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School of Graduate Studies

The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama's Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia

BY

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International Relations, Addis Ababa University, in partial fulfillment of the
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Supervisor

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, certify that this PhD Dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or academic institution, and that all source of materials used for the dissertation are fully acknowledged and properly referenced.

Melese Milossa Hamatto

Signature _____

Date: June, 2021

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
ANDP	Afar National Democratic Party
AU	African Union
BPDUF	Benishangul-Gumuz People’s Democratic Unity Front
CAFPDE	Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia
COEDF	Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic forces
CON	Council of Nationalities
COR	Council of Representatives
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
DFID	Department for International Development
EDORM	Ethiopian Democratic Officers’ Revolutionary Movement
EPDM	Ethiopian People’s Democratic movement
EPLF	Eritrea People’s Liberation Front
EPP	Ethiopia Prosperity Party
EPRDF	Ethiopia People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopia People’s Revolutionary Party
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GPUDM	Gambella People’s Unity Democratic Movement
GTP	Growth and Transformational Plan
HOF	House of the Federation
HOPR	House of Peoples Representatives
Ich’at	Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples’ Revolutionary Struggle
ISEN	Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities
Malerid	Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization
MEISON	All Ethiopian Socialist Movement
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEBE	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
OAU	African Unity Organization
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OMN	Oromia Media Network
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People’s Democratic Organization
PDO	Peoples Democratic Organization
PLF	People’s Liberation Front
SEPDC	Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Coalition
SEPDF	Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Front
SEPDM	South Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Movement
SHPDO	Sidama Hadicho People’s Democratic Organization

SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
SLF	Sidaama Liberation Front
SLM	Sidaama Liberation Movement
SMN	Sidama Media Network
SNLO	Sidaama National Liberation Organization
SNNPRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State
SNRS	Sidaama National Regional State
SPDF	Southern Peoples Democratic Forces
SPDO	Sidaama Peoples' Democratic Organization
SPDP	Somali Peoples Democratic Party
STV	Sidama Television
SRSFEDB	Sidama Regional State Finance and Economic Development Bureau
SZANRDD	Sidama Zone Agriculture and Natural Resources Development Department
SZFEDD	Sidaama Zone Finance and Economic Development Department
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
Wezlig	Labour League
WOGAGODA	Wolaitta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro

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Abstract

This dissertation examines Sidaama's quest for self-determination in Ethiopia's post-1991 federal order. The main objective of this research was to examine Sidaama's resistance to centralized rule and their struggle for regional autonomy. The dissertation used qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis. Key informants' interviews and focus groups discussion were used to collect data. The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted from 2015-2016 in Addis Ababa, Hawassa city, and different parts of the Sidaama zone.

This study is a comprehensive work on the Sidaama and focused on the path that the group followed to attain a regional state within the Ethiopian federal structure. Besides, the formation of the Sidaama region shows the most recent process of sub-national reorganization in Ethiopia.

The Sidaama mounted an armed struggle since the late 1970s. The study in particular examined the mobilization of the Sidaama for regional statehood under Ethiopia's ethnonational federal system. Accordingly, the study discussed theories of federalism and self-determination, the self-determination principles contained in the Ethiopian federal Constitution, and how Sidaama's longstanding quest for regional autonomy was impacted by the federal system.

As discussed in the dissertation, when the Ethiopian internal administrative system was restructured in 1992, the Sidaama were able to secure a regional status. This was reversed in the same year when the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) was established. Since the formation of the SNNPR and the incorporation of the Sidaama in that region without their agreement, there has been a concerted effort by the Sidaama to regain their lost regional status.

The reaction of the federal government to peaceful protests by the Sidaama by and large was violent. The Sidaama political elite within the former ruling party – Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) used provisions of the federal Constitution that entitle ethnic communities to establish their regions by following procedures provided in the constitution. First, following the 2005 electoral crisis in Ethiopia, the Sidaama zonal council endorsed the application for a regional status and supported the demand. The federal government and the EPRDF resisted the move and used patronage to defuse the challenge. The demand for regional status was, however, reignited after the political changes that happened in Ethiopia following the 2018 leadership change. The Sidaama within the ruling party (EPRDF and now Prosperity Party) and outside of it somehow stood together and pressed for regional status. Also, the Sidaama youth (Ejjeetto) played a significant role in mobilizing the public for regional status. Accordingly, in July 2018, the Sidaama zonal council officially demanded the regional statehood. Despite several ups and downs, the referendum for Sidaama regional statehood was conducted on 20 November 2019 in which the Sidaama quest for regional statehood had a landslide result won 97.7%. Accordingly, on 18 June 2020 officially Sidaama national regional state (SNRS) has become the 10th member state in the Ethiopian federation. The formation of the Sidaama regional state brought a crisis to the multi-ethnic region, SNNP. Several ethnic communities within the region are now calling for the formation of their regional governments.



Figure 1: Political Map of Ethiopia

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Quest for self-determination is a common phenomenon in global politics. The right to self-determination is recognized in international laws. However, its application is often controversial in various ways. Some groups of people seek ‘internal autonomy’ within the existing state structure while others argue for complete secession. Kashmir and Punjab, Northern Ireland, Quebec and the Kurdish region of Iraq and Turkey (Ferdous, 2007; Bahru, (ed.), 2008), Palestine, Catalonia, Southern Cameroon, South Sudan (Ferdous, 2007; Shelton, 2011), Tibet (Woelk, 2000) are popular cases to cite that demand for external self-determination. Also, Igbo people of south eastern Nigeria (Akanji, 2012), Western Sahara and the Basque country in Spain (Wolff, 2006 and Bahru (ed.), 2008) demanded the same. In Sirlanka, Tamil quests for a separate State (International Crisis Asia Report No 239-20 November, 2012).

Eventually, South Sudan succeeded in the secession struggle through referendum held in January 2011 as part of a Comprehensive Peace agreement becoming the 54th African state on 9 July 2011 (McNamee, 2012; Ferdous, 2007). However, the struggle for secession by Igbo in the Eastern Region of the Republic of Biafra, finally led to restructuring of the federal arrangement in Nigeria. This resulted in creation of more states (Suberu, 2006). On the other hand, the quests of Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the Sidaama and Gamo regions of Ethiopia are demanding for internal self-determination/regional autonomy (Tsegaye, 2009; Tsegaye, 2010a; Suberu, 2006).

The study of Sidaama’s quest for regional statehood is an important exercise in many regards with respect to federal studies and the rights of ethnic communities to self-determination. Firstly, the mobilization of the Sidaama to achieve a regional status within Ethiopia’s ethnic federation immensely contributed to the consolidation of Sidaama ethnic identity. In spite of internal differences within the Sidaama, the goal of forming a region for the Sidaama as amply demonstrated in this dissertation was advocated by the majority of political and social forces among the ethnic community. Second, this study has also made a contribution with respect to the challenges of realizing the ethnic self-determination rights enshrined in Ethiopia’s federal Constitution.

Though the right to demand a regional status for ethnic communities was well provided in the federal Constitution, the federal government by giving some incentives persuaded the Sidaama to abandon its demand for regional state. One reason that could explain the reluctance of the federal government to allow the formation of a regional state for the Sidaama was the country's political economy, meaning the cost of creating additional region and also opening of the gate for the creation of more regions in the south after allowing the Sidaama to have their own region.

Currently, there are a number of claims for the right to self-determination in various forms in Ethiopia. This dissertation focuses on the Sidaama's quest for internal self-determination or regional autonomy within the existing federal arrangement of Ethiopia. The Sidaama elites believe that they were forcefully incorporated into the Ethiopian state in the early 1890's. Since the late 1970s the Sidaama started a movement to acquire regional autonomy. Undeniably, Sidaama enjoyed some level of autonomy in the Post-1991 Ethiopia- for a brief time. They were given a regional status along with few ethnic groups in the country. However, since 1993, Sidaama was denied regional autonomy and was given at zonal administration level in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional (SNNPR) state with more than forty five ethnic groups. Since then there have been anguish and discontents. Very lately, this longstanding quest for regional autonomy has been granted through referendum that was conducted on 20 November 2019. As the result of the referendum reports, 97.7% of the voters said yes for an independent region of Sidaama (Tronvoll et al. 2020). Subsequently, Sidaama National Regional State (SNRS) has officially become the 10th regional state in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on 18 June 2020 (Anadolu Agency, 2020).

With more than a population of 4.1 million, the Sidaama is one of the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia (SNRS Plan Commission, 2020). Geographically, the Sidaama region extends on the north-south axis from Lake Hawassa to Dilla town and on the west-east axis, from the Bilaatte River to Logita River, Mount Garamba. The Sidaama share (cultural) borders with the Wolayita in the west, Gedeo in the south and Oromiya in the north, north-west, east and south-east (Hamer, 1987: 12; Seyoum, 2006: 59-60).

The Sidaama Administration zone (or the newly established Sidaama region) is situated at 6°14' and 7°18' North latitude and 37° 92' and 39° 14' East longitude. Currently, it comprises thirty *woredas* and six administrative towns. The region covers 6981.8km². However, the enumeration

of these *woredas* and administrative towns (in the former Sidaama zone) did not include the Hawassa city administration. This became another discontent to Sidaama people as they claim the city as their native land.

Despite the fact that Hawassa has been serving as a seat for Sidaama Zonal administration, it is nonetheless organized as a separate Zone and is accountable to the regional state where the same city serves as its capital (SZFEDD, 2015:1; SNRS Plan Commission, 2020). Markos argues that ‘at a later stage, Hawassa and its environs are detached from the Sidama Zone and is constituted within the Hawassa Special Zone whereas the Sidama Zone administration was reconstituted with 19 local administrations (*woreda*) and two special town administrations’ (Markos; 2014:96).

The status of Hawassa has occasionally been a source of contestation by the Sidaama, SNNPR state and federal government. Wolassa (2016: 307) contends ‘another thorny issue is the status of the city of Hawassa, which serves as the administrative capital of the Sidama nation, as well as the southern region. Conflicting interests to control the Hawassa city remains a political flash point in the region’. Despite the contesting interests, Hawassa city administration has been accountable to the regional state. In other words, Hawassa city is accountable to the Sidaama regional state. Interestingly, at the same time, it will remain as capital of the SNNPR up until, the SNNPR establishes a new regional capital (Addis Standard, October 18, 2019).

1.2 The Research Problem and the Main Tenets of the Study

Sidaama’s long entrenched gerontocracy was adversely affected by the incorporation of the Sidaama into the Ethiopian state, which was by and large achieved by force in the 1890s (Wolassa, 2016). The centralization endeavors of Ethiopia’s subsequent regimes namely Menelik II, Haileselassie I, and the Derg, although were different in degree, undermined the Sidaama identity, culture and language like other ethnic groups in the Southern part of the country. Meanwhile, the regimes worked more or less to consolidate the so called the then ‘dominant identity’ in the country as elites argue. More specifically, the Sidaama, like other ethnic groups in Ethiopia, has been compelled to pursue the ‘dominant’ culture and language instead of promoting its identity, language, culture and history. Especially, the *Amharanization* process; the attempt of imposing the *Amharic* language and the *Amhara* culture on the Sidaama

was a top-down project that threatened the lives of communities. The effects of this project are well explained by Seyoum Y. Hameso as:

The Conquest of Sidamaland in 1893 had impacted the Sidama world in many ways. It brought about the colonial system of tenant-settler relationship. It also resulted in the promotion of authoritarian ethos and the consequent demotion of the local systems of governance inculcated in *halaale* (truth) principle and the *Luwa* (age-set) system (Seyoum, 2006:58).

Similarly, Leenco (1999: 155) argues that ‘for the sake of a nation state forging in Ethiopia, its diversified communities and their culture, language and history were down-played’. He added that, instead of ensuring equalities of “nations and nationalities” with due recognition of their identities, on the contrary, the regime favored to promote the “*Amharanization*” project. He further stated that the nation building project was discriminatory and with overt move to ensure the dominance of the ruling *Amharas*.

The governments of modern Ethiopia followed assimilation policy which has adversely affected the use and development of Sidaama language, promotion of its culture, and have record of its history. Their intention was building Ethiopian nation state and at the same time disregarding linguistic and cultural diversity of ethnic groups in the country including the Sidaama.

Added to this, the *gabar* system which can be comparable to European serfdom was introduced and this brought the Sidaama under ruthless and exploitative rule. This also affected the citizenship status of the Sidaama in the Ethiopian state and reduced them to subject status. In fact, the ‘national oppression’ process under which the other incorporated areas were also suffering and it truly describes the Sidaama situation. In a nutshell, the ‘nation-building’ project in the context of the Sidaama and the other ethnic groups in the South was violent, oppressive and insensitive (Wolassa, 2016).

In similar discussion, Markakis (2011) argues that the Ethiopian empire building process by no means less equated to colonial enterprise on the soil of Africa, as the project run parallel to it, the incorporated areas peoples of Ethiopia were subjected to and assimilated like the colonial powers did in their respective colonies. Besides, the center-periphery dichotomy was a defining feature

of the state-society relations, as it was practiced by colonial counterparts as explained in the same source.

Markakis further noted that communities in the peripheries were asked to suit to social and cultural values of that of the center, at the expense of their resources appropriated in the zero-sum game manner. To the worse, people from periphery had little access to power essential to access to state resources. The unbearable oppression finally had led to resistance of different form for which the ruling elites had reacted by and large cruelly (Ibid).

There have been three contending perspectives concerning the Ethiopian state making. Basically, the major perspectives include ‘nation-building’ thesis, ‘national oppression’ thesis and ‘colonization’ thesis (Merera, 2011b). Obviously, nation-building cannot be viable without the genuine consent and equitable representation of people it constitutes. Merera (2003: 1) provides at length that the ‘nation –building’ project within the Ethiopian context is an empire building in which the few dominated multitudes and the people especially in the peripheries had lost their previous autonomous status. Subsequently, they were urged to follow assimilation policy for the sake of ‘nation-building’ where to abandon their own identity spearheaded by the political elite. To Merera the ‘national oppression’ concept better describes the situation of the South as a whole in the post Menelik II regime.

In *gebbar* project, the northern settlers were granted with the right to collect tribute from peasants who were rightful owners of their ancestral lands particularly in the South (Bahru, 2002:191). In addition, the *gult* system, a provision of the land as a substitute to remuneration, was given to those who served the state in different capacities. Both state and Church in unison involved in massive alienation of land from the indigenous population. The land owning *gabbar* (*ristegna peasantry*) was subjected to multiple taxation, tribute and corvée labor (Addis Hiwet, 1975: 26-34). Such a process significantly affected the indigenous people as they were under the control of agents of the state and they obviously lost right to their land. The elite of the ethnic communities of the south were coerced to adopt the culture, language, and religion of the *Amhara* ruling class.

Scholars and politicians in Ethiopia argue that state centralization and the drive for homogenization were the defining features of the expanding modern state of Ethiopia. For

instance, Semahagn (2012:169) argues that the Ethiopian nation builders for long have employed forces for much more centralization, discrediting the diversified nature of Ethiopian people. Reinforcing this argument, Alemseged stated that the then nation builders had forged the unitary state system by forcefully co-opting the ‘minority’ nations and nationalities into a dominant culture, largely through imposition of a ‘dominant’ people’s language and culture i.e. *Amharic* language and *Amhara* culture on others (Alemseged, 2004:595).

Like most ethnic groups of Ethiopia, following the incorporation process by Menelik II, the Sidaama as aforementioned, were forcefully incorporated into the central Ethiopian state system and were treated as subjects under successive regimes. Fasil Nahum further explains this as:

Menelik’s Ethiopia was in many respects not unlike the European colonial enterprises, particularly in the relationship between governors and governed. As hitherto independent peripheral communities with different religious, ethnic, and political backgrounds were incorporated by war lords, empire building was violent and semi colonial in nature (Fasil, 1997:13).

Haile Selassie’s regime further consolidated the centralization attempt of Menelik II with heavy hands. Semahagn explains further as Haile Selassie continued the centralization path, the centralization drive was primarily embedded in assimilation policy of ‘nation-building’ consequently, minorities were left without their rights and freedoms (Semahagn, 2012:169). In the same regime, the Sidaama, like other people of Ethiopia mostly from peripheries, were subjugated to fit into the ‘*Amaharanization*’ project (Wolassa, 2016).

In other words, the process of expanding the Ethiopian state was a dehumanizing project like colonialism (Markakis, 2011). The ‘national question’ advanced by the oppressed ethnic groups has been a response to this fact. Balsvik (2007) argues that the “national question” issue had been the most debated issue during student movements in 1950s and 1960s. For instance, the article on “national question” by Walleign Mekonnen, a prominent figure during students’ movement had sparked a hot debate among University Students. In his famous article, Walleign (1969) acknowledged the multi-national nature of Ethiopia and called/advocated for the liberation of oppressed nationalities. He criticized the wrong conceptualization of the ruling elite

and their affiliates to label the “national question” with tribalism. He boldly called for national equality and criticized the *Amharanization* project. According to Balsvik, the active members of the students’ movement used the “national questions” to organize themselves under socialist ideologies to fight against national oppression (Balsvik, 2007).

The military regime which succeeded Haile Selassie I in 1974, also known as “the Derg”, brought radical changes to end feudalism through the land reform proclamation of the 1975 (Bahru, 2002). Also, the regime established mass associations of different sections of society including: women, peasant and youth which were essential for political reform unlike the previous regimes. However, its growing dictatorship had stifled the genuine political participation through time (Wolassa, 2016).

The Derg regime acknowledged the Sidaama language (Sidaamu Afoo) by making it one of the fifteen local languages to offer basic adult education in its literacy campaign around the turn of 1980s (Anbessa, 2007). The decision of the Derg to provide basic adult education in Sidaama language was much appreciated, even though the use of the Geez script was contested by some scholars who have studied the grammar and linguistics of Sidaama language as noted in Anbessa’s 2007 paper. To scholars like Anbessa, the Latin system of writing better serves the use and development of Sidaama language with respect to its linguistic features (Ibid).

Obviously, the Derg regime vigorously enhanced political participation and socio-economic development in Sidaama compared to the preceding regimes. However, tight control of the regime based on its socialist ideology hampered peoples’ exercise of political and economic rights. Besides, the regime used unprecedented force to impose socialist ideology in all its political landscape. The Sidaama elite, who resisted the suppression, had opted for armed struggle against the Derg like other ethno-nationalist forces (Wolassa, 2016). Regarding this, Kassahun Berhanu et al (2007: 57-58) observed that:

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), which formally transformed itself into a ‘Peoples’ Republic’ in the late 1980’s, was increasingly alienating itself from the people. This was due to a host of repressive measures that it had adopted for the purpose of perpetuating itself in power in the face of mass discontent and

hostility towards its policies and practices. Thus, the hope for smooth and democratic socio-economic and political transformation, espoused by the vast majority of Ethiopians during the early days of the revolutionary upsurge in 1975, was gradually shattered.

