006/1995/es/. (15 March 2017).

surrounding the election, which most observers perceived as a genuine multiparty exercise (Harbeson 2005, Lyons 1996, 2006, 2010, Aalen and Tronvoll 2009, Asnake 2011), was soon replaced by disappointment as the ruling EPRDF and the major opposition alliances, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and the Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), declared themselves winners of the election before all the votes had even been counted. However, the opposition did make significant gains in the urban areas and in some regions (Oromia, Amhara and the Southern Nations and Nationalities) constituency, winning up to 173 out of the 547 seats. In the capital, Addis Ababa, the opposition won all the federal parliamentary seats as well as those of the city administration council.

The controversy surrounding the election process sparked violent protests that claimed the lives of more than 200 protesters (Asnake 2011). Furthermore, members of the CUD coalition refused to take up their seats in parliament and, consequently, its leaders ended up in jail (Abbink 2006). Journalists and some civil society leaders were also imprisoned alongside the CUD leaders.

The two elections that followed (2010 and 2015) were almost exclusively contested by the EPRDF and its affiliate parties, with opposition parties only able to play a minimal part in the highly controlled political space, established through new restrictive laws. Just before the 2010 election, the Charities and Societies Law, which regulated and restricted funding sources to civil society organizations, was enacted. The media laws were also revised to further regulate the media landscape. Electoral laws were re-enacted, and a new anti-terrorism law was put in place. While the government and ruling party justified the enactment of these new laws on the grounds that they protected the security and sovereignty of the state, and clarified the regulatory framework, the opposition and other critics saw this as a move to restrict and narrow the political space (Aalen and Tronvoll 2009, Abbink 2006). In the end, the EPRDF and its affiliate parties won all but one of the seats, which went to an opposition candidate. In the 2015 election, the EPRDF and its affiliate parties won all the seats. The elections held to date under the FDRE state regrettably demonstrate a perennial problem with the democratization process of the new republic. After 20 years, instead of garnering some support from all sides of the political spectrum,

the democratization process remains deeply contested. None of the elections under the FDRE state can be described as having been successful democratic exercises.

Table 3.1 National election results (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015)

Election year	% won by EPRDF and its affiliates	Remarks
1994/5	86%	Largely boycotted by major opposition actors
2000	88%	Largely boycotted by major opposition actors
2005	68%	Contested by major opposition forces
2010	99.6%	The EPRDF and its affiliates were declared winners after losing just two seats
2015	100%	

Source: National Electoral Board, available at https://www.electionethiopia.org.

A consolidation of the democratic governance principles will only become meaningful if both the ruling party and the opposition parties in Ethiopia accept them with a common understanding. To date, the EPRDF has molded its principles into tools to legitimize its political practices and governance, while for the opposition their clear superficiality discourages endorsement. There has been a tendency to express these political frustrations through armed resistance; the former CUD leadership is worth noting here, in addition to the dozens of other groups in exile in neighboring countries that have already rejected the EPRDF-led political process.

The human rights record of the FDRE state has become increasingly problematic too, although it cannot be disputed that there have been improvements compared to its predecessor, the Derg regime. In particular, the government's means of dealing with opposition politicians and dissident voices are worrying. International human rights groups and the US State Department all detail instances of abuse. A 2016 Amnesty International report describes how the EPRDF government has used legislation to 'stifle' dissent over the past 25 years, referring to three contentious pieces of legislation enacted by the HPR: The Press Law, the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Anti-terrorism Proclamation. The report details how these new laws were used to justify the arrest of opposition party leaders, silence journalists and other critical voices, and generally squeeze the political space. The excessive use of lethal force by security forces in suppressing protests has also increased markedly in recent years. Within the past three years, over 1,000 protesters have been killed by government security forces in the Oromia and Amhara regional states alone[20].

[20] Moreover, see a statement made by the U.S. State Department in reference to the abuses perpetrated across the country as recent protests unfolded. Available at https://www.state.gov/state-gov-website-modernization/. (20 May 2017).

Furthermore, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and internet freedoms are all areas in which there is still much room for improvement. In view of this, the country was classed as 'not free 'by the Freedom House Global Freedom Index (2016), scoring lower than neighboring Somaliland and Djibouti[21].

The second component of the political reform project, the devolution of power via the federal political power arrangement that aimed to resolve the historical 'nationality question 'has also begun to be questioned. In theory, the system, which aimed at empowering the historically marginalized and dominated groups – the Nations, Nationalities or Peoples – should have been embraced and defended. However, the federal political dispensation project instead generated a diverse and radical set of views from the outset. It has increasingly attracted fierce opposition from among ethnic groups that are often seen as the 'natural 'supporters of the current political arrangement. The Oromos are a notable example in this regard. At present, the Oromo partners in the ruling EPRDF have become the latest ones to question the *modus operandi* of the federal system, joining the Oromo opposition groups that rejected the system long ago. What initially appeared to the regional government to be an ordinary local protest against the handover of communal land to private investors in the small town of Ghinch in the South West Shewa Zone of Oromia, has become a political phenomenon that has engulfed the whole of Oromia in popular uprisings against the government since November 2015[22].

The protests continued, claiming the lives of thousands of Ethiopians. Although these protests were offset by the small protest in Ghinch, it was fueled by the federal government's plan to expand the territory of the capital city by incorporating surrounding Oromo towns and villages in a plan called 'The Addis Ababa and the Surrounding Oromia Special Zone Integrated Development Plan 'or 'the Addis Ababa Master Plan'. Despite the

[21] For more on the detailed report, see the Freedom House Country Report for 2016, available at https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/ethiopia (July 20, 2017).

[22] For a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of the 'Oromo Protest', see Yinebeb, N. (2018). 'The root causes of the political crisis in Oromia regional state and its implications', in Assefa, F. (ed.). *Emerging Issues in Federalism and Governance in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Printing.

federal government's decision to drop the Addis Ababa Master Plan, protests have continued to rage unabated across Oromia. It is now widely accepted that the protests are a product of greater and more fundamental issues; one Oromo scholar and activist, Awol Kassim, captured this well when he wrote,

> "Although the protests were sparked by a government plan to expand the territorial and administrative limits of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, into neighboring Oromo towns and villages, they were manifestations of long-simmering ethnic discontents buried beneath the surface." (Awol 2016:2[23]).

The Amhara region, home to the second largest ethnic group after the Oromo, became the second site of protests against the government. While the immediate cause of the protests in the Amhara region was a border dispute between the Amhara and Tigray regional authorities, it evolved into a solidarity movement in support of the Oromo protests. Regardless of the immediate causes or any ulterior motives that drove the two protests, by claiming that that there was a discernible common belief in the current Tigrian domination of Ethiopia. The Tigrian elites 'were treated as an overly privileged minority that had disproportionate control of the economic and political positions under EPRDF rule. The so-called TPLF dominance was in violation of the federal arrangement. In essence, the Oromo opposition to EPRDF rule was informed by their call for a genuine federal arrangement that enacted proportionate representation at the central government level and ensured regional autonomy. On the other hand, the Amhara elites proposed that the whole federal arrangement be revised in favour of a non-ethnicized arrangement.

The EPRDF-led government declared a state of emergency in November 2016 after a year of protests. The party pledged to 'deeply renew itself 'and 'widen and deepen 'the democratization process. It also acknowledged that a crisis of good governance and corruption existed in the country. To this end, the federal cabinet was reshuffled and dialogue

[23] For more see the complete commentary on https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/06/ethiopia-rising-narrative-oromo-protests-160620140306460.html. (15 July 2017).

with opposition parties was initiated. However, 10 months later, in August 2017, when the state of emergency was lifted, the protests in the Oromia region continued, and the country's security situation continues to deteriorate. Attempts at dialogue with opposition parties, the major component of the supposed government reform package to widen the political space in response to the protests, were marred by the withdrawal of the two major opposition parties, the Blue Party and the Medrek Coalition. A few months later, in November 2017, the government unveiled a new plan to create a 'National and Regional Joint Security Council', which basically amounted to a securitization of the political system, essentially imposing another 'state of emergency 'in all but name. This new legislative body has been tasked with controlling Ethiopia's security situation and taking appropriate action accordingly (Siraj Firgessa, 2017). Additionally, the ongoing conflict on the border of the Oromia and Somali regions has become a massive and tragic humanitarian crisis[24] that now threatens the security and survival of the country. Clearly, the post-1991 political reform phase has proved to be a controversial political project that has resulted in an impasse requiring some penetrating analysis.

In conclusion, since 1991, Ethiopia has witnessed spectacular economic progress, which has been coupled with significant socio-economic improvements. The country has registered some of the fastest economic growth rates in the world, attributable largely to the policy changes introduced and implemented by the EPRDF-led government. However, despite its economic progress, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, partly because the economy's structural base remains rooted in the agrarian sector, which is vulnerable to the vagaries of nature. The role of the state, particularly the role of military-related institutions, supposedly seeking to achieve a rapid transition of the country's economy to industrialization, has proven to be problematic both in terms of its policy choices and performance. The huge involvement in the economy of companies affiliated with the ruling party and the issue of ensuring equitable growth are issues that need to be

[24] In addition to the protests that have engulfed a wider part of the country, over 700,000 civilians have fled their homes and have been living in IDP camps for several months as a result of a new conflict between the Oromia and Somali regional states that began in 2016. Militia and regional security forces on both sides have been accused of carrying out mass evictions and killing innocent civilians.

addressed to ensure the sustainability of economic progress going forward. The political reform agenda, comprising the introduction of a multiparty democracy and the devolution of political power in the form of federalism, has already faced major setbacks and resulted in a political impasse. The political reform project is being contested on several fronts and the levels of contestation have been increasing since the reform project began, despite some positive political developments in the aftermath of 1991. These contestations go beyond the expected differences over political issue(s) that define democratic systems. Rather, they reject and question the whole political system of post-1991 in Ethiopia. Elections are often boycotted, democratic institutions denied legitimacy, and recurrent violent protests occur. These actions are all manifestations of the deep levels of discontent with the current system, and an indication that there is a fundamental need to rethink the current political process in order to be able to address the political impasse. In the following chapters, this thesis attempts to explain and understand the political impasse by probing the political discourses of the major actors in the political arena of the country between 1991-2015.

Chapter Four: The EPRDF's Political Discourse

> "Development is an existential question/issue. Democracy is an existential issue. This has nothing to do with a political party but is an existential issue for the country. Any strategy or policy that does not take the issues of democracy and development as existential issues/questions for the country is irrelevant." (Meles 2002) (own translation)

4.1. Introduction

The discourse on democratization of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is rooted in the political discourse of the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), a victorious ethno-nationalist movement that played a critical role in establishing the EPRDF. As will be discussed, the formation of the EPRDF was part of the TPLF's strategic plan, which was systematically implemented in the course of the armed struggle against the previous military regime. The TPLF's political discourse must therefore be the focus of any discussion of the ruling front's political discourse. Accordingly, one must shed light on the TPLF's conceptualization of political issues, and how that carried over to the EPRDF. Furthermore, we must examine the institutionalization of those discourses via the instrumentality of government policies, strategies, laws and state institutions. Consequently, this chapter aims to present the ruling EPRDF party's political discourse by tracing its origin, development and institutionalization based on TPLF/EPRDF party documents and key government policy documents, including the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) constitution. Accordingly, this chapter is a synoptic presentation of the party's political discourse and its 'democratization 'project, and includes an analysis of how these discourses interact with the general political processes in the country since 1991.

The chapter explores two major discourses: The first illuminates the debate around the TPLF-cum-EPRDF's political discourse, highlighting how it evolved over time both before and after 1991. The second analysis considers the dominance of the EPRDF's democratization discourse, its institutionalization and how this was carefully crafted to stifle the opposition's efforts to propel a pluralist political discourse. The chapter concludes with a commentary on the preceding discussions highlighting the congruency of the TPLF-cum-EPRDF political discourses, which ushered in the securitization of its democratization doctrine vis-à-vis its opponents.

4.2. The TPLF and the Making of the EPRDF Political Discourse

The ruling EPRDF party is a four-party coalition established mainly by the TPLF towards the end of the 1980s. In 1986, the TPLF formed an alliance with the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), a regrouped faction that left the EPRP. The EPDM subsequently forged a close alliance with the TPLF and began operating in parts of Wello and Gondar with the latter's support (Amhara Nation Democratic Movement (ANDM 2015). The first of the TPLF's creations, the EPDM, transformed into an ethnic Amhara Party, rebranding itself as the Amhara Nationational Democratic Movement (Amhara Democratic Party as of 2018). It thus became one of the three political parties that established the EPRDF in 1989, along with the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organzation Party (OPDO) (which became the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) in 2018) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers 'Revolutionary Movement (EDORM), which later renamed itself the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The founders of both the OPDO and EDORM/SEPDM were all selected from among prisoners of war or defectors from the Ethiopian army. The TPLF's strategic move to establish a wider coalition revealed a recognition of the multi-ethnic realities of Ethiopia and the need to transform itself into a national entity that appealed to most of the ethnic groups in the country. Thus, the EPRDF is seen as having links to the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, via the OPDO, and to the Amhara, the second largest ethnic group, via the ANDM. Moreover,

it appeals to most ethnic groups in the southern region via the SEPDM[25] and, of course, the TPLF's 'natural 'base is the Tigray. The EPRDF entered the Ethiopian political scene ostensibly as a grand, multinational coalition. The TPLF viewed these parties as 'democratic 'national movements with which it chose to align itself during a period of struggle. Beyond these major parties, the TPLF has also established a number of other parties, such as the People's Democratic Organizations (PDOs) and other movements, some of which are regarded as EPRDF affiliate parties,[26] which administer those regions not covered by the TPLF-led EPRDF coalition.

These affiliate parties subscribe to the TPLF's/EPRDF's political programme. Despite being separate legal entities with their own constituencies, these affiliates regard themselves as belonging to one party.[27] Because of the way the EPRDF operates, it is often confusingly described as a party; in fact, it is a coalition of four different parties. While essentially having adopted the discourse of the ruling camp's political programme, the way the affiliate liberation movements/parties present their respective discourses differs in terms of the context, messages and meanings of the EPRDF's political discourse, supposedly in congruence with the politics of their locale. For instance, the discourses of the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) and the Tigray People's Liberation

[25] The Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State Government is one of the nine regions/constituencies of the Ethiopian Federation established by the FDRE constitution. This region hosts more than 56 ethnic groups. Five of these regions (regions 7-11), established during the four years of the transitional period (1991-1994), merged to form the current set-up. For more, see Vaughan, S. (1994). The Addis Ababa Transitional Conference of July 1991: Its Origins, History, and Significance (p. 45). Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University.

[26] According to the EPRDF, the term affiliate parties includes those parties that administer the Somali region (Ethiopian Somali Democratic Party, ESDP), the Afar region (Afar People's Democratic Organization, APDO), the Gambella region (Gambella People's Democratic Movement, GPDM) and the Benishangul-Gumuz region (Benishangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front, BGPDUF). There is a desk at the EPRDF secretariat that coordinates and follows up on these parties.

[27] For more on the EPRDF coalition's programme and the four coalition members, including their own narratives of their struggles and achievements, see: 'Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) Programme', as adopted by the 4th Congress of the EPRDF in September 2001;
'History of EPDM-ANDOM: 1973 (EC)-2008 (EC)', published in Amharic by the Secretariat of the ANDM (2015); Bahirdar, 'The History of OPDO's Struggle and its Success: From its Birth to 2010', published in Oromia and Amharic by the Secretariat of the OPDO (2010), Addis Ababa.

Front (TPLF) on the conceptualization of political issues and the construction of "enemies", might differ depending on how the discourses resonate in their respective contexts. Nevertheless, the political discourses of the ruling party essentially remain the same, with the TPLF's political discourse at the epicentre. It is therefore crucial to begin by examining the TPLF's political discourse in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the political discourse of the government and the ruling elite.

The TPLF is an ethno-nationalist political movement established in 1975 by ethnic Tigrayan students. Many of the founders were active participants in the Ethiopian Student Movement (EST) that catalyzed the revolution that contributed to the demise of the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I in 1974 (Medhane 1992, Young 1996, Aregawi 2004, 2008). Inspired by global leftist movements, Ethiopian university students played a leading role in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism. The establishment of 'scientific socialism 'was seen as the only solution to the backwardness and extreme poverty in the country at that time. Marxism-Leninism was the prevailing political ideology in terms of explaining and understanding the contradictions in Ethiopian society. Despite the students 'belief that a 'socialist utopia 'was the only solution to Ethiopia's problems and that a revolution was necessary to achieve it, the students 'interpretations of societal contradictions differed. On the one hand, some student groups expressed their discontent at what they perceived as national oppression as part of, or in addition to, class oppression. They called for a struggle against 'national oppression 'and pushed for secession from what they regarded as a dominant oppressive regime that exploited citizens. Other students acknowledged this exploitation but insisted it was part of class oppression. This group called for a nationwide struggle against the oppressive classes. Those students who defined their grievances in terms of national oppression subsequently formed their respective nations 'ethnic liberation movements, while Pan-Ethiopian movements emerged from the latter groups. The TPLF founders adhered to the national oppression thesis.

In its analysis of the socio-economic situation and political conditions of the Tigray region at that time, the TPLF concluded that the abject poverty, underdevelopment of Tigray and the cultural and political marginalization was a deliberate act of oppression and neglect by the ruling Amhara elite, specifically the '*Shoan* Amhara 'elite. The TPLF's first

political manifesto, issued in 1976, briefly details the problems of the Tigray and their calls for revolution to 'liberate 'Tigray through armed struggle (TPLF 1976). Tigray, the once glorious host of the Axumite civilization, one of the oldest civilizations in the ancient world, and the base of Emperor Yohannes IV, the ruler of Ethiopia from 1872-1889, became a land of "misery and agony" which forced the Tigrayans to flee as 'leaderless bees 'to other parties in the country in search of a better life. This exodus continued when the region fell under the rule of Emperor Menelik II, King of *Shoa*, in 1889 as a result of the deliberate acts and economic neglect by the *Shaon* rulers. Indeed, under the *Shoa* regime, Tigray was ravaged by multiple famines, an exploitive land tenure system and a succession of devastating wars, including the battles of Adwa and the subsequent war with Mussolini's fascist Italy. Politically, the Tigrayan elite felt "marginalized" from the centre by the *Shoa* Amhara elite, as the region was initially ruled by *Shoan* elites appointed from the centre. Moreover, the TPLF manifesto states that the *Shoan* Amhara elite tried everything in their power to "destroy" Tigrayan cultural identity ("Amharanization"), to the extent of "stealing" the history of the Tigray people. The consequence of this "dominance", "subjugation", "marginalization" and underdevelopment, was the "dehumanization", "backwardness" and "restlessness" of the Tigrayans, according to the TPLF's founders (Ibid. 1976: V-VII). These founders concluded that Tigray suffered from both "class exploitation" and "national oppression" by the *Shoan* Amhara elite.

In response to class exploitation and the oppression of their region by the state, the TPLF was convinced a national and social revolution was necessary to liberate the oppressed and exploited classes in Tigray. The TPLF believed an armed struggle guided by a Marxist-Leninist organization like the TPLF could achieve the objectives of the struggle – to establish an anti-feudalist anti-imperialist democratic republic and government of the "oppressed people". The new government would include representatives of the oppressed classes (the peasants, working class and others oppressed groups). It must be noted here that the idea of liberating Tigray and establishing an Independent Tigray Republic was later dropped. Instead, the idea of the self-determination of nations (nationalities) was adopted. It was further stated that the democratic republic would protect the interests of the oppressed and suppress their class enemies. Generally speaking, the revolutionary

struggle was waged against national oppression (anti-national oppression), feudalism (anti-feudalism), imperialism, "reactionaries", "anti-revolutionaries", "chauvinists" and "narrow nationalists" (Ibid. 1976: V-VII). Specifically, the list of enemies included the Shoan Amhara elites, the ruling military regime (described as "the worst fascist regime in the world") and those Amhara elites who disagreed with the TPLF's conceptualization of political issues and its struggle. This list also included groups such as the EPRP and the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON), which had collaborated with the military junta, and hence was regarded as reactionary. The 'enemies' were also the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), which was perceived as pro-monarchy and feudal, but lost power and privilege under the military regime, the Tigray Liberation Front (TLF) and other nationalist liberation fronts such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The TPLF had engaged in battles with most of its listed enemies for a period of 17 years (1975-1991) and defeated them. Their conquests included the military junta, which then had to relinquish its power (Aregawi 2008).

The TPLF's discourse on the armed struggle phase (1974 to 1991) was fairly straightforward – it was a discourse that concerned the need to pursue liberation from national oppression. The Tigray nation, and later the whole of Ethiopia, were to be liberated through armed struggle. Liberation was to be followed by the exercise of self-determination rights aimed at establishing the democratic republic. The socio-economic conditions of Tigray and the governance issues of that time were perceived as acts of oppression by the "enemy" classes, which could be countered only by armed struggle. Politics then was about ensuring the liberation of Tigray by force. It was not about deliberation or negotiation; rather it was about bloodshed and a civil war that lasted 17 years. War was the politics of the day, and the TPLF, the Ethiopian military and other enemies of the TPLF were fully engaged in the conflict. Therefore, it is not difficult to argue that the militarization of politics resulted in winners and losers in Ethiopian politics. The consequential outcome and practice of such politics came to haunt Ethiopia's political culture and its political elites in political developments after 1991. As mentioned earlier, subsequently, the TPLF created three other parties (the ANDM, OPDO and SEPDM) to form the EPRDF and, in 1991, it established a transitional government in accordance with its revolutionary ideals.

The core of the TPLF's revolutionary doctrine that would later be so consequential in the country's politics involved recognizing the rights of the oppressed nations (nationalities) to self-determination. These rights included the right to secede from the Ethiopian state. The discourse emanated from the premise that Ethiopia was essentially dominated by one ethnic group – the ruling Amhara elite. The TPLF narrative was that the Amhara had "dominated", "subjugated" and "marginalized" other ethnic groups to the extent that necessitated an armed struggle to be waged by the national liberation movements/fronts of the oppressed. The discourse justifying the recognition of the right to self-determination for the oppressed nations was none other than the Marxist-Leninist conception that once the nationality question had been fully addressed, class solidarity would prevail over nationalism. Furthermore, the TPLF believed that the struggle of the Eritrean Liberation Movement was based on the presumption that it was a struggle against Ethiopian imperial state 'colonialism'. By doing so, it endorsed the view that the Ethiopian state was not only a state in which the Amhara ruling elite oppressed other nationalities but also that it was also a "colonial power" as far as Eritrea was concerned. To this end, the TPLF fully supported and worked closely with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which had fought for Eritrea's independence for 30 years, and whose struggle resulted in the secession of Eritrea at the same time as the TPLF took control of the Ethiopian state in 1991.

According to the TPLF/EPRDF, a revolutionary democracy would come when the armed struggle achieved its aims of victory for the "oppressed masses". The democratic government would be based on the TPLF's core belief that it should address the issue of nationality by recognizing the right to self-determination, including secession for ethnic communities (the nations/nationalities of Ethiopia). Economically, the TPLF's original preference for socialism was put on hold, but land was to be owned by the state and redistributed to the peasants. As far as rural land distribution was concerned, the TPLF was adamant the feudal land tenure system from which the "enemy" class had benefited should be replaced with a system that favoured those who worked the land, the tillers. In other words, the aim of overhauling the land tenure system was to "liberate" the tillers from exploitation by the feudal class and to ensure free use of their produce. It is interesting to note here that the tillers did not have ownership rights, but only land-use rights. To this

end, the TPLF had already exercised this policy of redistributing the rural land in areas it had freed from government forces. As victory neared, the TPLF established the EPRDF, and the inaugural congress of the EPRDF, held a few months before the end of the war in 1991, endorsed the TPLF's discourse as the EPRDF's political programme. Thus, the post-1991 EPRDF's discourse is an extension and 'new 'version of the TPLF's discourse.

