Political discourses and the securitization of democracy in post-1991 Ethiopia

Tessema, Y.N.

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

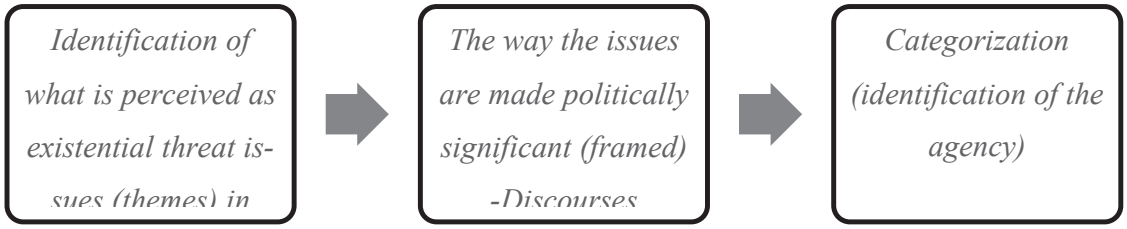
Ethiopian government officials	- Verbal (interviews, discussion and debates)	- Selected based on their significance to official government discourses - Mainly used for elaboration and triangulation purposes	Interpretive, triangulation, position summary	- Most of these material are available in Amharic 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.