The Marxist-Leninist, ideology was propagated as a ‘panacea’ to end the widespread ‘national oppression’. The land reform of the 1975 ended tenancy which was one of the key economic features of the *gabbar* system. As mentioned above, the Derg also spearheaded the establishment of mass organizations which helped the mobilization of people. However, the Derg gradually moved to further consolidate its power, by pursuing harsh and repressive measures that entrenched the military at the center of the axis of power (Semahagn, 2012; Aadland, 2002). Its ‘nation building’ project, was violent and the ‘national questions’ of different peoples were suppressed.

As a result, the regime could not ensure both economic and political reforms which were pressing demands of the time. The unitary state structure was less accommodative to the diversified people of Ethiopia. Consequently, the military regime which failed to get legitimacy from the citizens of the country (albeit a brief support it got after the land reform in 1975), continued to stay in power by relying on the repressive state apparatuses which ultimately led to the emergence of ethno-national movements (Ibid). As a result, typically armed struggle against the Derg regime were launched by many liberation movements and fronts in the country as a continuation of former national struggles against the successive and suppressive Ethiopian regimes, which eventually brought about the demise of the Derg regime in 1991.

Likewise, the entrenched oppression forced the Sidaama to take up armed struggle against the Derg regime by establishing a liberation movement known as the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) in 1977 (Markos, 2014; Wolassa, 2016). The SLM had established military base in Somalia which at the time was providing support to Ethiopian rebel forces to weaken the Ethiopian government (Gebru, 2000; Kifle, 2007).

During the transitional period, as per Chapter I, Article 2(a, b, c) of the Charter, 1991, the Sidaama like other ethnic groups of the country had the right to use and develop its language, pre-serve its identity, promote its culture and history; the right to self-determination, fair and proper

representation in the central government (Transitional Government of Ethiopia Charter, 1991). During the July 1991 conference held in Addis Ababa, the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM), along with other liberation and political movements was represented by its leader, the late WoldeAmanuel Dubale.

At the time, SLM was represented with two seats in the Transitional Assembly of an 87 members Council of Representatives. Later on, the SLM was discouraged by the heavy hand of the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) / Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which had already established a surrogate organization, named Sidaama People's Democratic organization (SPDO). Therefore, SLM boycotted the June 1992 regional and local elections (Merera, 2011b; Markakis, 2011).

Interestingly, it was not difficult to predict the outcome of the 1992 elections and subsequent elections held in Ethiopia. This is so because the necessary institution for democratization process (e.g., the National Electoral Board) was crafted by the very regime which lacks both the will and interest to ensure democratization and constitutionalism. The rules of the game, the free and fair nature of the elections were contested by opposing parties. As a result, the SLM decided to withdraw from the Transitional government, taking a lesson from Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Finally, the SLM withdrew from the Transitional Government (Lyons, 1996; Markakis, 2011: 285-286).

This situation led the Sidaama Liberation Movement to continue its struggle for Self-determination as the opportunity for a peaceful struggle during the transitional period was undermined by the EPRDF/TPLF. Abbink remarked on the establishment of surrogate organizations loyal to the EPRDF/TPLF regime as follows:

Every ethnic group had to have its own political party, under the aegis of the ruling EPRDF. These were of course the so-called PDOs- 'People's Democratic Organizations', ethnic satellite parties among the various ethnic groups set up and controlled by EPRDF cadres, without much grass roots influence. In a later phase several smaller and related groups were merged in one PDO party (Abbink, 2011: 599-600).

After opposition political parties, such as OLF and SLM, left the transitional council, the political space was fully dominated by the EPRDF/TPLF and its surrogate political organizations (Markakis, 2011; Wolassa, 2016). With the proclamation of a Federal and Democratic State Structure in 1995, the EPRDF/TPLF claimed that a new political space was created to nations, nationalities or peoples of Ethiopia to exercise particularly a right to self-determination (FDRE Constitution, 1995). As well, the FDRE constitution's Article 39(2) declares that 'Every Nation, Nationality and People' in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history.' In a similar manner, the revised constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State in 2001 also stipulates under Article 39(1) to 'preserve its identity and have it respected, promote and preserve its heritage, artifact and history, and use and develop its own language and culture.'

The Ethiopian constitution has enabled Sidaama to enjoy cultural and linguistic rights; however, it was denied to fully exercise its political and economic rights. In the Transitional period, Sidaama was organized at regional state level along with a few ethnic groups such as Gedio, Burje, Amaro (Koore), and Gidicho (See TGE Proclamation No. 7/1992; Council of Nationalities, SNNPRS, 2011: 10 of the English version). Later, it was merged as Zonal administration in the SNNPR state within a year time contrary to the long-standing quest of Sidaama for regional statehood.

The merger of five regions in Southern Ethiopia into a single region, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region had both proponents and opponents. The Ethiopian Government claims the merged region was established with the consent of the concerned 'nations, nationalities and peoples' for administrative convenience as well as to create 'strong political and economic union' (TGE Proclamation No. 7/1992; Hashim, 2010: 7 and Cohen, 1995: 159). The opponents of the merge; however, argue that the intention was forceful and top-down imposition that excluded the consultation of the target 'nations, nationalities and peoples' (Abbink, 1998: 64; Merera, 2011b:89).

In this new arrangement, the Sidaama was reduced to assume a zonal status contrary to the will of its people and its long struggle for complete independence. Consequently, in the face of enormous socio-economic and politically pressing demands of the people, the Sidaama nation's quest for regional statehood has been vigorously revitalized than ever before. Amidst of plenty of

claims such as the Gamo, Wolayta and other ethnic groups for regional statehood, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples region is currently at a cross road. It is important to address such demands in a democratic manner as guaranteed by constitution (Tsegaye, 2010a:57; Anadolu Agency, 2020). At this point, it is vital to consider what Christopher Clapham (2006) commented about SNNPR. He said:

Towards accommodating minority nationalities in the SNNPR of Ethiopia multination state is created... though it is not difficult to foresee that a more competitive political system would create, as in Nigeria, irresistible pressures for fragmentation (Clapham, 2006: 233).

Semahagn on his part noted that the federal experiment of Ethiopia is famous for having relatively better achievements in cultural and linguistic rights but it has been experiencing multifaceted challenges that include undemocratic state-society relations, politics of difference, which emanate from a failure to ensure consensus democracy and a reversed course of centralization leading to the situation where the economic and political rights have been backsliding and falls apart from the original promise (Semahagn, 2012:172).

Ethnic based federal arrangement in Ethiopia has partly addressed ‘national questions’ of nations, nationalities and peoples who were victims of ‘national oppression’ since the formation of the modern state in Ethiopia. Particularly, the provision of linguistic and cultural rights to previously suppressed nations, nationalities and peoples are predominant features of Ethiopia’s federal arrangement in comparison to the previous regimes. But, in the wider political, social, legal and economic arena, it is ironical that a new restructuring of the Ethiopian state under ethnic federalism rebuffed the Sidaama’s right to regional statehood (Wolassa, 2016).

In more concrete manner, Merera (2011b:89) cogently argued that ‘the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples State (SNNPRS) was formed by a political surgery that lumped together several dozen diverse ethnic groups more for political expediency.’ Compared to other ethnic groups which have achieved regional status with a few hundred thousand population size, the denial of Sidaama statehood was unconstitutional and undemocratic (Wolassa, 2016).

Interestingly, the city of Hawassa has occasionally become one of hotspots of status making for the Sidaama, the regional state and the federal government. The Sidaama quest for statehood and the status of Hawassa city has been intertwined. This has resulted in confrontation that caused the death of hundreds, arrest of multitudes and the exile of many people since the restructuring of the Ethiopian state in the post-1991. Since 2003, the city is administered as a separate zone under control of the regional state through proclamation number 51/2002 of SNNPR. It is also a seat to the Sidaama Zonal administration (Kinkino, 2013).

Scholars are concerned about such arrangement. As a case in point, Jon G. Abbink argues ‘in these mixed cities, local power holders may also opt to enforce dominance of the group they are said to belong to. For instance, in Awasa [Hawassa], capital of the Southern Region, it is asserted by some local people that Sidama people (who are well-represented in the zonal administration) claim the town as part of their territory (though it was not traditionally theirs) and try to expand their numbers in the town’ (Abbink, 1998: 66). Regardless of the bone of contention concerning the status of the city by SNNPRS and the Federal government, Sidaama political elite have a strong assertion that the city belongs to them and need to use it as capital for their aspired future regional state. Wolassa articulates the situation in the following manner:

The Hawassa town was established in 1964 by displacing the Sidama farmers and cattle herders surrounding Lake Hawassa, which they have inhabited for the past 1000 years. The Sidama people have been living in the present land of Hawassa for over 1000 years. It is impossible to rewrite the history of the Hawassa land by denying the right of the Sidama people to ownership of the Hawassa city, which rightfully belongs to them (Wolassa, 2016: 307).

Commonly and locally, Hawassa most referred as ‘Adaare’ original settled by the Sidaama people who used to plough their farmland and herd their cattle. The development of state commercial farms and its gradual urbanization displaced the Sidaama people who have settled for centuries (Daye, 2015; Wolassa, 2016). According to Zeleke and Serkalem (2007:3) ‘Hawassa town has got its name from the name of ‘Lake Hawassa’. Before the establishment of Hawassa town this land (along the edge of the Lake) was named ‘Ada’are’ which means ‘a field of cattle’ in Sidaama Language.’

It is apparent that the Sidaama, federal government and the regional state have competing interests concerning the status of Hawassa. This requires careful evaluation of diverse factors such as history, demography, ethnic territoriality and political issues to determine the status of Hawassa. Utmost constitutionalism and the rule of law are the essential elements that may set a ground for the future status of the city. Currently, both the regional state and the Sidaama Zonal administration have been governing the city in a dual rule. There has been occasional rumor that federal government wants to make a city chartered. How long the regional state and the Sidaama zonal administration pact may last and whose claim shall prevail in the city will be left for unpredictable future (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2013).

The Sidaama Zonal administration in the Ethiopian federal system was placed in the southern state in the top-down imposition. The region was formed without adequate consultation and consent of the affected people and ethnic groups including Sidaama contrary to right to self-determination for ‘every Nation, Nationality and People’ to the extent of secession. Besides, as opposed to what the Sidaama has been contributing to even in the region of the South, SEPDM/ the EPRDF regime has been at loggerheads with Sidaama’s move. This has created suspicion, which has led to occasional confrontation with incumbent party mainly regarding its statehood claims and over the status of Hawassa city.

Hawassa was administered as one of municipalities under the Sidaama zone since the restructuring of Ethiopian state in the 1991. However, the government promulgated the proclamation number 51/2002 of SNNPR that stipulates Hawassa city to be organized as a separate zone detached from being under the Sidaama zonal administration and accountable to the regional state (Kinkino, 2013; Markos, 2014).

This has further provoked Sidaama to peacefully quest for its statehood. The 24 March 2002 demonstrators was to march into the city to appeal to authorities to revoke the decision; however, unexpectedly they encountered armed force which flagrantly fired on peaceful demonstrators that resulted in the death of over seventy people, arrest of the multitudes and persecution of many which is annually commemorated by the Sidaama people as the Looqqe massacre (Markakis, 2011; Aalen, 2006 and Wolassa, 2016). Added to this, the move to make Hawassa a ‘Metropolitan’ city in June 2012 proposed by the regional state under the mantra of improving its governance record by pooling in more skilled human resource and promoting development by

adopting the ‘open up’ policy without the consultation of the Sidaama public. The proposal was vigorously challenged widely by a vast majority of Sidaama who voiced that it was against the right to self-rule particularly in the city administration. Indeed, the intended proposal was later revoked by the government (Kinkino, 2013).

All in all, these lead the researcher to assume that the Sidaama forceful merger in the Southern Ethiopia has undermined the Sidaama to enjoy its long-standing quest for regional statehood. These conditions clearly indicate that the Sidaama quest for internal self-determination shall remain their legitimate right specifically in light of the FDRE constitution as well as SNNPR’s state constitution.

1.3 Problem Statement

The 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution (FDRE) bestows every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia to self-determination, including secession under Article 39(1). In spite of this, Sidaama’s demand for a regional status was resisted by both the federal government and the then governing coalition, the EPRDF. The main problem that this dissertation sought to examine was why the EPRDF government resisted Sidaama’s quest for a regional status that was made in line with the provisions and procedures instituted in the federal and regional (SNNPR) constitutions. The dissertation also sought to examine how the Sidaama reacted to the decision of the federal government not to entertain their quest of regional statehood.

Sidaama’s quest for a regional status was made in accord with Article 47(3a) which says that, ‘When the demand for statehood has been approved by a two-thirds majority of members of the Council of the Nation, Nationality or Peoples concerned, and the demand is presented in writing to the state council.’ Ironically, Sidaama’s legitimate right to self-determination was denied by unconstitutional moves of both regional and federal governments under the appeasement policy of ‘development instead of democracy’, which ignores the responsibility of a regional council to arrange referendum within one year. The denial particularly of a right to statehood forced the Sidaama to take a long road for its right to internal self-determination proves the contradictions that are imbedded in the Ethiopian federal system.

I contend in this dissertation, following Semahagn (2012: 172) and Berhanu (2008:19) that Sidaama's quest for regional statehood was rejected by the federal government for a long time due to the fact that the Ethiopian federal project lacked a 'social contract' and was instituted and run for much of its history on a top-down basis. This problematic undermined the legitimacy and accountability of the federation and undermined the development of a federal covenant. According to Alem, the Ethiopian constitutional provisions have been contested by different opposition political parties and people. Especially, the secession version of the constitution is the most controversial (Alem, 2003). The southern region was crafted in a 'political contract' that does not recognize the socio-economic realities of the ethnic groups reconstituted the region. Indeed, the Southern region is left with uncertain future given the establishment of the Sidaama region in 2019 and the demand of other ethnic groups for the establishment of their respective regions.

Thus, this dissertation is aimed at exploring the federal arrangement of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period in the context of the Sidaama. Sidaama is the least studied except the works of a few scholars like Lovise Aalen (2002), Sarah Vaughan (2003), Akililu Abraham (2000) and others who studied the federal experience of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' regional state at a macro level.

The major problem is the imposition of a flawed federal arrangement on the Sidaama people without their consent and the consequences of such arrangement on the quest of the Sidaama people for democracy and the right to self-determination. Nevertheless, in the course of conducting this research, the Sidaama quest for statehood has been presented to the council of zonal administration on 18/07/2018 whereby the council unanimously approved the demand. After long struggle, the current government finally conducted a referendum on the 20 November 2019 to respond to the Sidaama quest for a regional autonomy. The establishment of a Sidaama region was supported by an overwhelming number (97.7%) of the voters (Tronvoll et al. 2020). Accordingly, on 18 June 2020 the Sidaama regional state became the 10th regional state in the Ethiopian federation (Anadolu Agency, 2020).

1.4 Central Argument

Even if federalism is not a panacea by itself, the former ruling party, the EPRDF contended that ethnic-based federalism rightly addresses the 'national question' of the vast majority of nations,

nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the restructuring of the Ethiopian state along ethno-linguistic lines undeniably has enabled several ethnic communities like the Sidaama in exercise self-administration at the zonal level, the use and development of its language, and cultural celebration. But under the hegemonic control of the former ruling party, the provisions that were provided in the federal Constitution regarding the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to self-determination including to establish a regional state were more theoretical than practical. The quest of the Sidaama for a regional status was suppressed by the EPRDF for a long period of time and was only achieved due the persistence and resilience of the movement and the changes that happened to the Ethiopian political landscape after 2018 political changes.

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this dissertation was to examine the theory and practice of self-determination in Ethiopia's federal system by focusing Sidaama's quest for regional statehood. In doing so, the dissertation examined why the federal government sought to suppress Sidaama's quest for regional status, in spite of the fact that the right of the constitution contained clear provisions that allow ethnic communities to the right of self-determination including the formation of regional states. In addition, the dissertation also aimed at examining the factors that explain the resilience and persistence of the Sidaama political elite and the wider society in pursuing the quest for regional status.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

- ❖ To examine relationships between federalism, self-determination, ethnic identity
- ❖ To examine history and politics of the Sidaama
- ❖ To examine the impact of the federal system in Ethiopia and the Sidaama
- ❖ To investigate procedures to be followed to establish a regional state and
- ❖ To examine underpinning factors behind the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood and the reaction of the federal and SNNP regional governments to Sidaama's quest for regional status.

1.6 Research Questions

The main research question that this dissertation seeks to examine is: what are the underlying constitutional and political factors that undermined the Sidaama from achieving self-rule in the form of regional autonomy? Specifically, the dissertation attempts to address the following sub-questions:

- ❖ How federal system of government affects ethnic identity?
- ❖ What are the criteria to form a regional state?
- ❖ What procedures to be followed to establish a regional state?
- ❖ Why the federal and the SNNPR governments sought to suppress the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood?
- ❖ Why the Sidaama sought regional statehood?
- ❖ How the demand for regional statehood was sustained for a long period of time?

1.7 Methodology and Methods

This dissertation mainly focused on exploration of opinions, meanings, attitudes, and experience of the Sidaama people regarding the federal experiment in Ethiopia. Consequently, the study employed a qualitative case study approach as its methodology. Qualitative research approach was adopted in the current study for two basic reasons. First, a qualitative research approach was found relevant to examine the attitudes and opinions of people who participated in this study. According to Kothari (2004:3) qualitative research aims at understanding motives and desires of the research participants. Accordingly, it was employed to explore how people feel or what they think about the subject of the study. Second, a qualitative research approach was employed to promote understanding on the subject by examining the meaning people give to issues concerning the subject and their experience of these issues. Baxter and Susan Jack (2008: 544) noted that qualitative case study refers to in-depth understanding of a subject in a given context using different data collection techniques.

As research tools, interviews were used as the main data gathering tool in the current study. Using semi-structured interview questions and in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted to obtain rich data from research participants. Moreover, focus group discussions were

conducted to understand the practical application of the federal arrangement in Sidaama and the problems associated with it. Apart from the use of these two primary data gathering tools, secondary sources were also used in this study. The secondary sources included books, proceeding papers, conference papers, official reports, journal articles, official documents, unpublished works, research or academic papers, as well as Internet sources.

The primary data were collected through field work from 2015-2016 in Addis Ababa, Hawassa and Sidaama. A total of 67 key informants were interviewed. These key informants, who can represent the society under study and can be able to provide pertinent information, were mainly drawn from federal, state and local government level. These include authorities from Sidaama administration zone, Hawassa city and Addis Ababa. By and large, the Sidaama people and some non-Sidaama people also took part in the study. Particularly, non-Sidaama group was included in this study to explore how other people perceive the Sidaama's struggle for its regional autonomy and its future demands.

In a nutshell, the research participants were drawn from various socio-economic groups including members from the House of People's Representatives, executives at regional and local government level, members from the regional council, the Council of Nationalities, as well as opposition parties, and civil society leaders and experts/elites representing Sidaama. Most importantly, the academia who had been drawn from Sidaama, were also consulted for this research. Besides, non-Sidaama people from different ethnic groups of Ethiopia who mainly live in Hawassa and work in different capacity were involved in this study through interview.