4.3. EPRDF's Political Discourse Between 1991 and 2015

The political discourse of the EPRDF after 1991 was not just a continuation of the TPLF's discourse. First, the TPLF's discourse evolved due to various developments that shaped the organization in the armed struggle phase. Several instances can be mentioned here. One good example is the TPLF's proclivity towards the different conceptualizations and approaches within the leftist camp, and its attempt to position itself as a unique leftist force with a viable alternative in the Ethiopian context. It is interesting to note how, during this positioning process, the TPLF's conceptualization of politics, tactics and strategies changed over time, and the party constantly explored the Marxist-Leninist conceptualizations of politics. It also investigated Maoist and Soviet revisions and the Albanian model while developing its own ideological doctrine of revolutionary democracy (*abiyotawi* democracy in Amharic). This discourse construction was a continuous exercise accompanied by the formation of a party within a party – the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT) in 1985 within the TPLF and the formation of a similar Marxist-Leninist group within other EPRDF member parties (ANDM and OPDO) shortly after the first congress of the EPRDF in 1991. These Marxist-Leninist groups within the EPRDF went as far as establishing a workers 'party that would lead the country towards socialism. However, this option was disbanded in just a few months as the party shifted its commitment towards building a free market economy (EPRDF 2010). This search for an ideological doctrine entailed restructuring the party and constructing dynamic political discourses, which some regarded as innovative (Bach 2011). The search clearly shows the pragmatist approach that underlay the EPRDF's political discourse. I prefer to use the term pragmatism, rather than innovation, when describing this aspect of the party, as innovation does not necessarily capture the realities that forced the party to undergo such readjustments. For instance, changing global circumstances forced the EPRDF to adopt a

free market economy model in the 1990s. The party admitted this, and therefore it is fair to conclude that the party made choices driven by the need to remain relevant with the realities on ground, rather than by its 'innovative 'capabilities. Put differently, the issue of survival was more pressing than the party's 'creativity 'in adapting itself to the political and economic realities of the country and the global dynamics.

Secondly, there have been some discernible changes in the EPRDF's political discourse in the past 25 years (1991-2015) since it assumed state power. In the period that preceded the first 'renewal '(*yemejemeriya tewadiso*), i.e. pre-2001, the EPRDF's political discourse was mainly about establishing and institutionalizing its core doctrine of revolutionary democracy. Developmental (economic) issues were not discussed in the same way as political issues at this time. Similarly, the content of this discourse (of revolutionary democracy) was limited to its depiction of enemies, targeted only at the non-EPRDFites. By contrast, the EPRDF's political discourse in the post-2001 period changed following the so-called first renewal, which was triggered by a split in the TPLF, its core and driving member, in 2001. During this period, the political discourse was about the political process and economic issues. An allied concept of the "Democratic Developmental State (DDS)" was introduced and constituted the main tenet of the EPRDF's discourse. In this post-renewal period, the discourse about the Democratic Developmental State appears to have replaced that of revolutionary democracy. As will be discussed, it is not clear whether this new discourse about the Democratic Developmental State is a continuation of a revolutionary democracy or a concept in which the 'revolutionary 'aspect is embedded. In addition to these differences, the post-2001 EPRDF's discourse about the 'enemy ' had also been expanded, this time to include the EPRDF's own comrades who allegedly turned "chauvinist" or "narrow nationalist" or became "rent seekers".

Concurrently, the discussion below examines the EPRDF's construction of its enemy's "chauvinism and narrow nationalism". To conclude these preliminary remarks, it should be noted that the political developments that occurred in the country from the end of 2014 forced the ruling EPRDF party to undergo a second 'renewal'. Since 2015, the party has been undergoing major changes through its radical reforms, and is now entering a new

phase of political discourse that has yet to emerge in a concretized way. Thus, the discussion of the EPRDF's discourse will be limited to the period 1991 to 2015. Accordingly, the following sections present the EPRDF's two main political discourses – revolutionary democracy and the developmental democratic state and their salient features.

4.4. Revolutionary Democracy as the Cardinal Principle of the EPRDF's Political Discourse

As far as the EPRDF's discourse on democracy is concerned, the party has championed the idea that 'democracy 'is the only way forward in Ethiopia. The need for democracy is described as an existential issue for the country, and its absence as chaos, disintegration and Armageddon.[28] Going beyond this initial assertion, a number of questions arise regarding the content of the EPRDF's discourse on democracy; questions such as what it means and what kind of democracy the party advocates. The theoretical gist of the

[28] The primary party and policy documents of the EPRDF (all of which are published in Amharic) reviewed for this study frame the issue of democracy/democratization in terms of security. See: EPRDF (2000a). 'The Fundamental Questions about Democracy in Ethiopia' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2000b). 'Revolutionary Democracy: Strategies and Thoughts on Development' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2000c). 'Revolutionary Democracy: Leadership and Practices' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2001). 'Political Program' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2006a). 'Revolutionary Democracy Strategies, Tactics and the Question of Leadership' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2006b). 'Development, Democracy and Revolutionary Democracy' (Addis Ababa); 'EPRDF (2006c). 'The Question of Revolutionary Democracy Leadership'. (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2010a). 'EPRDF from its Establishment up to 2009' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2010b). 'Renewal and Ethiopia's Renaissance' (Addis Ababa); EPRDF (2017). 'The Features of the Ethiopian Federal System, Democratization Building Processes, Achievements and the Way Forward', 1st ed. (Addis Ababa); Ministry of Information, Federal Government of Ethiopia (2002a). 'The Issues of Building a Democratic System in Ethiopia' (Addis Ababa); Ministry of Information, Federal Government of Ethiopia (2002b). 'The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy'. (Addis Ababa); FDRE (1995). 'The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' (Addis Ababa); TPLF (1987). 'wexa wexana indeshenbeqo tenkebalele indemuqecha: ye ihapa tragedy',(published in Amaharic)., Meles, Z. (2007). 'African Development. Dead Ends and New Beginnings'. In unpublished note, http://cgt. Columbia. edu/files/conferences/Zenawi_Dead_Ends and_New_Beginnings. pdf., Bereket, S. (2017). Tinsaé Ze Ethiyophiya Ke menita mengedi ketemetsewachinet wede afrikawi kurati yetederege shigigir metsai fetenawochi ina melkam idilochi', India:Angkor Publishers (Published in Amharic). Bereket, S. (2011). 'yehulet Mirchawoch weg: Nadan vegeta hagerawi rucha' (Addis Ababa).

EPRDF's understanding of democracy and its application of the concept essentially require a recapturing of the EPDRF's discourse as it is. This approach helps facilitate an understanding of the EPRDF's thought processes that underpin its discourse on democracy in general and its vision of democratization for the country in particular. This will, in turn, aid our analysis of its discourse in relation to a general discussion of the concept of democracy as it is widely understood, at least in terms of Western liberal perceptions and practices, and vis-a-vis other alternative visions for the democratization of the country. With this in mind, we shall unpack the EPRDF's discourse of its revolutionary democracy as explained by relevant party and government policy documents.[29]

It is often difficult to find an EPRDF party document that provides a comprehensive explanation of what revolutionary democracy is. However, the party document entitled 'yedemocracy meseretawi xiyaqewoch be Ethiyopiya', which can be translated as 'The Fundamental Questions about Democracy in Ethiopia', published in August 2000, can be regarded as the first comprehensive elaboration of the doctrine of revolutionary democracy. The document juxtaposes the concept with liberal democracy, stating:

> "To better understand our *abiyotaw* (revolutionary) democracy, it is important to compare and contrast it with a liberal democracy. Thus, a brief discussion on a liberal democracy is crucial" (EPRDF 2000:1). (Own translation)

The document begins by outlining the EPRDF's understanding of liberal democracy and its relevance to the Ethiopian context. Accordingly, liberal democracy is generally understood to be 'the system of democratic governance that exists in the industrialized developed world '(Ibid. 2000:1). The system is founded on social bases that include a strong private sector-led capitalist economy with hegemonic liberal values and principles (the rule of law, respect for human and democratic rights, separation of powers etc.). Besides

[29] See the notes in footnote 24 above.

the issue of social bases and other differences to be discussed, the EPRDF believes its revolutionary democracy generally aligns with the values of liberal democracy, including its economic goals: "Both democracies, regardless of their differences, believe in pursuing a free market economy in which the private sector plays a key role to ensure the development of a capitalist economy" (Ibid. 2000: 47). Despite these general shared beliefs and a similar vision for building a capitalist economy, the EPRDF firmly contends that liberal democracy has serious deficiencies in contrast to its doctrine of revolutionary democracy.

For revolutionary democrats, a key deficiency in liberal democracy is the argument about the social basis of liberal democracy in Ethiopia. The EPRDF argues that during the 1990s there was no developed private sector in Ethiopia. The imperial regime was clearly a backward feudalist regime followed by 17 years of Marxist-Leninist military dictatorship, which officially declared socialism as the government's policy under which a set of restrictive ownership policies were practiced.

However, to date, Ethiopia's economy remains dominated by the agricultural sector, which occupies 85 per cent of the population, the majority of whom are struggling to achieve food security at a household level. The absence of the necessary social class/base under this regime left no possibility for liberal democracy to operate. Moreover, liberal democracy's priority of individual rights and freedoms is seen as another deficiency of serious concern with consequences in the Ethiopian context. For the EPRDF, the fundamental question of democracy in the context of Ethiopia is about addressing the 'nationality question'. Addressing this issue entails ensuring self-determination rights for ethnic communities, i.e., it is essentially about dealing with a 'group rights 'issue. The EPRDF believes liberal democracy's ideological commitment to, and emphasis on, individual rights and freedoms, rather than 'group rights', makes it incompatible with the Ethiopian context. In addition, the EPRDF believes liberal democracy is elitist and lacks revolutionary ferment compared to revolutionary democracy, which characterizes itself as a mass-based popular revolutionary movement committed to the transformation of all aspects of society (social, economic, political and cultural). Interestingly, the EPRDF contends that its revolutionary democracy addresses these deficiencies of liberal democracy

while simultaneously embracing its core democratic values and principles. In doing so, it claims to expand the 'democratic content 'of liberal democracy to incorporate 'revolutionary 'and 'popular 'characteristics.

> "In short, it can be said that revolutionary (abiyotawi) democracy goes beyond the limit of what a liberal democracy cannot achieve by itself, by endowing it with revolutionary and popular characteristics." (EPRDF 2000:47). (Own translation).

Revolutionary democracy in EPRDF parlance is about radically changing Ethiopia into a 'new Ethiopia 'in which the old institutions of 'oppression 'are entirely dismantled. It promoted political governance that enables self-determination rights for ethnic communities, including secession and building 'democracy'. The EPRDF's stand is that its revolutionary democracy, unlike liberal democracy, has a strong social base in Ethiopia. It claims that about the 85 per cent of the population, the peasantry, is its strong base, with which it toppled the military regime. The working class and low-income city dwellers, petty bourgeois and 'revolutionary 'elites (the intelligentsia) are perceived to be a 'potential base 'for revolutionary democracy in Ethiopia. The EPRDF believes that revolutionary democracy better represents the interests of these classes. Revolutionary democracy, then, is about envisioning radical measures to address the country's political questions (the nationality question, land issues and the need for democracy in general) in a radical way, in which the revolutionary democracy elites through the instrument of a revolutionary democracy party (vanguard party) mobilizing revolutionary forces (the masses) bring about radical changes (EPRDF 2000). The EPRDF portrays revolutionary democracy as being different from the Marxist-Leninist notion in which it was understood to be a transitory phase of socialism. Whilst it is generally acknowledged that the EPRDF itself is inspired by Marxist-Leninist understandings of politics and has leftist roots, Bereket (Bereket

2017:26-67), a prominent 'old guard 'figure in the EPRDF, argues that the party's conceptualization of revolutionary democracy is misunderstood as a transition to socialism. He asserts the opposite and notes that revolutionary democracy, which he describes as a 'wave', is about building a capitalist market economy and democracy, albeit in the EPRDF way, as discussed above.

Since 2002, the EPRDF's discourse seems to have shifted towards emphasizing economic development issues. Following the aforementioned 'first renewal', it appeared that the party emerged with a clear economic development path it wanted to pursue. At the start of its reign in the early 1990s, the EPRDF was forced to adopt a free market economy policy, albeit with strong reservations and ambivalence towards fully embracing what it calls a neo-liberal prescription of the Bretton Woods institutions (the IMF and World Bank). While implementing market reform measures, it retained control over key economic and financial institutions (such as state-owned banks, telecommunications, etc.), which the party calls 'the commanding heights of the economy'. This was clear state intervention in the economy and contrary to the tenets of a free market system. Later, inspired by the rapid economic growth of the South East Asian countries, the EPRDF endorsed a 'developmental state model 'of economic growth in which the state plays a key role in the transition to a capitalist market economy. While it adopted this model, the EPRDF nevertheless argued that the South East Asian countries 'economic model was not accompanied by democratic governance; therefore, for it to be tenable in the context of Ethiopia, it had to be packaged with democratic governance. Hence, the party adopted a new discourse, the Democratic Developmental State, to distinguish its model as democratic and developmental. This discourse emerged as a 'motto 'of the party and the government in the post-2002 period. In terms of the content of this discourse, while the economic aspect appears somehow prorogated having state-led, rapid economic growth leading to the establishment of a capitalist market economy, the 'democratic 'aspect refers to the implementation of the constitution. The FDRE constitution, discussed below, is largely an institutionalized document of the EPRDF's political discourse. Interestingly, post-2002, there was almost no direct reference to revolutionary democracy. Instead, new terms, such as dominant-party discourse, a situation in which the EPRDF remains the

dominant player in a multi-party set-up that also allows for the participation of opposition parties, was at times advocated. However, in practice, the EPRDF remained not just dominant but exclusively in charge. Despite the addition of new terminologies and an emphasis on development issues, the above-discussed fundamentals underpinning the EPRDF's discourse appear to have remained intact in the post-2002 period.

Whether the EPRDF's political discourse is democratic and shares any similarities with liberal democracy as invoked requires further interrogation and is beyond this discussion,[30] but certainly its 'political package – 'the 'democratization discourse – 'needs examining before any discussion can take place on how the party has gone about institutionalizing it as a government policy and, most importantly, as the 'basic principles 'guiding the political process in post-1991 Ethiopia, by enshrining it in the country's constitution and through the instrumentality of other legislations.

4.5. The EPRDF's Democratization Discourse

The EPRDF presents the need for democratization as a sine qua non for the country's survival. It believes the absence of democracy was an underlying cause of the civil war, poverty and the country's backwardness. Thus, its democratization discourse was presented as a binary choice: democratizing the country, and hence a path to stability and

[30] For various understandings and critiques of the EPRDF's doctrine of revolutionary democracy, see Koper, M. (2018). *Does Democracy Help Africa? An enquiry into multiparty democracy, political settlement, and economic development in Africa* (Enschede: Ipskamp Printing); Abbink, J. (2011). 'Ethnic-based Federalism and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: Reassessing the experiment after 20 years', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *5*(4), 596-618; Idem, (2009). 'The Ethiopian Second Republic and the Fragile "Social Contract", *Africa Spectrum, 44(2),* 3-28; Bach, J. N. (2011). '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*(4), 641-663; Gudina, M. (2011). 'Elections and Democratization in Ethiopia, 1991–2010', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *5*(4), 664-680; Vaughan, S. (2011). 'Revolutionary Democratic State-building: Party, state and people in the EPRDF's Ethiopia', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *5*(4), 619-640; Paulos, M. (2009. 'Authoritarianism and the Ethiopian Body Politic. Dissonance between Democratization and Elite Political subculture', in Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, vol. 2, 673-690.

equality, or the opposite, which would mean a continuation of the civil war and the possible disintegration of the country. This latter worst-case scenario has been compared to the Battle of Armageddon, the fate of the Yugoslavian federation or the situation in the Republic of Somalia. These cases illustrate the destruction that can follow should a country fail to democratize by dealing with its perennial political issues (Ministry of Information, FDRE 2002). The EPRDF's democratization discourse makes a case for a reorientation of the country's political process based on this strongly dichotomized approach:

1. a path of democracy that leads to stability, and thereby the survival of the country as a political entity, or

2. a continuation of the past and a lack of democracy that could resume a civil war, which might lead to the disintegration of the country.

The EPRDF believes the only path to democracy that can deliver stability and ensure the country's survival as a political entity is its own revolutionary democracy, which constitutes its democratization discourse: 'Democracy in Ethiopia is not about the issue of choosing a better administration but an existential matter (for the country). The country needs to adopt democracy. If it doesn't, it will certainly lead to the country's disintegration (EPRDF 2000: 36). "Such [sic] type of democracy that could save the country is revolutionary democracy. It is because of this that revolutionary democracy in Ethiopia becomes not just a matter of choice but an existential/survival issue" (Ibid. 2000: 37).

It is this vision of a revolutionary democracy that the EPRDF has promoted as a democratization agenda for Ethiopia since it took political power. For the EPRDF, it is this cause for which the oppressed people of Ethiopia struggled and paid the ultimate sacrifice. The EPRDF's struggle is equated with the people's struggle, and thus its victory over the military regime is regarded as the people's victory. Basically, the EPRDF's discourse on democratization envisions a 'New Ethiopia 'through the adoption and application of its own political strategy to save the country. This is what the EPRDF as a party and government means by democratization of the country.

The EPRDF's democratization doctrine or ideological discursive narrative entails reading the country's politics through its party's lens only, and understanding that the contradictions of the past were embodied in national oppression ('the national oppression thesis ' of TPLF/EPRDF') by the Amhara elites, who dominated, marginalized and oppressed other ethnicities in the country. The EPRDF's response to such oppression was to try to reconfigure the country's politics in such a way that allowed for the self-determination rights of ethnic communities, including the right to secede from the Ethiopian state. This means, among other things, reading politics in terms of ethnicity, a radical measure meant to empower the "oppressed nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia" upon which the "New Ethiopia" was meant to be built. In other words, it is all about what the TPLF/EPRDF's understanding of the causes of Ethiopia's societal problems were and what it could offer as a solution to 'fix 'those problems to the exclusion of any other understandings and alternative solutions/visions. Any alternative understandings of the country's past and the different visions for the present and future of the politics of the country that do not conform to the EPRDF's discourse are not only presented as a wrong recipe, but are described as being a destructive path that will result in the country's disintegration (Ministry of Information, FDRE 2002).

Furthermore, the EPRDF believes consideration of those alternatives allows continuity of past oppressive regimes that were backward, anti-democracy and oppressed and subjugated the people, practices that would inevitably lead to the resumption of civil war (EPRDF 2015, EPRDF 2000, FDRE 2002). According to the logic of the EPRDF democratization discourse, such alternatives presented by opposition political forces in the country are a recipe for destruction, are undemocratic and a return to the past. The EPRDF firmly believes its own political discourse, the democratization option, should be adopted and applied and that the party and government should not concede any defeat (Ibid. 2002:13). Clearly, the EPRDF's democratization discourse is not only underpinned by this singular approach to the country's complex political context, but is an approach that equates its political discourse with the democratization agenda of the country to the exclusion of any alternative visions. It also makes the survival of the country conditional

upon the adoption/application of its democratization vision and thereby dependent on the existence of the regime itself. To that end, it has a firm conviction that the application of its vision (the democratization of the country) should not be compromised. Somehow, this is a rigid approach to building a new political process that requires at least average support from the different political actors engaged in the process. Accordingly, it is interesting to examine how the opposition political forces are being portrayed within this EPRDF discourse on democratization.

The opposition political groups should be considered when discussing Ethiopia's democratization agenda, whatever this democratization means. It is particularly important in the context of building a political process with a multi-party set-up, as the EPRDF often claims it is doing. A multi-party democracy is premised on the existence of a plurality of actors (the key players being the different political groups, including the opposition political parties and the ruling party) and choices in the political terrain of the country. In this regard, the EPRDF seems to have two contrasting positions. On the one hand, it is clear the EPRDF explicitly sees no constructive or relevant role for the opposition political forces in its democratization agenda. In fact, it categorically labels them as a force of destruction, violence, and chaos: 'From the very beginning, we have concluded in our evaluation that the opposition political organizations are forces for violence and destruction '(EPRDF 2006a: 48) (Own translation). Furthermore, 'as these parties (opposition) are of the rent-seeking type, it is clearly set out during the 'renewal period 'that they cannot be an alternative force for democracy '(EPRDF 2006b: 94). And 'As it stands now, […] these opposition parties do not have a character and any relevant role to take the country forward. The only role they can play is either to try to dismantle revolutionary democracy unconstitutionally by the use of force and rebellion or legally by trying to be an obstacle and unsettle the rooting of revolutionary democracy '(EPRDF 2000: 64).

Moreover, the EPRDF portrays the opposition political forces as antagonistic forces whose main task is to reverse its efforts to build a democracy in Ethiopia. Accordingly, their role is presented in terms of a binary opposition, generally using the prefix 'anti 'as a signifier of the agency of opposition politics. While the EPRDF describes itself as a revolutionary party building a 'New Ethiopia', the opposition forces are presented as anti-

revolutionary and nostalgic for the undemocratic past as remnants of the past regime. While the EPRDF is an agent of 'peace 'and a force for 'democracy', the opposition political forces are presented as 'anti-peace, undemocratic and anti-democracy 'forces. The opposition political forces are further depicted as 'anti-development', 'chauvinists', 'narrow nationalists 'and 'rent-seekers', whereas the EPRDF self-promotes as pro-development/developmental and a democratic nationalist force. At its extreme, these labelling practices can extend to accusing the opposition of being interlocutors of foreign interests, enemy agents and terrorists.[31] The only instance where the opposition political forces are mentioned positively in the EPRDF discourse is when they are allowed to operate within the 'legal boundary 'so that as they advance their wrong and backward alternatives to the public, they are exposed, and hence can be alienated from the political realm (EPRDF 2000a). On the other hand, the EPRDF expresses a desire to have a 'loyal opposition partner 'that can be trusted as a responsible stakeholder whose aim is not to challenge the institutionalization of the EPRDF's democratization vision, but will challenge it on other, less significant issues. It probably has in mind a party that accepts the ideals of the EPRDF, although this is not explicitly communicated. Indeed, the EPRDF believes such an opposition partner does not exist in the current political arena, and is unlikely to emerge anytime soon, as the socio-economic conditions of the country are yet to change (Ibid. 2000a). The core of this latter argument is that changes in the socio-economic conditions could result in the emergence of a middle class, a phenomenon that might create favourable conditions for competitive political party politics. In the absence of these loyal opposition parties, the EPRDF even suggests 'filling the gap 'by attempting to directly mobilize citizens through different mechanisms, including increasing its membership to over four million, organizing a 'developmental army '(in Amharic '*yelimat serawit')* and other methods, all in the name of ensuring the direct participation of the people in exercising their sovereign rights. According to the EPRDF, this is what makes its (and, by extension, the country's) 'democracy 'unique (EPRDF 2000a, 2000b, 2006b, 2006d,

[31] The EPRDF often accuses the opposition political forces (Oromo Liberation Fronts, Ogaden Liberation Front, Patriotic Ginbot 7, etc.), based in neighbouring Eritrea, as agents of the latter given the hostile relations between the two countries.