Not only educated individuals were considered in this study but also key informant elders from Sidaama who can provide pertinent information on historical accounts also took part in the current study. Accordingly, in-depth interviews were conducted with five Sidaama elders. Besides, three focus group discussions were conducted with twenty-five selected discussants from different layers of the society who live in three *woreda* namely Malga, Lokka Abbaya and Darra Districts of the Sidaama Zone. Therefore, the qualitative analyses in this study was based on data collected from ninety-two research participants through in-depth interview was conducted with sixty-seven informants and twenty-five discussants in the three focus group discussion sessions. Table 1 summarizes the list of the research participants in current study.

Table 1.1: key- informants and FGD members

No	Categories of informants	Size	Remarks
1.	Academics	22	
2.	Government Officials	10	
3.	Opposition Parties	3	
4.	Civil Societies	15	
5.	Non-Sidaama People	12	
6.	Elders	5	
	Sub -Total	67	
7	FGD		
	7.1. Malga District	6 members	
	7.2. Lokka-Abbaya District	10 members	
	7.3 Darra District	9 members	
	Sub-Total	25	
	Grand-Total	92	

In sum, the key informants were drawn purposively from the aforementioned institutions and different segments of the society. First, by drawing research participants from different groups, bias from the researcher’s perspective side was minimized during data gathering. Second, the collection of data from multiple categories and sources was to ensure the reliability of this study. Next, to avoid the risk of possible persecution of informants because of their views their names were withheld and numbers or codes were assigned when references are made to them in the dissertation. The same holds true for the FGD participants. The qualitative data analyses process began with analyzing pertinent information from field note manually. Then, the interviews were

translated into English and transcribed. Lastly, the data were analyzed based on emerging themes from the data. It should be noted that the fieldwork and the writing of this dissertation was made before the Sidaama referendum and the formation of the region.

1.8 Scope

This research scrutinized the Sidaama's experience in the federal arrangement of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period. The data collection was conducted in 2015 and 2016 in Addis Ababa, Hawassa and different *woreda* of the Sidaama zone.

1.9 Relevance of the Study

It is hoped that this dissertation would significantly contribute to the understanding of the emerging federal experiment in Ethiopia both within the local context of Sidaama and the wider Ethiopian context. It can also serve policy makers and policy implementers to reassess the present federal system particularly in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples region, which is vulnerable to frequent claims for status making whereby common asset building lags far behind to address the emerging assertion regarding identity question. Furthermore, it can be used by researchers, students and teachers as a reference material for future studies in similar or related cases.

1.10. Limitation of the Study

Scheduling and rescheduling interview meetings were one of the major challenges due to many of my informants were busy persons. Besides, there has been scanty literature on the subject on SNNPR state in general and Sidaama case in particular.

1.11 Ethical Approach

Obviously, a research is not a sole duty of a researcher rather it is the product of contributions from many quarters such as informants, researchers, supervisors and funding bodies. While interacting with these research stakeholders, a researcher needs to adhere to ethical codes that concern a respective stakeholder. Some of the ethical guidelines while conducting research in relation to a stakeholder in research generally include informed consent, acquaint a respondent with purpose of a given research, confidentiality, acknowledge source of information, avoid ambiguity and mistakes, showing one's own position while writing a report, use information properly, correct reporting, avoid plagiarism and publication (Kumar, 1999: 191-196; Adams et al. 2007: 35-36 and Hart, 2005: 296- 300). Adams et al (2007:35) further reminds researchers:

In doing any research there is an ethical responsibility to do the work honestly and with integrity. If you do not conduct your work in an ethical manner you will fail. This will apply to all stages of the research cycle. Fraud must be avoided in research.

To meet these requirements, the researcher primarily informed the research participants about the purpose of the research and obtained the informed consent to gather the primary data mostly through interview and FGD. As well, to maintain confidentiality the dissertation used codes to represent interviewees and FGD participants. Finally, the document duly acknowledged primary and secondary data sources.

1.12 Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter One presents introduction that includes background to the study, the research problem and the main tenets of the study, problem statement, central argument, research objectives, research questions, methodology and methods, scope, relevance of the study, limitation of the study, and ethical approach. Chapter Two examines the conceptual and theoretical framework relevant to the current study. Chapter Three provides a brief introduction to history, culture, economy and politics of the Sidaama. Chapter Four explores the federal arrangement in Ethiopia and the Sidaama. Chapter Five deals with justifiability of the Sidaama quest for self-determination in the post-1991 Ethiopia. It also argues for possible prospect Sidaama regional state and the questions associated with it. The final part, Chapter Six provides concluding remarks, considerations and policy implication of the study. Besides, a post- script was provided to understand the development following the fieldwork and the writing of this research report.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES: FEDERALISM AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ETHNIC GROUPS

This chapter explores conceptual and theoretical framework adopted for the study. It basically deals with federalism concepts and theories. Besides, it examines the level of autonomy in ethnic federation. It also reviews the state creation attempts in the federal systems and the response of governments. There have been claims for self-determination by ethnic groups in different parts of the World. Generally, ethnicity is briefed in this chapter only meant to serve the purpose of subject under study but not to have a deeper examination of the concept. It is important to note that there is no consensus on the meaning of the concept. Hale reminds us ‘although scholars often treat ‘ethnicity’ as one of the most important phenomena in politics, nothing close to a consensus has emerged about not only what its effects are but also what it is’ (2004: 458).

The study investigates how identity constructions and ethnicity matter to achieve some level of autonomy and form a state. In this chapter, mass political mobilization has been assessed in the light of how the political actors mobilize the mass to achieve a higher level of autonomy. Moreover, the neo-patrimonialism looks at how the informal approach challenged the formal approach. Finally, a political economy approach is presented to help understand how politics and economy are interrelated and influence each other.

2.1. Federalism: Concepts and theories

2.1.1. Understanding Federalism

Federalism has no universally accepted definition (Burgess, 2006). Plethora of literature on the concept has not yet provided a common working definition. Meanwhile, it is commonly understood that federalism entails two or more levels of government that are supposed to function in coordination without jeopardizing their independence (Ibid). In this regard, Watts (1996:6) reported that federalism ‘is... a normative term and refers to the advocacy of multi-tiered government combining elements of shared-rule and regional self-rule’.

To Alfred Stepan federal system can be formed in different forms. The most popular includes ‘coming together’, ‘holding together’ and ‘putting together’ (Stepan, 1999). Anderson also argues that there is no one way of formation of federal system, countries at different level of economy, governance, large or small can adopt a federal system or some kind of federalism in their accord mostly either in ‘coming together’ form or ‘devolutionary type’. Despite this, a

federal system should have at least two tiers of government with relative autonomy and these units should adhere to popular sovereignty in their constituencies governed by a constitution (Anderson, 2008).

Federation is seen as the free will of units 'coming together' to achieve their respective and common goal abide by a constitution. A constitution designates transfer of sovereignty to a union where they hold equal rights (Cameron, 2010:117). What makes a federation different from other forms is that in a federal system a unit has an autonomous power that cannot be altered by the will of the national government. In other words, the unit shall have independent power to act in its jurisdiction where a central government has no right to make it or break it whenever it deems necessary as it is formed through a constitution (Smith, 1995: 7-8). According to Daniel J. Elazar the federal system is characterized by 'self-rule' and 'shared rule' of units usually maintained by constitutional division and guarantee of their respective discretion (Elazar, 1987: 5-6).

Federation can be formed in the territorial form based on granting recognition to a territorial community through geographic or economic issues -treating all citizens equally as well as in non-territorial such as linguistic or cultural rights, to address territorially scattered cultural and linguistic groups- some refers to multinational federalism (Gagnon, 2010:5; Smith, 1995: 2-6). Essentially, a federal system is believed to be symmetrical and competitive. Nonetheless, practices reveal that asymmetry of different type and interdependence of units has been the most common in different countries that practice the federal system. For instance, James M. Buchanan reports the experience of the kingdom of Spain as some units like the Basque Country and Catalonia have relatively got preferential treatment than the other units that made the practice asymmetrical. On the other hand, Ronald L. Watts discusses, special treatment accorded to Quebecois identity in Canada. Michael Burgess on his part identified the shifting asymmetry in Belgian federation by Flanders and Wallonia (Buchanan, 2001: 92- 96; Watts, 2008 and Burgess, 2006).

2.1.2. Federalism: Theories

Even though many have attempted to study a theoretical basis of federalism, still today federalism has failed to have a "global theory" (Gamper, 2005). In the same token, Karmis and Wayne Norman have observed that much of research on federalism focuses on a comparative

study and case study not on production of a full-fledged theory (2005:4). In this respect, Burgess (2006: 1) noted that ‘while such a thing as federal theory does exist; there is as yet, no fully fledged theory of federalism.’

Meanwhile, in federal system what is the most important is to ensure the consent of the constitute units where units are to be established constitutionally and safeguarded by the rule of law (Dosenrode, 2010). Daniel J. Elazar, who was an advocate of a liberal typology of federalism, believes that a federalism system that is forged based on choice and design of constituting units precludes accidental and forceful establishment (Elazar, 1987: xiv-xv). Here it is important to note that the will of the constituent units expressed in a democratic way is essential to establish a union where each unit enjoys its autonomy and contributes to a shared-rule in genuine representation through constitutional guarantees. Otherwise, federalization without the consent of its units denigrates the essence of genuine federal foundation. It can be inferred that federal or unitary systems should not be abused by the central government, or by a ruling elite interests that disregard realities on the ground in the context of constituting units- in terms of language, culture, history, economy and the like especially in multi-national states.

Federalism can be formed, for instance, ‘coming together’- aggregative form refers to enter into a political bargain by previously independent units to come under a federal system. In this category, countries like the United States, Switzerland and Australia are typical examples. On the other hand, ‘holding together’-devolutionary form denotes the transition of unitary state to federal form. India, Belgium and Spain can be cited as examples. Putting together federal system may be crafted through the use of force in contrast to consent of the constituent units. The former USSR serves as an example. It should be understood that every federal system has a cause that necessitates foundation of federal system and driving goal to achieve (Stepan, 1999). In light of the above forms, Ethiopia is in a category of ‘holding together’ federal system because the country moved from the unitary to federal type in the 1991. This study further assesses the practice of the Ethiopian federal system by taking the Sidaama as a case in point.

2.1.3 Federalism as a Tool to Diversity Management

A federal system can manage diversity in multi-national states. This helps the recognition of the plural nature of communities and promotes solidarity while building a common asset. As federalization by itself is not an end, it needs the development and practice of culture of

tolerance, negotiation, and compromise by the constituting units (Gagnon, 2010). Taking into consideration the Nigerian experience, Suberu appreciates the feasibility of adopting a federal system particularly for plural societies for effective management and resolution of conflicts. He noted that:

By combining self-rule for individual territorial communities at the sub-federal level with shared rule for all groups at the federal level, federalism seems to provide the perfect formula for democratically maintaining unity in diversity in deeply divided societies. Nigeria provides ample illustration of how federalism's grant of local political space and national access to diverse subnational territorial to modulate conflict in multi-ethnic societies (Suberu, 2006: 72).

McWhinney (2007: 68-71) on his part argues that federalism has a greater leverage while dealing with divergent interests of its constituents along dynamism through *modus Vivendi* than in mere form of legal structuring. Accommodation is further enhanced by recognizing units as co-equal, regardless of their difference in terms of population, territory and resources.

Units in a federation should be empowered in terms of revenue raising and utilization to successfully accomplish their constitutional entrusted responsibilities. In this connection, Cohen (1995: 171-172) claims that 'if political and administrative power is to be shared it is critical that the center should not dominate revenue collection and budget allocations and the state should have enough resources to adequately perform the tasks assigned to them'.

However, guarantee of freedom is not inherent in the federal system. Accordingly, federalism is not panacea. The existence of democracy, rule of law and constitutionalism are essential elements mostly for a democratic federalism (Burgess, 2006). For instance, Riker (1964 quoted in Smith, 1995: 8) underlines that 'it is an ideological fallacy to link federation with guarantees of freedom without interrogating the nature of cultural rights and liberties and how these rights and liberties are both socially and spatially constituted'.

2.1.4 Autonomy and Federalism

Federalism entails about the constitutional share of power at different levels of government in which units exist autonomously within federation. Simultaneously, those units share power at the

national level (Bulmer, 2017:3). Mostly, in multicultural societies it attempts to ‘build unity in diversity’. Specifically, through negotiation and discussion it strives for maintaining the unity of federation (Ibid, 2017: 5-9). Federalism most commonly is known for self-rule by units on the one hand, and shared rule on the other hand in the areas of discretion set by constitution where each level of government functions autonomously (Watts, 2008: 1).

In a federal system, there is a national government and constitute units in which both levels of government operate in their discretion independently without excluding the shared power. The authority of the federal government and units emanates from the constitution. There is also mechanism of conflict management and compromise to keep the contract effective (Amah, 2017: 287).

Essentially, each unit in federation shall have some degree of autonomy to act over power that was constitutionally assigned. In federal system, the constitution guarantees the foundation and the functioning of the component units and has a provision for the settlement of disputes within and between different levels of government. It works to maintain the unity of federation versus diversity of different kind (Ibid, 2017: 288- 289).

There are different causes for the federal system to be established. The cementing element is the will of units to forge federation which is guaranteed through constitution. Each level of government operates autonomously. Federalism most commonly works to ensure a unity without jeopardizing diversities (Bataveljić, 2012: 27; Amah, 2017: 289).

Fundamentally, federalism declares for the constitutional establishment of autonomous sub-national states in Africa following the decolonization process. Nevertheless, lack of the political commitment to implement what is constituted in the constitution has obstructed the federal project (Yonatan, 2012: 269).

However, autonomy is not solely established by the federal system. The non-federal states may establish different autonomous units for different purposes. Nonetheless, what makes the autonomy in federation unique is that it is guaranteed by the constitution. Regardless of the dominant role of the national government, autonomous entities may be established by the unitary system. In federation, autonomous entities are involved in both self-rule and shared rule. In contrast, in non-federal states established autonomous units may exercise self-rule but has no

mandate to involve in decisive decision and policy making at the national level (Benedikter, 2009).

2.1.5 Federalism and State creation

Despite demand for state creation in different federal systems in the world, some states embrace it, whereas others repress it. Basically, there has been highly devolved, semi-centralized and highly centralized federal systems (Watts, 2008).

To Obi federalism in multiethnic societies more often accommodates diversity and seeks to forge national unity. Minorities may want to maintain their unique identities being organized at different level of government per se the constitution (2019:17). Consequently, there have been demands for the creation of sub-national states in different federal systems. The demand for state creation stems from diverse causes. Some of these causes broadly include socio-economic, identity based, historical, political and legal (Watts, 2008). Specifically, language, culture and religion also constitute claim for self-rule by constituent groups. Such demands could be made in different ways. In some cases, demands could be made using the legal system. In other cases, demands could be made by organizing protests (Ibid). The response of governments also differs; some allow the creation of new sub-national entities, while others forcefully repress such demands (Ibid). In many cases, governments see state creation demands as a threat to the national integration. As a typical example, the USA has been embarking on maintaining the union of its federation and less likely treats the creation of a new state (Watts, 2008; Asnake, 2009). Whereas, the Nigerian federation despite maintain the strong center unprecedented in the creation of new states which has about the 36 member states (Alkali, 2017).

Comparatively, the FDRE 1995 Constitution declares the fact that a right to self-determination for every Nation, Nationality and peoples up to the extent of secession (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Accordingly, Ethiopia is exceptional on the African continent by including the right of secession in its constitution. Also, the grant of statehood for it's over 80 ethnic groups seems challenging both politically and economically. On the top of these, states shall be organized based on ethnicity (Selassie, 2003). The Ethiopia federal system is predominated by the strong center and renowned for ensuring the exercise of linguistic and cultural rights of ethnic groups. However, the creation of a new state has been a rare practice except the recent establishment of the Sidaama regional state (Asnake, 2009; Tronvoll et al. 2020). Remarkably, federations

influenced by the strong central government maintain the highly centralized union, but the creation of states varies widely from a given federal system to the other (Burgess, 2006; Watts, 2008).

On the other hand, genuine democratic practice and rule of law usually calls for constitutional consideration of people's struggle for self-rule. Practically, state creation may not show the existence of a democratic state. A non-democratic state like Nigeria has been extensively engaged in state creation mostly when it was under military rule. It mainly focuses on power and resource sharing for contesting elites than ensure rule of law and good governance (Alkali, 2017: 1-3; Selassie, 2003). This dissertation examines how the state creation in Ethiopia has been bewildered in the federal system despite several claims to establish more ethnic based regional states by different ethnic groups including the Sidaama. The case of Sidaama is explained in the subsequent chapters in depth.

2.2 Self-determination of ethnic groups

2.2.1 Self-determination

Self-determination is one of principles of international law (Hannum, 1998). It has been duly recognized during the decolonization period and then afterwards. Later, it becomes part of human right but still its interpretation remains controversial (Ibid). It is affirmed by different international legal instruments including the Charter of the United Nations of 1945. However, in different contexts the scope and content of the term quite varies (Katzer, 2011 and McConnell, 2008).

The demand can be internal where a given people can have autonomy within a state towards the exercise of rights such as linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, political and inter alia or external in which claimant people shall have a right to independence on ground of entrenched denial of their rights and gross violations of these rights through subjugation and exploitation (Walt, 1999: 12-16 and Sterio, 2010: 138-139).

Interestingly, the concept of what constitute a people (who have the right to self-determination) has been much contested. Consensus is not reached regarding the holder of right to self-determination and factors that accompany it. This has provided a room for statesmen for

manipulation of the term and inconsistent application all over the world (Shaw, 2008: 256 and Saul, 2011: 611 and 614).

It is vital to note that there have been different legal instruments that affirmed the right to self-determination as fundamental right of people who were by and large under colonialism. The United Nations Charter Article 1 (2) declares self-determination of the peoples as one of their primary purposes. Subsequently, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights acknowledge in Article 1 (1) declare in the same words that read as ‘All peoples have right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’. By the same token, African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights in Article 20(1) emphasizes irrevocable nature of the right to self-determination of all peoples wherein they have a right to determine their own destiny including formulating policies that fit their interests and demands. Despite these legal provisions, the right to self-determination has been controversial. Except in its usage for decolonization, the principle remains baffling in other aspects.

National states of the world have been pressed by demands by different groups for autonomy. The international law proclaims a right to self-determination for colonial people. The post-colonial states have faced quests for self-government. Concerning ambiguity of the right to self-determination, there are different views that are forwarded by scholars. For example, Abdullah (2006: 39) points out that the absence of clear-cut scope for right to self-determination and its duality nature where on the one side it advocates for territorial integrity and non-intervention, whereas self-administration for the people on the other hand have made the application of the very principle complex. Saul (2011: 641) argues that states have deliberately left properly setting the scope and content of self-determination and its *jus cogens* status for fear that it will be threat to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a calculated interest in the sense that its vagueness shall provide them an opportunity to manipulate it.

Similarly, Merera (2003:32) identifies three issues that likely cause controversy regarding the right to self-determination. These include the politics of ‘might makes right’, the stubborn position of states concerning their sovereignty and territorial integrity and its attainment through military and political means than the legal path. Furthermore, the politicization of the term and

inconsistence of state practice have complicated what really self-determination is? And what it constitutes? The right to self-determination has been influenced by political negotiation and military engagement than solely a legal principle (Merera, 2003: 32, Saul: 2011: 609-611).

In the Ethiopia federal system, the FDRE constitution Article 39 (1) stipulates every nation; nationality and people in Ethiopia have the right to self-determination to the extent of secession. Notwithstanding this, the Sidaama long-standing quest for regional autonomy for a long period of time was not treated democratically and constitutionally. Indeed, referendum was conducted on the 20 November 2019 fourteen years after the Sidaama regional council decided to hold a referendum on the regional status of the ethnic group.

2.2.2 Self-determination of ethnic groups

As discussed above, federalism system can better manage diversity of different type while maintaining the unity of a country. Even if the appropriateness and design of federalism has been determined by the situation of the country to achieve a given purpose. In multinational states, which have adopted federalism, it may challenge the balance between unity and diversity. There should be democracy and rule of law to ensure genuine federalism. As part of the diversity management, federalism enables different territorial based ethnic groups who have distinct identity, religion, language or culture to have a right to self-determination. At the same time, it may result in discrimination and oppression of minorities. Thus, to protect the rights of those minorities there should be rule of law and democratic rule. In federal countries quests for self-determination by different ethnic groups should be considered constitutional and democratic. Otherwise, suppressing such demands by force might result in unintended consequences. To the worse, where there has been undemocratic rule and lack of rule of law may further cause for generation of conflict unfolding to achieve its quest (Bulmer, 2017: 11-12).

For instance, on the continent of Africa most states have become reluctant to explicitly adopt federalism for fear of secession. But there have been instances in which bloody struggle has led to secession of countries like Eritrea and South Sudan. Exceptionally, Ethiopia has explicitly adopted ethnic-based federalism which recognized a right to self-determination of ‘every nation, nationality and people’ to the extent of secession (Yonatan, 2012).

There has been practices that some states have granted autonomy at different level given ethnic, religious, language and culture diversity and administrative convince; many fears that the recognition of autonomy may bolster secession and threat to the national unity. However, autonomy has become vital for states engulfed in conflict by different group demanding for its self-determination. To have peaceful settlement, there should be negotiations by the states and groups claim for its self-government (Heintze, 2009: 391-393).

Autonomy has been essential to maintain the unity of state while accommodating diversity of different groups, mostly in multiethnic states. It aimed at constitutional address ethno-linguistic minority's demand for self-rule. However, it promotes ethno-nationalism that ultimately results in secessionism which has become reality in the contemporary democracies of the developed western (Ćurko, 2016: 52). Regardless of the debate of grant of autonomy, there have been cases in which autonomy granted to the demanding groups through rule of law and democracy.

The canton of Jura has been established after a long-drawn contestation. They have claimed either for autonomy or secession from canton of Berne from which its territory was given during Vienna congress in the early 19th century. People have expressed their dissatisfaction though a series of public demonstrations. As well, the government and the representatives of Jura separatist movement held negotiations and political discussion on the fate of Jura people (Reuter, 2016; Assefa, 2007).

Consequently, series of referendum had been conducted to provide the people a right to self-determination. It has divided votes to the region, district to district and community to community in favor creation of a new canton and to stay in the Berne canton. Indeed, on 24 September 1978 a national referendum was held to determine the creation of Jura canton or to remain in Berne canton. As an outcome, 82.3 percent, a majority of Swiss voters have voted for the creation of a new canton. Accordingly, on 1 January 1979 Jura canton was officially established. Yet, it is not clear that separatist movement is satisfied with the creation of Jura canton, while their ultimate demand had been separation (Ibid).

The Ethiopian constitution granted right to self-determination for every 'Nations, Nationalities and people' and it is territorial based. Uniquely, to the African experience, it as well declares for secession of its ethnic groups. While the regime claims the fact that it redresses "the national

question”, the opponents argues that ethnic-based federalism ultimately leads to national disintegration and it should be abandoned (FDRE constitution, 1995; Belete, 2018). However, the actual implementation of federalism in Ethiopia has been curtailed by weak rule of law and lack of democracy which is essential to have genuine federalism (Birru, 2018; Selassie, 2003).

The grant of right to self-determination to territorial based ethno-linguistic groups in Ethiopia has little considered minorities that reside within different regions in scattered manner. This calls for adequate representation in different states’ institutions, protect and promote their rights (Belete, 2018). Moreover, Ethiopian federalism, even if constitutionally is decentralized, it was highly centralized in practice and its development was influenced by the revolutionary democracy ideology of the EPRDF. Grant of right of autonomy to territorial based group’s claims for distinct identity has become a practice in multiethnic countries. The right to self-rule and the level of autonomy shall be determined either by law or through negotiations (Weller, 2009: 115).

However, the majorities of post-colonial states are heterogeneous and in many cases there have been calls for further self-determination. By and large, the governments in different parts of the world have a little appetite to allow ethnic/ national groups to determine their destiny. They primarily focus on maintaining the unity of their country. Therefore, their response has been repressive in many instances which may include genocide, expulsion, and crime of treason or assimilation (Connor, 1973). In such situation, constitutional and democratic treatment of quest for self-determination has been seldom practiced.

Currently, various ethnic/national groups in the different parts of the world have been mounting pressure up on governments to have right to self-determination. Unless settled peacefully, violent struggle to determine destiny of a given ethnic/ national group have become apparent in the world politics. Accordingly, governments have been forced to arrange referendum as per constitution of their countries or amend their constitution to address such demands. Indeed, right to both internal and external self-determination has become a reality today. But, claims to right to self-determination should be assessed in the light of constitution of a given country and by international law even if it is contested who constitutes right to determine its destiny (Archibugi, 2003; Cederman, 2015).

In states where a majority (titular nation or ethnic group) have been predominant, minority groups have been discriminated, disadvantaged or excluded (Benedikter, 2009). Building a 'nation-state' where language, culture, and history of a nation have been essential to build a state is essential for peace and stability of a given nation. If not considered, it may result in conflict between the state and minorities constituting those states. Minorities have been repressed both in centralist states and federal countries (Ibid).

In multiethnic states, it is imperative to provide protection of minority rights and recognition to collective rights of these groups. Consequently, minorities have been entitled to the right to self-government. Not every demanding minority groups have been redressed in some form of autonomy. Especially, multiethnic states have been engaged in some form of autonomy arrangement to accommodate diversified groups. Basically, the territorial autonomy or a right to self-government for distinct identity concentrated in a given territory and non-territorial solution for scattered minority groups or "cultural" or "personal autonomy" needs to be managed carefully. Hence, multiethnic states have been opting to internal self-determination to ethnic groups to avoid secessionism. Despite the efforts, there have been demands for secession in different parts of the world (Ibid).

In Ethiopia, lack of constitutionalism and democracy has adversely affected its federal experiment. To the worse, the central government has remained to be hegemonic as the major decisions are made at the center and the units are expected to implement top down decisions. Also, self-determination to ethnic groups should be enforced by the development of overarching citizenship which is essential to national unity and prevent secessionism. This fundamentally requires the existence of a state which treats every group in the country without discrimination (Aalen, 2006).

2.3 Identity Constructions

2.3.1 Identity and its Construction

Literature witness that identity is both dynamic and stable, it is also argued that identity is multilayered. For example, Märtsin argues that there are diverse and contradictory perspectives to identity. On the one hand, identity is viewed as a fixed and stable entity. On the other hand, identity can be made through on-going process. It may be constructed and reconstructed (2008:

3-4). Essentially, primordialists view identity as endowed and natural while the constructionists contend the fact that identity can be forged as an individual interacts within a society (Ibid: 25-26). Especially, identity construction shall be undertaken through continuous interaction of individual with a society at large (İnaç, 2013:223).

Identity takes different forms namely personal and group/collective of again diverse forms. The later, collective identity is established through individual interaction with a society and/or an institution in turn produces self-individual identity which is as well a product of same interaction. It can be made through different contexts: socio-political, economic, cultural, situational, historical and so on. Identity is composed of identity content and identity salience. The later, which is important for the current study, is the magnitude of attraction individuals have for their group identity. As a result, members of a group may have a positive feeling to each other. Collective/group identity is an essential element to mobilize members of a group towards a common goal (Polletta and James M. Jasper, 2001: 284-285).

2.3.2 Ethnic Identity

In spite of diverse studies conducted on the subject, ethnicity has still remained controversial among politicians and academia (Wolff, 2006). Attempts hitherto made to define ethnicity did not get a universal acceptance. Instead, the term, by and large, becomes interpretative by differing perspectives or school of thoughts known as ‘primordialists’, ‘instrumentalists’ and ‘constructivists’ (Yash Ghai, 2000; Wolff, 2006). In contemporary period, regardless of attempts to globalization, there has been every growing concern for identity recognition since multiculturalism has become a global reality (Seyoum, 1997b; Wolff, 2006). Accordingly, the study of ethnicity is essential since Ethiopia has been experimenting ethnic based federalism in the post-1991 Ethiopia. Here, this section focuses on conceptualizing ethnicity and ethnic identity.

2.3.2.1 Conceptualization of Ethnicity

The concept ethnicity remains flexible to a wide variety of interpretations. Isajiw understands ethnicity as a complex phenomenon and argues that it is not easy to exhaust a study on ethnicity. He further suggests that researchers who study some aspects of ethnicity should not miss to establish a link with other aspects of the subject (Isajiw, 1993:1). Moreover, within a few decades ethnicity has managed to win the attention of politicians, ‘freedom fighters’, and social

movements that has broaden the applicability of the concept in practical aspect than being only the concern of social scientists. It has become an appropriate concept to be used instead of ‘race’ or ‘tribe. In midst of this, the term ethnicity still could not lead to a common understanding (Lentz, 1995: 304; Jones, 1997: 56).

Wolff (2006:33) recalls that even if ethnicity was with less complicated conceptualization given the original version ‘ethnos’- inferred as kinship with blood bond, however, later it become a point of debate by different parties. Originally, the concept was coined with descent- blood ties. Recently, the concept becomes susceptible to a wider range of interpretation and politicization. Scholars, therefore, could not reach at a common understanding of this concept. This has complicated the effort to come up with clear essence of ethnicity and its manifestation in social, economic and political landscape. Brown (1994: ix) writes the challenges of theorizing ethnicity as follows:

Ethnicity is one of those subjects in which explanation tends to become intertwined with moral evaluation. Enquiry tends to be permeated and inhibited by the preconception that it involves either a primitive and backward instinctual trait (tribalism), a moral sickness (racism, chauvinism, or a progressive virtue (the communitarian spirit, the ‘people’, for some, the nation). Faced with one or other of these assumptions or feelings, any attempt at extended explanation is likely to be criticized in so far as it fails to accord with, or provide ammunition for, the given evaluation.

Despite differences, scholars have continued to forward definition of ethnicity and ethnic group. According to scholars (like Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, 2004: 3; Kioli, 2012: 42; Isajiw, 1993:6;Wimmer, 2008: 973) ethnic group refers to a sense of common feeling and shared identity founded on historical experience, myths of a common ancestry, belief, language, psychological makeup, custom and in the possession of definite geographic area. Ethnicity, therefore, stands for collective identity to be manifested through socio-cultural, economic and political spheres. Membership to a given groups comes from either ascription-born into a given ethnic group or achievement-social status gained through personal merit by good will of an individual. In harmony with this definition, Horowitz (1998: 16-17) defines ethnic group

identification from inception as well as passage through a common life experience maintains identity assertion. His argument reads as:

Ethnicity is a powerful affiliation, both because similarity is valued and because genetic (or putatively genetic) origins and early socialization are potent sources of similarity or, in any case, of cues that signal similarity: appearance, customs, gestures, language, clothing, tastes, and habits. The assumption of similarity follows quickly once groups are formed, even in laboratories, and reinforces group identity. Even more powerful is the assumption of similarity that derives from birth or common experience of childhood.

Isajiw (1993:5) reports that ethnicity is viewed in both objective and subjective perspectives. Objective perspective refers to understanding ethnicity in terms of institutions wherein relationship assumed by individuals. The subjective perspective contends the analysis of attitude, values and preconceptions of individuals in the course of interacting with each other. To Eriksen, ethnicity implies a group of individuals who consider themselves distinct from others. In other words, a group may assume a given status in hierarchically organized societal structure. Identification marks are often labeled as ‘us’ and ‘them’- ‘we’ and ‘they’ claims in a given institutionalized relationship. It is enriched and developed social relationships. This is how identity consciousness often begins to take shape for further identity assertion. In brief, it is about how individuals identify themselves and how others view these individuals. It entails ‘self-defining systems’ (Eriksen, 2002: 19; Jones, 1997: 84).

2.3.2. 2 Approaches to Ethnicity

Literature on ethnicity proves that there are three schools of thoughts namely ‘primordialist’, ‘instrumentalist’, and ‘constructivist’ (Wolff, 2006; YashGhai, 2000). Primordialists view ethnicity as inborn trait. It is attached to ethnic origins (or descent). This identity is shaped through common historical, cultural, social and genetic foundations. On the contrary, instrumentalists argue that ethnicity can be manipulated by self-interest specifically for economic and political gains. Ethnicity is rather a ‘political identity’ than biological (natural) trait. Elites mobilize masses based on ethnicity from political vantage point. In this sense, ethnicity serves as a means to an end (Wolff, 2006).

Nonetheless, ethnicity is not a readymade tool for automatic political maneuver; instead it is determined by socio-economic and political structure of a state (Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, 2004; Yash Ghai, 2000). On the other hand, 'constructivists' hold the view that ethnicity is developed through social process, i.e. construction of an identity over time with collective memories and shared experience (Ibid). It is understood that ethnicity is not a 'reaction' to a given 'action'. Meaning, societies do not tend to create a new 'identity' in response to what a daunting challenge they experience in the course of time. It is obvious that individuals possess straddling relationship to a state and their community. Nonetheless, the adverse handling of a given ethnic group shall gear towards resurgence of identity consciousness (Ibid).

As explained above, it is not easy to prejudge that a given school of thought has preeminence over the other. Knowing that these views are not mutually exclusive, it is difficult to delimit a boundary of each as 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' identification as it remains quite debatable (Horowitz, 1998; Chai, 1996). More to the point, Horowitz (1998: 25-26) indicates:

Ethnic group boundary change responds strongly to the political environment, particularly the territorial frame in which groups find themselves very often in Asia and Africa the approach of independence produced a tendency to create larger ethnic agglomerations more suited to political competition in the whole territory. This tendency was called 'supertribalism' or 'artificial ethnicity' as if to say that lower-level affiliations were more genuine.

However, each of these views does have its own merits. It is often observed that ethnicity is explained from any of these three schools of thoughts. This does not mean that ethnic manifestations and explanations at all levels can evolve from these three approaches. However, ethnicity remains multifaceted and intricate. In this regard Isajiw explains:

We can distinguish four major approaches and a number of sub-approaches, some of which cut across the major ones on the study of ethnicity. They are (1) ethnicity conceived as a primordial phenomenon (2) ethnicity conceived as an epiphenomenon (3) ethnicity conceived as a

situational phenomenon (4) ethnicity conceived as a purely subjective phenomenon (Isajiw, 1993: 2).

2.3.2.3 Ethnic Identity

To Seyoum, there have been different approaches to ethnicity. Some states embrace it while others try to repress it. Regardless of this, there have been demands by different ethnic groups for different kind of autonomy (Seyoum, 1997a). This study attempts to understand ethnicity explicitly for the fact that Ethiopia has been experimenting ethnic based federalism. Accordingly, there has been self-rule and shared rule by different ethnic regions in Ethiopia where minorities resides. Equally with ethnicity, nations, nationalities and peoples do not have clear-cut definition.

Conceptualization of ethnic identity is attributed to different causes by different writers. To Lentz, people trace back to their identity in times when they feel sense of insecurity. When ethnicity is mobilized, it may help access to resources and opportunities of different kind. It is shaped through time to face different socio-economic ills a given group encountered and subject to change (Lentz, 1995: 323-324). Similarly, ethnic identity is usually mobilized in competitive elections by political entrepreneurs representing different ethnic groups especially in the Africa context. Ethnicity is effectively mobilized to access to power and resources. Voters are promised to have access to power and resources through the network group (Eifert, 2010).

In the same token, Harff and Ted Robert Gurr aptly contend that ‘When people of different ethnic groups compete directly for the same scarce resources and positions, their ethnic identities become more important to them and group boundaries are more sharply defined. And if some groups are more successful than others, inequalities increase, which provides the third general condition for ethnic mobilization and conflict’ (Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, 2004: 97). Ethnic identity is claimed by a person who feels that he/she has a common belonging to a given group versus the other groups. Nonetheless, the intensity of his/ her affinity may vary to other counterparts. But, deep affinity to a given group may sustain the relationship (Hale, 2004: 473). Horowitz points out that ethnic identity is influential in maintaining intra-group relations than extra-group actors. Members in a group usually develop a positive stereotype to their fellow (Horowitz, 1998: 17).

According to Yash Ghai studies conducted on Sri Lanka, Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) and the Balkans reveal that ethnic consciousness and resentment are accredited to oppression and coercion in a state-society relations and community to community relation where some ascend to the ladder of power and access to resources; while other becomes bystanders. This provides a fertile ground for development of 'ethnic nationalism', which is much hurdle to resolve in posterior (Ghai, 2000:5). Eriksen on his part writes:

We need to understand how individuals perceive and classify their social surroundings, and how the past is used to make a sense of the present. Notions of shared origins are usually crucial for ethnic identity, and interpretations of history are therefore important to ideologies seeking to justify, strengthen and maintain particular ethnic identities (Eriksen, 2002:59).

As discussed by Connor (1972) nation-builders could not escape salient features of diverse identity in most of contemporary states unless they make certain that ethnicity has a little credit to national-make up. Likewise, Lentz (1995:303) purports ethnicity has become a global concern than the problem of a developing states in Africa alone 'cursed' with. In spite of this, the global ethnicization of social identities is gaining currency in times to come. Seyoum argues that imperialist powers who arbitrary partitioned Africa often deny the multicultural nature of states in the African continent. Also, African leaders who inherited the post-colonial states are unwillingness to give due recognition to diversity in their states and they want to follow the legacy of their patron. African states should consider social and economic realities of their people in which ethnic diversity is taken as positive milestone for sustainable peace and development in the continent (Seyoum, 1997a). Added to this, even economic development is likely to lead to pronounced claims to equitable sharing of resources, if not it inevitably paves a way for social unrest. Nonetheless, advocates of 'nation-building' thesis have not yet come to terms of recognizing rights of ethnic groups within multination states. But one should not rush to conclude that ethnicity is usually equated with curse for multination states. However, its management has a greater bearing than its essence. In the same argument, Wolff presents an important point to consider as cited below.