2010a). The EPRDF argues that this is an example of direct democracy. In addition to these two approaches, after the 2010 and 2015 national elections, specifically following its '100% win 'in the last parliamentary election, the EPRDF began discussing a new narrative of a 'dominant-party system'. This new development might have been induced by the need to create legitimacy for the EPRDF's continued rule by allowing the opposition to get some seats so that the political system 'resembles 'a multi-party democracy. Subsequent to the introduction of this new narrative, there has been an ongoing discussion between the EPRDF and other political parties to explore the modalities that may improve the chance of the opposition political parties 'representation, a call that the opposition shunned, as will be explained in the following chapters.[32]

4.6. Institutionalization of the EPRDF's Democratization Discourse

Following the fall of the Derg military Marxist-Leninist regime in 1991, the EPRDF established a transitional government with a transitional charter, and later the FDRE government with the promulgation of the FDRE constitution, which superseded the transitional charter. The EPRDF has remained in power since then and is undertaking the formalization of its democratization discourse, which it calls a political reform agenda and a democratization process. A key document at the core of this process is the FDRE constitution. For the EPRDF, the institutionalization of democracy means the application of this constitution, strengthening the democratic institutions it has established and nurturing 'democratic culture/thoughts'; the latter means adhering to the norms upheld by the constitution. Furthermore, the EPRDF has declared that all institutions of government, including educational establishments and the public media, should ensure the ideas and ideals underpinning the FDRE constitution are inculcated so that its vision of democracy becomes the normal political life of the country. In particular, it strongly underscores the importance of creating consensus on the basic principles. Thus, it believes, that the institutionalization of democratization/democracy will be achieved. This totalitarian approach

[32] Major opposition parties, such as the Blue Party and MEDREK (in English: 'Forum' – a coalition of a number of important opposition political parties) are not taking part in the negotiations due to their reservations about the process. Consequently, the initiative is far from inclusive.

to indoctrinate the whole society with the EPRDF's political programme is in line with the party's hegemonic aspirations and efforts to effectively solidify the foundation of the 'New Ethiopia', as discussed extensively in various party documents. While the fundamental human and democratic rights enshrined in the FDRE constitution are the espoused acceptable standards, norms and liberal values, there are a number of basic principles of the 'New Ethiopia 'state that are deeply contested. For instance, the FDRE constitution has reconfigured the country's political system by adopting an ethnic-based federalism as part of recognizing the rights of ethnic groups to self-determination, including the right to secede and the disputed rights to land ownership. In view of the fact that these have been made part of the country's constitution, a supposedly supreme law of the land which should mark a fresh beginning for the country, it is no surprise that it has become a bone of contention. Indeed, the constitution itself remains a contentious subject in the country's democratization discourse. The content and application of the constitution and the manner in which it was drafted and adopted have been severely criticized and rejected by the opposition political forces, who believe any constitution should first be negotiated and 'owned 'by all political forces before it can be endorsed as the supreme law of the land. Consequently, the institutions the EPRDF constitution has established might suffer from this extended legitimacy issue. By contrast, the EPRDF sees the FDRE constitution as a continuation of its struggle (as well as that of 'the people') to achieve its goal of 'democratizing 'the country. It is seen as not only as a democratization issue but the realization of the ideas and fundamental beliefs for which the party stands. Moreover, the FDRE constitution, which the EPRDF rightly calls its constitution, is regarded as a highly sacred document, the violation of which is presented as a 'red line 'which, if crossed, could trigger drastic measures. The impact of this institutionalized document of the EPRDF's political discourse requires further discussion, including how it interacts with the post-1991 political process of the country.

One area in which such interaction is clearly visible is in opposition politics. Needless to say, in multi-party politics, opposition political parties are the main stakeholders. A political space in which multiple political parties across the political spectrum are able to contest and engage with the ongoing political process needs to be realized. A prerequisite for achieving this is establishing a political space, both legally and through other political mechanisms, that enhances the meaningful participation of these political players, particularly that of opposition political parties. In other words, there has to be a space for normal politics, in which political actors' debate, negotiate, compete and freely present their views and alternatives on all relevant issues in the public realm, even if doing so is contrary to the interests of the ruling party. The EPRDF's democratization discourse and practices seem to be restrictive and problematic as far as opposition politics is concerned. The main factor contributing to this problem is the status and role of the constitution in the country's politics. For the EPRDF, it is the supreme law of the land and a realization of the people's struggle for democracy. As such, it is instrumental in serving as a foundation of the New Ethiopia's endeavour to build. Thus, the party presents the constitution, particularly the core beliefs that underpin it, as non-negotiable and a 'red line'. This position emanates from the EPRDF's strong beliefs about the opposition political parties ' views of the constitution. The architects of the EPRDF democratization discourse believe the opposition forces 'aim was to reverse the constitutional order, either legally (by winning elections and changing the constitution through the amendment process), or by using extra-constitutional measures, by way of violence or rebellion. The EPRDF seems to be adamant about any of these 'reversal 'attempts or plans – particularly the latter option of reversing the constitutional order that falls squarely within its red-line category, which automatically activates the EPRDF's use of force. In this sense, it is clear opposition politics (including any dissenting voices) fundamentally challenges the EPRDF and its political discourse, and therefore opposition to the constitution is perceived as a 'threat 'to the country's constitutional order. To this end, the EPRDF has enacted various laws, including anti-terrorism laws (Anti-Terrorism Proclamation no. 652) to further criminalize any serious political opposition to its regime – all in the name of national security and ensuring constitutional order as mentioned in the preamble of the proclamation. As it

moved to implement these laws, it has jailed a number of opposition party leaders, journalists and human rights activists. It has also outlawed and banned some opposition political forces as terrorist organizations since it assumed power in 1991. These measures intensified following the May 2005 election, which was conducted in a relatively freer political space and saw the opposition parties challenging the regime and winning several seats for the first time. The people and organizations the state targeted have at least one thing in common: they all crossed the EPRDF's red line. Recently the EPRDF has been forced to declare a state of emergency a number of times to contain the political crisis in the country. Evidently, beyond curtailing the political space, the EPRDF's democratization discourse is inextricably intertwined with a particular type of politics that links threat construction (security) and democracy.

The characteristics of this particular type of politics arising from the EPRDF's democratization discourse and practices include creating an environment in which the securitization of politics/political activities occurs. This securitization of politics/political activities involves presenting political issues in the country as an existential threat to the survival of either the regime (constitutional order) or the country, and therefore putting them beyond debate/discussion. Thus, they exit the realm of normal politics and become a security issue that requires security measures (use of force). This raises the question of whether the logic of democratization dictates that the more 'normal 'politics is, the more democracy there is, or whether the more securitized politics becomes, the less democracy there will be. Simply put, one may wonder whether democratization can occur and become successful in this type of highly securitized politics. In this regard, the EPRDF's own 'democratization 'journey suggests otherwise. The EPRDF declared that its doctrine of democracy is an existential issue for the survival of the country. It has securitized all other alternative visions of democratization and presented them as a 'threat 'that will lead the country on a path of destruction. It presents its own vision as the only alternative for saving the country. The failure to implement its doctrine is equated with a likelihood of state collapse. It has institutionalized its political discourse as an official democratization project and, therefore, any opposition to the official discourse is considered a threat to the constitutional order of the country, and is invariably followed by the use of force. This securitization of politics has resulted in a particular type of politics that not only restricts

opposition politics, but also impacts the country's 'democratization 'agenda. Consequently, Ethiopia's political process appears to rest on shaky foundations, and a legitimacy crisis seems inevitable. In the next chapter, oppositions 'responses will be discussed to show the legitimacy problem the EPRDF's democratization project has faced.

In sum, the EPRDF's democratization discourse is rooted in the political discourse of the TPLF, crafted by the victorious ethno-nationalist movement that played a critical role in establishing the EPRDF doctrine. The TPLF's discourse of the armed struggle phase (1974 to 1991) was fairly straightforward – it was a discourse of liberation from national oppression (both from the exploitative land tenure system of the feudal system and from the oppressive rule of the *Shoan* Amhara elites). Liberation was to be crowned by establishing a democratic republic based on the core discourse of the TPLF (i.e., revolutionary democracy), which had been in place since the beginning of the 1990s. Revolutionary democracy remained largely intact in the EPRDF's reign after 1991. Built on an exclusively EPRDF vision of a New Ethiopia, any opposition is to be crushed and any alternative vision subdued.

As a securitized doctrine, it is surmised that for the survival of the regime, the success of the state is contingent on the dominance of its vision of democracy. In this discourse, the role of the opposition political forces is null and void, insofar as they are labelled terrorists who are a source of destruction, violence and chaos. Concomitantly, the EPRDF's conceptualization of its discourse on democracy and practices has resulted in a particular type of politics in which security and democracy are linked. This securitization of politics, in turn, appears to set Ethiopia's political process on shaky foundations, which makes a legitimacy crisis seem inevitable.

Chapter Five: Discourses of Ethiopian Opposition Politics

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is one of the three dealing with the major political discourses of post-1991 Ethiopia: Those of the ruling EPRDF, the Ethiopianists and the ethno-nationalists. These discourses underpin the debate on the present and future development of the Ethiopian state, and oscillate between those who reject the EPRDF doctrine, particularly ethnic federalism, the Ethiopianists who advocate a unitary democratic federalist state, and the ethno-nationalists vying to challenge the *raison d'être* of the imperial current makeup of the Ethiopian state. In explaining the political discourses of the Ethiopianist opposition political parties, fronts and movements, this chapter argues that discursive narratives express the contestation of power between the dominant and dominated political forces. These discourses also change in relation to shifts in the political context, in which discourse is produced and reproduced as in the case of opposition political forces/ parties that have maintained their political presence from the 1960s to the present. The chapter also shows how discursive narratives on democracy and development have become major contested arenas leading to their securitization, whereby the opposition also actively engages in securitizing politics.

5.2. The Antecedents of the Ethiopianists 'Political Discourses

The politics of opposition, understood as organized practices associated with a certain political agency, is traceable to the political activities of the late 1960s, which, at their peak, led to the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution,[33] which saw the fall of the government of

[33] For details and alternative versions of the political events/history, see Zewde, B. (2014). *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement, c. 1960-1974* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer Ltd.); Tareke, G. (2009). *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); Tiruneh, A. and Andargachew, T. (1993). *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Autocracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Clapham, C. (1988). *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Markakis, J. and Ayele, N. (1986). *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press); Ottaway, M. and Ottaway, D. (1978). *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York:

Emperor Haile Selassie I. Emperor Haile Selassie I was the country's last monarch, who ruled from 1930 until his dethronement in 1974. Despite the emperor's modernizing efforts, the fundamentals underpinning the *ancien régime* remain largely problematic and intact. Politically, the emperor had absolute power. For example, the *Zufan Chilot*, the highest appellate court, presided over by the emperor himself, had overruling power over the decisions of the judiciary as a whole. The prerogative power he had over the legislature included repealing any legislation he disapproved of. Above all, sovereign power resided in the person of the king, and the legitimacy offered was a divine one, i.e. that he was an 'elect of God '(Revised Constitution 1955). Economically, feudalism, which was the basis of the monarchial system, appeared more susceptible to opposition. In the feudal system that characterized the economic activities of the *ancien régime*, it was the gentry and nobility, just below the emperor, who were seen as undeservedly benefiting from, among others, the land tenure system. In the southern part of the country, peasants turned tenants, who had to serve/maintain the ruling class, while the peasants in the northern part of the country struggled with burdens related to inconsiderate taxes, levies and tributes to the ruling class. These and a plethora of other issues gave rise to a series of opposition actions that occurred in different forms and at different times throughout the emperor's reign, but more seriously since the early 1960s. The Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) was among those forces that challenged the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and called for radical change[34].

The ESM was one of a several groups that opposed monarchial rule, but it was also different from the others in various ways, including the nature of its opposition, its role in the process that brought about the downfall of the emperor, and for the mark it left on the general politics of the country. Many other groups opposed to the monarchy can be characterized as sporadic, event-led and narrower in terms of the scope of their issues and/or the locus of the affected areas. However, the issues championed by university and high school students were more systematic and directed against the system itself. For instance,

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Holmes and Meier); Hiwet, A. (1984). 'Analysing the Ethiopian Revolution', *Review of African Political Economy*, *11*(30), 32-47; Lefort, R. (1983). *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* (London: Zed Books); Halliday, F. and Molyneux, M. (1982). *The Ethiopian Revolution* (Brooklyn, NY: New Left Books).

[34] For more on the ESM see the reading list mentioned under footnote 30 above.

the peasants 'revolts in the north of the country, such as the Gojjam Peasants Rebellion and the Bale Peasant's Rebellion, were related mainly to the injustices that resulted from a rise in taxes (in the former case) and the land tenure system (in the case of the Bale Peasants 'Rebellion). Similarly, most other challenges to the system in the period before the 1974 revolutions were of the same category. The soldiers 'mutinies in Negele Borena and other places were against harsh living conditions and motivated by a demand for salary increases. The taxi drivers 'strike was against the rise in fuel prices, and Ethiopian teachers opposed the new education policy (the Sectorial Review Initiative[35]). An exception to this, albeit incomparable to the ESM, was the abortive coup d'état in 1960. As unthinkable and 'heretical 'as it was perceived to be at the time, its goal, however, was not to fundamentally change the monarchy but to modernize it by replacing the emperor with a more modern monarchy, with significantly curbed power. The coup aimed to depose the emperor and, as disclosed by the coup leaders, the Neway brothers, put his son on the throne.[36] In contrast, the Ethiopian Student Movement, both at home and abroad (in North America and Europe) was at the forefront of opposition to the imperial system as a whole. Addis Ababa University students were pioneers in raising systematic and far-reaching questions from the early 1960s onwards. They waged a more radical struggle too. They framed the opposition to monarchial rule and raised systematic questions aimed at unsettling the imperial system. They demanded '*Land for the Tiller*', a radical land policy that would put an end to the feudal system. They attempted to highlight all the problems they saw emanating from the imperial system and sided with all those whom they perceived as an exploited class, and echoed their grievances. They questioned the foundations of the *ancien régime* itself by historicizing and problematizing its evolution and

[35] For more on the subject see Paulos, M. (1982). The Political Spectrum of Western Education in Ethiopia. *Journal of African Studies*, *9*(1), 22. Tekeste, N. (2006). *Education in Ethiopia: From crisis to the brink of collapse*. Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. And, Bishaw, A., & Lasser, J. (2012). Education in Ethiopia: Past, Present and Future Prospects. *African Nebula*, (5).

[36] The coup leaders were Brigadier General Mengistu Neway, the elder brother, who was in charge of the Imperial Palace Guards, and Girmame Neway, a Western-educated civilian who was appointed to govern the local provinces. It is widely believed the coup was plotted primarily by the latter. Both lost their lives, and their bodies were hung in public before being buried. See Clapham, C. (1968). 'The Ethiopian Coup d'etat of December 1960'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *6*(4), 495-507. In addition, the reading materials cited under footnote 1 all focus on pre-revolution events in the Ethiopian revolution.

existence. Finally, espousing Marxist-Leninist ideology, they called for the monarchy to be overthrown and replaced by a socialist revolution. In doing so, the students took the lead in the framing, conceptualization and politicization of political, economic and social issues (Andargachew 1993; Kiflu 1993). Amidst the harsh government response, which included imprisonments, killings and politically motivated dismissals from the university, they persisted in their struggle and played a key role in the revolution that overthrew the emperor. As such, they were effectively conducting opposition politics not only in relation to the imperial regime, but also to the two subsequent regimes – Mengistu's regime (1974-1991) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front regime (1991-present). This role of student movements in opposition politics warrants further discussion.

Many of the opposition political forces/organizations emerged out of the ESM. As their opposition against the imperial system intensified, the students 'movement became more radical and leftist in its ideological orientation. Different clandestine groups, which later emerged as major political forces, had their roots in the student movement. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM), better known by its Amharic acronym, Meison (yemela Etiyophiya Socialist Niqinaqe), were the two main political forces that sprang out of the movement. Other ethno-nationalist liberation fronts stemmed from the movement too. Whereas all of these political forces were ideologically Marxist-Leninist, they differed in their conceptualizations of political, economic and social issues. Additionally, their differences expanded to the tactical/strategic issues of their struggle against what they initially regarded as their 'common enemy '(the emperor regime) and on the end goals of their respective struggles. However, the alleged variations often become blurred as one zooms in on the political forces under consideration. That said, based on their conceptualization of the political and socio-economic issues (politicization of their grievances) and their visions for the country, one can broadly group the opposition forces as pan-Ethiopianist or 'centripetal ' forces and ethno-nationalist liberation fronts or 'centrifugal 'forces. Reference to their interpretation of societal contradictions in their conceptualization of monarchial rule makes this clustering more plausible. For instance, while the Pan-Ethiopianists understood the

major contradiction in Ethiopian society in terms of class exploitation, and conceived a nationwide struggle to radically change the system, the ethno-nationalists understood the major contradiction as ethnic domination/(internal colonialism, depending on the group in question and sought the liberation of their respective ethnic communities. Additionally, while the Pan-Ethiopianists envisaged an end goal more focused on the whole of Ethiopia and aimed at advancing the territorial integrity/inviolability of the country, the ethno-nationalist focus was on emancipatory ends for their ethnic communities, which also included secession for some groups. These variations in the conceptualization of societal problems have been evident for the past 24 years (1991-2015), defining the political spectrum of the country and serving as an important feature of opposition politics since the time of the ESM. Thus, dividing the opposition along Pan-Ethiopianist (centripetal) forces and ethno-nationalist (centrifugal) forces provides a good foundation for the following discussion on opposition discourses.

Accordingly, the first part of the discussion presents Pan-Ethiopianist opposition political discourses, and the second part presents ethno-nationalist opposition political discourses. The discussions are aimed at uncovering how Ethiopian opposition politics in both camps has manifested in its conceptualizations of societal problems (political, economic and social) and the characterization of struggles in relation to the ruling regimes these forces oppose or have opposed. To achieve the aim of the discussion, this study has aimed to sketch the trajectories of opposition politics in terms of the temporality issue, the relevance of the representations and the dynamics of the nature of the opposition *vis-á-vis* the ruling regimes. For instance, while the scope of this study is from 1991-2015, the discussion on Pan-Ethiopianist political discourse goes back to the opposition political discourses that began in the 1960s by analyzing the political discourse of the EPRP and AESM. Likewise, for the discussion of the ethno-nationalists, organizations such as the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden Liberation Front, which were founded in the same period as the EPRP and AESM, are parts of the analysis. This has two major advantages. The first is that the discussion is enriched by acknowledging that opposition politics in Ethiopia has its roots in the politics of this era and, indeed, today's opposition is largely a continuation of the politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the analysis focuses on the more recent past, while it also considers the earlier developments. Second, it is

clear opposition politics is an intergenerational undertaking incorporating both convergent and divergent ways. This must be reflected in any discussion in order to remedy any gaps that might arise from the temporal focus of this study. An equally important point for consideration is the selection of the political forces included in this discussion.

Since 1991, there have been over 90 political parties legally registered to operate in Ethiopia (National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, 2017). This figure does not include those political forces that operate outside the legal realm of the incumbent government. In the pre-1991 period, too, there were different political forces, but they are beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on the key opposition political forces between 1991 and 2015. The political opposition groups under discussion have been selected for the 'weight 'of their contributions to political life in Ethiopia, a notion elaborated in the discussion below. Finally, the various objectives (democracy or secession), methods (peaceful or armed struggle) and the different relations these opposition political forces have had over time with the different ruling regimes are examined to reflect the dynamism and efforts to ensure representation in the opposition's political discourse.

5.3. Pan-Ethiopianists 'Political Discourse

This section explores the political discourses of Pan-Ethiopianist political forces by focusing specifically on how they conceptualize issues of political and socio-economic importance. Furthermore, it briefly sheds light on the characteristics of their struggles by examining the nature and strategies of their opposition activities. The Pan-Ethiopianist forces discussed (in order) are: 1) EPRP; 2) AESM/MEISON; 3) Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU); 4) All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP); 5) Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP); 6) Ginbot 7: Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy; and 7) Blue Party (or *Semayawi* in Amharic). The first two are the 'giants 'that emerged out of the Ethiopian Student Movement, and represent the leftist camp, while the EDU was a pro-monarchial party established after the 1974 revolution and the dethronement of the emperor. As such, it represents a non-leftist discourse from the 1970s. The remaining political forces in the

above list were established in the post-1991 era and currently represent the main opposition to the incumbent regime's rule, some acting peacefully and others, as discussed below, through armed struggle.

5.3.1. The Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

The EPRP was established as a clandestine group in April 1972, just two years before the 1974 revolution. Its existence, however, was not officially declared until August 1975. It was founded by students who played a key role in the Ethiopian Student Movement. Its party newsletter, *Democracia*, was published well before the official declaration of the party and was influential in shaping the discourses of the struggle and the course of the revolution. It is now over 45 years since the party was established, and to this day it continues its struggle, despite the heavy losses it suffered in wars with various regimes and the brutal repression it experienced mainly from the Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam and the TPLF/EPRDF. It has lost many of its founding leaders and hundreds of its members and supporters. The EPRP was the most formidable force in the pre-revolution period, with solid foundations in student organizations, labour unions and in key urban areas. However, during and after the 1974 revolution it was almost annihilated by the campaign of 'Red Terror '(1976-1978) by the Derg military dictatorship regime. Its role as a political opposition and its struggle against the three successive regimes: the *ancien régime* of the Haile Selasie government, the Derg military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam, and the incumbents must be highlighted in order to examine how the EPRP understands politics and the characteristics of its struggle over four decades.

As a party that emerged from the Ethiopian Student Movement, the EPRP regarded the *ancien régime* as a source of the problems confronting the country. Clearly, for a party that espoused a Marxist-Leninist ideology, monarchial rule was inconceivable, and the EPRP regarded it as the cause of societal contradictions. It was labelled an oppressive system that stood for a few elites imposing their rule over the masses, thereby negating the popular sovereignty principle. The EPRP saw it as an anti-democratic one-man dictatorship that divided and discriminated against the people of Ethiopia based on religion, class and ethnicity. They also blamed the feudal system upon which the monarchy was based as the major source of societal contradictions. The EPRP blamed the feudal class –

the nobility and the gentry, the clergy and the foreign investors – for exploiting the masses (the peasantry, workers, petty bourgeois, low-ranking military officers and soldiers). And they rejected the land tenure system because the nobility and the gentry benefited from it at the expense of the peasantry. In this regard, the ESM sympathized with the various peasants 'rebellions in different parts of the country which echoed their 'Land for the Tiller 'slogan. The EPRP also supported the peasants in the southern part of the country, who had become subject to oppression as tenants of the feudal class, and insisted that their democratic right to self-determination be restored. The EPRP believed the political and cultural dominance of the settler Amhara ruling elites was exacerbating the plight of the peasants in the south, and highlighted their claim that class was the (material) basis for the contradictions in society (Kiflu 1993). True to its Marxist-Leninist convictions, its support for secessionism was not in the form of an endorsement but a declaration that it would fully adhere to a Leninist resolution of the issue. Additionally, it believed that once the class contradiction was resolved, other contradictions in society would be addressed too. This was a further indication of the party's application of Marxist-Leninist tenets to the issue of the nationality question. The problems of monarchial rule were further externalized, and the country's relationship with the West became a political issue. Like any other leftist movements of the time, the EPRP also made imperialism part of its struggle against monarchial rule. In the context of the Cold War, the emperor's government sided with the US and other Western interests in the Horn of Africa region, making the regime a beneficiary of extensive support, including military aid, from the West – a critical factor in sustaining its rule. As a result of this support, the global socialist movement narrative about the U.S. (in a Cold War context) and the presence of foreign investment, which was seen as 'a tool to extract 'raw materials by global capitalists, U.S. imperialism was seen as inherent to the 'enemy class'. The party called for the entire imperial system, including monarchial rule and feudalism, to be abolished. It also sought an overhaul of the land policy (i.e., the enactment of a land redistribution policy in response to the Land for the Tiller campaign) and the establishment of a democratic republic government for the oppressed masses, which, of course, excluded the enemy class outright. Its list of enemy class included the 'reactionary 'monarch, the nobility and gentry and the 'reactionaries ' and 'imperialists. 'The EPRP framed its struggle as being anti-feudal, anti-bureaucratic

capitalism, anti-reactionary, anti-imperialist, anti-democracy, anti-people and anti-exploitation. It subsequently launched an urban-based movement and promoted armed struggle.[37] In sum, the EPRP wanted a socialist revolution, and it believed this was possible with the party as the vanguard.

As the opposition to monarchial rule grew, so did the potential for revolution. This, coupled with ruptures within the regime itself, resulted in the emperor being overthrown on September 12, 1974. The absence of organized opposition politics following the downfall of the Haile Selassie I government created a leadership vacuum, a situation that led the Derg, a military committee of low- and middle-ranking officers, to take over state power. At the time, both leftist organizations that emerged out of the student movement, the EPRP and AESM, were operating underground as clandestine organizations but were actively engaged in the opposition movement and in the revolution by, among other things, issuing political newsletters. Following the military takeover, the existence of these organizations was officially declared. The Derg military committee, which initially stated that its intervention was provisional, turned into a dictatorship, with its leader, Major Mengistu Haile Mariam, consolidating his power by eliminating his contenders internally and establishing a military dictatorship. Mengistu ruled the country with an iron fist for 17 years (1974-1991). Ironically, Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime declared itself to be revolutionary and a vanguard of the people's struggle. In this new revolutionary role, it issued a land proclamation that aimed to end the feudal land tenure system, a move which was well received by peasants in the south and the revolutionary groups. Mengistu also took other revolutionary measures but these are beyond the scope of this discussion. The EPRP supported Derg's land proclamation despite its reservations about how it was to be implemented. That said, it remained a major opposition to the Derg. It called for the replacement of the military government by a provisional popular government to be formed by anti-feudal and anti-imperialist political parties, groups and mass organizations (*Democracia*, n.d:13, II). Its demands further included democratic rights such as free speech,

[37] The EPRP's analysis of the imperial regime and the characterization of its struggle against it can further be found in the selected *Democracia* Series referred to here. *Democracia*, n.1,v.1, *Democracia*, n.2,v.1, *Democracia*, n.3,v.1, *Democracia*, n.4,v.1, *Democracia*, n.5,v.1, *Democracia*, n.6,v.1, *Democracia,* n.7,v.1, *Democracia*, n.10,v.1, *Democracia*, n.11, and *Democracia*, n.12,v.1)

free press and right of assembly for the political groups/parties, and mass organizations opposed to feudalism and imperialism (Ibid., n.d:13, II). It also questioned Derg's policy towards Eritrea and demanded the revocation of those foreign treaties the party regarded as a mark of dependence on imperialism (Ibid., n.d:13, II). These questions, which the EPRP dubbed urgent, and its criticisms of the Derg did not appease the latter. The feuding and apparently irreconcilable competition for political power, which also involved the AESM, provoked political violence that not only claimed the lives of many Ethiopians, but also left its mark on the general politics of the country. What the EPRP started as 'self-defense 'measures, unleashed the military dictatorship's campaign of Red Terror, which resulted in the death of thousands (Gebru 2008; Babile 1997; Tessema 2018). Of course, this resulted in the military regime being put on the EPRP's list of enemies and being called a 'chauvinist fascist dictatorship 'with which it waged an armed struggle following its defeat in the urban areas. The military dictatorship was further described as anti-people, anti-struggle, anti-democracy, anti-nation, anti-worker, anti-revolutionary, pseudo-socialist, etc., which, according to the EPRP, justified its status as a legitimate object of the armed struggle that needed to be eliminated. Its list of enemies was also expanded to include Soviet socialist imperialism as a result of its relations and considerable support for the Derg military government after the latter proclaimed itself a socialist force committed to achieving a socialist revolution.[38]

The EPRP's opposition continued into the post-1991 era. Following the downfall of Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime in 1991, it called for the establishment of a provisional government that excluded the Derg. However, the TPLF/EPRDF regime, the ethno-nationalist force that won the war over the Derg, excluded the EPRP from the process of forming the transitional government that was being installed under the auspices of the incumbent TPLF/EPRDF government. The EPRP's exclusion from the post-1991 political process was not surprising, given the heightened animosity that existed between itself and the

[38] For the EPRP's characterization of the Derg military junta and the issues it was raising against it, see *Democracia*, n.13,v.1, *Democracia*, n.20,v.II, *Democracia*, n.23,v.II, *Democracia*, n.29,v.II, *Democracia*, n.2,v.III, *Democracia*, n.6,v.III., *Democracia*, n.7,v.III., *Democracia*, nd.9-10,v.III., *Democracia*, n.2,v.IV., *Democracia*, n.5,v.IV., *Democracia*, n.1,v.vi, *Democracia*, v.15, special edition September 1990, and *Democracia*, n.2,v.16

victorious TPLF. While the two groups attempted to organize themselves to wage an armed struggle against the Derg military, the two became engaged in a battle over political issues that the TPLF won. Consequently, the two groups became sworn enemies, hence the exclusion of the EPRP. This unfortunate animosity between the country's political forces remains a tragic feature of Ethiopian political life and had far-reaching repercussions that will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

On its part, the EPRP attempted to initiate a parallel process aimed at establishing a transitional government. It mobilized exiled opposition groups and formed a taskforce to operate the country. However, members of the taskforce who travelled to Addis Ababa were arrested and some were immediately deported upon their arrival at Bole International Airport. The party strongly condemned its exclusion from the TPLF/EPRDF-initiated process and the blocking of its alternative process. Since then, it had become part of the opposition group that operated outside the legal realms of the incumbent government up to the period 2018. The EPRP persists in its opposition against TPLF/EPRDF rule, in what it calls the struggle against *woyane* rule, a reference to it being a movement originating from a minority ethnic group. The EPRP has articulated its bitter opposition to TPLF/EPRDF rule by labelling it as an anti-Ethiopia force that has sold out the country to its historic enemies, including Egypt. It further described the TPLF/EPRDF as a non-Ethiopian government that serves as a Trojan horse for foreign interests that run contrary to the national interests of the country (*Democracia, n.d 4, 37: 2-3*). It has depicted the woyane leadership as being a racist dictatorship, narrow nationalist, anti-people, a traitor and a totalitarian government committed to destroying Ethiopia. It has also accused the TPLF of taking part in the campaign of Red Terror in Tigray during the Derg era. In fact, the EPRP believe the Red Terror is still active in Ethiopia under the incumbent government, although on a reduced scale (Babile 1997: i-iii). Finally, the EPRP believes that, under woyane rule, Ethiopia's existence is seriously threatened, and it has called for the dismantling woyane rule (*Democracia,* special edition May 2002).

> "In today's Ethiopia, after 40 years of terror, agony, imprisonment, killings, fleeing, humiliation and oppressions, the country's existence itself has come under serious threat" (*Democracia*, n.d 4, 37:2).

Apparently, the EPRP's conceptualization of politics has remained a securitized one. Its vision to 'democratize 'Ethiopia remains contingent upon first removing the regimes in power since 1974. It perceives them of as a 'threat 'to be dismantled, and resorted to political violence to realize its vision of a 'New Democratic Revolution 'against the imperial and Derg regimes. In its opposition to the incumbent regime, the EPRP has engaged in bloody urban and guerrilla warfare. More recently, however, its use of political violence has been minimal due to the weakening of the party. Nevertheless, it currently promotes itself as a 'social democracy 'party (EPRP 2009: 5), a shift from its previous affiliation to Marxist-Leninist ideology. It is also noteworthy that the party has become a centrist advocate of Pan-Ethiopinism/union as it fiercely opposes the current ethnic-federalism arrangement, thereby silently toning down its Marxist-Leninist stand on the issue of nationality. Its political discourses nevertheless remain a manifestation of a securitized politics.

5.3.2. All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) or MESIONE

The All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) is another leftist political organization that emerged out of the Ethiopian Student Movement. It was founded in Hamburg, Germany, in 1968 by Ethiopian educated elites who were in Europe at that time to pursue their advanced studies. Its existence was, however, kept covert, for fear of political repression back home. It was only disclosed after the revolution erupted in 1974; however, the organization was politically active underground and used to circulate its newsletter, *the Voices of the Masses*, which was akin to the EPRP's *Democracia*. The AESM became a formidable political force, particularly in the formative years of the Derg period, during which its feuding and competition for power with the ERPR turned deadly and left them both prey to the military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. After the Derg regime fell, the AESM continued its opposition, now aimed at the current EPRDF regime. It is one of the political parties the TPLF/EPRDF did not invite into the transitional government formation process in 1991. Indeed, it was not only excluded from the transitional process, but it was also not recognized legally as a political force in the post-1991 politics of the country till 2018, and thus it operated in exile from the West. Its influence on, and

reach into, Ethiopia's political life has made it a relevant actor, and hence a brief discussion is warranted on its political discourses and the attributes of its struggle against successive regimes over four decades.

The AESM, one of the two organizations that stemmed from the student movement, shared political readings with the EPRP on the conditions that necessitated an immediate political struggle. To this end, it associated the country's problems with what it called the dark age of feudal reign (Meisone 2013). The feudal system that underpinned the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I was regarded as causing poverty, backwardness, exploitation, and as being an oppressive system that stood for a few, i.e., the gentry and nobility and, as such, was anti-people. It was an absolute monarchy that was perceived as inherently anti-democracy. The land tenure system was identified as a major problem, sustaining the feudal system at the expense of the peasantry. Moreover, the AESM believed the imperial regime system was oppressing the majority of nationalities living in the country. In other words, as an organization that espoused Marxist-Leninist ideology, the AESM understood the problems of the country as class contradictions arising from the material basis of the *ancien régime* – the feudal system coupled with national oppression and other injustices and discriminations based on religion, sex and culture. Its struggle was about dismantling the institutions of the *ancien régime*: the monarchial rule, feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism. Moreover, its struggle was framed as being against these enemies of the Ethiopian people and the reactionary feudal and fascist Ethiopian government. It characterized its struggle as anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-people, anti-bureaucratic capitalist, etc. (Meisone 2013; Asegid 2000). Consequently, it played an active role in the pre-revolutionary period by proactively advancing the rallying cry of the time, "Democracy, land for the tiller, equality for nationalities" and by calling for the establishment of a provisional popular government once the revolution toppled the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I. True to its Marxist-Leninist convictions, the aim of its struggle was to build a socialist system, to be realized by waging a national democratic revolution by all means, including protracted armed struggle, though this latter option was never carried out (Meisone 2013: 8). The party sought to lead the potential revolutionary forces in a systematic way in order to achieve the envisaged revolutionary goals,

including the ultimate goal of a socialist system. Accordingly, it pursued a different strategy, tactics and understandings of the nationality question, which brought it into direct conflict with the EPRP and, later, the Derg.

One key difference the AESM had with the EPRP and other leftist ethno-nationalist movements was its understanding of the nationality question. Initially, as a Pan-Ethiopianist movement, its understanding of the nationality question was similar to that of the EPRP. Both regarded it as a secondary issue that could be resolved once democracy had been achieved and the major class issues had been addressed (Assegid 2000). In short, while the AESM adopted a Leninist approach to the nationality question, and thus embraced the notion of self-determination rights including up to secession, it initially held back from endorsing the policy of 'secession 'as a right for all, contrary to the EPRP's stance. Later, however, it upheld the Derg's regional autonomy approach to the nationality question, thereby confirming its difference on the issue from the EPRP and other ethno-nationalist movements. It also differed in its understanding of the existence of revolutionary conditions on the ground, on the timing of forming a revolutionary leftist political organization and on the timeliness of the methods of struggle employed by other leftist organizations, particularly the EPRP. It generally believed the time was ripe for revolutionary organizations to be formed in order to lead the struggle according to the EPRP's and other leftists 'approaches. Instead, the AESM chose to operate clandestinely and organize revolutionary forces (the peasantry, workers, laborers). Accordingly, it regarded the struggle methods of the EPRP as a manifestation of 'left infantilism' 'adventurism ' and 'anarchism '(Andargachew 2000: 49-73; Haile 1977). Amidst its growing feud with the EPRP, the AESM chose to collaborate with the Derg, adopting a policy of what it called 'providing critical support'. The earlier differences and this collaboration with the Derg heightened animosity between the two, which unfolded in tragic political violence (the White Terror, Red Terror, "Netsa irmija" – an Amharic phrase meaning counter self-defence attack on the EPRP). Those who survived the Derg's brutal attacks fled into exile. The surviving members of the AESM leadership continued their opposition to the incumbent EPRDF regime.

According to the AESM, the current TPLF/EPRDF regime is a narrow ethno-nationalist rebellion force that was imposed on the Ethiopian people by the Western powers and the regional reactionary Arab countries (Meisone 2013:1-4). The AESM argued that, due to their hatred of the Derg's self-proclaimed socialism, foreign supporters backed the establishment of the supremacy of the minority Tigrean Liberation Front over the rest of the country in 1991, also allowing Eritrean secession. Consequently, Ethiopia disintegrated, lost access to its port and became a tribalist federation under the guardianship of the *woyane* minority dictatorship rule (Ibid. 2013:1-4). The AESM believes the tribalist/ethnic federation was a façade that never realized the nationality question. The economic policy of the TPLF/EPRDF is seen as only working for a few, while the majority continue to suffer in poverty. The land policy is seen as a measure that reverses the 'land for the tiller 'era, as under the EPRDF, the land has become government property. In sum, the AESM firmly believes Ethiopia is in a dark age, in the grip of an 'anti-democratic', 'anti-people' 'anti-peace', 'anti-Ethiopia' 'foreign agent – 'a traitorous, oppressive regime under the minority TPLF, which rules the country by force and has declared a Stalinist constitution (Negede 2004). Moreover, it accuses the TPLF/EPRDF of deliberately causing ethnic hatred, tribalist/ethnic conflicts and religious conflicts in a bid to divide and rule the country and thereby wreak havoc. The TPLF/EPRDF regime is also accused of disintegrating the country by including the right to secede in the constitution and by allowing the secession of Eritrea. In doing so, the AESM contends that the *woyane*/EPRDF leadership poses a serious threat to the country and people of Ethiopia. The AESM strongly believes a struggle against the woyane regime of the anti-Ethiopian 'lackey 'is an obligation that can be justified nationally, humanly and morally (Negede 2004: 182) with the aim of attaining Freedom, Justice and Democracy (Meisone 1995: 1-2). To this end, it has repeatedly called for the uprooting of the *woyane* regime. Its struggle against the incumbent government started in 1991 when it attempted to initiate a parallel transitional process with other political forces. The TPLF/EPRDF rejected that attempt and excluded the AESM from the transitional process. Since then, it has been playing a key role in organizing an alliance of the opposition against the government in Addis Ababa. A notable instance is its role in establishing the Ethiopian Democratic Forces Union or in Am-

haric, *hibret*, later on *MEDREK*.[39] This coalition challenged the EPRDF in the 2005 election and won a significant number of seats in the federal parliament. The coalition's strategic document, which was prepared by a leading AESM member, called for the 'stirring ' of a popular peaceful rebellion to remove the entire EPRDF "Stalinist constitutional regime", using the election as a pretext. This generated serious anger and a reaction from the EPRDF, which proved the AESM's influence and relevance in the ongoing political process.[40]

Clearly, the AESM's political discourse is about dismantling/removing the current political order using all available means. The current order and the incumbent as a political agent are perceived as a threat, as were the past two regimes. Like the EPRP, they were also a generation of leftist parties that subscribed to the use of violence as a political means. As the AESM persisted in its opposition to the three regimes, its orientation began to shift to an emphasis on Ethiopian unity, thereby appearing less leftist, if leftist at all.

5.3.3. All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP)

The AEUP is a successor organization to the All Amhara Peoples 'Organization (AAPO), which was established in 1992 during the transition period. The AAPO was founded to present and defend the interests of the Amhara people, who had been the target of attacks since 1991, the party believed. The killing of ethnic Amhara people in places such as Arbagugu in the Hararghe and Oromia, and the proliferation of ethnic-based parties with

[39] The Ethiopian Democratic Forces Union is a coalition of over 15 different political forces that operate in the country and abroad. It was established just before the May 2005 election in a bid to form a united front against the ruling party in the subsequent election, when it successfully challenged the ruling EPRDF coalition especially in the Oromia region and in the Southern region. Later, in 2008, other political forces joined, and the name changed to *MEDREK* meaning "coalition" in Amharic. To date, the coalition is a key opposition force in the country.

[40] Prime Minister Meles mentioned this book (Negede's Book, mentioned above) and told Professor Beyene, President of the EDFU, that his government could have arrested him long ago for endorsing the book. He mentioned this in a meeting that took place during the post-2005 election crisis, when opposition party leaders were negotiating with the EPRDF in the presence of EU representatives. For more, see pages 435-436 in a book by Berhanu Nega, who was among those present at the meeting: Berhanu Nega (2006). *The Dawn of Freedom: An Attempted Reversal on Ethiopian Democracy* (M.M. Publishers: Kampala, Uganda).

anti-Amhara sentiments during the transitional period led to the establishment of the AAPO as an emergency response, the party claims (*Andinet*, 14 May 1994). However, the party later transformed into a multi-national Pan-Ethiopianist vanguard party in 2002 (AEUP 2003).[41] It has an official newsletter called *Andinet*, an Amharic word meaning unity. A relevant background note about the AEUP states that it is a non-leftist opposition party that emerged after 1991, as part of a new political phenomena in the country's political process. As a legally registered political party it participated in the formation of the transitional government as a major dissenting voice. It later withdrew from the process entirely. Its opposition to the EPRDF regime continued in subsequent years, reaching a climax during the 2005 election when it formed a Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) with other opposition parties and successfully challenged the EPRDF government in the election, which resulted in a major win for the opposition parties. As its opposition to the EPRDF government continued, gaining momentum since the start of TPLF/EPRDF rule, it has become the main target of a crackdown by the ruling regime. Many of its leaders, members and supporters have been subjected to brutality and its leaders, including Professor Asrat Woldeyes and Engineer Hailu Shawul, arrested[42]. In its stance, however, the party has remained fiercely opposed to what it calls a dark period of divide-and-rule during which the ruling regime officially sponsored inter-ethnic conflicts that jeopardized the unity and sovereignty of the country (AEUP 2003).

[41] It must be noted that the AAPO leadership splintered, and a breakaway group carried on as the AAPO. But generally, the AAPO is widely believed to have been succeeded by the AEUP, which was formed from the majority of the AAPO leadership, members and supporters. Another interesting development emerged as a movement called 'Dagmawi AAPO', a second AAPO was recently established in the diaspora. For more, see the movement's website: http://www.aapo-mahd.org/; last accessed 05/03/2019.

[42] Just to mention two instances, Prof. Asrat Woldeyes, the feuding president of the AAPO, was arrested and kept in prison for 43 days. He made a total of over 55 court appearances in a three-year period. During his court appearances, hundreds of people were reportedly detained. The another instance of repression against the party leadership was after the 2005 election, when Hailu Shaul, the chairman of the party, was arrested and kept in solitary confinement in a dark prison cell for 28 days before he joined other prisoners. For more, see *Andinet* May 16, 1994, and Hailu (2013), *My Life and Political Participation* (an autobiography of the writer, written in Amharic).

The AEUP contends that all Ethiopia's current problems stem from the ERPDF's ideologies and practices. Politically, it believes the EPRDF's governance strategy is a one party, neo-Marxist, "apartheid" system that denies the exercise of civil liberties and has kept people "hostage" using state power (economic resources and the use of force). It is a regime that has carried out a sustained onslaught on the country's unity, history and national pride by adopting a divisive, ethnic-driven policy (Ibid. 2003). Economically, it regards the EPRDF's declared free market economy a verbal exercise. Moreover, it problematizes the government's land policy and sees it as being used for political purposes. Among other things, it singles out the business conglomerate of the ruling TPLF as being responsible for serious economic malpractices that need to be addressed. Moreover, under a continued EPRDF reign, it sees the country heading on a destructive path that poses a serious threat, one that requires immediate resolution (Ibid. 2003; Hailu 2013:151-154). To this end, it calls on all the people to stand up and combat what it calls organized evil against the Ethiopian state and Ethiopianism. On its part, the AEUP is committed to a full reversal of this "despicable" government policy, as stated below:

> "to accept the evil and anti-democratic practice of the official ethnicization of Ethiopia – the only such country in the entire world with this detestable system as a government policy – and serve as an instrument of such evil designs is to condemn Ethiopia to perpetual backwardness and poverty. Our party is committed to a full reversal of this despicable government policy" (AEUP 2003: 3-4).

The AEUP not only plans to reverse the policy but it essentially sees all government institutions as an instrument of the institutionalization of the EPRDF's beliefs and tenets. Consequently, its overall aim is regime change, but through peaceful political struggle. This includes revising the constitution, thereby reconstituting the whole governmental system. It aims to achieve this by introducing liberal democracy, a free market economy and by bringing land under private ownership. On the issue of federalism, the AEUP

seeks to introduce an alternative to the current ethnic-based federalism; however, to date, its alternative lacks any detail as to what exactly its plans are, although it refers to geographic proximity, settlement patterns and suitability for socio-economic development. Given the divide in the country's political sphere on this issue, one can easily infer that the AEUP is pro-unity in its resolve, as opposed to the ethno-nationalist stance on the issue. This is particularly so given the emphasis it makes on national unity and the territorial integrity of the country (Ibid. 2003:3-4). Moreover, the party characterizes its struggle as one against 'narrow nationalism', 'ethno-centred egoism 'and 'anti-unity forces'. It also sees its struggle as being against anti-democratic forces – a list which goes beyond the TPLF/EPRDF regime and includes other secessionist ethno-nationalist forces, which the party regards as enemies of Ethiopian unity and sovereignty. It calls for the dismantling of the 'enemy of Ethiopia', i.e. the TPLF/EPRDF regime.