The existence of different ethnic identities within the same state is not a problem in itself; it is what people- leaders as well as their followers-make of it that determines whether claims based on such different identities can be accommodated peacefully or whether they will lead to bloody civil wars (Wolff, 2006:42).

Seyoum argues, unlike the long held belief dominantly by the liberal school of thought which perceives ethnicity as sole cause for underdevelopment particularly in the African continent, giving due recognition to ethnicity may boost socio-economic development and ensure durable peace on the continent (Seyoum, 1997a). Instability and underdevelopment in Africa are not exclusively caused by ethnic diversity; in the opposite the major causes of instability are associated with repressive states. To the worse, the post-colonial state of Africa has inherited the colonial state structure with a little consideration to the social and economic realities of different ethnic groups. Sacrosanct nature of colonial boundaries has further consolidated extraneous approach to previously artificial boundaries of Africa. This calls for positive engagement in dealing with ethnicity by statesmen and scholars to embrace it in a way effectively achieving peace and sustainable development in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular (Ibid).

The FDRE constitution (1995) article 39 (5) explicitly adopted a primordial approach to ethnic identity which is mainly based on common culture, language, psychological make-up and ethnic consciousness which are settled in contiguous territory. The constitution, however, does not clearly articulate who is Nation? Nationality? and People? Thus, it is obscure to categorize who is a nation, who belongs to nationality and people. In midst of this confusion, politicians in the country often coin the terms for themselves one of the above naming for their ethnic group and call themselves either nation or nationality. Besides, it is difficult to find ethnic and territorial congruence for every ethnic group which reside in the country. Most of regional states in Ethiopia are multi-ethnic. Even in a few nation-states like Oromia, Amhara, Somali and Tigray there are minorities within the regions (Assefa, 2007). Despite this, competing ethnic nationalism including the Sidaama have been challenging the government in terms of having equal access to power and equitable share of resources. As well, different nations, nationalities and people have been questing for different level of organization. The Sidaama quest for regional statehood has been focus of this dissertation (Merera, 2011b).

2.3.2.4 Ethnic Territoriality

Different countries in the world attempt to grant autonomy to different territorial based identities and interests. Ethnic territoriality is one of those identities in which states employ to accommodate diversities. In federal system units exist independent of the national government and would have adequate representation in shared rule. Constitution also shares power and function at different bodies and levels of government (Simeon, 2015: 3).

Ethno-territoriality is social and political claims of a given ethnic groups for a specific territorial region. It may be even a contested issue. It is about congruency of territory and identity. It is the aspiration of such an ethnic group to have state structure which best advances their interests (Moore, 2016).

Obviously, there are challenges to have ethnic and territorial congruence for every group of people. Thus, there are groups of people who live scattered within different majority ethnic groups. This calls for non-territorial recognition of those groups. Otherwise, the ‘sons of the soil’ will have more access to power and resource sharing (Selassie, 2003; Assefa, 2007).

Post 1991 Ethiopia declared ethnic-based federalism that constitutionally granted autonomy to constituent units mostly based on ethno-linguistic criteria. As a result, a given ethnic group is organized in a given territory to function as an autonomous unit. At the same time, the federal system works to maintain the unity of the federation (Alem, 2003: 1). Selassie states that:

Ethnic federalism is also inherently at odds with the human rights of individual belonging to the “wrong” ethnic group. The vision of a federal system with perfectly coinciding ethnic and territorial boundaries is virtually impossible to attain. Thus, in practice such a vision inevitably traps some minorities within sub-states which belong to the ethnic majority. As a result, members of the minority are treated as “outsiders”, liable to be excluded or discriminated against while members of the majority are privileged as “sons of the soil.” Worse still, minorities may face ethnic cleansing, as has already occurred in Ethiopia in the wake of the 1991 constitutionalization of ethnicity (Selassie, 2003: 107).

Ethnic based territorial federal system introduced in Ethiopia is said to mainly redress past injustice, inequality and lack of democratic system in the previous regimes. Even if the constitution declares for a right to self-administration for every ‘nation, nationality and peoples’ to the extent of secession, however, the established states in the federation have found to be multinational states. Accordingly, the federal system presumed to resolve old-conflict has generated a new conflict mostly caused by majority-minority tensions. It is fundamental to ensure effective federal system that respects the rule of law and protection of human rights. Besides, since ethnic federal system requires a careful play to maintain ‘unity in diversity’, lack of its proper implementation can make the experiment a risky venture. It is also vital to mind that the political system should seek for effective way of accommodating diversity mostly in multinational country, without institutionalizing ethnicity predominant element to grant autonomous units in the federation (Yonatan, 2012: 280-284).

2.3.2.5 Ethnicity in the Ethiopian Context

As stated now and then in this document, the FDRE constitution’s definition of ethnic groups (nations, nationalities and peoples) is made in the conceptualization of primordial approach to ethnicity. Critics argue that the definition of ethnic identity in the constitution is problematic as all Ethiopian communities cannot be organized on ethnic basis (Turton, 2006; Selassie, 2003). The constitution is also criticized for its deficits in enhancing nationwide identity (Ibid). Interestingly, there are non-titular groups which have no defined territory of their own but live dispersed in ethnically defined regions (Ibid).

Ethnicity in the Ethiopian case is explicitly mentioned in the constitution (Abbink, 1997:160; Aalen, 2006: 247). Asebe contends that ethnicity is not mere fact of the state restructuring in post 1991 Ethiopia. Instead, there are diverse ethnic identities in the country even long before the creation of modern state that were exercising egalitarian governance of their own which helped them to maintain their unique identity. Thus, it should be sound to recognize multicultural nature of the people who reconstitute the state than discredit ethnicity disastrous at all (Asebe, 2007: 19).

The federal experiment of Ethiopia enters into debate by two contending views, namely as ethnic and pan-Ethiopian perspectives. Assefa argues that EPRDF/TPLF advocated ethnic perspective

that presupposes redressing past injustice experienced by ‘nations and nationalities’ of Ethiopia due to the oppression and dictatorial rule of the previous regimes to address collective rights (Assefa, 2007). Contrary to this perspective, the pan- Ethiopian perspective argues that centuries of ‘nation-building’ project resulted in ‘assimilation’ of Ethiopian people, thanks to the intermarriage and national mobility, and recommends for pan-Ethiopian identity where all individuals shall be treated equally (Tesfaye, 2002). According to this perspective, ethnicization of politics harbors adverse effect and shall bring unintended consequences, disintegration or ‘balkanization’, than ‘unity in diversity’ for Ethiopia.

The restructuring of the state along ethnic lines has partly promoted self-administration at different level of government, use and development of language, administration dominantly by local elites and improvement of revenue raising capacity which contributes to access to subsidy from the federal government. Despite all these, the quests for more autonomy have remained to be one of the contemporary issues in the Ethiopian political landscape. This calls for a new restructuring in the Ethiopia state. The Sidaama quest for regional statehood in the federal experiment of Ethiopia, the focus of this dissertation, is a working example. This is further explored in the subsequent chapters comprehensively. The following sub-section briefly deals with how mass political mobilization can be used to achieve different objectives. It is obvious that different group of people may employ mass political mobilization to ensure the pressing demands of their members.

2.4 Mass Political Mobilization

This sub-section briefly discusses mass political mobilization that helps us to understand how it enhanced Sidaama quest for regional statehood (See Chapter Five for details). Mass mobilization refers to the participation of civilian population towards achieving a common goal in a contentious politics. It involves a large number of people who take part in either supporting or pressurizing government at grassroots level (Cain, 2015). This dissertation mainly examines how mass mobilization was practiced in promoting self-determination of ethnic groups in Ethiopia and with particular reference to Sidaama. According to Vaughan, self-determination for ethnic groups in Ethiopia has been basically mobilized based on ethnicity. The constitution authorizes ethnic groups to be organized at a given level of government. Accordingly, different ethnic groups either tabled or have aspirations to achieve at least a higher level of government within

the federation (Vaughan, 2003). Asnake (2009: 29) argues ‘ethnic regionalization led to the overall ethnification of politics in the country as the state promoted ethnicity as the key instrument of political mobilization and state organization’. Thus, in Ethiopia the primordial identity is mobilized to benefit the existing ethno-linguistic federalism. Unlike other multinational federations like Switzerland and Canada, ethnicity is key instrument of state organization in Ethiopia (Ibid).

In the SNNPR state, there has been dozens of quests to be organized at different level of government. Especially, quests to establish a separate state was not accommodated by the regional state regardless of its constitutional provision. The Sidaama quest for regional statehood was also the long-standing demand in the face of repressive state structure (Tronvoll et al. 2020). Despite this, Sidaama was relentlessly questing to establish its regional statehood and divorce from Southern region.

By its nature, mobilization includes public rally to support or protest the existing regime for a particular cause. The public may use different means to convey their message. In the contemporary period, social media is one of the most common means of communication. Mostly, in the case of public protest social media is the most influential in promoting public interest and bringing people together for a collective action. Accordingly, governments should be proactive to address public interest in a way that settles public grievances. Otherwise, suppression of public demands may add fuel to fire and may result in unintended consequences. Thus, governments should have careful planning on how to respond to mass mobilization, mostly in public protest drawing lesson from other experiences in different parts of the world that have used mainly social media (Cain, 2015).

Mass mobilization that lasts for long establishes organizational structure that may serve as playground for exercising leadership and equipping tomorrow’s political leaders who may assume power by overthrowing the dictatorial regimes that pretend democracy and rule of law. It also helps to entrench democratic system after overtaking power through struggle (Kadivar, 2018).

Any social movement has its own agenda to push forward by actors who may channel their resources in the realization of their goal. They try to exploit existing opportunities and win the

heart and mind of their followers. It requires careful planning, operation and management to minimize unnecessary cost and able to achieve their intended goal. The most important thing is that leaders of mobilization should know the behavior of those who are in power and set effective strategy to achieve their claim (Hyun, 2015: 2).

This dissertation examined how politics of neo-patrimonialism influenced the Sidaama quest for regional statehood since post-1991 Ethiopia's federal experiment. This is comprehensively discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

2.5 Neo-patrimonialism

Literature proves that there is no common agreement in conceptualizing neo-patrimonialism. For example, to Erdmann and Ulf Engel (2006) and Kelsall (2011) there is no consensus as to what neo-patrimonialism constitutes. The challenge mainly stems from benchmarking of the concept from the 'neo-liberal project'. The irony is that many of pro-liberals tend to reject neo-patrimonialism as a traditional form of governance than what they have applauded the modern governance modeled in the Germany's sociologist Max Weber's legal-rational bureaucracy. The optimal approach should be engaged in it than denounces it at all. Chabal argues that neo-patrimonialism is understood as informal way of interactions than dealing through formal institutions. However, both the formal and the informal institutions work in duality (Chabal, 2002). Bratton and Nicolas Van De Walle articulate this argument on the concept as:

In neo-patrimonial regimes, the chief executive maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law. As with classic patrimonialism, the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than an office. In contemporary neo-patrimonialism, relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system and leaders occupy bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status. The distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred (Bratton and Nicolas Van De Walle 1994: 458).

In neo-patrimonial regimes, those who are in power control resources under their command and distribute power to those who are loyal to them. The distribution of different kinds of benefits

usually mobilizes support at different levels (Brinkerhoff and Arthur A. Goldsmith, 2002; Bratton and Nicolas Van De Walle, 1994). The benefit ranges from provision of jobs, money, and access to power and issuance of licenses and inter alia. This results in ‘patron-client’ relationship in which obedience is ensured so long as a benefit is maintained for the clients. It operates from the highest echelon to the lowest. Informal social networks often prevail over formal institutions. In neo-patrimonialism, what most matters is personal relationship than rules and procedures underlying the formal institutions. In return to the benefits, the client often obtains what they perceptually expected to vote for and rally behind a patron. The patron, using the resources at its disposal, works to consolidate the dependence of clients on the very relationship which could perhaps be a rule of significant figures in a given community. Indeed, patronage is an essential element to determine modes of administration than merits and professionalism (Ibid).

Political entrepreneurs in the context of Ethiopia have been mobilizing ethnic identity as a significant factor to benefit members of informal social network in a neo-patrimonial rule which is an apparent feature of African governance system despite attempts of reforms African states have undertaken. Tripp (2000) points out that limited democracy is one of crippling factors to ensure competitive elections that may alter the political landscape in Africa. Ethiopia is not exceptional to this in which subsequent elections could not bring changes in its political landscape. Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle (1994) generalizes that what most characterizes African states is neo-patrimonialism but not corporatist which is vital to have institutions that operate based on bureaucratic structure. In Africa, informal system often personal patronage overrides the often considered formal bureaucratic system.

In the context of Sidaama, the neo-patrimonialism influenced Sidaama’s quest for regional statehood. Government provided diverse inducements to deter Sidaama political elite from pursuing their goal of establishing a regional state. Particularly, in July 2005 when the Sidaama zone council unanimously endorsed the Sidaama official demand for regional statehood, the federal government intervened and suggested the Sidaama to focus on development issues than to establish its own regional state. At the same time, the federal government promised the Sidaama to hold the position of the regional presidency and the Mayoral office of the Hawassa city (Darota, 2015).

This offer by the government was rejected by the people of Sidaama as the informal approach adversely affected the formal system. In this regard, the constitutional right of the Sidaama was repressed by concession put forward by the federal government (Kinkino, 2019; Wolassa, 2016). Notwithstanding the Sidaama regional statehood quest was revived vigorously during the reform process within the EPRDF party and the demand later was officially endorsed by the Sidaama Zone Council on the 18 July 2018 (Kinkino, 2019; Tronvoll et al. 2020). Based on this context, the dissertation narrates the impact of neo-patrimonialism on Sidaama's quest for regional status. The following sub-section briefly deals with political economy. The current dissertation narrates the political economy in Sidaama, specifically in different regimes of Ethiopia, in the forthcoming chapter comprehensively.

2.6 Political Economy

Most recently, there has been a growing interest to explore the interplay between economics and politics (DFID, 2009; the World Bank, 2006; Gilpin, 2001 and Drazen, 2000). International agencies including donors have shown interest to understand how politics affects the distribution of resources and vice versa (Ibid). It is stated that a sound intervention plans and programs could not be designed without properly understanding the relationship that entails politics and economics. Political economy, therefore, has become a central concern to contemporary scholars as well as organizations. Development endeavors cannot be attained through sole economic means as political dynamics is determinant to its realization (Ibid).

In its general sense, political economy studies the distribution of political power and authority and how that affects the distribution of economy. Empowerment is seen as profound to achieve equitable development in a society (Hudson and Adrian Leftwich, 2014; Gilpin, 2001). This calls for analysis of economic issues within a given institutional setting. To put differently, development may not be achieved by economic issues alone as politics has its own vital role to play. In the contemporary period, political economy has become essential to both national and international policy makers. In short, politics has a significant role to play in a given national economy. Thus, both economists and political scientists have a shared interest on the subject. Traditionally, the concept of economy operates independently and the practice reveals that there is interdependence between economics and politics. Normally politics determines 'who, gets

what' out of the scarce resources and limited power positions within the society. Politics, however, may accelerate (decelerate) economic development (Ibid).

Incorporating insights from political economy is useful in this study. The demand for regional status in the Ethiopian federal system has been influenced by the political economy of the country. Basically, political and economic feasibility had an adverse impact on Sidaama to establish its own regional state regardless of what is constituted in the constitution.

The Sidaama quest for regional statehood was driven by questions of political power and economic resources. Those who advocated a regional status for the Sidaama contended that the Sidaama regardless of its contribution to the national economy and population size was not provided a regional status (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2019 and Markakis, 2011). The advocates of a regional statehood for the Sidaama contended that regional statehood enables the ethnic group to have a fair share of the 'national cake' that boosts its development (Ibid). When people with a few hundred thousand achieve the regional state, the denial of the regional statehood for Sidaama was considered paradoxical (Asnake, 2009).

Lack of regional status prevented Sidaama to have power of legislation over pressing issues of its concern. Moreover, it is part of its right to self-determination constituted in the Constitution. The Sidaama struggle for its regional autonomy continued unabated over several decades since the time of its organized struggle by SLM in the late 1970's and culminated during the conduct of referendum for regional statehood on 20 November 2019 in which the Sidaama statehood was secured overwhelming by 97.7% voters (Tronvoll et al. 2020).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined relevant literature on federalism and the quest for autonomy at different level of government. Even if there is no best design to form a state, a federal system is introduced in multinational states to manage diversity and resolve conflicts. Obviously, there are different variant of federalism in which some adheres to territorial aspects while others organize constitute units based on non-territorial elements. Also, in some cases other arrangements dialectically harmonize both territorial and non-territorial aspects. In sum, the causes for federation and possible arrangements vary significantly.

Identity construction in the context of territorial aspect can be made based on different elements. For example, in Ethiopia federalism is based on ethno-linguistic criteria in which different ethnic groups are organized territorially. Accordingly, in Ethiopian ethnicity is an instrument to mass mobilization. Regardless of federal experiments in different parts of the world to have a genuine federalism, there should be a working democracy and rule of law. The role of politics, though varies in magnitude in different countries, is pivotal to the economic sector. In some countries, there is intervention of state in some selected sectors of the economy often in ‘Developmental states’, where as state has remained a night watch dog in countries that advocate liberalism. Despite ideological differences in diverse states, federalism seeks to secure economic efficiency for different units within states.

A right to self-determination is typical in the different states of the world. The central issue is that different group of people may claim for adequate political representation and access to a ‘national-cake’ at different level of autonomy to the extent of seceding from a given country. Accordingly, different form of federation has been forged in response to demands of different groups. Nevertheless, those states which do not want to redesign accommodative state structure continue to suppress such demands and consolidate their power by becoming much more dictatorship. Distinctively, neo-patrimonialism and rent seeking political economy has adversely affected federations mostly in developing and emerging economies. The federal experiment of Ethiopia is also predominated by these elements.

There have been successful and long-standing quests for self-determination in the different parts of the world. The subsequent chapters of this dissertation deal with the Sidaama quest for self-determination in Post-1991 Ethiopia in which the state is restructured based on ethnic federalism.

CHAPTER THREE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ORIGIN, HISTORY, CULTURE, GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICS OF THE SIDAAMA

This chapter outlines the history of the Sidaama people and its social, economic and cultural features to provide a brief background to the forthcoming chapters. Sidaama had its own independent indigenous governance system prior to being incorporated into modern state making in Ethiopia. Essentially, the current research studied how Sidaama has been ruled in the successive regimes of Ethiopia from the incorporation process of Menelik II to the present Ethiopia. Moreover, it specifically explores how those regimes have impacted the exercise of autonomy by the nation. Further, it assesses the Sidaama people's reaction to aforementioned regimes in Ethiopia.