Additionally, it is important to note the AEUP's radical stance towards the Transitional Government Charter, the constitution and its outright rejection of the TPLF/EPRDF regime. It sees the latter as an anti-Ethiopia force, usurping power backed by foreign forces to disintegrate the unity of the country. It perceives the Charter as a move by the Tigirigna-speaking (ethnic Tigreans) to take control of economic and political power together with "alien" forces, i.e. Eritreans (*Andinet*, 14 May 1994). The TPLF regime is regarded as an enemy of Ethiopia because, among others, it allowed the secession of the province of Eritrea from Ethiopia. Furthermore, the AEUP regards the TPLF/EPRDF's recognition of self-determination rights, including the right to secession, for the country's different nationalities as destructive and a threat to the country's unity (Hailu 1996, interview; Asrat 1994, interview). It also has accused the ruling party of instigating animosity/revenge against the Amhara ethnic group by associating all the problems of the country with the Amhara and labelling it as "chauvinist" and "*neftegna*" (AAPO, 2000). The AAPO believe the charter and the FDRE constitution were a mere institutionalization of the Dedebit Manifesto, the TPLF's declared political programme imposed on the people of Ethiopia. In fact, on the same date the FDRE constitution was ratified, the AAPO declared its objection and called for the establishment of a provisional government, claiming that the

TPLF/EPRDF had no mandate to draft a constitution, contrary to the TPLF/EPRDF's regime-sponsored transition process (*Andinet*, February 1995).

Thus, the AEUP's political discourse is fundamentally opposed to the EPRDF's political and legal reorderings of post-1991 Ethiopia. It contests the whole political process of post-1991 Ethiopia, including the legitimacy of the TPLF/EPRDF, both of which are perceived as a 'threat 'to the country's existence. As a precondition to its vision of democratization, the AEUP seeks the removal of the incumbent and the reversal of the latter's New Ethiopia. Its adamant upholding of Pan-Ethiopianist politics and skepticism towards ethno-nationalist forces reveals the tension that underlies the political discourses of the Ethiopian opposition. This is evident in its rejection of ethnic based federalism and its disapproval of ethno-nationalist movements/political parties. Therefore, it is fundamentally opposed to the ruling TPLF/EPRDF and the ethno-nationlist political forces.

5.3.4. Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP)

The Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) is a non-leftist, Pan-Ethiopianist opposition political party established in 1999/2000 in the TPLF/EPRDF era. It is one of four parties that established the CUD in the pre-2005 national election and, consequently, it rose to prominence in the opposition political arena. In particular, its profile has been raised as a result of its founder and long-time leader, Mr. Lidetu Ayalew, who has remained a controversial figure in the opposition camp. Among other things, this controversy stems from Ayalew's alleged role in ending the CUD coalition, a subject beyond this discussion.[43] As

[43] There was serious allegation about Lidetu's ties with the EPRDF and the spy agency. Both Hailu Shawul and Berhanu Negga mentioned this allegation without providing much information. Lidetu has denied any link to the EPRDF/intelligence agency, although the allegation against him seems to be widely upheld. For more on the accusations, see the books written by the aforementioned leaders. Hailu Shawul (2013), My life and Political Participation, (an autobiography of the writer published in Amharic). Addis Ababa: Far East Trading. Lidetu, A. (2010) Medilot, published in Amharic. Addis Ababa: Progress Printing. Lidetu, A. (2006). Ye arem irisha, published in Amharic. Addis Ababa: Progress Printing. Berhanu, N. (2006). Yenetsanet Goh siqedi: Liqelebesi yetemokorewu ye Etiyopiya democracy (The Dawn of Freedom: an attempted reversal on Ethiopian democracy). Kampala, Uganda: M.M. Publishers.

an opposition political party, however, the EDP is one of the few in the opposition to attempt to clearly articulate its position vis-a-vis the ruling TPLF/EPRDF regime and the actors in the opposition camp in a written form.[44] The subsequent discussion briefly presents the discourses of the party in relation to its rationale, position and the characteristics of its political struggle based on a review of the party's key documents.

The EDP's stance is that there is no democracy and that the country is in darkness under the current TPLF/EPRDF rule. To the EDP, the ruling regime has imposed its rule on the country's people down the barrel of the gun, a reference to how it seized state power in 1991 after defeating the military junta. It essentially sees the country's problem as the continuation of a plethora of problems related to governance, backwardness and the exacerbation of extreme poverty under the current TPLF/ERPDF 'totalitarian 'regime, which organizes 'sham elections 'ostensibly to promote democratic governance. The EDP regards the current FDRE constitution as having no legitimacy. It sees it as an institutionalization of the political programme of the ruling party. It further states that it is an imposition of the ruling group's interests and its ideology of revolutionary democracy on the people. It therefore insists that the FDRE constitution is not based on the consent of the majority of the people and is not a properly negotiated document. As such, it is a winners ' document (Lidetu, 2010, 2016). Due to the regime's legitimacy crisis, the EDP asserts that the institutions established by the constitution are also illegitimate. The EDP objects to the regime's fundamental ideals. To this end, it rejects the notion of ethnic federalism as informing the reconstitution of the country. It regards the reordering of the country based on ethnicity as racist, divisive and discriminatory and states that, among other things, it is based on incorrect readings of the history of the country and what it means to be Ethiopian (EDP 2003a). This tribalist federalism not only ignores individual rights in

[44] See, for instance, its official documents (All published in Amharic in a six-volume series): (1) EDP (2003a), Analysis of EDP's Political program: Political beliefs and strategies (vol.1), (2) EDP (2003b), EDP's Stand on Government Restructuring and Organization (vol.2), (3) EDP (2003c), EDP's Economic Development Policy and strategies (Vol.3), (4) EDP (2003d), EDP's Policy and strategies on Agricultural, Industry and other Related Economic Issues (Vol.4), (5) EDP (2003e), EDP's Policy on social issues, Vol.5, and (6) EDP (2003f), EDP's stand on electoral system. All are available online at http://edponline.org, accessed on (February 23, 2019).

favor of group rights but, like the constitution and the ruling regime itself, is an imposition on the people of the country by force. Thus, it characterizes the current regime as combining racism with dictatorship to rule the country (Ibid. 2003a: 49). On the inclusion of a secessionist clause for ethnic groups in the FDRE constitution, the EDP not only deplores this but sees it as a strategy by the TPLF to "disintegrate", as illustrated by the regime's facilitation of the secession of Eritrea. Indeed, it appears that the EDP takes a stronger stance on this issue and against the TPLF/EPRDF than the previously discussed Pan-Ethiopanist opposition forces. Moreover, it regards the issue as a threat posed on Ethiopia and Ethiopianess. When it comes to the nationality question, the EDP asserts it is still national oppression, in which the TPLF, made up of the Tigrean ethnic minority, dominates the rest of the country using divide-and-rule tactics. On the economic front, the EDP believes the TPLF/EPRDF regime is running a system that benefits only a few, i.e., its political loyalists and the business elites affiliated to the ruling regime, and not the majority (the peasants and other segments of society). In particular, it problematizes the role, practice and impact of the TPLF's business empire on the economy of the country. These political and other socio-economic crises are what led to its establishment and advancement of what it calls the 'third way option 'or 'politics based on reason', as opposed to the options of the ruling party (EDP 2009).

The EDP's third option or politics based on reason (in Amharic: *mikinatiyawi politica*) appears to be more of a modus operandi that becomes visible as one closely examines the party's behaviour, operations and interactions. Its political position is dissimilar to other Pan-Ethiopianist groups. As an alternative to the TPLF/EPRF's revolutionary democracy, the EDP favours liberal democracy, which prioritizes individual rights, as opposed to the current system, which prioritizes group rights. In light of this view, the EDP seeks to alter the current ethnic-based federalism into one that, among other things, focuses on geographic and administrative convenience factors. While it is clear the EDP disapproves of the current ethnic-based arrangement, its alternative lacks essential details that would allow for further comparison of its position vis-a-vis others (EDP 2003a). Accordingly, a discussion on this important topic is limited. On the issue of recognizing the right to secession as part of the right of ethnic communities to self-determination, the EDP seems

to have a firm anti-secessionism stance, as it regards the country's territorial integrity and unity as inviolable. With regard to the EDP's economic policy, it endorses a free market economy in which the state plays a 'provisional 'and legally circumscribed intervening role in the process of building a capitalist system. The party contends that the state's role is necessary, given the state of the country's economy and the fact that the private sector is yet to play the leading role. With regard to land ownership, the EDP recognizes three types of ownership rights: private, communal and government ownership rights (EDP 2003c). In this regard, it appears to accept the EPRDF's approach but with an essential addition, which the EPRDF rejects outright. The EDP has clearly stated it believes in peaceful struggle, and strongly condemns armed struggle as an option. Additionally, despite its position on the constitution and current institutions, it advocates engaging in politics with the ruling party, rather than outright rejection and withdrawal. This means it does not approve of the boycotting of elections as a strategy of political struggle. Finally, the EDP's political programme states that the country needs a fresh start in which all political actors, including the ruling party, reconcile with each other, and that this national reconciliation should form the basis of a national consensus on various issues affecting the country. In the absence of this national reconciliation, the EDP believes Ethiopia faces a serious threat to its survival, as the political forces in the country have not yet reached consensus regarding their political differences, which is vital to the nation's survival. Therefore, EDP's conceptualisation of politics remains a securitised one though its mobilisation strategy has remained non-violent as proclaimed by the party.

5.3.5. Blue Party or Semayawi Party

The Blue Party is another non-leftist, Pan-Ethiopianist party. It was established in 2012 but rose to prominence shortly though the internal battle later ultimately contributed to its weakness. It promoted itself as a new-generation party founded by the youth and, indeed, its leaders are younger than their counterparts in the opposition camp. The party believes the 'leftist generation '(commonly referred to as '*ya tiwilid*' in Amharic) has failed to transform the country's political system, and thus it bestows the responsibility of

changing the current political order on the new generation, in particular Ethiopia's youth (Yilikal 2014). Although its stance towards the current regime has remained radical, the party adheres to a policy of peaceful political struggle. Since its establishment, the Blue Party had organized and engaged in many activism rallies against the ruling regime, which have led to the imprisonment of its leaders and supporters, mainly on charges of alleged terrorism. The party had an official newsletter called *Negere Ethiopia*, in which it used to communicate the rationale for it political struggle and its alternative positions.

The Blue Party contends that the country is still suffering from backwardness, civil war and extreme poverty due to the prolonged political problems and poor governance. The party further maintains that although Ethiopia is endowed with rich natural resources and a proud history, it has lost its pride and become one of the world's poorest nations. The party also claims that the current regime is a repressive dictatorship that has effectively turned the whole country into an "open prison" (*Negere Ethiopia* n.1, 24, January 2014). It also accuses the government of torture, imprisonment, corruption and creating a situation of mutual suspicion among Ethiopia's ethnic communities (Silesh 2014). In this regard, it appears to vehemently oppose the ethnic-federalism arrangement in place, calling it tribalist and divisive (Ibid. 2014). Furthermore, it claims that the majority of the Ethiopian people have become second-class citizens as a result of the TPLF's divisive and discriminatory rule, which it believes the latter sustains by creating animosity (*Negere Ethiopia* vol.1, no.14, May 23, 2014). The Blue Party also accuses the TPLF/EPRDF regime of deliberately compromising the country's unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty. To substantiate this claim, the party refers to the secession of Eritrea, the case of port access (Aseb) and the latest case of Badme, in which it accuses the regime of intentionally ignoring the country's national interests more than any other regime in Ethiopian history (*Negere Ethiopia* n.1, January 24, 2014). It appears that the Blue Party, in its attempts to rectify the deeds of the ruling party, has clearly indicated its irredentist claims (Blue Party 2012). The party is not only against the inclusion of secession as part of the self-determination rights for ethnic groups, but it is also against the idea of reconfiguring

the country based on ethnicity. Accordingly, it takes a different approach to the nationality question. The party also claimed Ethiopia's economic system was benefiting only a few.

As a solution to the above problems, the Blue Party offers a different vision. Politically, it advanced a liberal democracy that prioritizes individual rights over group rights. It advocates a federal system, but based mainly on geography and administrative convenience, it fails to provide the details except that it is unequivocally in favour of dismantling the tribalist TPLF/EPRDF option. On the territorial integrity issue, it clearly spells out its position that it is against the secessionist option, and regards the country's territorial integrity as inviolable. The Blue Party believes in a free market economy, and supports private land ownership rights for both rural and urban dwellers. Although the party is committed to peaceful political struggle, it has continuously organized rallies on a variety of issues. These rallies have created an uneasiness among the ruling party, as demonstrated by its reaction to this activism. Moreover, the Blue Party has persistently called for a popular revolution against the regime, which has evoked a repressive response from the latter on the grounds that the party is acting unconstitutionally and engaging in acts of terror against the state. Apparently, the Blue Party's vision for the democratic political future of Ethiopia, is not only different to that of the ruling party, but its vision conflicts radically with the current political process, which it seeks to reverse.

5.3.6. Ginbot 7: Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy

In Amharic, *Ginbot 7* means May 15, the date in 2005 when the national elections were held. The movement believes the ruling minority dictatorship rigged the votes of millions of people. During these elections the opposition parties challenged the ruling party, which won all the seats in Addis Ababa. Before the counting was over, the ruling party declared it had won the election, a claim the National Electoral Board later affirmed. But the opposition rejected the outcome, and their supporters took to the streets. The ruling regime responded with force; many people died, and the opposition party leaders were jailed. Berhanu Nega, a professor and economist at Bucknell University in the USA, was one of

those detained. After his release, he established the Ginbot 7 movement in 2008 with other renowned politicians based in the US.[45] Ginbot 7 associates its movement with the May 2005 election and, in fact, it sees its struggle as one against "the coup d'état the regime conducted against the outcomes of the May 15, 2005 election and the ever narrowing of political space in the country" (Ginbot 7 2008: 4). Ginbot 7 subscribes to the Pan-Ethiopianist camp and has a newsletter called the *Voices of Ginbot 7*. The movement decided to merge with the Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front, a group that had waged an armed struggle against the Ethiopian government from its base in Eritrea in 2015. Consequently, the movement was renamed the 'Patriotic Ginbot 7 Movement for Unity and Democracy 'until it regained its original name and its independent existence in 2018, following its split from the EPPF.

The movement believes the country is at risk of plunging into chaos, which would not only destabilize Ethiopia, but the entire Horn of Africa region (Ibid. 2008: 3). It contends that the "totalitarian ethnic minority dictatorial regime of the TPLF" is seated on policies that advance ethnic favoritism and nepotism and, as such, are racist and discriminatory, as a result of which the majority in the country are relegated to live as second-class citizens (Ibid. 2008). Politically, it believes the country is in a "dark life", while the economy is deteriorating and benefiting only a few (Berhanu 2009:614). It further refers to an apartheid system in which the minority Tigrean ethnic group dominates key state apparatus (military, security services, etc.) and monopolizes the economy of the country through its business conglomerates (*Voices of Ginbot 7,* no.27, November 19, 2009). Moreover, Ginbot 7 states that the ruling narrow nationalist group is anti-Ethiopian, secessionist and against "Anything of Ethiopia: our national flag, the territorial integrity, unity, etc. that it wants to destroy" (Andargachew 2009: 2. Own translation). As a Pan-Ethiopianist party, it refers to the issue of Eritrean secession and the loss of access to *Aseb* port under the TPLF regime, which it calls a traitor (Voices of Ginbot *7,* no.13, August 16, 2008). It accuses the latter of forcefully occupying the country following the fall of

[45] Berhanu Nega is a renowned politician who co-founded the movement with Andargachew Tsige, formerly the group's secretary-general. Tsige was captured by Yemen security forces at Sana's airport in 2014 and handed over to the Ethiopian government, which imprisoned him until very recently.

the Derg Military Junta in 1991. It is firmly opposed to rearranging the country on the basis of ethnicity and promotes a liberal democracy in which individual rights get precedence over group rights. Thus, the federalism option the movement advocates is radically opposed to that of the incumbent one. Indeed, it sees the incumbent's existing policy as dangerous and racist – one which favours the divide-and-conquer tactic (Ginbot 7 2008; Berhanu 2006; Andargachew 2018). It believes territorial integrity is non-negotiable and inviolable, thereby clearly ruling out the recognition of secession as part of any right to self-determination for ethnic groups (Ephrem 2008). In general, it regards the issue of building a democracy as a matter of survival, but for that to happen the movement believes the regime must be removed from power. This would lay the foundations for a democratic political order in the country (Ginbot 7 2008). To achieve its goal, the movement has launched an armed struggle against the TPLF's anti-democratic tyranny. The TPLF/EPRDF, in response, has outlawed the movement as a terrorist organization.

In conclusion, despite their differences the discourses of the Pan-Ethiopianist opposition political forces radically oppose the democratization discourse of the ruling EPRDF. They fundamentally question the legitimacy of the whole post-1991 political process and its guardian actor, the TPLF, on the grounds of legitimacy. They perceive the rule of the TPLF itself as self-imposed, with the backing of some Western powers. For them, it is a force that is overseeing the disintegration of the country and posing a threat to Ethiopia's very survival due to the governance ideals it promotes. Furthermore, the Pan-Ethiopianist opposition are vehemently opposed to the New Ethiopia the ruling regime is attempting to build by reconfiguring the country through ethnic-based federalism. For the Ethiopianists, the post-1991 political system represents a repressive authoritarian system, and should therefore be reversed. Furthermore, the regime should be dismantled, either peacefully (through elections or popular revolution), or through an armed struggle. The ultimate aim of removing the EPRDF regime is to spur an authentic democratization process. Moreover, the Pan-Ethiopianists envisage an end goal more focused on the whole of Ethiopia, an approach which emphasises advancing the territorial integrity/inviolability of the country. It thus contains a unitary and centralist approach towards building or sustaining the country as opposed to the ethno-nationalist approaches. Evidently, the politics the

opposition is pursuing is that of reversal, i.e., the dismantling and removal of the regime's excesses of power, which involved political violence when demands for democratization were securitized and political opposition was perceived as a threat.

Chapter Six: Ethno-nationalist Political Discourses

6.1. Introduction

Following on from on the political discourse of the Pan-Ethiopianist opposition political forces in Chapter 5, this chapter examines four cases of ethno-nationalist political discourses with the aim of presenting varieties of opposition discourses that have dominated the Ethiopian political space for decades. The ethno-nationalist political discourses (the Oromo; the Somalis of the Ogaden region; the Sidama; and the Afar), presented in this chapter are, in most cases, diametrically opposed to the Pan-Ethiopianist assertions. Some of these groups have long demanded the right to self-determination and fought wars of liberation to fulfill their desire for statehood. Some, such as the Sidama, have been in the news during the writing of this chapter, demanding their right to statehood within Ethiopia. The ethno-nationalist political forces contest most of the claims of the Pan-Ethiopianist discourses and their interpretation of Ethiopia's political history, which they dismiss as colonial/occupation. They also question the viability of a unitary centralized Ethiopian state. To be sure, these two contending political discourses allow us to understand the depth of ethno-political cleavages and their implications for Ethiopia's politics and society.

The four ethnic groups represented by the political forces under discussion constitute 46.34 per cent of the total population but, according to the 2007 census report (CSA 2007), they clearly occupy more than a half of the country's landmass. Individually, the Oromo is the single largest ethnic group, constituting 34.4 per cent of Ethiopia's population; the Somalis are the third-largest ethnic group, accounting for 6.2 per cent; the Sidama constitute 4 per cent; and the Afar occupy eighth place with 1.7 per cent of the total population (CSA 2007). Additionally, all of these ethnic groups have 'their own' region in the reconfigured post-1991 New Ethiopia, with the exception of the Sidama, who are part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region. In fact, the Sidama have long demanded their own region, a constitutionally acceptable demand yet to be entertained but seem to be on its way to becoming the 10th regional state in view of the political process taking place in the SNNPR region at a time of writing this thesis.

Taking into account the above considerations, this chapter will examine the political discourse of the opposition forces of the Oromo, the Somali (Ogaden), the Sidama and the Afar, including how they conceptualize their politics, their struggle and their methods.

6.2. The Discourses of the Oromo Opposition Political Forces

The Oromo political forces are among the leading ethno-nationalist forces that have spearheaded the deconstruction of Ethiopia's mainstream political discourse. Since the early 1960s, they have attempted to form their own opposition discourse, capitalizing on a series of revolts and rebellions that occurred in Oromia. The discourse of the Oromo political struggle, however, only began to take shape with the emergence of a radical intelligentsia in the course of the mushrooming opposition movements against the *ancien régime* of the Haile Selassie I government. Of particular significance during this period was the establishment of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1973 by Oromo elites, many of whom were Addis Ababa University and high school students (Asafa 1995; Mekuria 1997). Since the launch of the OLF struggle, Oromo issues have been at the epicentre of Ethiopian politics, despite their 'marginal 'position as far as the political power dynamic of the country is concerned. Its weight and relevance, either as a support base or as opposition, is obviously associated with its numerical majority and the landmass it occupies, both of which have ensured that the Oromo were a key factor in Ethiopian politics. Indeed, as an indispensable feature of the county's political landscape, the OLF have played an increasingly influential role in the successive regimes that have ruled Ethiopia, from the imperial era to the current TPLF/EPRDF regime. The Oromo's political influence vis-á-vis the successive Ethiopian regimes has largely been manifested in the discourses of the different Oromo opposition political forces. These can generally be summed up as follows: (1) The OLF's discourse; (2) the Oromo Democratic Front's (ODF) discourse; (3) the Oromo Federalist Congress's (OFC) discourse; and (4) the newly emergent Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDOs) discourse, or the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) as it was renamed in 2018. Despite the differences between these political organizations, it is noteworthy that they all uphold the Oromo's right to self-determination as a prime goal of their political struggle. Consequently, their support for identity-/ethnic-based federalism has remained a common goal of their respective

political struggles. The extent to which their discourses converge and diverge and, most importantly, their conceptualization of politics and characterization of their struggle need to be discussed further.

One of the key political discourses, which essentially problematizes the mainstream Ethiopianist discourses, is that posited by the OLF. In this regard, the main OLF contestation begins by questioning Ethiopia's political history as advanced by the pro-unionists. According to the OLF, Ethiopia is an empire built on the foundations of Emperor Menelik II's colonial conquests, which occurred at about the same time as the European scramble for Africa. The OLF claims Emperor Menelik II shaped modern Ethiopia through his successive colonial wars, which culminated in 1900 with bringing the Oromo and other peoples under expansionist Abyssinian rule. By the Abyssinians, the OLF meant,

> "[T]he Habeshas (Tigreans and Amharas), different from the Cushitic speaking groups, viz. the Oromos and Somalis, in culture, language and history, but there is very little difference in physical features. They are culturally the descendants of the Semites who came from Arabia and colonized this area between 500 B.C. and 100 A.D.''(Gadaa 1980:6).

The ethno-nationalist OLF believes the Pan-Ethiopianists 'claim that the country has existed for over three millennia is a myth. The OLF asserts that modern Ethiopia is the result of the colonial conquest by Menelik II and is thus a colonial empire that emerged only at the beginning of the twentieth century. The OLF further contends that the name Ethiopia comes from the Abyssinians, and that they "appropriated and gave (Ethiopia) to their empire to claim legitimacy based on antiquity/ancient divine authority of biblical proportions" (OLF 2017: 13). According to the OLF, from the establishment of the current Ethiopia in 1900 to the present rule of the TPLF/EPRDF regime, the Oromo and other non-Abyssinian people have been under a colonial and alien occupation. To this end, it believes, that:

> "In all spheres of life, discrimination, subjugation, repression and exploitation of all forms were applied to the Oromo population. Everything possible was done to destroy Oromo identity – culture, language, custom, tradition, name and origin" (Ibid. 2017:13).

To the OLF, Menelik II was a colonial conqueror, whose empire was further strengthened under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1913-1974). Haile Selassie I used the modern state machinery to consolidate the empire by, among other things, expanding modern education. He also used the state machinery as an alleged tool of cultural genocide against subjugated peoples by promoting the culture and history of the Abyssinian people through the so-called Amharanization project. This further affirms that while Selassie abolished slavery and personal servitude, he also maintained and compensated the *Neftegnas* (colonial settlers) through the installation of feudal rights and privileges, legally. Meanwhile, in parallel, the Ethiopian student movements vociferously opposed the *ancien régime*. The Derg regime was not spared criticism and was regarded as an extension of the Amhara colonial regime. For example, the OLF regarded the Derg military regime as a regime controlled by an Amhara military clique, which quickly turned into a repressive totalitarian military dictatorship, whose support base was described as the Amahara elite. The Derg regime was also accused of characterizing the nationality question as one of narrow nationalism. In this later claim, it appears the OLF rejected the Derg's treatment of the nationality question as an issue deserving regional autonomy. Moreover, it labelled the resettlement and villagization policy of the Derg as politically motivated and designed to alter the demographic composition of the non-Abyssinian Oppressed Peoples of the South. In a nutshell, the OLF regarded the *ancien régime* and Derg military rule as an empire of the Ethiopian state dominated by an Abyssinian regime that imposes its Amahara colonial rule on the Oromo and other subjugated peoples. Therefore, the OLF is determined to 'emancipate 'the Oromo nation and their 'country, Oromia '(OLF 1974, 1976, Gadaa 1980).

Founded as part of the radical Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) of the 1960s and 1970s, the OLF espoused a Marxist ideology, as reflected in its conceptualization of political struggle. Accordingly, it identified what it called the enemies of the people and the real friends of the struggle, in Marxist parlance. Its list of enemies included, 'the successive Amhara colonial regimes', the colonial bureaucracy, the armed *neftegnas* (colonial settlers), the Oromo feudal class, which colluded with the Amhara colonizers, the neo-Gobanists (the term used to describe those Oromos who collaborated with the Ethiopian state, and those members of other organizations that the OLF refer to as chauvinistic political organizations (i.e., any other organization outside the OLF) and, of course, the 'international Imperialism 'they claim lends support to 'enemies 'of the Oromo people. On the other hand, the OLF has compiled a list of supporters of its envisaged revolution (OLF 1976: 5-6). This list comprises the workers and peasantry, who are mentioned as the backbone of the revolution, the *petit bourgeoisie* (mentioned as including small merchants, craftsmen, teachers, students and low-level government employees), patriotic elements, revolutionary intelligentsia (who are mentioned as providing ideological and technical guidance to the liberation struggle) and members of the armed forces (Ibid. 1976). The objective of the OLF struggle is to achieve national self-determination and the liberation of the Oromo people from oppression and exploitation. This is to be realized through a 'new democratic revolution 'that would lead to the ultimate goal of establishing The People's Republic of Oromia. The OLF published a map of the proposed Oromia Republic or Oromo Land, which incorporates the Wollo part of Amhara (see Map 6.1 below).

In pursuit of this goal, the OLF waged an anti-feudal, anti-colonial and 'anti-imperialist ' struggle, and established the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) (Ibid. 1976:7). Over the years, the OLF appears to have dropped the political goal of secession. Accordingly, its new political objective is to exercise their inalienable right to national self-determination, while the colonial thesis discourse remains in place. The struggle is also characterized as one against Ethiopian colonialism led by the Abyssinian ruling class, albeit without referring to any other entities, while elsewhere, the Tigreans are perceived as the new Amhara (OLF 2017). However, whether the self-determination rights the OLF advances include the right to secession or not remains unclear. Added to this is the fact that, over

time, the OLF itself has split into different factions, some of which still appear to champion the establishment of an independent People's Republic of Oromia. As both emperor Haile Selassie I and the Derg military regime have been dismantled and replaced with the TPLF/EPRDF regime, so the OLF's discourse seems to have changed accordingly.

The OLF perceives post-1991 Ethiopia as a continuation of an Abyssinian controlled empire, so it has not changed its stance (OLF 2016, 2017). What has changed in its discourse, however, is its belief that the empire has now shifted from an Amhara colonial regime to a Tigrean colonial regime. It accuses the TPLF/EPRDF regime of creating an Oromo surrogate party, the OPDO, to rule Oromia. It further sees the TPLF/EPRDF regime as a minority Tigrean regime in which the ethnic Tigreans dominate the economy and completely control the state security apparatus. The OLF also accuses the TPLF/EPRDF of promoting divide-and-rule policies with a view to causing inter-communal conflicts that will sustain its minority rule. Although the OLF partnered with the TPLF just before and during the transitional period, thereby collaborating with the TPLF to co-author the current EPRDF constitution, which recognizes the right to self-determination including secession, it claims the TPLF was acting strategically to consolidate power at the time by coopting the Oromo elites and pitting them against the Amhara elites. Leenco Lata, deputy chair of OLF at the time of the transition period, clearly expresses this view:

> "Oromo commentators consider the constitution's reference to self-determination merely as paying it lip service without meaning to uphold it, and to turn it into a ploy for substituting Amhara domination with a Tigrean one" (Leenco Lata, 1999: 44).

Specifically, he expressed disappointment about members of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (including the OLF) feeling:

> "[…] cheated and used at a critical moment merely to lend a facade of plurality to a set up that was, in reality, intended to culminate in the ascendancy of a basically Tigrean dominated regime". (Ibid. 1999: xiii).

Thus, the OLF perceived the TPLF/APRDF's recognition of the right to self-determination including secession in the FDRE constitution not as a genuine move, but rather another tactic of colonial rule. Moreover, the federal arrangement as practiced is not seen as an authentic governance model reflecting the exercise of self-determination and as illustrating a lack of democracy under the TPLF's 'alien 'minority dictatorship rule.

Other views of the Oromo political forces are represented by the ODF and OFC parties. The ODF party was established by veterans of the OLF leadership, and is one of five factions of the OLF created in the past few decades.[46] With its roots in the OLF, the ODF shares the colonial thesis of the OLF discourse discussed above. That said, it believes the OLF's discourse, set four decades ago, needs to be re-articulated. Thus, its discourse is offered as a new re-articulation of the Oromo quest for freedom and emancipation (ODF 2013). At least two things can be deduced from the ODF's discourse. The first is that it perceives Ethiopia's problem to be one of interlocking questions of democratization and decolonization. Consequently, it calls for the establishment of a genuinely democratic multinational federation. It is convinced the Oromo people's quest for self-determination can be settled within this framework. Accordingly, it clearly distances itself from the OLF's long-held political objective of creating an independent Oromia republic. Secondly, the ODF seeks to widen the scope of the struggle of the Oromo people in order to address the 'yearnings 'of other oppressed nationalities. In this way, it recognizes the interdependence of the struggle to in conclusively settling the interlocking questions of democratization and decolonization of the Ethiopian state as a whole (Leenco 1999:238; ODF 2016). Consequently, the ODF seeks to transform its struggle beyond the Oromo

[46] The other factions are: the Oromo Liberation Front (Daud's faction); the Oromo Democratic Front (ODF); the Oromo Liberation Front (of Gen. Hailu Gonfa and Abba biyya – ABO Tokkome); the United Front for Independent Oromia (Gen. Kamal's OLF faction); and the Oromo Liberation Front (Galasa's faction).

cause. In addition to this reorientation in its discourse, the ODF subscribes to the OLF's discourse against the current TPLF/EPRDF. By contrast, the OFC does not believe in the colonial thesis, but rather in the national oppression thesis, i.e., that the Oromo nation has been oppressed, mainly by the Amharas and now by the Tigreans, under successive Ethiopian regimes. The OFC calls for the establishment of a real multiparty democracy with a federal system based on ethnic identity in which the states (ethnic groups) are fairly and equitably represented (OFC 2012). The OFC is one of the parties established legally in post-1991 Ethiopia, and hence its discourse focuses mainly on the political process under the TPLF/EPRDF. Like other Oromo opposition forces, it concludes that the current federalism is not genuine and undemocratic. It believes the TPLF is using it as a tool to divide and rule the country. It sees the country as being taken over by a Tigrean minority dictatorship. It further perceives the establishment of the transitional government and the elections as a drama and the FDRE constitution as an imposition of the TPLF's programme on the rest of the country (Merara 2013, 2016). Finally, if one closely examines the current political development in the ruling camp and the country in general, it appears the TPLF's own creation in Oromia, the OPDO, emerged as an opposition voice from within. It is interesting to note, too, that the OPDO/ODP also questions the authenticity of the current federal arrangement, thus concurring with other Oromo opposition forces in this regard.

Clearly, for the Oromo opposition political forces, ethnic/identity-based federalism is the minimum demand[47]. Their struggle is for the right to self-determination. Some political

[47] As far as Oromo politics is concerned, two issues are noteworthy. The first is with regard to Oromo politics during the Ethiopian Student Movement. While the founders of the Oromo political organization, such as the OLF, took the path of ethno-nationalism, a significant number of Oromo students subscribed to Pan-Ethiopianism. A good example is the founders of MEISON, including its first chairman, Haile Fida, an ethnic Oromo who regarded the Oromo/nationalist issue as 'regionalism' or secondary to the class struggle. However, with the gradual demise of MEISON and the heightened politicisation of ethnicity and the victory of the ethno-nationalist forces and their occupation of the central power post-1991, it appears ethno-national forces (Oromo movements) remained the dominant representatives of Oromo politics. Those who were part of pan-Ethiopian politics re-emerged as Oromo ethno-nationalists. Examples include Merera Gudina, who was a member of MEISON and later established an Oromo political force, and Bulcha Demeksa, a veteran politician (finance minister of the imperial regime), who established an Oromo party post-1991. Oromo individuals (including those who identify themselves as an Oromo and those who refuse to identify themselves as such) have been participating in the country's

forces elevate this self-determination exercise to include the right to secession. Like the Pan-Ethiopianist forces, almost all are opposed to the current federal system, albeit for totally different reasons. This reveals another dynamic in the opposition politics discourse, i.e., that the 'struggle 'is not just a vertical one with the regime in power, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is also a horizontal struggle among the opposition parties themselves, which indicates the horizontal dimension aspects of the discourses. The Oromo opposition political force's struggle is framed in terms of either the colonizer vis-á-vis the colonized (the colonial thesis) or the oppressor vis-á-vis the oppressed (the national oppression thesis), indicating the high levels of tension and animosity involved.

6.3. The Somali Opposition Political Forces Discourse

> "ONLF believes that all nations in Ethiopia have shed their blood for more than a century and have paid a heavy price to achieve self-rule and self-determination, which was recognized legally in 1995 in the present constitution. That right is a key factor in keeping the peace, and ONLF supports and protects that right… The Somali people cherish that principle of federalism and self-rule…. the federal arrangement is still incomplete and needs to be improved, and the rights [enshrined] in the constitution for self-administration need to be implemented." (Abdirahman Mahdi Madey (Chairman, the ONLF)[48].

political life. As the focus of this study is on ethno-nationalist forces, those issues remain outside the scope of the study. Another important development in Oromo politics is a dynamism that emerged after 2015, particularly following the change of leadership within the EPRDF, including the current prime minister. It seems a new development that requires a thorough investigation is emerging. ODP leaders seem to be presenting a new Oromo discourse about Ethiopia that emphasises the unity and inviolability of the sovereignty of the country, as manifested by PM Abiy's 'Medemer' doctrine and Lemma's description of *Ethiopiyawinet* as an addiction. As important as it is, one can only fully investigate how this discourse evolves, impacts and shapes the Oromo, and by extension, Ethiopia's politics.

[48] The excerpt is from the interview the chairman gave on current affairs in Addis Ababa on August 21, 2019. Available at http://addisstandard.com/news-onlf-wants-election-2020-on-time-says-if-postponed-there-should-be-a-mechanism-to-integrate-opposition-liberation-forces-into-the-federal-structure/. (22 August 2019).

The Somali opposition's political discourse is different to the other opposition politics discourses discussed so far. Its peculiarities lie in the fact that its discourse thesis is rooted in what it sees as colonial issues, but it sees these issues as being intertwined with the irredentist claims of Ethiopia's neighbour, the Federal Republic of Somalia.[49] In that sense, the opposition discourses it has presented, starting in the mid-1970s, have ranged from discussions strongly rooted in separatist claims to those seeking to achieve the goal of self-determination, if the latter is assumed to have emerged as a new development as a result of recent political changes in the country[50]. The general assertions that have dominated the Somali opposition political discourse reject anything that has to do with Ethiopia and, as such, this discourse underpins a need for either a separate existence in the form of an independent republic, or steps towards the realization of a 'Greater Somalia',

[49] For more on this subject see, Lewis, I. M. (1989). 'The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary Nationalism', *African Affairs*, *88*(353), 573-579; idem (2003). *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press; Hagmann, T. and Korf, B. (2012). 'Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and Sovereignty in the Ethiopian-Somali frontier', *Political Geography*, *31*(4), 205-214; idem (2014). *Talking Peace in the Ogaden: The Search for an End to Conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia,* London: Rift Valley Institute; Abdullahi, A. M. (2007). 'The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF): The Dilemma of its Struggle in Ethiopia', *Review of African Political Economy*, *34*(113), 556-562; Markakis, J. (1996). 'The Somali in Ethiopia', *Review of African Political Economy*, *23*(70), 567-570; Samatar, A. I. (2004). 'Ethiopian Federalism: Autonomy Versus Control in the Somali Region', *Third World Quarterly*, 25(6), 1131-1154; Eshete, T. (1994). 'Towards the History of the Incorporation of the Ogaden: 1887-1935', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, *27*(2), 69-87; Tareke, G. (2000). 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *33*(3), 635-667; Abbink. (2003). 'Dervishes, 'Moryaan' and Freedom Fighters: Cycles of Rebellion and the Fragmentation of Somali Society, 1900-2000'. *African Dynamics*, Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 38, and Clapham (2017). The Horn of Africa: State formation and decay. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[50] The Somali region has been undergoing major changes following political developments in the country since 2015. At the time of writing this thesis, a long-time president of the region, Abdi Mohamoud Oumer, also known as Abdilley, was deposed and arrested by the federal government. The military intervention is said to have been caused by Abdiley's move to declare independence of the region. Following his removal, a new team of educated Somalis reformed the regional government by also making a peace agreement with the ONLF, as a result of which the latter moved to Ethiopia to undertake a peaceful political struggle. Similar to Oromo politics, this new development in Somali politics vis-a-vis post-2015 political dynamism in Ethiopia needs a thorough investigation.

thereby lending itself to an irredentist claim that historically has engaged both Ethiopia and Somalia in border wars. A brief discussion of the roots of these two dominant discourses requires a sketch of their trajectories and warrants highlighting how these discourses emerged from vital political events that help explain the roots of these discourses.

As far as the Somali opposition discourses are concerned, the irredentist claim initially made itself visible after the Federal Republic of Somalia achieved independence in 1960. Somali nationalists wanted to realize the dream of forming a 'Greater Somalia 'by uniting all Somali-speaking peoples (ethnic Somalis) in the Horn of Africa, including the Somali-speaking part of Ethiopia. The objective of this ambitious goal was popularized during the reign of Mohamed Siyad Barre, who seized power following a successful coup d'état in 1969. It was under his reign that two Somali opposition forces with irredentist claims entered the stage in the mid-1970s, each of them with a separatist cause rejecting Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The organizations were: 1) The Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF); and 2) The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). Both had strong support and backing from Siyad Barre's regime and both aimed to annex parts of the Ethiopian territory they claimed belonged to the Somali-speaking people under the 'alien 'occupation, and to reunite them with Somalia. The SALF claimed those areas in the southeastern part of Ethiopia, including Ethiopia's Balle, Arsi and Sidamo Administrative Zones, while the WSLF claimed areas in the eastern part of Ethiopia, including the Ogaden (Somali-speaking region), by then, part of Hararghe province, and the larger parts of Hararghe province itself, including the two main cities of Harar and Dire Dawa. These two fronts were initially able to control major parts of the territories they had claimed, given the major political upheavals happening in Ethiopia at the time, which resulted in the downfall of the imperial regime in 1974. The Somalian military later invaded Ethiopia in 1977 on the back of these irredentist claims and in tandem with the two liberation fronts (Hesse 2010, Gebru 2000). It overran the Ethiopian military, occupied the whole Ogaden area and was advancing to capture Dire Dawa city until its advance was halted. This incident, which has come to be known as the Ogaden War of 1977-78, saw a major superpower of the time, the USSR, together with its socialist allies, participate militarily on the Ethiopian side. The Ogaden War concluded in a major defeat for

the invading Somalian army.[51] The two liberation fronts were also driven out of the country. This defeat changed the course of internal politics in Somalia for Siyad Barre, who sought a different approach of engagement with Ethiopia. Consequently, the two sides signed a pact that, among other things, impacted the former's support for the two liberation fronts and imposed a reciprocal duty on Ethiopia too. The post-war internal political developments in Somalia, including the civil war that resulted in the fall of the Siyad Barre regime and the subsequent disintegration of the country, weakened the irredentist claims and the liberation fronts. In what appears to be a phenomenon of post-Siyad Barre Somalia, different Somali clans/territories began to declare their own autonomous regions and, in some cases, claims of independent statehood emerged. It was in this context that a new liberation front, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) was founded in 1984 by individuals who were part of the leadership of the WSLF, this time with a cause of the right to self-determination for the colonized people of Ogaden and the goal of forming an independent country, the Ogadenia (ONLF 1984, n.d.).

The ONLF's discourse evidently differs from the previously discussed opposition discourses in a number of ways. First, it presents the 'cause 'of the Ogaden people (ethnic Somalis) in Ethiopia as primarily a struggle for self-determination rights against the colonial Abyssinian/Ethiopian rule. According to the ONLF's conception of the political history of the Ogaden land and people, part of the Ogaden land was occupied by Abyssinian expansionists towards the end of the 19th century through a series of wars of colonial conquest, and the remaining areas became a British colony but transferred to Ethiopian colonial power in the mid-1950s. As such, the ONLF sees the history of the Ogaden people as a history of colonial possession, to which the Ogaden people had never consented. Since the incorporation of Ogaden land, the ONLF believes the people of the region, which is now recognized as a Somali regional state in Ethiopia, are being occupied by Ethiopian colonialism which later morphed into settler colonialism. Accordingly, the ONLF maintains the region's population has been subjugated and exploited for the past century. Thus, it disassociates from anything that has to do with the colonizer, Ethiopia.

[51] In addition to the USSR, Cuba and South Yemen sent troops to fight alongside Ethiopia. This inevitably contributed to the defeat of the Somalis.

In this regard, it rejects the political history of Ethiopia (the formation of its statehood, etc.) as advanced by pro-unionist opposition groups. Furthermore, it categorically labels the Ethiopian state as an artificial system founded on colonial doctrine. It adds that,

> "For almost one century, the Abyssinians have been abusing the concept of sovereignty and statehood to deprive the rights of other peoples' living under the oppressive rule of Ethiopia […] that [it] has never relinquished its colonial possessions" (Abdirahman n.d., p.2).

Clearly, The ONLF does not see itself as an Ethiopian opposition force, let alone associate itself with one. Secondly, it also insists on distinguishing its struggle and cause from irredentist claims and movements. In this regard, while acknowledging its sympathy for, and commitment to, the pre-1960 Pan-Somali movements that wanted to establish a 'Greater Somalia', it argues that its struggle is different and should not be seen as part of a border conflict between Ethiopia and the republic of Somalia in that context. To this end, it promotes itself as a vanguard party born out of the corrective measures targeted at transforming the WSLF into an entity that 'truly represents the interests of the people of Ogadenia in their justified quest for self-determination '(ONLF n.d., p.3). Thus, it presents its struggle as a separatist one in its own right that should not be taken as an extension of irredentist claims or as an instrument of any other entity. Like other liberation fronts, it has espoused a protracted armed war as a means to achieve its ends, a move that it describes as an act of self-defense by colonized people.

Following its inception in 1984, the ONLF remained largely inactive until 1991, after which it became a major player in Somali regional politics due to the political changes that unfolded in the country. Post-1991 politics focused on the ethnic-based movements that enabled the ONLF to participate in the political process during the transitional government of Ethiopia. It was allotted a 'quota seat 'in the Transitional Government Council. In 1992, it participated in the first regional council election and won over 80 per cent

of the seats in the regional parliament of what was then 'Region 5', and is now the Somali regional state government. However, its stay in politics was short-lived – it ended its formal participation in the political process of Ethiopia in 1994. Within those two years, however, it attempted to obtain what it was struggling for – an independent *Ogadenia*. After controlling the majority of seats in the regional parliament, it activated a formal procedure to exercise the right to self-determination for the Ogaden people. The regional parliament unanimously approved the demand to hold a referendum on the issue of self-determination and independence for the Ogaden people, a move which ultimately would lead to the secession of the region. This move triggered an immediate response from the Transitional Government in Addis Ababa, which reacted by making arrests and removing the ONLF from public offices. On its part, the ONLF boycotted the elections and withdrew from the constitution adoption process. Unlike the discourses of others opposed to the constitution, it rejected the constitution from the outset and regarded participation in the process as tantamount to 'endorsing 'Ethiopian colonialism. Since 1994, it has been an active, armed separatist group in the Somali regional state, engaging militarily with the Ethiopian government in opposition to its colonial legacy and continuing its struggle for the liberation of the Ogaden people.

We can conclude that the Somali opposition discourse constitutes an exception in the terrain of opposition discourses in the country. In that sense, it is a discourse not only about the 'colonial thesis', but also about irredentism and a strong disassociation from Ethiopia as a country. In view of this, the ONLF's stance on a genuine ethnic-/identity-based federalism can only be a minimum request/goal, if it is at all ready to compromise on its ultimate objective of the struggle.

6.4. The Afar Opposition Forces Discourse

A call for self-determination rights is at the core of the Afar oppositional politics discourse. A number of factors explain this rationale. Firstly, Afar-speaking people are scattered and live under three jurisdictions in the Horn of Africa. They inhabit an eastern, lowland periphery of Ethiopia (currently the Afar regional state), the lowlands and coastal areas of Eritrea and the Djibouti republic. Until the late 1980s in Ethiopia, under the Haile

Selassie I and Mengsitu regimes, the Afar people were distributed in five different provinces: Hararghe, Showa, Wollo, Tigray and Eritrea. Following the political changes in 1991, the Ethiopian Afars were further divided into two jurisdictions of Ethiopia and Eritrea. These arrangements meant that, despite speaking the same language and leading similar pastoral lifestyles, the Afar people found themselves disunited under different jurisdictions. This 'disunity 'has remained a central theme of the Afar's opposition politics since the 1970s, and almost a decade earlier (in 1961) even concerned Afar chieftains who, at a meeting in Ti'o, called upon the imperial government to put all Afar people under a single administrative province (Lewis 2017, Yasin 2008:39-65, Shehim 1985:331-348, Said 1998). Another factor is the marginalization discourse. By the government's own admission, the Afar region is among the least developed regions in Ethiopia. This marginalization, which has manifested itself in a lack of economic development in the region, features widely in the discourse of Afar opposition political forces. It is thus these two fundamental issues that formed the basis of the Afar opposition discourses as advanced by different opposition political forces since the beginning of the 1970s.