The Sidaama people have struggled to regain its lost autonomy through unorganized and organized form of struggle. Despite this, at present Sidaama exercises autonomy at the zonal level which in depth discussion provided in subsequent chapters. Currently, both the modern and the indigenous system functions parallel in the nation despite the fact that the later has no state recognition yet. One should bear in mind that the Sidaama quest for regional autonomy has been the long-standing demand but was suppressed by different regimes of Ethiopia. The people have been relentlessly demanding the current regime which promise a right to self-determination for every 'Nation, Nationality and People' to the level of secession from the country. Whether Sidaama succeeds in achieving regional statehood or not is discussed in chapter five of this dissertation. The next section narrates the origin, history and culture of Sidaama.

3. 1 The Sidaama: Origin, history and culture

The mainstream historians of Ethiopia have shown a little interest to study Sidaama history. Basically, the Ethiopian history is predominated by documenting the history of the center than periphery (Seyoum 1998; Kifle, 2007: 120). Due to limited study on Sidaama, Sidaama has maintained particularly its history, culture and language through generations through oral traditions (Wolassa, 2016: xxi).

3.1.1 Language and People

Linguistically Sidaama is classified as the Highland East Cushitic Speakers currently found in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region of Ethiopia. The people Speak Sidaama language (Sidaamu afoo- what is commonly known as 'mouth of Sidaama') (Tolo, 1998: 23; Kawachi, 2007:1 and Sidaama-Amharic-English Dictionary, 2007: II).

The Sidaama people call themselves as Sidaama. However, there has been confusion over the use of term by some others. Even today some people call Sidaama as 'Sidamo' which is pejorative term to the people. The imposition of the term 'Sidamo' up on Sidaama traces back to the time of incorporation process of MenelikII (Wolassa, 2016). Ali and Hameso (2008:744-746) explained 'the groups targeted for assimilation and marginalization [in Ethiopia] were the Oromo (who, until 1974, were officially called by the derogatory name Galla), Sidama, and many other southern peoples' also experienced the same. The term 'Sidamo' was deliberately employed by successive empire builders to dehumanize and subjugate the Sidaama to the 'nation-building' project. Nonetheless, there have been no people and land called 'Sidamo'. It is, therefore, notorious to use the term 'Sidamo' to refer to Sidaama people.

Despite the fact that the name 'Sidamo' was used to designate the people, administrative region and cushitic speaking language family of southern Ethiopia in previous regimes of Ethiopia. What is plausible is that the Sidaama people call themselves Sidaama and the contemporary institutions mainly of the state recognize such fact (Betana, 2012: 48- 49; Markos, 2014:136-137 and Brøgger, 1986). Kawachi (2007:133). However, underscores that the usage of the term 'Sidamo' is unacceptable to the Sidaama people.

As Braukamper explains the term Sidama denotes people who have been living between Lake Abbaya, Lake Hawassa and upper Genale River (Braukamper, 1978: 123). It is, therefore, a reality and justifiable fact in contemporary law of the land to call people and its language Sidaama. On the contrary, any move to use 'Sidamo' to refer to Sidaama at present is illegitimate and refers to neither any land nor people in Ethiopia. The term Sidamo describes none of ethno-linguistic groups in the current Ethiopia. Consequently, it is advisable to avoid the usage of the term 'Sidamo' to refer to Sidaama people any longer. Wolassa (2016:233) asserts 'with the dissolution of the "Sidamo" administrative region in 1993, the term "Sidamo" was also officially dissolved. Today, there is no region, zone or people named "Sidamo".' Since there is no social

and legal ground to justify that the term ‘Sidamo’ is right form of reference to the Sidaama people or land in the current Ethiopia, The usage of ‘Sidamo’, for example the brand ‘Sidamo’ to Sidaama coffee in global market, is disgraceful. It is suggested that local, national and international communities and organizations should use the correct name Sidaama to refer to both the people and the land. It is important to capitalize any move to use ‘Sidamo’ while dealing with the Sidama people is insincere and meant to dehumanize the people (Ibid, 2016: 232- 236).

3.1.2 Origin

Historically, Sidaama people said to have been originated in the Northern part of Ethiopia. Sidaama belongs to indigenous Cushitic linguistic group along with those who are living in the contemporary Ethiopia and Eritrea such as Beja, Agew, Afar, Oromo and Saho. The inscriptions of Aksumite portray the Sidaama in its peak days. But, the name Sidaama gradually vanished probably after the decline of the Aksumite Empire around 10th and 14th century. Sidaama regained its prominence afterwards. However, it requires further study to better understand who Sidaama is in Ethiopian history (Wolassa, 2016: xx-xxi and 52-53, Tolo, 1998: 24-26 and Hamer 1976).

In the course of time, Sidaama moved from the northern Ethiopia to other areas. On the way some Sidaama group have dispersed to areas where they developed their own unique identity with due affinity to the Sidaama identity nowadays. As a result, in today’s Ethiopia, there is Sidaama proper and other ethnic groups who previously dispersed from Sidaama, which include Hadiya, Maraqa (Libido), Kambata, Halaba, Xambaro, Qewena. Among these groups Sidaama has maintained close affinity hitherto to Qewena, Halaba (formerly Alaba) and Xambaro (Markos, et al. 2011 and Wolassa, 2016 and Tolo, 1998).

During the Aksumite period and even before, the Sidaama people had inhabited in the northern part of Ethiopia as stated by Tadesse. Distinctively, Sidaama used to occupy Lake Hayq region currently known as south Wollo region (Tadesse, 1972). Since Sidaama used to live with other ethnic groups like Agew and Beja which occupied large part of Northern Ethiopian and Eritrean highlands has contributed to Cush civilization before the advent of Semitic groups in the region (Murdock, 1959; Wolassa, 2016).

Culturally, Sidaama has strong cultural ties with Cushitic group with more similarity with Oromo, Somali, Afar and some other ethnic groups in the southern Ethiopia. Currently, there are efforts made to make inter-ethnic relations building process particularly with the Arsi Oromo by the Malga clan of Sidaama and Xambaro people with their descendants from Hawela clan of Sidaama. Sidaama are original Cush people in Africa. It is believed that the Cush moved from Egypt to the present Ethiopia and it has contributed to the Egyptian civilization and the very civilization they transferred to Ethiopia as part of Black civilization (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 19 June 2015).

Dawa (Specifically- Dawa River) in south eastern Ethiopia had been a place where Sidaama forefathers moved to and settled today. When Sidaama started to move to southward from the northern part of Ethiopia, it inhabited areas in the eastern and south eastern Ethiopia before the 13th century like the Hararghe and the Bale kingdom respectively. Later, following the movement of other Cushites like the Somali and Afars, Sidaama had moved to different regions most commonly to south and south west directions. Sidaama then moved to tip of north-eastern part of Kenya and the southern part of the Bale kingdom (Kifle, 2007: 122-124). There is, however, no consensus regarding when the Sidaama proper settled in the present Ethiopia. Some sources maintain Sidaama settlement to 16th century AD while others account for 12th century AD (Wolassa, 2016: 222-224).

The conquest of the northern Ethiopia by Ahmad Gragn had resulted among others the movement of Sidaama people southwards during the late medieval period (Hamer, 1987: 21). The Sidaama movement ultimately led to the formation of the present day Sidaama proper and other ethno-linguistic groups akin to Sidaama identity through time. The movement among others had different motives. On one hand, the primary reason was to counter the expanding state of the northern Ethiopia as well as to confront the Oromo expansion. On the other hand, Sidaama movement was driven by economic interests such as a search for fertile agricultural land and grazing land. Indeed Sidaama managed to secure its present day land by countering the Oromo expansion and conquering the Hooffa people who previously settled in the region (Markos, 2014: 54-55; Wolassa, 2016 and Cerulli, 1956: 597). Finally it is important to mention that it requires further ethnographic to explain historical account and the exact times Sidaama people origin, movement and settlement which is beyond the scope of this study.

Haileyesus (2001: 227) further contends that ‘Opinions about Sidama origins vary, but despite diverging views on the location of the original homeland most agree that the Sidama ancestors lived in Dawa before moving to the present location. This is supported by the fact that there is special veneration for the Dawa River and various ceremonies and sacrifices taking place there’.

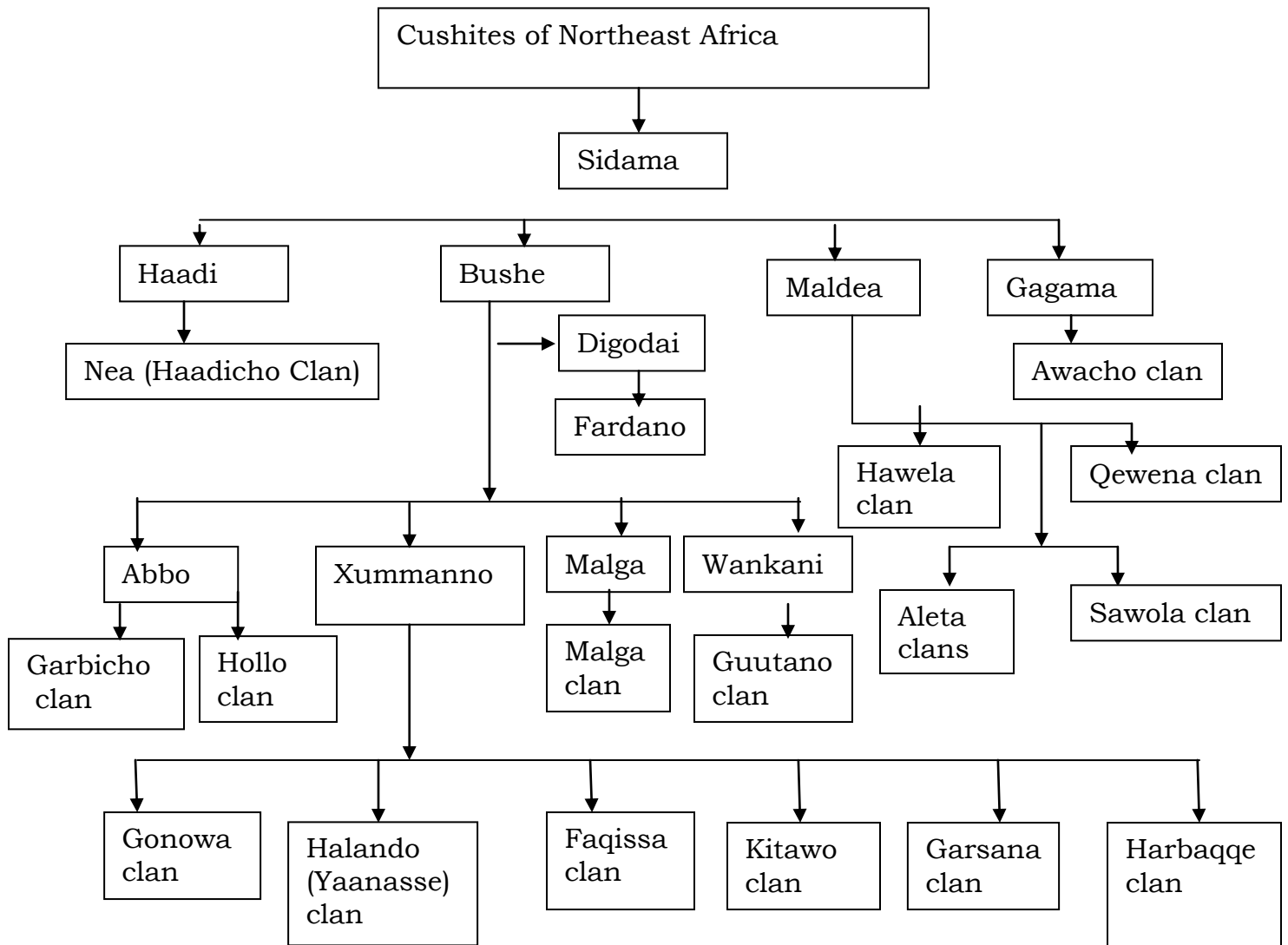
Hoofa people were believed to occupy the land where currently the Sidaama people live in. They were said rule over Sidaama cruelly. The Sidaama had fiercely fought with the Hoofa and finally become victorious. Many of the Hoofa were died in the battle and the rest of them were either run away or gradually were assimilated to the Sidaama mostly through marriage and socio-cultural interactions (Bruno, 1989; Wolassa, 2016).

In Ethiopia, there are some ethnic groups which have historical relations to the Sidaama. The most common include Xambaro, Halaba, Kambata, Hadiya, Qewena and Maraqa. Sidaama is a source for some clans within aforementioned ethnic group particularly for Xambaro, Qewena and Halaba. These ethnic groups have emigrated (itinerant settlers) constituted the majority clans. Those ethnic groups have word affinity of nearly 50% to Sidaamu afoo- ‘mouth of Sidaama’. Besides, in religious practice, there is ancestor worship both in Sidaama and other Sidaama affiliated ethnic groups. In order to improve relationships essentially with Sidaama affiliated ethnic groups it is necessary to strengthen mainly people to people relations. This may be forerun by elders on either side or it can be enriched through engaging in ethnographic, historical, anthropological and sociological research from among others (Interview, non-Sidaama historian, Hawassa, 24 April, 2015; Wolassa, 2016:55-60 and Betana, 2012: 87-90).

Historically, Sidaama descended from common forefathers who had four sons namely Bushe, Maldea, Haadi and Gagama. Due to genealogy and sphere of influence Bushe and Maldea are said to be the major groups in Sidaama. These groups lived in the 13th century (Wolassa, 2016). The descendants of Bushe include Xummanno (also named Yemerecho) that constitutes clans namely Gonowa, Halando (Yaanasse), Faqissa, Kitawo, Garsana, and Harbaqe. Abbo is the forefather of the Hollo and Garbicho clans. The Malga clan is the descendant of the Malga who is the forefather. Wankani is forefather of the Guutanno clan, and Digodai is forefather of Fardano clan. The Maldea genealogy comprises of Hawela, Alata, Qewena, Sawola, Darasha and Daafina clans.

In Sidaama proper there are also other clans like Hoofa which inhabited the area prior to the comings of the Sidaama. The aforementioned clans' ancestors into area resisted the intrusion of Sidaama into the territory they occupy today and finally Sidaama crushed them. Today, there are some Hoofa descendants which have been assimilated in Sidaama live in Sidaama soil. Besides, some Halaba people as well live in contemporary Sidaama out of their Halaba Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional state (Wolassa, 2016: 54 and 215-217; Kifle, 2007: 124). For comprehensive understanding of the genealogy of Sidaama see the following chart.

Chart 1: The Genealogy of the Contemporary Sidaama



Source: Adopted from (Wolassa, 2016).

Aforesaid each clan of Sidaama has its own self rule without adversely affecting the unity of the Sidaama. Exceptionally, legendary, Queen Furra even if it is difficult to provide the exact time of her reign who brutally ruled particularly the Sidaama men might have interrupted the highly decentralized clan based administration by serving the nation as a Queen previously ruled by Moote (King) of each clan (Seyoum,1997C). She attempted to bring women autonomy in the nation in which patriarchy was predominant. After the overthrow of Queen Furra reign in

Sidaama, likewise the pre-Furra reign, every clan of the Sidaama was administered autonomously, but with strong bond that established its unity (Ibid).

The unity of the Sidaama has been maintained through foremost part all Sidaama clans today have a common language, culture, history, political struggle and psychological make-up among others. Sidaama had a defined territory that was contiguous. Added to this, exogamous marriage was dominantly practiced in Sidaama which enabled them to strengthen inter-clan relationships. In sum, Sidaama in terms of settlement is lineage based. Thus, there is affable relationship between and among lineage groups that is in general contributed to a wider unity of Sidaama (Seyoum, 1997c; Markos, 2014).

In Sidaama, there has been movements of people from one clan to the other including choices to live there. The inter-clan mobility as well contributes to the unity of the Sidaama. There has also been significant number of other ethnic groups that peacefully co-existed together. Sidaama is known for culture of accommodation and tolerance which make it an example of inclusive society (Interview, opposition party leader, Hawassa, 30 August 2015).

Contrary to what was mentioned above, scholars like Aadland (2002: 37) contend that principles like purity, seniority and patrilineage may deepen internal division of the Sidaama in contrast to its attempt to be independent nation. Haileyesus as well recognized the fact that there had been an act of discrimination which was particularly exhibited by marginalizing the Haadicho and Awacho clans of the Sidaama. One major area of discrimination was avoidance of inter-clan marriage. Haileyesus further notes that in recent years there has been a decline in the importance of the principle of purity due to the effect of Protestantism and the political empowerment. Accordingly, there has been also a decline social and economic marginalization (Haileyesus, 2001).

Moreover, the Prominent Sidaama economist Wolassa Lawisso remarks that discrimination mainly based on artisanship and dietary is observed in different parts of the world. The discrimination, by and large, Haadicho and other artisanal groups in Sidaama as well accounts for artisanship and dietary. Nevertheless, following the land reform proclamation of the 1975 these group had managed to have access to land and representation in the political system that gave them leverage to participate actively in socio-economic and political system. Nowadays

discrimination on clan and patrilineal bases has become less imperative in public interactions. The author admits the fact that conservative culture still lingers in the society regarding inter-clan marriage with the designated clans of the Sidaama. He recommends the spread of education further induce change within the society towards avoidance of any act of discrimination (Wolassa, 2016: 220-221). However, the Haadicho people of Sidaama strongly oppose the discrimination of them mainly in social, economic and political system and they call for urgent redress in structural problems (FGD, Darra Woreda, 11 February 2016).

Sidaama was dominantly administered by autonomous clan-based system; however, it also had shared rule system. There were noticeably common social, economic, cultural and political issues that concern the whole nation for collective decision. In comparative terms, Sidaama was predominantly characterized by self-rule than shared rule. This indicates Sidaama had no strong monarchy that holds the group together. Some groups subdue to the king/Queen and each clan of the nation was ruled autonomously. With respect to socio-cultural aspects, Sidaama was often intrinsic (Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 13 June 2015). According to Wolassa, in fact, Sidama was more or less a loose federation of major clans that were cemented together as a nation with a common history, language, culture, economic activity, geographic boundary and psychology. Therefore, the political process was largely local, clan based, in which every household was encouraged to fully and actively participate without significant constrains (2016: 292).

The major offices of the Sidaama indigenous institution include Moote (equivalent to King), Gadaana (class leader) and Woma (distinguished elder). The Sidaama traditional system of governance (Luwa) like the Gada system of the Oromo has elements of egalitarian democratic system which is anchored in gerontocracy (Tesema, 2004:2; Ali and Hameso, 2008: 742). Moote/geelo (Kingship) is in charge of political and administrative affairs of the nation. The office is assumed by the Mootichcha (the King) who is the ultimate political figure in his sphere of authority, but in a rare case that he passes final decision without the consent of members of council. Ga'ro serves as deputy in the institution. The *Songo* (council of elders) plays pivotal role in Moote leadership. Clan council is most commonly an ultimate authority to pass a binding decision. The council is expected to deliberate on public affairs, set policies and strategies, resolution of conflicts (Betana, 2012: 150-151).