Amongst the first Afar opposition political organizations to appear on the Ethiopian political scene was the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), which was founded by Sultan Ali Mira and leftist Afar students in 1975. Sultan Ali Mira was a traditional ruler of the Afar people, who was recognized as such in 'cordial 'relations with the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I. Belonging to the landed gentry, the sultan was a beneficiary of the land tenure system and, as such, a 'feudal 'leader in his own locality. Unsurprisingly, he was opposed to the Derg's land reform policy, and established himself as an opponent in exile. Indeed, he regarded the Derg's land reform policy as 'land confiscation', and his son launched the political struggle against the Derg. The ALF promoted the stance that the Afar were among the 'oppressed nations and nationalities', and referred to Ethiopia as a 'prison house', thereby subscribing to the 'national oppression thesis '(ALF 2000). The ALF further accused successive Ethiopian governments of deliberately misguided political and economic policies that have kept the Afar in 'backwardness'. The ALF has clearly stated that its aim is to ensure the unification of all Afar in Ethiopia by exercising the right to self-determination under a democratic federal system: 'to realise the long sought political

settlement in which nations and nationalities of Ethiopia be guaranteed under a constitution the right to self-determination under a democratic federal system '(ALF 2000:2).

Despite its initial military engagements with the Derg, the ALF was largely inactive for a long period, with its leaders exiled in Saudi Arabia. It then reappeared as a key player in post-1991 Ethiopia. Finding the new political reconfiguration (the regional autonomous federal structure) palatable to its cause, it joined the process of transitional government formation. After winning the regional election in 1992, it ruled the region until 1995, after which it withdrew on the grounds that the 'minority TPLF government 'kept interfering in the internal affairs of the region by undermining the ALF, the Afar people and their traditional leaders (Ibid. 2000:2). Essentially, the ALF question the authenticity of the federal system by pinpointing the case of the TPLF's regional ally in the Afar regional state, the Afar People's Democratic Organization (APDO), which it describes as the TPLF's puppet, after the latter took over the regional administration with the support of the TPLF in 1995. The APDO has remained in power ever since.

The other major Afar opposition parties that emerged on the regional political scene are the Afar National Liberation Movement (ANLM), the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF) and The Afar Peoples Party (APP). The ANLM was founded in 1976 by leftist students who initially collaborated with Sultan Ali Mira and formed the ALF. The ANLM founders were adherents of the 'national oppression thesis 'and, consequently, their aim was to create an autonomous Afar state within the borders of a Free Union of Ethiopian nations (ANLM Guidelines, p.6, cited in Shehim and Searing 1980: 224). As such, when the Derg declared the National Democratic Revolutionary programme in 1976, in which it announced its recognition of the 'nationality question', and promised to address it, the ANLM decided to work with the Derg in order to achieve an autonomous region for the Afar.[52] To this end, in 1977, it organized a conference in

[52] The Derg declared "The program of National Democratic Revolution in 1976", in which it announced its position on the perennial question of the 'nationality question'. In the proclamation it states, "The right of self-determination of all nationalities will be recognized and fully respected so no nationality will dominate another one since the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition in accordance with the spirit of socialism."(PMAC 1976)

Gewane, calling on the government to create a separate region that would incorporate all Afar-speaking people in Ethiopia (Shehim 1985). The ARDUF was founded at the beginning of the 1990s following the secession of Eritrea, a move that further divided the Afar-speaking people of Ethiopia and brought them under two different jurisdictions. It was against this background that the ARDUF was established with the aim of 'unit[ing] all the territories inhabited by the Afar people in Ethiopia proper, and to attain a federal or confederate political status for this administrative unity of the Afar people '(*Ethiopian Review*, September 1993:15). In what can be seen as a common political agenda driving Afar opposition politics, the APP was founded. This relatively new and active political party was founded in exile in the 2010s and also called for the right of self-determination for the Afar people. Its stand is clear: '[to] ensure the rights of the Afar people without direct and indirect interference of the federal government, and protect the right to self-determination within the federal and democratic Ethiopia '(APP n.d., p.1). The APP appears to elevate the issue of self-determination, expressed in the form of a federal or confederal arrangement, by vowing not only to establish it but also to protect it. Moreover, the APP maintains that the people of Afar have been continuously oppressed and subjugated since the beginning of the 19th century by successive repressive Ethiopian regimes against which they continued to resist oppression and intensified the struggle to determine their right to self-determination, thereby alluding to the 'national oppression thesis '(Ibid. n.d.).

With regard to the Afar opposition discourse, the issue of exercising self-determination rights in the form of ethnic-/identity-based federalism is a dominant topic. Indeed, it appears to be a *raison d'être* for all Afar political parties. However, the exercise of self-determination rights is sought through the adoption of a genuinely multinational, democratic federal set up. All Afar opposition political forces regard the current federal arrangement as being dominated by a Tigrean minority regime, in which the Afar people are not 'genuinely 'represented at either the federal or regional government levels. The current party that controls the Afar region, the APDO, is regarded as a TPLF creation – a 'surrogate 'that administers on the latter's behalf. Thus, to the Afar opposition the current ethnic federal configuration is palatable with their goal, as long as it can become democratic and authentic/genuine.

6.5. The Sidama Opposition Political Forces 'Discourse

The Sidama-speaking people of Ethiopia inhabit the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regional state in Ethiopia. It is one of the largest ethnic groups inhabiting Ethiopia's most diverse region, with over 56 ethnic groups. One of these groups, the Sidama, constitutes about 20 per cent of the total population of the region. The SNNP regional state has the fifth largest population in the country (almost three million) (CSA 2007). It also has the most fertile arable land, notable for producing cash crops, including coffee and khat, the major foreign currency earner crops for the country. Despite being a key player in the politics of the SNNP region, the Sidama elites appear dissatisfied with the current administrative arrangement in which the Sidama is just a part of the SNNP regional state. Instead, the Sidama elites seek self-determination and an autonomous Sidama regional state, a position that has been the major political rallying call for the Sidama opposition political forces since the end of the 1970s. The main Sidama opposition movement, which claimed to represent the cause of self-determination for the Sidame people was the Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM), which was founded in 1977 by Wolde Amanuel Dubale, a previous founder of the SALF. The SLM waged an armed struggle against the Derg, and later joined the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991 when the regime fell. However, its participation in the transitional political process was short-lived as it withdrew and left for exile like the OLF, the ONLF and others. This was due to problems associated with the post-1991 political process under the auspices of the TPLF/EPRDF regime. It continued its struggle from exile, where it became a 'Front', and subsequently, in 1999 and later, the SLF merged with other Sidama forces and finally, as the Sidama National Liberation Front in 2014. Regardless of its historical ups and downs, the SLM discourse that emerged in the 1970s has endured two successive regimes and has grown to the level of mobilizing a significant proportion of the Sidama elites both in the ruling and opposition entities. It has also had a significant impact on post-1991 politics by heightening ethnic nationalism.[53] Thus, the discourses of the SLM/SNLF warrant unpacking.

[53] To the testament of the heightened status of the demand for an autonomous region, the Sidama Zone Council (which is entirely under the control of the Sidama wing of the ruling party) has unanimously

The SLM/SNLF adheres to the colonial thesis discussed above. It believes the Sidama people were occupied by the Abyssinian power and by Menelik II's war of 'conquests ' and 'forceful annexation'. The latter's rule was labelled 'worse 'than the Italian occupation, which the SLM/SNLF believe allowed the Sidama to at least get 'land rights and a control over their own labour '(SNLF 2010a; Betena 2015; SNLF 2014). The Haile Selassie I reign was described as a continuation of the occupation of 'personal rule and tyranny', but with some attempts to 'modernize 'it. The Derg regime was the immediate cause of its armed struggle. The SLM/SNLF asserts that the Derg was "a military/communist dictatorial rule that, among other things, pursued 'scorched earth policies brutally and ruthlessly'". The current TPLF/EPRDF regime is described as a minority regime with deceptive appearances. It is also alleged to have committed the worst 'atrocities 'and accused of being a continuation of the repressive Ethiopian empire (SNLF 2010a, 2010b). Moreover, it is opposed to the current reconfiguration under which the Sidama people have been made part of the SNNP:

> […] [the SNLF had] [h]igh hopes that their age-old demand for regional self-determination would be addressed in 1991. But that was not to be. Instead, the Sidama people, for the first time since 1891, lost their nominal

passed a resolution approving a request for a referendum on the subject in the month of October 2018, for the second time during the reign of the incumbent TPLF/EPRDF regime. Further to formal initiation of the procedure to form a Sidama regional state, at the time of writing this thesis, a political crisis has occurred in the Sidama zone as the Federal military intervened following the mass unrest in support of an urgent call for holding a referendum vis-a-vis the ambivalence of the regional and federal government political handling/endorsement of the matter. Lately, however, both the EPRDF and the regional ruling party, the SEPDM have announced their endorsement. The National Electoral Board has also announced its plan to organize the referendum in five months' time, reversing its earlier hesitation about the feasibility of organizing such a referendum. For details see, Yinebeb, N. (2010). 'The Right to Form One's Own State Under FDRE Constitution: The Case of the Sidama People' (Hawassa University, unpublished LLB Thesis). Available at Law School Library, Hawassa University, Kinkino, K(2014). 'Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism and The Right to Self-Determination: the Experience of Sidama People' (Riga: Lambert Academic Publishing).

> regional identity and were once more forcefully subsumed under the Southern Region" (SNLF April 4, 2014).

Thus, the SLM/SNLF have stated that the objective of their political struggle was national self-determination for the Sidama People (SNLF 1999). This self-determination is sought, however, in the form of an autonomous region for the Sidama people within the current federal set up. In that sense, it supports an ethnic-/identity-based federalism. The SLF/SNLF adopts armed struggle as an alternative means to achieving its goal (Ibid. 1999). Apparently, the Sidama opposition discourse, anchored on the right to self-determination, falls squarely within the ethno-nationalist discourses discussed above.

In short, while the Ethiopianist discourses present Ethiopia as one of the world's oldest civilizations, one that has preserved its independence in Africa for more than 3,000 years, they see it as a country for which successive generations ('the forefathers') have paid a sacrifice to maintain Ethiopia's sovereignty and, in turn, its territorial integrity, both of which are seen as inviolable. By contrast, the ethno-nationalist political discourse perceives Ethiopia as an 'empire 'state that has incorporated its respective ethnic communities (nations) through colonial conquest in successive wars that culminated in the formation of the current Ethiopian state in 1900, contrary to the 3,000 years claim. As a result of this conquest, they claim, their people/nations are under an oppressive occupation that has catalyzed their long-standing struggle for liberation. Thus, ethno-nationalists generally frame the objective of their struggle as a realization of their nation's inalienable right to exercise self-determination. As discussed, for some ethno-nationalists, the exercise of self-determination also includes secession from the colonial Ethiopian empire state. It is this tendency to disassociate from the centre and to contest the Pan-Ethiopianist notion of territorial inviolability that has led to ethno-nationalist forces being described as centrifugal forces.

Generally, the ethno-nationalist discourses are centred on the goal of the right to self-determination. It is a discourse that conceptualizes the politics of the country differently vis-a-vis the mainstream opposition discourse. It has its own conceptualization of how

the Ethiopian state emerged and is sustained. For ethno-nationalists, the Ethiopian state is either a colonial polity or an oppressive entity that allows certain groups to oppress or colonize others. In this context, it seems to promote an emancipatory type of politics in which the oppressed or colonized people attempt to (re)gain a space, which it envisions being achieved through the right to self-determination. This space will allow for a new state to be established or for an autonomous regional state to be secured for the oppressed or colonized people of Ethiopia. This, by extension, means that Ethiopian politics is inherently framed as we/us vs. them – the oppressed/colonized vs. the oppressor/colonizer, ours vs. theirs. Moreover, it is characterized as an emancipatory politics to be achieved by involving the use of force (armed struggle). It is also a securitized politics. What this particular politics means and how it interacts with other political discourses and their implication is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Synthesis, Conclusion and Future Research

This chapter consists of three sections: section one offers a synthesis of the thesis by drawing linkages that bind all the chapters; section two presents concluding remarks, while section three sets a future research agenda in light of the major political developments that have taken place in Ethiopia since the beginning of 2016.

7.1. Synthesis

This concluding chapter probes issues emanating from the EPRDF's framing of opposition politics in a discourse invoking the speech act as an instrument to securitize opposing discourses of democracy and development paradigms. The EPRDF's discursive narratives are hardly new, dating back to the liberation struggle. They are shaped by the ruling EPRDF doctrine (ethnic federalism, developmental state and revolutionary democracy). The ideological trio underlying this doctrine is contested by the opposition forces and their counter-ideological strands, which oscillate between Pan-Ethiopianists and ethno-nationalists. Neither the TPLF/EPRDF nor the opposition forces constitute an internal ideological unity or political discourses that are coherently Ethiopian or ethno-nationalist. From this perspective, the TPLF/EPRDF and its political opponents engage in competing discursive narratives, using the regional states 'ethnicity, politics and history as counter-discourses. Some are directed simultaneously against their allies (for instance, the TPLF's latest spat with the ADP and ODP or the TPLF, ADP and ODP). The political discourses are not merely elite creations independent of their regional states 'constituencies; they must resonate with, and offer solace to, their ethnic groups to ensure their political support.

To be sure, the political discourses of the ruling party and the opposition, whether they are Pan-Ethiopianists or ethno-nationalists, are path dependent, have evolved from earlier political discourses, and consciously strive to link the past to the present. The ultimate goal of the opposing discourses in both groups is to provide a doctrinal perspective that privileges their respective democratic and developmental transformation.

While the dominant political discourse of the EPRDF is the securitization of democracy and development, the opposition's discourse has thrived by equating ethnic federalism with ethno-nationalism, either under competitive democratic politics or by seeking fulfilment in a nation-state in an ethnic-based confederal system. Opposition forces agitating for a Pan-Ethiopian future, contrived to do away with ethnic federalism altogether, and therefore dismantle the crown jewel of the TPLF/EPRDF doctrine. Accordingly, from the EPRDF perspective, any divergence of political discourse that does not align with its own political discourse and doctrine or offer alternative democratic and development processes, invites security risks. The securitization of development and democracy, therefore, is an act of self-preservation, which, for the EPRDF, justifies the use of brutal force and violence to silence its opponents, whether they use peaceful or violent means of resistance.

For securitizing the opposition and its alternative political and development doctrines, the EPRDF defines the opposition as an agglomeration of chauvinists who purportedly rally around the cause of Ethiopian unity only to dominate and oppress the rest of Ethiopia's nations and nationalities (*Addisraey* 2017: 4-25). Concomitantly, the EPRDF further describes the chauvinist forces as remnants or new agents of pre-1991 regimes. In this discourse, these agents comprise the Amhara Pan-Ethiopianists, on the one hand, and the Oromo, Somali and others who struggle for the right of self-determination as narrow nationalists (EPRDF 2010). The EPRDF, as the liberator of Ethiopia, promotes itself and its politics as the only correct democratic option in its available discourse. In contrast to the opposition groups, the EPRDF 'Portrays itself as the bearers of all that is good, and their opponents as relics of the past '(2007:673) as Salih aptly put it. For the EPRDF, therefore, the redemption and survival of Ethiopia is inherently contingent on the prevalence of its superior political discourse**.** As a result of this, the EPRDF has elevated its political discourse as Ethiopia's discourse. In other words, any opposition to the EPRDF is an opposition to the people, the constitutional and democratic order, and peace. As such, the EPRDF perceives the opposition as a threat to the survival of Ethiopia. Therefore, multiparty democracy, the constitution, the rule of law and elections are mere instruments to guarantee the security and survival of the regime.

The EPRDF officially declared its political opponents (OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7), to mention but a few prominent opposition forces or 'terrorist organizations'[54]. Because the EPRDF has developed an integrated system of party, security organs and the machinery of the state (executive, judiciary and legislature), peaceful protests, strikes, demonstrations or election rallies are considered acts of terrorism that aim to overthrow the government by the use of force. In short, oppositional politics were perceived as a threat to the state, and hence are defined as a security matter. In other words, any acts and pronunciations or protests against the TPLF/EPRDF and its order, which are part of democratic politics, are securitized, and hence, competitive democracy is by extension considered a security threat.

The securitisation of opposition political discourses and their agency in turn seem to have generated a particular type of politics. A politics of the extraordinary in which the EPRDF government attempts to build a 'democracy' while at the same time uses force against its opponents (the opposition forces that according to the TPLF/EPRDF, cross its red line) or to put it more appropriately, its "enemies". It has enacted different legislation (Anti-Terrorism laws, Media laws et cetera) over the past twenty-five years to deal with any opposition to its rule. As discussed, a number of political dissidents, opposition party leaders, members and supporters had been arrested continuously since the start of its rule in 1991. Typical of the practices under the politics of this state of exception - the politics of the extraordinary- TPLF/EPRDF seems to be ruling the country with both declared and 'undeclared' state of emergencies. In recent years, the EPRDF-led government had declared three states of emergencies - all of them induced by the political crises emanating from the TPLF/EPRDF-espoused political process of the post-1991 period. In particular, the last two years (2015-2016/17) of the TPLF/EPRDF rule, has shown a heightened state of exceptional politics as the regime had switched to ruling the country by military force through these states of emergency in the face of popular violent protests to its rule from the two largest regions (Oromia and Amhara regions) of the federation. Thus, EPRDF's

[54]As part of the political developments (reforms), the Ethiopian government under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, took three rebel groups (the OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7) off the country's list of terrorist organizations in July 2018.

political discourse is marred by a perpetual state of exceptional politics (politics of the extraordinary) in which security measures/issues takes precedence over the normal state of affairs of politics (normal politics). This practice of exceptional politics is embedded in its conceptualisation of politics in general but more so, in its understanding of the role and meaning of opposition politics and its interaction with the opposition's political discourse.

The political discourse of the Pan-Ethiopianists opposition forces problematizes and securitizes the EPRDF's political discourse and the regime itself in a more fundamental way. First, it questions the TPLF/EPRDF's legitimacy to rule. The political discourse of the Pan-Ethiopianist forces dismisses the TPLF/EPRDF as an illegitimate regime imposed by occupation and rule by force. The Pan-Ethiopianists further believe the TPLF/EPRDF are engaged in a process that will ultimately lead to the disintegration of Ethiopia. The EPRDF's 'New Ethiopia, 'in which the country is reconfigured based on ethnicity under the auspices of addressing the nationality question, is in fact diametrically opposite to the Pan-Ethiopianists 'vision of democracy for the country. In this regard, despite their differences on how the nationality issue is to be addressed, the Pan-Ethiopianist forces strongly oppose and condemn the TPLF/EPRDF's 'New Ethiopia – 'the ethnic federalist project. Moreover, the Pan-Ethiopianist forces believe that reconfiguring Ethiopia along the lines of an ethnic federalist state is a recipe for disintegration and a danger to unity and national sovereignty.

Similar to the EPRDF discourse, at least methodologically, the Pan-Ethiopianists 'discourse resembles a speech act, and not only securitizes the TPLF/EPRDF regime and its discourse, but also perceives their own struggle as one that has been an act of popular mobilization to remove a threat to the very survival of Ethiopia as a unitary state. In doing so, it appears their vision of democratization is predicated on the complete dismantling and removal of the EPRDF regime.

The discourses of the ethno-nationalists, on the other hand, diverge remarkably from both the discourses of the EPRDF and the Pan-Ethiopianist forces. Apparently, insofar as its assessment of the discourses of the Pan-Ethiopianists are concerned, the ethno-nationalists are radically opposed to the tenets of the Pan-Ethiopianists. The ethno-nationalists

struggle is conceived as a struggle against an enemy occupier, from which they have sought emancipation through both peaceful and military means to liberate their people and land. Some ethno-nationalists can uphold a revisionist stand only in a scenario where ethnic federalism is democratized and recognizes the right to self-determination for the oppressed/colonized peoples.

Ethno-nationalist forces recognize the TPLF/EPRDF doctrine, mainly in the historical context of the Ethiopian empire and its evolutionary process in which the ruling class shifted from the Amhara elites to the Tigrayan elites (till 2018), while other elites were regarded as a subordinate class, serving as surrogates in their respective regions since 1991. Hence, the ethno-nationalists perceive TPLF/EPRDF policies and governance practices to be devoid of any democratic content, and harboring divisive tactics aimed at sustaining TPLF minority rule. Therefore, the ethno-nationalists justify their struggle against the TPLF/EPRDF regime in a political discourse that aims at completing the unfinished business of pre-1991 struggle.

A close examination of the interplay of the political discourses, as discussed herein, reveals the characteristic features that explain the Ethiopian political scene. In this regard, as one goes through the terrain of the meeting points of the political discourses, it becomes plain that the Ethiopian political forces' political conceptualiazations differ greatly and that the differences are not just mere differences of political opinions. The radically contradictory differences arise from how the political elites understand and conceptualise politics as it relates to the past, present and future of the country. These are differences in which the other's political visions, alternative understandings, conceptualizations and their agency itself is fundamentally disputed, rejected and a reversal/dismantling is sought against it. The interactions of the discourses is characterised by the mutual exclusions of the other's conceptualisations of politics and in which the depiction of the 'enemy/friend' runs throughout the narrative, as manifested by the binary oppositional terms, self vs the other, us vs them, oppressor vs oppressed, colonised vs coloniser, democratic vs anti-democratic, pro-people vs anti-people, revolutionary vs anti-revolutionary, peace vs anti-peace et cetera. Underpinning these differences are deeply rooted feelings of animosity, hatred, mutual distrust/suspicion that is often expressed in the form of political violence that is employed against one another. Indeed political violence remains the major outlet

through which political differences are 'resolved' - only to result in the vicious circle of a process that produces provisional 'winners/losers'. This tends to result not only in the underdevelopment of the politics of the country but also in a huge human and capital loss to one of the already poorest countries in the world. The difference is then a political process in which the other (the agency) and the other's discourses (vision of politics, alternative understanding, policy options) are essentially presented as a "serious threat" to the country, for which an action/reaction is sought in the form of mobilisation of forces/resources. In other words, it is about securitising the alternative political agency and their discourse by presenting them as posing a danger to the existential threat of the country. This securitisation of politics is one of the major features that arise from the interplay of the discourses.

The political scene seemed to be turned to the field of mobilisation arena as the securitisation of politics further marks the political terrain of the country. The ruling TPLF/EPRDF presents the other alternatives and political actors as "a serious threat" to the existence of the country, the constitutional order, the rule of law and democracy. Using the official state apparatus (the parliament, legislation, policies and most importantly, the security apparatus) it activates its use of force against the opposition political forces by reducing them to the status of a "force of destruction", "terrorist", "anti-peace" et cetera, as discussed previously. To effectively mobilise its use of force, the ruling party often employs such governance practices as declaring a state of emergency and enacting different restrictive laws - all to facilitate its use of force against the opposition forces it deems a threat to the political order that is is establishing. The political opposition also take the same approach. Both the pan-Ethiopianist and the ethno-nationalist discourses portray the ruling TPLF/EPRDF regime and its vision/alternative as a "existential threat" to the survival of the country or a threat to their cause and hence, they justify the use of force - including popular revolt or through armed struggle, to dismantle/remove the threat-EPRDF rule poses and reverse its policies. In the opposition category, this presentation of the other as a threat, extends to other competing political visions and actors and hence the threat construction exercise also runs horizontally, among themselves, as highlighted above. The political scene is then a site in which a web of different securitising

moves arise from the interplay of these political discourses. It is also a scene in which, as a result of the securitisation of politics, there is a mobilisation of the use of force by all political actors. It is a politics of the extraordinary, of the exceptional type, that is at play.

As highlighted under chapter two, in a state of affairs where the politics of exception is at a play, it is hardly possible to build an inclusive democracy. The main reason for this is that it often creates a situation of more security, less politics. In the sense that the room for normal politics, in which political actors debate, negotiate and compromise on the socio-economic issues of the country, is either highly restricted or non-existent. Instead, the political actors seem be interested in sustaining (in case of the ruling party) or creating a situation in which they or their discourses become the 'winner'/have hegemony, to the exclusion of the others. Indeed, as uncovered above, the political actors themselves regard each other as 'enemies' and unsurprisingly, enemies have rarely ended up building a democratic inclusive governance in the history of modern democracies unless they move away from the enmity mentality and collaborate instead. Clearly, this can be taken as a major explanatory factor for the failure of the political process from 1991-2015, to generate legitimacy.

Despite a declared commitment to building 'democratic' governance in post-1991 Ethiopia, the ruling party has not recorded success to that end, notwithstanding the formalistic exercises undertaken so far (having a liberal constitution, conducting elections et cetera). It follows that the ruling party's approach - securitising politics to build a democracy – has not only failed but is also a major factor in explaining the failure of the political process - given its leadership role of the country. As another major actor in the state of affairs of the politics of exception in the country, the opposition political forces (in both camps) are also clearly the players in the failed politics of the country. Their approach to building democracy in the country is very much a reflection of the ruling party's approach, as discussed above. They advance securitised politics that make their approach problematic in a similar way to that of the ruling party. Perhaps another interesting matter with the case of the opposition is that, even if ones removes the ruling EPRDF party from the picture, the state of affairs of the politics of the country might still remain a failure

given the existence of horizontal securitization approaches among themselves; A relationship that regards each other as the 'enemy' informs their discourses toward one another. Thus, the present political practices in which the politics of exception widely feature, is a failure and could not reasonably result in democratization of the country as markedly demonstrated with this study - and this clearly problematizes the democratization visions of the Ethiopian political actors across the spectrum.

In sum, the interaction of the discourses of both the ruling and opposition parties seems to have resulted in an exceptional type of politics – politics of the extraordinary – in which all the actors understand politics mainly in terms of security. This has resulted in the use of violence, which has left little room for normal politics in which compromise, negotiation and deliberation occurs[55]. Both the governing party and the opposition's conceptualization of politics (the politicization of socio-economic issues, history and *modus-operandi* of the country in general) is not only in security terms but has resulted in a competing visions/alternatives of democracy that fundamentally antagonize and reject one another. This seems to be the major explanatory factor for the political impasse facing the country.

The findings from this study appear to have also uncovered several issues related to the limitation of the theoretical framework employed. While the explanatory power of securitization theory, particularly its (in)security logic, has been particularly helpful in explaining the post-1991 political processes, there are some aspects of the theory that need

[55] Some scholars have written on the subject of the state of exception and the EPRDF's governance practices in relation to issues such as (a) development projects by Fantini and Puddu (see Fantini, E., and Puddu, L. (2016)). Ethiopia and international aid: development between high modernism and exceptional measures. Aid and Authoritarianism in Africa: Development without Democracy. Nordic Africa Institute. London: Zed Books; and (b) the practice of governance on the periphery, by focusing on the case of Ogaden by Hagman and Korf (see Hagmann, T., and Korf, B. (2012)). Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and sovereignty in the Ethiopian–Somali frontier. *Political Geography, 31*(4), 205-214, on how successive Ethiopian regimes used states of emergency for policing/arresting opponents (see Toggia, P. S. (2008). The state of emergency: police and carceral regimes in modern Ethiopia. *Journal of Developing Societies, 24*(2), 107-124; and Awol, A. *(2017).* 'Protests, terrorism, and development: On Ethiopia's perpetual state of emergency.*' Yale Human Rights Law and Development Journal, 19, 133.*

reconceptualization in the context of political transitions such as that of Ethiopia. Its (in)security logic, for instance, seems to operate on the assumption that (in)security can be successfully established if existential threats to a specific referent object that requires emergency measures, is presented by a securitising actor (who may not necessarily be a group in power) and accepted by the audience as such, as discussed under chapter Two of this thesis. Furthermore, it envisages a situation in which securitization can be successful under certain situations, referred to as *felicity conditions*. This security logic however fails to capture the 'unsettled' nature of the transitional political reality of Ethiopia. The country has yet to forge a minimal consensus on political issues (including on the continued existence of the state itself), the contention among the multiple competing 'authorities' emanating from the manifold securitizing actors who mobilize political violence against each another.. In other words, while the theory is a valuable tool in explaining exceptional politics, it seem to offer less in the area of political space/realities, in which one can envision either normal politics or exceptional politics that might have a consequence on this somehow 'linear' security logic of the school.

7.2. Conclusions

Methodologically, this study analyzed the political discourses of Ethiopia's major political forces, mainly the governing EPRDF regime and the major opposition political forces from 1991 to 2015. It analyzed primary sources of political discourse as presented in their founding documents, charters, manifestos, constitutions, policies and strategies expressing political orientations and positions vis-à-vis major national issues. The study also reviewed a broad range of post-1991 press archives made during the fieldwork, and writing expressing the views of the most influential political elite who contributed to the major developments that shaped current Ethiopian politics. By canvasing a large array of literature on distant and contemporary political and economic developments in Ethiopia, the study is able to interrogate the political discourses of those perceived to be the dominant political forces and their opponents.

Theoretically, the study used securitization theory by paying special attention to security as a speech act: an utterance that represents and recognizes phenomena as security, thus giving it special status and legitimizing extraordinary measures (Buzan et al., 1998: 26),

including the use of force or suspension of citizens 'liberties. Or, in Waever's words: Therefore, the study treats the "speech act" as a major political discourse informing not only the governing EPRDF alliance discourse, but also counter discourses by the opposition forces, aiming at (de)securitization. In the Ethiopian context, the desecration of democracy means transcending the EPRDF revolutionary democracy doctrine and agitating for authentic multi-party democracy informed by the ethos and practice of competitive democratic politics.

To be sure, by using discourse analysis and the speech act as analytical tools, the study has demonstrated that Ethiopia's post-1991 failure to foster the requisites for democratic transition and competitive democratic politics is attributed to the securitization of democracy. In order to understand securitization and counter-securitization, the study examined discourse as an expression of adversarial positions and competing visions. The former strives to maintain the status-quo, while the latter opts for alternative policies and priorities. Both positions risk unravelling the current Ethiopian federation or redefining Ethiopia's political future, in which the country embarks on building a new, unknown political system. In this respect, the study concluded that the political posturing and policy orientations of the major opposition political forces are divided into two broad ideological strands: Pan-Ethiopianists and ethno-nationalists. The study probed these political discourses as unrelenting, divisive and non-compromising, discourses that were specifically crafted to signify not only the meaning and current implications of Ethiopia's history of the present, but also as a continuation of past struggles for democracy and development.

The EPRDF political discourse equates its political survival with the survival of Ethiopia, which justifies its struggle against 'chauvinist/narrow nationalist 'forces bent on destroying the state. On their part, the opposition forces 'discourses perceive the EPRDF as an illegitimate, anti-democratic regime that rigs elections and forcefully quells peaceful protests. For the opposition, the EPRDF political discourse and practices have degenerated into a particular type of politics characterized by radicalization, hatred, enmity, animosity and uncompromising winner-versus-loser trajectories. This discourse, in the opposition's view, has ushered in contingency politics dominated by acrimonious mobilization leading to the securitization of democracy. Apparently, the securitization of democracy is a major

contributing factor in the EPRDF's failure to lay down the necessary foundations for the emergence of competitive democratic politics.

At the time of writing this study, Ethiopia's future hinges on a political contingency mode and remains in the political doldrums in which the major political forces are combining radical mobilization and the ethnicization of politics. Political violence, hatred and animosity have permeated daily life, thus diminishing the politics of hope and exacerbating ethnic cleavages that are difficult to control. Augmented by activism, political discourses and counter-discourses have become the defining elements in validating the positions of the various players, while negating those of their opponents. At the face of these developments, there is reason to believe the two dominant powerful political discourses, Pan-Ethiopianism and ethno-nationalism, are holding Ethiopia and the Ethiopian people to ransom, as their positions are very much opposed to each other in fundamental ways. This contrasts with the situation in many multi-party democracies. The visions of the various parties seem to be interlinked with security and hence, it is difficult to achieve compromises or agreements in any way.

7.3. Future Research

The scope of this study is limited to the period between 1991 and 2105 before the onset of the political and economic reforms unleashed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, who assumed office in April 2018. The turbulent protests that engulfed Ethiopia between 2016-2018 and their aftermath, have not been included in this study, nor has the return of the opposition forces which were victims of the securitization of democracy who were given amnesty, and returned to participate in national politics. The post-2018 period has produced its own political dynamics and empowered the Pan-Ethiopianists and ethno-nationalists alike. It has awakened past grievances and produced new fears and anguish.

In my future research, I intend to study post-2018 political dynamics, the outcomes of the political and economic reforms and the configuration or otherwise of new alliances, including the future of the EPRDF and its contenders. I hope to be able to conduct these

studies, not as a lone PhD student, but with a larger team that comprises Ethiopian researchers drawn from different nations, nationalities, and political and ideological orientations. Furthermore, comparative studies on the securitization of democracy and development in the Horn of Africa will shed light on this pivotal aspect and hopefully contribute to Africa's democratic renewal and consolidation.

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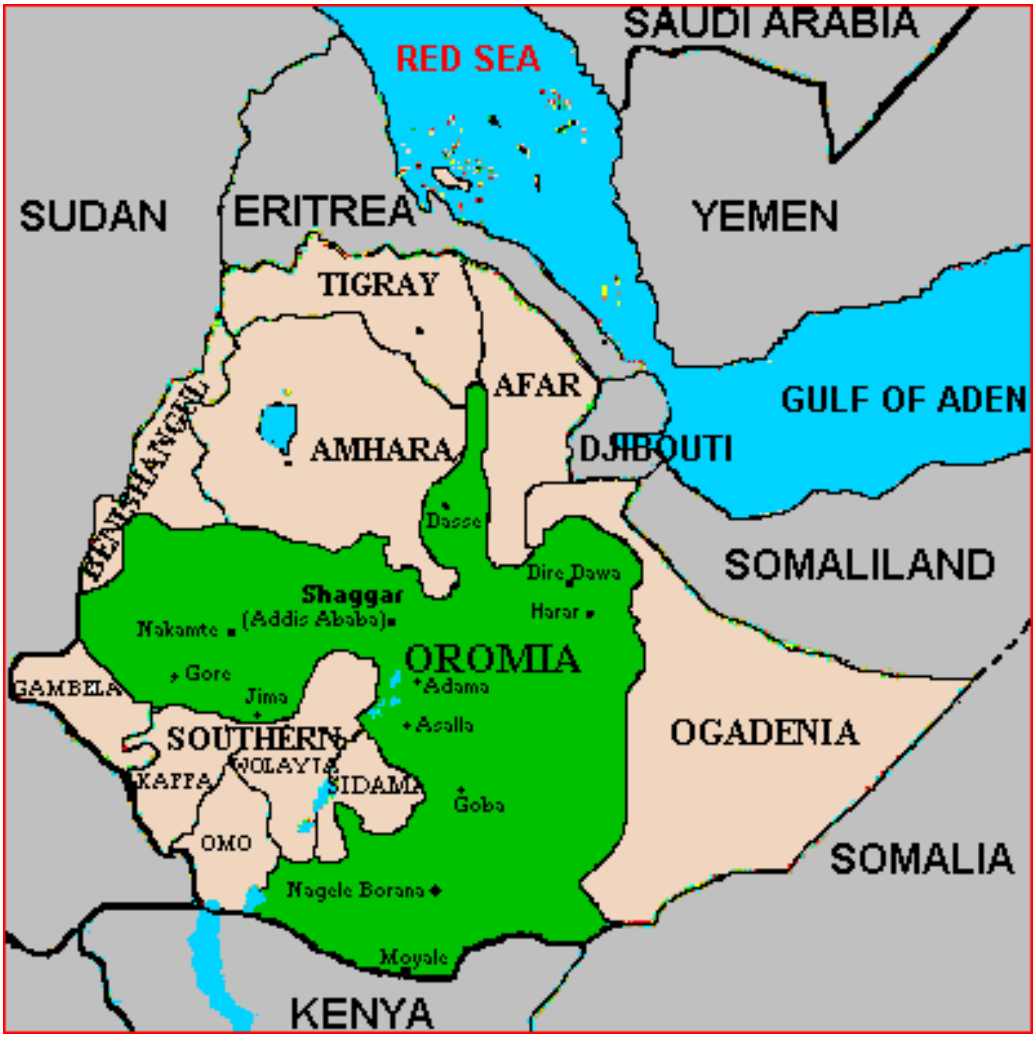
IV. Interviews

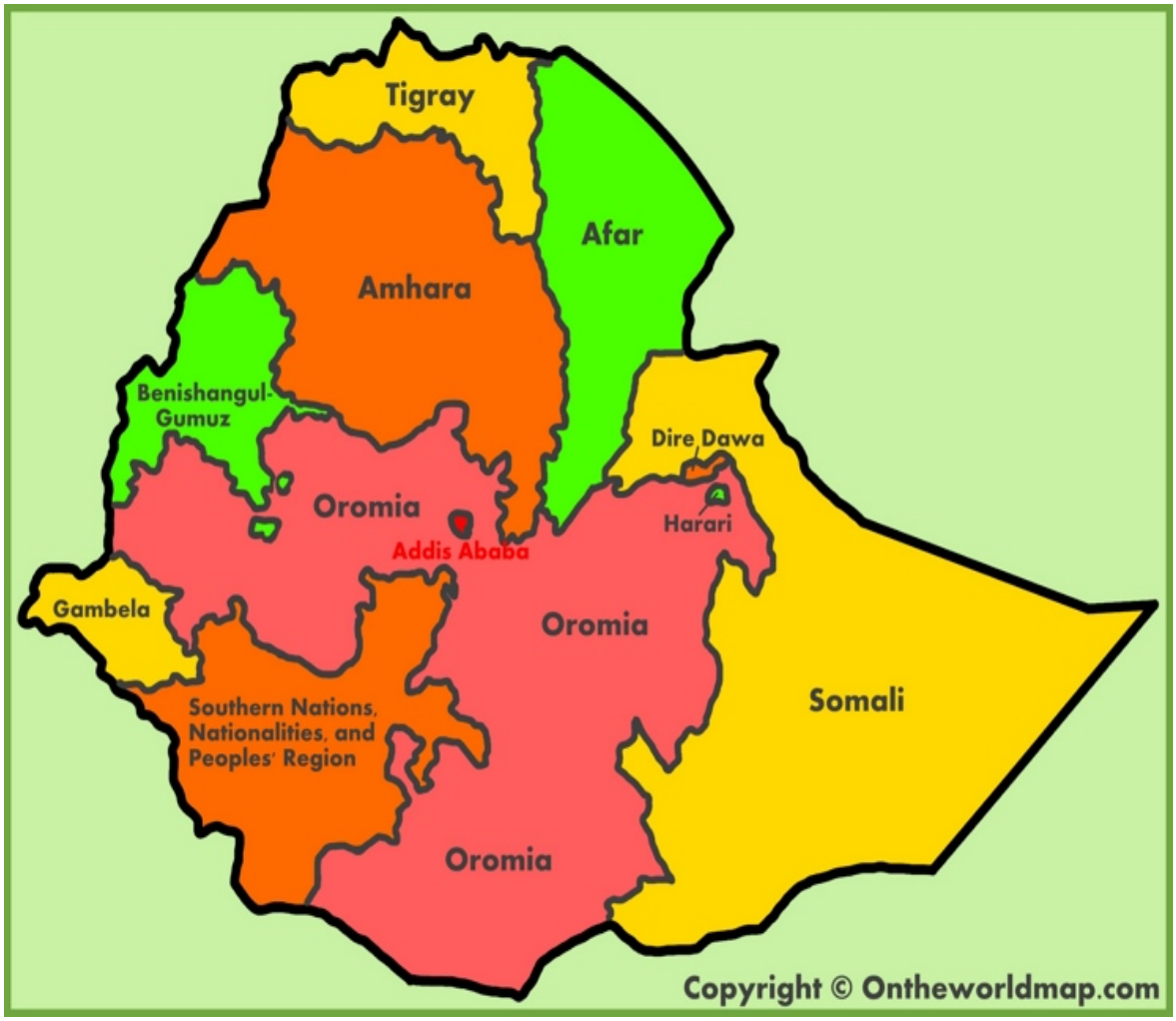
- ANDM/Amhara region officials, Hague, The Netherlands, 14 May-02 June, 2018.
- Desalegn Chanie, President of the National Movement for Amhara, Bahirdar and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May- June (twice) 2018.
- Gebru Asrat, member of the leadership of MEDREK and former executive committee member of the TPLF party, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 January 2018.
- Lidetu Ayalewu, founder and former president of the EDP party, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10 February 2018.
- Mulatu Gemechu, member of the leadership of the OFC party, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 January 2018.
- OPDO/Oromia government officials, First Round Training participants, London (UK) & Hague (The Netherlands), November-December 2016.
- OPDO/Oromia region officials, 2nd Round Training Participants, Hague, The Netherlands, 27 January-11 February, 2018.
- TPLF/Tigray region officials, Hague, The Netherlands, 26 November-14 December 2018.
- Yeshiwas Assefa, Chairman of the Blue Party and now part of the key leadership of the Ethiopian Citizens Party for Social Justice Party, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 14 January 2018.

Annex 1: The OLF's map of Oromia.



Source: Source: OLF website http://oromoliberationfront.org/english/oromia (18 March 2019).

Annex 2: Government Administrative Map of Ethiopia



Source: Administrative Map of Ethiopia. Available at http://ontheworldmap.com/ethiopia/administrative-map-of-ethiopia.html. (15 August 2019).

Curriculum Vitae

Yinebeb Nigatu Tessema is an Ethiopian who was born on February 12, 1987, at Borena (Teltele) in Ethiopia's Oromia region. Yinebeb studied Law and obtained an LLB degree in Law (distinction) from Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia, in the period 2006/7-2010/11. He became assistant lecturer and advisor to the University President at the same University. He worked for a year before he enrolled at The University of Manchester, United Kingdom, between 2012-2013, where he studied International Politics and obtained a Master's Degree (MA) by winning the Chevening Award (A UK government scholarship scheme). From 2013-2016 he worked as a senior researcher for the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development, an Ethiopian government think-tank for foreign relations. In May 2016 he moved to the Netherlands to undertake a PhD Research at the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs at Leiden University as a fellow of the Netherlands Fellowships Program (2016-2019/2020). While working on his PhD research project, he has been employed as a researcher by the Africa Studies Centre of Leiden University on a part-time basis. He has also worked as an advisor/consultant to local and international organizations in the areas of security and governance of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region.

Samenvatting

Politieke Vertogen en de Securitisatie van Democratie in Ethiopië na 1991

Dit proefschrift is een poging om de politieke ontwikkeling in Ethiopië in de periode 1991-2015 te onderzoeken met nadruk op het politieke discours geproduceerd door de overheid en de oppositiekrachten met behulp van de methode van discours-analyse en de securitisatie-theorie. Discursieve verhalen en tegenverhalen werden door de regerende politieke elite gebruikt als instrumenten voor politieke mobilisatie om hun ideologische claims te versterken, terwijl die van hun tegenstanders werden ontkend.

De studie analyseert de verbanden tussen het politieke discours van de belangrijkste politieke krachten (regering en oppositie) en de *speech acts* in de securitisatie-theorie, waarbij te zien is dat de EPRDF-regering buitengewone maatregelen heeft genomen om de oppositiekritiek op haar ideeën en programma's te onderdrukken. De regering deed daarbij een beroep op 'revolutionaire democratie' (de locale ideologie van de heersende partij EDRPF), etnisch federalisme en de idee van de 'ontwikkelingsstaat' (*developmental state*), en schilderde de acties van de oppositie meestal af als subversieve 'terroristische daden' bedoeld om het bestaande politieke systeem te ondermijnen. Tegelijkertijd werd in de politieke vertogen van de oppositie de EPRDF-regering als een bedreiging voor de opkomst van een concurrerende open democratische politiek gezien, die uiteindelijk zou leiden tot het ondermijnen van het bestaan van Ethiopië als eenheidsstaat.

In mijn proefschrift beweer ik dat het politieke discours – en de praktijk - van de regering en van de oppositie naast de securitisatie van 'democratie' hebben geresulteerd in de opkomst van 'de politiek van het buitengewone', die de politieke ruimte voor de groei en het samenbrengen van normale politiek heeft gesloten. Het cumulatieve effect van deze politiek van het buitengewone was het verstikken van elke mogelijkheid voor het ontstaan van authentieke democratisering. Het bevoorrechtte de securitisatie van democratie en legitimeerde het gebruik van geweld als extensie van een centralistisch 'revolutionair-democratisch' discours.

Aldus verklaar ik in dit proefschrift het mislukken van de politieke ontwikkelingen na 1991 door de rol van discursieve formaties te onthullen bij de productie van een diepgewortelde relatie tussen politiek en veiligheid in Ethiopië. Daartoe heeft het proefschrift de politieke vertogen van de regerende EPRDF-partij onderzocht alsmede de institutionalisering hiervan, hoe dat proces zich verhoudt tot de vertogen van de oppositie en in het algemeen het hele politieke proces dat zich onder auspiciën van de regerende eenheidspartij ontwikkelde van 1991 tot 2015. Het problematische begrip van politiek - en van politieke praktijken - van de regerende EPRDF-partij werd verder geïllustreerd door het fenomeen van de opkomende Oromo-protesten, beschreven om een praktisch voorbeeld te geven dat de kwetsbaarheid van het politieke proces in de periode na 1991 onthult. Naast de discussie over de rol van de regerende partij EPRDF werden aldus de politieke vertogen van de oppositie ook beoordeeld in een poging het verband te leggen tussen *hun* benaderingen en het politieke proces van Ethiopië na 1991. Dienovereenkomstig werden de politieke opvattingen en praktijken van de belangrijkste politieke oppositiepartijen, afkomstig uit twee kampen: de 'pan-Pan-Ethiopianisten' en de etno-nationalisten, besproken en onderzocht. Bovendien werd onderzoek gedaan naar hun politieke ideeën en vertogen om te achterhalen hoe zij kwesties politiek significant maken en meer in het algemeen, hoe ze hun conceptualisering van politiek en hun visies op democratisering gestalte gaven. Ten slotte werd de interactie van de vertogen onderzocht om het specifieke type politiek te bepalen dat daaruit voortvloeit en de implicatie of betekenis ervan voor het democratiseringsproces van het land te bezien. Daarbij heeft de studie tenslotte de nadruk gelegd op de noodzaak om de Ethiopische politiek te heroverwegen door deze te 'desecuritiseren', zodat een normale politiek, in plaats van de politiek van het buitengewone, kan ontstaan. Daarin zouden onderhandelingen, dialoog en compromis voorrang hebben en daardoor bloei van een nieuwe politiek mogelijk maken die een proces zou kunnen ondersteunen dat leidt tot een democratische transitie.