Luwa is one of indigenous institutions of Sidaama where youth promoted to elderhood. In Luwa it is noticed that not only age but also grade matters to join a given luwa cycle. Gadaana is chief head of the office. Ja'lawa assumes the deputy position. It is basically, in charge of cultural affairs of the nation. The institution enhances intra-clan and /or inter-clan unity as embodiment of ensuring the harmony and would be ready to defend the nation in times of imminent war being waged from the neighboring ethnic groups (Betana, 2012: 161; Wolassa, 2016). Meaning, it works to safeguard the custom, tradition, values of the society inculcate them commonly to members of Luwa rotates every eight years. Membership is non-discriminatory as to age, religion, clan etc. The Gadaana, the leader shall be selected carefully from among likely candidates democratically and with a limited term of office. Luwa has five cycles each to reign over for seven years. It includes Wawassa, Fulasa, Hirbora, Mogisa and Darara (Hamer, 2007: 210; Wolassa, 2016: 243-244 and 251-252 and Betana, 2012: 161).

The woma is responsible for cultural and religious affairs. It functions through its own council known as the womu Songo. Woma utmost provides Kakalo (sacrifices) while to worship forefathers. Woma as well involves in affairs like marriage and circumcision (Wolassa, 2016: 255). In the contemporary period the authority of Woma has become less influential than the earlier times (Markos, 2014).

Sidaama speaks a common language, has the same cultural and historical experiences. They have dominantly settled in the current Sidaama region since thousands of years ago. The indigenous governance and institutions were common in over the entire Sidaama. For instance, the Luwa system is common to all sections of Sidaama society. Also, the Moote system is shared by all clans and Fichchee is celebrated by all clans of the Sidaama in a strong sense, to mention few examples (Betana, 2012; Wolassa, 2016 and Markos, 2014). In brief, Sidaama though autonomously ruled by clan-based leadership, in the case of common interest they act in unison. Issues at stake include invasion by external bodies, cultural affairs, natural and man-made calamities threatening the lives and livelihood of the nation and so forth. Sidaama was governed through a highly decentralized administration system (Markos, 2014; Tolo, 1998 and Wolassa, 2016).

Regarding the exercise of authority, the Songo (council of elders) often established at different levels limits abuse of power by traditional leaders. Sidaama council of elders is organized at different hierarchy such as the hamlet, the lineage, the neighborhood and the clan council (Aadland, 2002: 37). It arbitrates different cases presented depending up on the authority of the council. Effective deliberation and lodge of appeal can be made to the appellate council. In traditional Sidaama institutions, decisions are made through consensus and are enforced through sanction of different kind in case when perpetrator refuses to accept it. The council of elders serves as to check and balance the traditional leaders since leader alone may not pass binding decision. The decisions are normally made at the council level. The indigenous authorities are less likely to turn to tyrants (Melese, 2002; Markos, 2014).

Tolo (1998:1) reminds us that ‘during the last one-hundred years, beginning in the 1890s, the Sidama people in the central part of South-Ethiopia have experienced continuous political, social and religious changes. For centuries they had been independently ruled by councils of local elders and chiefs elected according to the generational or ancestral system’.

3.2 Geography

Sidaama Zone is located in the SNNPR state. Hawassa city is currently serving as both a seat for Sidaama Zonal administration and the regional state. The city is located 275kms from the Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa. Sidaama Administration Zone is situated at 6°14’ and 7°18’ North latitude and 37° 92’ and 39° 14’ East longitude. It comprises of nineteen woredas and four administrative towns that cover 6981.8km². It should be noted that Hawassa city is currently organized as a separate zone despite its location on the map of the Sidaama zonal administration. This is discussed in Chapter I of this dissertation.

The woredas in the zone include: Hawassa Zuria, Malga, Wondo-Genet, Gorche, Wonsho, Chuko, Loka-Abaya, Bursa, Bona-Zuriya, Chire, Shebedino, Dalle, Aleta-Wondo, Dara, Hula, Aroresa, Bansa, Arbegona and Borch. The town administrations of the zone constitute of Alata Wondo, Yirgalem, Leku and Daye (SZFEDD, 2015:1). Currently, the Sidaama regional state constitutes thirty woredas and six town administrations (SNRS Plan Commission, 2020).

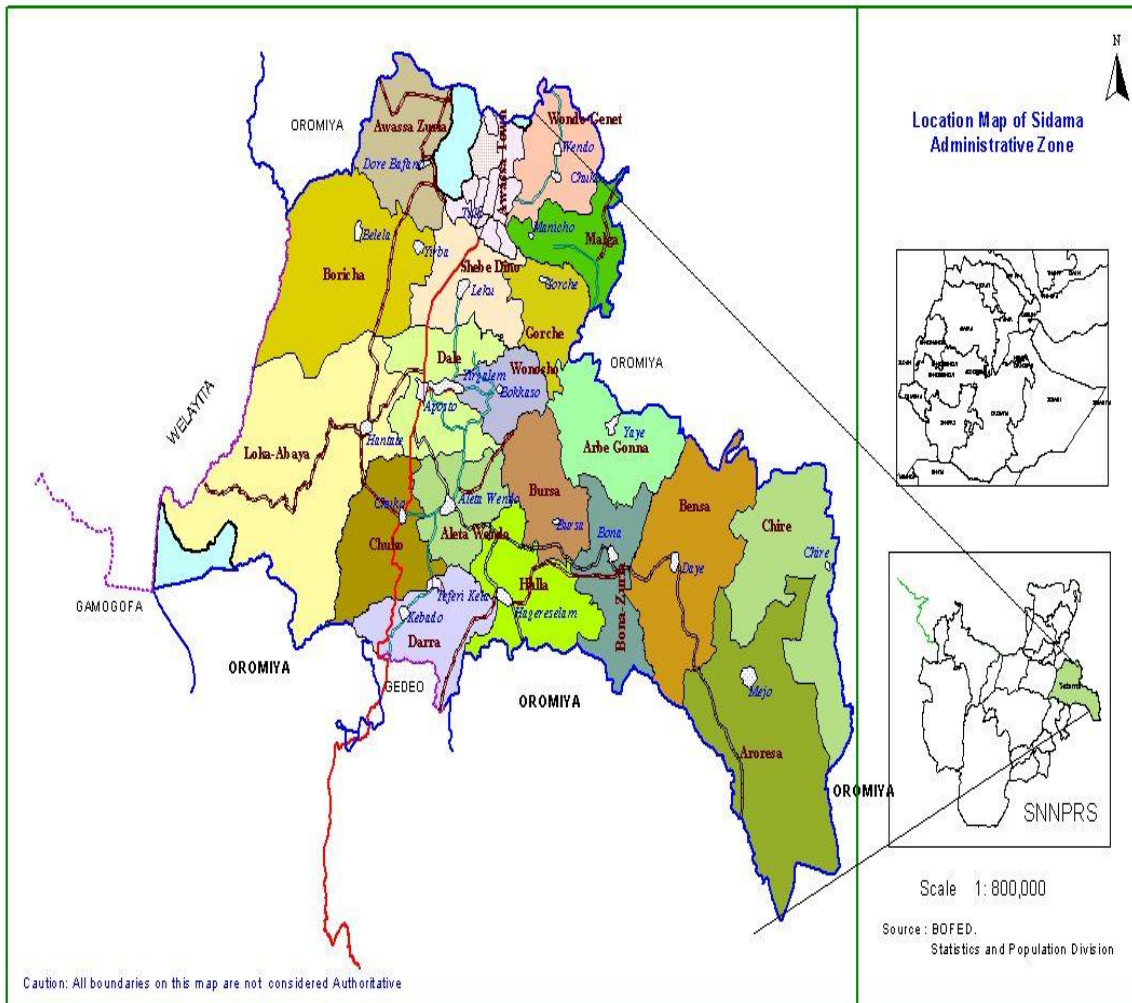
As discussed in the first chapter, Hawassa city is on the map of the Sidaama Administrative Zone. It has, however, been excluded from the list of town administrations of the Zone despite

the Sidaama people are the majority in the city. Hawassa is reorganized as a separate zone that comprises of seven urban sub-cities and twelve-rural kebele which resulted in substantial increase of the Sidaama population in the city where they are majority (Markos, 2014: 3). Currently, the city of Hawassa is administered by Mayor and accountable to the regional state since 2003 as per the Proclamation number 51/2002 of the SNNPR State (Kinkino, 2013).

The status of Hawassa city is contested by the Sidaama, the regional state and the federal government. This may have an implication for the occasional political interest to have control over the city either by the regional state or to put it under the Federal state in the mantra of enhancing development and ensuring better governance making it either metropolitan or a chartered city by the respective governments. Since the city is part and parcel of the Sidaama zone the very move dwarfs the principle of self- rule that is accorded in the constitution. Meanwhile, as per population projection based on the 2007 national census Sidaama National Regional State Plan Commission in 2020 a figure at 4,105,043. Demography, however, contested primarily on the validity of the 2007 national census as well as its exclusion of the population of Sidaama inhabit in the Hawassa city administration (Seyoum, 2015: 14).

The following sub-section deals with Sidaama in different regimes of Ethiopia. The report focuses on Sidaama since the making of modern state of Ethiopia to the present regime.

Figure 2: Map of Sidaama Administrative Zone



3.3 Sidaama under successive Ethiopian governments

This sub-section attempts to explore the Sidaama in the Ethiopian state. It begins with the study of Sidaama from pre-conquest to the formation of centralized and ‘modern’ state to the contemporary Ethiopia. More specifically, it aims at studying the state-society relations in the context of Sidaama. Also, it examines how Sidaama was governed under different regimes of the country. Since the incorporation into the centralized state of Ethiopia, Sidaama for the most part

was ruled under repressive regimes. Accordingly, the Sidaama relentlessly struggled for ensuring its independent existence. Basically, the Sidaama struggled against those oppressive regimes in both unorganized and organized forms.

Meanwhile, in the late 1970's Sidaama Liberation movement (SLM) was established with the purpose of ensuring an autonomous region for Sidaama, but it could not achieve its goal due to entrenched suppression of the demand by the Derg regime. During the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Sidaama was organized as Region Eight along with a few other ethnic groups. However, not over a year, the five regions including Sidaama were merged to form the SNNPR state. Since then, the Sidaama firmly struggled to establish its regional statehood. But, the EPRDF/TPLF government repressed the demand of the people and instead it suggested Sidaama to pursue development endeavors than demanding regional statehood. Later, during the political reform in Ethiopia, on the 20 November 2019, referendum Sidaama regional statehood was obtained an overwhelming 97.7% votes. In the following section, Sidaama relations with the national government and its impact are discussed. The discussion begins with the incorporation of Sidaama into the central state. According to Addis Hiwet (1975: 3)

Feudal centralization- expansion, annexation and administration of territories-had started earlier in Shewa than in the surrounding area. In the second half of the 19th century, especially after the 1870s, the Shewan feudalists acquired access to the then growing traffic in arms and ammunition. In a matter of a decade the monopoly of firearms was gradually reversed in their favor and they were even able to participate in the internal scramble for colonies. The predominant feature of the political history of the Horn of Africa during the last two decades of the 19th century was colonialist expansion. In the Horn of Africa colonialism took a dual aspect: feudal and capitalist.

3.3.1 Menelik II Reign

It was Menelik II who brought Ethiopia into its current shape. He achieved broader geographic area beyond in the preceding rulers' attempt of centralization and/or modernization (Bahru, 2002). The emperor's expansionist policy had different reasons. The primary reason was building economic base to his bid for supremacy against the other principalities of the north and

aspired to restore what he called ‘the ancient frontiers of Ethiopia’. The other driving motive was to forestall the encroachment of colonial powers that were in surroundings (Bahru, 2002: 60-61, Tolo, 1998: 60- 61).

In the incorporation process, Sidaama had first requested by then military commander, Dejazmach Beshah Aboye to peacefully surrender and pay tribute to the central state. The request was made to King Baalicha Worawo from the Hanja sub clan who represented the Halando, Yaanase clan. As it concerns the whole nation, the Moote (king), Balicha convened a meeting with other clans’ kings of Sidaama to debate on the matter. The views on how to response to the call was differing. Majority of the clans of Sidaama decided to face the invading army while others such as Yaanasse, the first clan to whom the submission request was made after an attempt to defend opts to peaceful surrender (Wolassa, 2016: 224- 227; Kifle, 2007: 129).

In the beginning, a few clans who finally decided to surrender and the several clans of Sidaama who wanted to resist the anticipated attack had their own justification and military calculation. Those who wanted to fight against Menelik II had the thought that defending a nation was a responsibility primarily bestowed to leadership, and they were unwillingness to recognize any suzerainty. Whereas a few clans oddly decided to surrender and had realized that they could not fight the advancing army equipped with modern weaponry. Particularly those on the north western part of the Sidaama like Yaanasse clan had a lesson from neighboring ethnic groups like Hadiya, Kambata and other Sidaama affiliated groups where Beshah Aboye used to serves as the governor.

Meanwhile, incursion of the army of Menelik II happened in the territory in which the king Baalicha reigns under the leadership Beshah Aboye. There was of course an attempt to reverse the occupation. Different factors withheld Yaanasse clan which was the first targets for the attack. Due to differences in opinions, it was not possible to galvanize all clans of the nation for the call of defense. Then, the military muscle of Sidaama was dominated by traditional weapons and this was not parallel to the imperial army which was armed with modern weaponry. In the state of this perplexity, the king Baalicha thought of accepting the intruding army of Beshah to settle and invited other clans’ kings of the nation to welcome the expansionist army into their

territories due to the ensued crisis. Though reluctant some clans' kings decide to receive them in lukewarm manner after an attempt to defend the expanding army (Ibid 227-228, 129-130).

Finally, Sidaama had come under the rule of Menelik II in 1891 and compelled to pay tribute to the central government. King Baalicha Worawo was recognized as representative of the whole Sidaama as imperial agent in the area (Addis Hiwet, 1975: 13; Markos, 2014: 157-158 and Wolassa, 2016). That is why he used to act as 'king of kings' in Sidaama at early days of occupation where each clan administered by Moote (King). Gradually, every leader of the clan was given a new title like Qoro, baalabat, Grazmach, Dejzmach and Kegnzmach to serve the state as a local chief. This arrangement adversely affected the egalitarian governance of Sidaama.

Afterward the army of the emperor settled in garrison towns and the people were required to pay tribute in kind and cash. Tolo (1998: 1-2) describes the situation as 'Even though the Sidama, like other Southerners were previously influenced by the ancient Ethiopian Christian kingdom, the new appearance of the northerners by the end of the 19th century meant a radical change. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church settled in new small communities or garrison towns called ketemas. Soldiers and police forces were equipped with modern weapons. The indigenous population had to contribute financially to the central government. First every clan or subgroup was required to provide annual tribute of two oxen and a pot of honey to the emperor in Addis Ababa'. The Gabbar system later instituted was so harsh than the tribute the incorporated people used to pay to the central government including in Sidaama (Ibid).

On the other hand, the burden of shouldering the armed settlers representing the Menelik's state in Sidaama was the foremost compulsion. It led to the appropriation of the resources and labor. The situation was unbearable for the society which was used to be governed autonomously. The Moote (King) Baalicha Worawo who acted temporary as the 'king of kings' of Sidaama during the nation building project committed to design a military strategy against the *neftegna-Gabbar* system shortly as 'divide and attack' tactic. He then asked the Dejzmach Beshah Aboye to share his military persons throughout Sidaama for better accommodation and to make accessible for each clan to pay its tribute. Each clan was assigned with nearly 200 contingents. After that the hosting clan advised to vanquish the army as much as possible. Sidaama finally successful annihilated the apportioned army of the Beshah and a few survived nearly 4 persons including

the Dejazmach Beshah left Sidaama from over 1500 forces after staying for a few months nearly five to six months in 1891 (Kifle, 2007: 130- 131; Wolassa, 2016: 228-229).

The second delegation of subduing Sidaama nearly after a year was led by the other military commander of the Menelik II; Dejazmach Leul Seged later became Ras. The Sidaama people had combated them at different fronts. The army was much more informed about the nation, well-organized and better equipped. Attempts to reverse it were futile and Sidaama at last was conquered by the invading army and the subsequent *gabbar* system was instituted in Sidaama. The army managed to settle at Shisha. To revenge what the King Baalicha Worawo did for Dejazmach Beshah Aboye military contingents, Ras Leul Seged while expanding to south and south western Ethiopia asked King Baalicha to join him.

While they were in Konso expedition, Ras Leul Seged ordered his loyalists to kill the notable figure of the Sidaama in 1896. When the King Balicha was assassinated, his mule named Laango escaped and arrived back home after traversed over 200kms. Ras Leul Seged indeed laid foundation for the *gabbar* (landlord-tenant relationship) system. He centralized Sidaama without the consent of its leaders and people instead through blood and iron (Wolassa, 2016: 229-231; Markos et al. 2011:68 and Betana, 2012: 184-185).

It is recalled that Dejazmach Beshah and Ras Leul Seged spent much of their reign in Sidaama in expeditionary war. The *gabbar* system entrenched with the arrival of Dejazmach Balcha Safo as governor of Sidamo province. The subsequent governors like Ras Nadew and Dejazmach (later promoted to Ras) Teferi Mekonnen consolidated the *gabbar*. Later on, Dejazmach Balcha Safo was reassigned to rule the Sidamo province. Afterwards Ras Birru Wolde Gabriel and Ras Desta Damtew governed the Sidamo region. In this milieu, Sidaama's core cultural values and its indigenous institutions were massively dismantled and forcefully replaced by alien-dominating and subjugating cultural ethos of the northern ruling class. Despite the fact that Sidaama had been persisted its indigenous practice parallel to the 'modern' system, but the centralization process was adversely affected it (Betana, 2012: 185-186; Kifle, 2007: 133- 134 and Tolo, 1998: 1-2).

Finally, Sidaama was ruled by the people who were assigned by the center with little participation and representation of Sidaama in political system. Sidaama became serfs in land of their ancestors. They were also limited to socio-economical benefits in newly developed

garrison towns. They were mostly limited to access to education and engagement in commerce. There was sporadic uprising in response to socio-economic injustice the Sidaama people had faced (Daye, 2015; Wolassa, 2016).

As a result, Sidaama became tenants in their own holdings. They were supposed to provide portion of their produce and render labor service predominantly to the ‘neftegna’-armed settler, the Church and also to pay tribute to the state. Sidaama, like other peripheral counterparts, was ruled under the *gult* system. They were basically required paying tribute of different form and amount. The people who had been lived independently following forceful incorporation to the central state doomed to become servitude in which right to their land and produce usurped. Even they used to carry tribute to different areas where the overlordship resides including to the central governors in Addis Ababa (Daniel, 2015: 1; Interview, academician, Hawassa, 23 April 2015). Regarding the nature of the *gabbar* system, Bahru (2002: 87) enlightens ‘In the nineteenth century, as indeed also in earlier centuries of Ethiopian history, the economic basis of political power was tribute and surplus labour. Both were extracted from the peasant, who held his land (rest) by genealogical descent, and who was known as *gabbar* (after *geber*, tribute).’

The peasants who turned to the *gabbar* were subjected to multiple form of tribute. The previous rightful owners of the land became tenants for new landlords, *balabats* in the area. The people were deprived of both their produce and labor. A part from its provision of tribute discussed above, they cultivate the land allocated to the new landlords, also the state land, construction of house and fences of respective *malkagna*, serve as porter. On the other hand, wives of the *gabbar*s’ grained grains, clean home, and milk cows of the *balabats*, among others. The people were further expected to show loyalty to officials assigned in the region without unflinching and impatience (Addis Hiwet, 1975: 44-47; Bahru, 2002: 87 and Markakis and Nega, 1986: 22- 23).

Much of weekday’s *gabbar*s was spent on cultivating the land of the landlords and mostly on the weekend even if they cultivate their own land; however, they were required to pay tribute out of their produce. The life of a tenant was precarious in many ways. They were used to provide *corvée*-particularly both a tenant, his wife and children used to serve the *balabats*. The most important means of production the land and forces of production particularly their labor forceful appropriated to serve the *gultegna* (Bahru, 2002; Tolo, 1998). This implies that there was broadly no rest day the Sidaama people used to spend. Hamer (2009: 3) recalls:

After the “Sidāmo” defeat by the Menelik’s army in the 1890s the former were treated virtually as slaves under the gabbar system. They were forced to serve the occupying soldiers who constituted a barrier to the possible incursion of the British [colonial powers] from Kenya [encroaching around]. This meant providing food and service six days a week with one day reserved for working their own land.

The *gabbar* system apart from its economic appropriation led to the weakening of the indigenous governance system of the Sidaama. In a new system, the previous indigenous leadership assumed a role of serving as a local chief. The leadership which were legitimate to the public transferred to give loyalty to the central government even against the interest of their people. Towards this end, they were given a new title, *balabat* to subdue their own people in contrast to the socio-political system of the Sidaama. But these *balabats* were the low ranking officials in the feudal system. Specifically, Sidaama rarely assumed high ranks in the feudal system. To put differently, the most common ranks the *balabats* from the Sidaama included Grazmach and Balabaras, whereas Ras, Dejasmach, Fitawurari were provided to nefteгна-the ruling class (Interview, academician, Shabadino District, 27 April 2015; Aadland, 2002). Tolo (1998: 63) cogently puts as:

The traditional chief, for instance, who had played an extensive meditative and religious role before, now became the one who was controlling the usage of land and exacting tributes from the famers. Now his main function often was to certify that each farmer within his area was fulfilling his obligations towards the settlers. Only these traditional chiefs had the right to keep a position as free land-owners. To uphold their privileges, they were expected to act as agents for the Amhara authorities.

Wolassa (2016: 291) specifically emphasizes that ‘The traditional Sidama political system was egalitarian. Since the Sidama people originated from one ancestor and four apical descendants of him, namely, Bushe, Maldea, Gagama and Haadi there was no ideological reason for the one group to oppress and exclude another from political participation. The accumulation of wealth, which is the foundation of class structure in a society, was discouraged. Therefore, before the

annexation into the Ethiopia Empire in early 1890s, Sidaama was a classless society with no bureaucratic centralized administration’.

The Sidaama ruled under the *gabbar* system not in their own will, nonetheless, they lacked power to roll-back. The attempts made to resist it were weakened by different factors. Primarily, the Sidaama traditional leadership who used to organize the people to any external threat was co-opted to the state system (Tolo, 1998). Secondly, the armed settlers-*neftegna* mostly in garrison towns had the upper hand easily to crush any attempt of rebellion (Ibid). Thirdly, as the people were tenants they had no spare time to plan for and defend the occupation and they were exhausted physically and were demoralized psychologically. Moreover, any attempt of resistance had dreadful consequences. Despite these, there were some individuals from the Sidaama who refused to become a *gabbar*, left aside their holdings and retreated to remote areas of the Sidaama away from the sphere of influence of the feudal lords (Ibid). Seyoum (1998: 111-112) further explains as ‘Habasha settlers colonialism led to the confiscation of land from the rightful owners and its distribution among armed settlers. In Sidaama, this dispossession was followed by severe coercion against dissent. While easy-go collaborationists were co-opted, local chiefs were arbitrarily picked, baptized, and given foreign titles such as *balabats* and *dejazmatchs*. State and church were fused and imposed to reinforce the physical, cultural and spiritual slavery in the conquered lands’.

‘One language, culture and country’ ideals of centralization were meant to fasten assimilation. The dark side of centralization nevertheless was forceful assimilation. The ‘Nation building’ was pursued between unequal where the dominant class was more equal than the others from its inception (Interview, academician, Hawassa, 21 May 2015).

There are different justifications put forward regarding the ‘Nation-building’ project spearheaded by Menelik II. The proponents of ‘Nation-building’ argue that it is a holy project. Whereas opponents explain that the incorporation process ensued in the oppression of the conquered people in the peripheries and it was part of colonial project. In this sense, opponents rationalized the issue that entails the ‘national-oppression’ and ‘colonization’ thesis (Merera, 2011b: 43-49).

Studies show that Menelik’s expansion process is not less equated to what imperialist did in their respective colonies. It is termed as a colonial expansion. The process as well launched

simultaneously and particularly to colonial powers scrambles for Africa post the Berlin conference (1884-1885) (Seyoum, 1998: 111; Tolo, 1998: 62-63 and Ali and Hameso, 2008: 738). Tolo (1998: 60) further underlines ‘While other parts of Africa were colonized by the European Christian imperialistic powers, the southern people of Ethiopian plateau were colonized by the Christian Ethiopians from the north’.

Accordingly, by expanding the territories of its state basically to previously independent kingdoms, Menelik became the one who is from among the colonial powers contesting to partition on the African continent. When the colonial powers came out to partition Africa, the emperor, by and large, waged war of conquest that led to centralization of the people in the South, south east and south west. In the context of Sidaama, the ‘Nation-building’ normally was violent and top-down imposition. Finally Menelik became the one to negotiate in arbitrary boundary agreement with then imperial powers such as British, French and Italians (Seyoum, 1997a; Interview, academician, Hawassa, 21 August 2015). The empire building project undeniably resulted in ‘national oppression’ in the context of Sidaama. Whether such oppression equates to colonialism is debatable since there are contending theses regarding the modern state making in Ethiopia such as ‘nation-building’ thesis, ‘national-oppression’ thesis and ‘colonial’ thesis which I have attempted to discuss in the chapter one of this study.

Nonetheless, the ‘nation-building’ project anchored under the mask of *Amharanization* depicts ‘internal colonization’ in the context of Sidaama. Menelik centralized Sidaama by the war of conquest, not only its territories conquered, but also their culture, language and religion. They were urged to fit for ideals of ‘nation-building’ project. The alien language, culture and religion were imposed up on the people and they were subjugated to pursue it. It was colonization since there was no nation other than Ethiopia as a nation recognized to refer to ‘national oppression’ (Wolassa, 2016; Tolo, 1998). Menelik’s purpose was not unification in a true sense of the term due to kingdoms existing were not the one secede from the mother country before, he, on the contrary, wanted to subdue regional lords to ensure his suzerainty. The test of loyalty was meant to pay tribute. The system through time has dismantled the socio-economic and political system of the conquered people including Sidaama. Consequently, domination and exploitation was a defining feature of state to ensure submissiveness (Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 18 June 2015).

The concomitant consequence of the process was the centre-periphery creation in which the center is the one to command the supremacy of power that enabled it to amass resources and dictate the socio-political system. In the opposite, the periphery depended on the center for its survival and compelled to follow what was to be dictated from the center. The patron-client relationship resulted in its marginalization and exclusion from the locus of power and least benefit out of socio-economic system. It was patron-client relations that linger to the contemporary Ethiopia (Markakis, 2011: 7-8; Merera, 2011b:6).

Menelik II stroke in 1906 and the struggle for succession to the throne was intensified. Menelik died in 1913 and Lij Iyasu was assigned as successor for the period (defacto, 1911-1916). Even if he attempted to introduce slight reforms, he could not cope with the fierce opposition that come from the nobilities of Shewa and of the foreign legations given his reform move and finally deposed him. Then, Zewidtu, Menelik's daughter became empress and Teferi Mekonnen was assigned as regent (1916-1930). However, Teferi began to play uncontested power than the empress. The previous administrative experience and educational background significantly contributed him to act as the heir than the regent. During the dual rule, Teferi was ambitious to modernize and develop the country. He wanted to maintain strong relations with the Western world. Consequently, socio-economic development began to improve in the country particularly the expansion of education and economic infrastructure like banking, electricity and telecommunication (Tolo, 1998; Bahru, 2002).

Despite this, in Sidaama, the conservative leader Balcha Safo was not akin to the modernizing regent. Later, Haile Selassie I was crowned as the 'King of Kings' and he further consolidated the power through the promulgation of the 1931 constitution. But, the feudal system further entrenched and the gabbars including in the Sidaama continued to relentlessly serve the imperial system (Bahru, 2002). Tolo contends that:

The emperor [Haile Selassie I] sought to limit the power of the local lords and other nobles by placing administrators of his own choosing wherever he could. In spite of that, he did not directly attack the system of land tenure that was a part of the old political order he had inherited. Even though he showed a will to modernise parts of society, the peasants still felt oppressed by the gabbar system. Before Haile Selassie went into exile

he did not do much towards making the life of the peasant easier (Tolo, 1998).

Generally, in the Sidaama *Neftegna-Gabbar* system was introduced following its conquest by the army of Menelik II. Accordingly, the Sidaama peasants became tenants in the land previously they owned. They used to pay tribute to *neftegna/Melkegna*. The life of those tenants was precarious. They were exploited and their resources were appropriated (Tolo, 1998; Betana, 2012). The first commander who led the Menelik II army into Sidaama, Beshah Aboye could not have effective control of the region due to the resistance he encountered. Later, Ras Lul Seged had able to subdue the Sidaama (Wolassa, 2016; Betana, 2012). Later, *Dejazmach* Balcha safo was established *Neftegna-Gabbar* system and harshly ruled the Sidaama (Tolo, 1998; Kifle, 2007). Following him, *Ras* Nadew and *Dejazmach* Teferi (who later became *Ras* and the emperor Haile Selassie) ruled the Sidaama in their respective areas (Betana, 2012; Kifle, 2007). As well, Ras Birru ruled the Sidaama with a little departure from the preceding feudal rulers. The last but not the least, *Ras* Desta ruled the Sidaama from the (1930-1935) (Kifle, 2007). The administrative structure set up and accountability in the Sidaama context from 1893-1936 referred as: Emperor—Provincial Governor (*Dejazmach or Ras*)—*melkegna—balabat—qoro* (Ibid). Chiqashum served as the lowest tier of the government at the grassroots level (Markos, 2014). During the period, the Sidamo provincial administration constitutes Sidaama, Wolaita, Gedeo, Burji (Amaaro), Guji, Borana, and Garre (Kifle, 2007).

3.3.2 Italian Occupation

The coming of Italians into Ethiopia shifted somehow the socio-political scene of the country. Though it was for a brief period (1936-41), it however promised to end feudalism which gave a relief for the majority-peasantry to have a right to their land as well as produce. They tried to win the minds and hearts of the people relief from the bondage of being *gabbar* for the imperial government mainly in the conquered areas. Peasants who were aggrieved by the system had hoped that the new comer may usher in era of freedom.

Italians further worked to exploit the existing weak state-society relationship in which they stood against the previous regimes (Tolo; 1998; Markakis, 2011). The culture arena was also influenced by the western orientations and their religious attachment to Roman Catholicism. Broadly speaking, dissimilar to the legacy of the previous regimes the Italians were not against

the language, culture and religion of other ethnic groups so that they expanded their social base as opposed to the war of liberation. Sidaama at the early day as well felt the comings of Italians better help them to reinvigorate their socio-political system and enjoy economic rights (Tolo, 1998).

However, concerning the Italian occupation perspectives are differing in Sidaama. In this study I tried to discuss in two contending camps. The proponents say that during the Italian occupation Sidaama people got a relative relief that helped them to develop their political consciousness (Betana, 2012: 195-196; Tolo, 1998: 120-121). The opponents of this are with view that Italians occupied Ethiopia for their vested interest that is regaining the glory of Roman Empire at least through victory over the Black; most commonly Ethiopia who beat Italians at the battle of Adwa in 1896 (Bahru, 2002: 151). The Sidaama people at early days had seen Italians as liberators from the *neftegna-gabbar* system. Italians promised reform to win hearts and minds of the people. There was of course a relative relief for some time. Gradually when they started to ensure loyalty through repression of different form as a part of imperialist policy, people rose up to resist them (Tolo, 1998). For further understanding let us briefly explore each perspective in the Sidaama context.

The Italians promised the people as they would get back their land and abandon the *gabbar*. The hope of the early days persuaded the people to a 'wait and see' their real practice. There was better infrastructural development compared to the predecessors. Particularly the physical infrastructural development of course aimed at implementing their colonial aspirations connecting different regions under Italian East Africa (Africa Orientale Italiana) in which Oromo and Sidama put under a region Jimma was serving as its capital (Bahru, 2002; Markakis, 2011).

In the early days, in Sidaama, the Italians promised to abolish the *gabbar* system and return of land back to the tenants. They were also accommodative to the socio-cultural system of the Sidaama than the preceding imperial regimes. Significant number of Sidaama *gabbars* considered Italians as emancipators from the *neftegna* rule. But, local chiefs of Sidaama at the outset went against the Italians either to maintain the statuesque or considered them as deadly enemy against the sovereignty of the country (Betana, 2012; Tolo, 1998).

Further, Ras Desta Dametew the son-in law of Haile Selassie who was the governor of the Sidamo province combated Italians in a deadly battle at Genale Dorya (Doria) which is found between Dolo and Negele Borena area galvanizing forces from the Sidaama and Borena. He commanded forces from Yirgalem which was his administrative center to combat Italians encroachment. He was at the end murdered by the Italians in 1937 (Bahru 2002). Bahru plainly states:

On the southern front, Ras Dasta had embarked on one of the most audacious campaigns of the whole war. Taking advantage of the short-lived discomfiture of the Italians at Qorahe, he led his troops in a bold thrust to the frontier post of Dolo. The exhaustingly long journey, the shortage of supplies and the outbreak of epidemic diseases made them fall easy prey to the better-prepared Italians. The Battle of Ganale Dorya (12-14 January 1936) proved to be a veritable massacre of Ethiopians. The only sour note in Graziani's victory was struck by the desertion of over 900 Eritrean askaris to the Ethiopian side- a phenomenon which was repeated in the other theatres of war. Their presence boosted the sagging morale of Dasta's defeated troops and partly explains his continued challenge to the Italians until his capture and execution in early 1937; the Eritreans, to whom capture or surrender meant certain death, fought with great resolution (Ibid 158).

Italians tried to exploit the existing socio-economic and political gaps in Sidaama to get the legitimacy from the people. The Italian policy affairs in contrast to the incumbent government turned the mass of Sidaama to tenants in their own native land put them temporarily hold a view that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' and collaborate with them. In particular, Italians promised to return land back to tenants, abolition of slavery and high taxes (Tolo, 1998; Kifle, 2007). Some Sidaama at the time accompanied Italians while chasing away nefteгна- armed settlers and took revenge on their turn for they ruled them harshly. This incidence in Sidaama is known as the first terror (Shibbire) in which, Italians attacked armed settler of the time. But,

some members of the ruling class including Sidaama turned to fight against Italians though they were not successful (Markos, 2014: 77-78; Tolo, 1998).

Conversely, the Italians driving objective was not meant to liberate Sidaama. They came to occupy Ethiopia to fulfill their colonial ambition. Benito Mussolini, who ascended to power in 1922, planned to take revenge the Italian defeat at the battle of Adwa (1896) and ensure supremacy of the white over the black. On this ground, some Sidaama people were against the occupation of Italians in Ethiopia. In this regard, Italians provided nothing special to Sidaama than fulfillment of their imperialistic aspirations (Bahru, 2002; Markos, 2014).

Remarkably, nowhere else people submitted to colonizers in African context. Resistance was common. In the context of Sidaama at early days *gabbars* were persuaded to the promise of Italians to give them relief. But later when the Italians turned to be oppressors as part of their colonial project, Sidaama people as well joined the national and local resistance movements against Italians (Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 18 June 2015; Markos, 2014). In the course of time, Italians imposed harsh measures such as feeding its troops, and land grabbing proposals and assassination of heroes of Sidaama who were against their occupation (Markos, 2014; FGD, Darra District, 11February 2016).

Notwithstanding the above fact, as part of the colonial project Italian inherent element of subjugation started to manifest in Sidaama like in other parts of the country. There was a prophecy by the prominent Yaanasse clan king of Sidaama Aliito Hewano who foretells that ‘Italians will stay in Sidaama for a brief period; not over five years’. In this regard, Aliito Hewano, King of Alawo sub-clan in Yaanasse had fierce opposition to Italian occupation which was an indication to the public to stand against them (Markos et al. 2011). The argument was shocking for Italians as it eroded their legitimacy (Ibid). They asked him to recast to what was commonly in Ethiopia, ‘reign for thousand years’. Aliito; however, was obdurate to his words and reiterate the same whenever they asked him to check whether there would be any change of his prophecy for better fortune of them. They examined authenticity of his being a prophet over other issues and found it correct. As his words was powerful and would mobilize the mass. Italians gave Aliito to choose between ‘death and change of his words’. Though bitter, Aliito courageously chose death than change of the prophecy. Indeed, Italians outrageously killed him (Ibid).

The above mentioned causes led Sidaama to rise against Italians through time. The opposition to Italian rule by some clan kings of Sidaama like Aliito Hewano, Waqayo Baallicha, Grazmach Mengistu Hameso gave an impetus to the Sidaama's resistance to Italian rule. These kings having strong legitimacy, though partly eroded during the *neftegna* rule, turned them to serve the reigning emperor even against their people but mobilized public not to be submissive to the Italian occupation. The Italians indeed took harsh measures against these dissidents. Finally, they were assassinated by Italians. This implies the dictatorship of the late colonialist power. This further fuelled public animosity to Italians in the region. No matter how less cruel Italians had been the Sidaama people were not endured to continue with oppression. Instead, Sidaama by and large, turned to resist them and finally chased out of the country with the help of the British in 1941 (Wolassa 2016; Kifle, 2007: 138- 140 and Markos, 2014: 77).

Finally, Italy which allied with Germany during the Second World War was evicted from Ethiopia by the war of Liberation launched by the national patriots since its occupation gradually weakened, and left Ethiopia with the help of forces led by the British. Subsequently, Emperor Haile Selassie was re-crowned and feudalism was reinstated as the ideology of the state (Merera, 2011b; Bahru, 2002).

3.3.3 Haile Selassie I Reign (1942-1974)

The Sidaama fiercely resisted the reestablishment of *neftegna-gabbar* system in its land following the restoration of the imperial power (Kifle, 2007). Indeed, the bureaucracy established in the Sidaama (Ibid). Accordingly, the restored emperor promised the reform in the land tenure system in the country including the Sidaama (Daniel, 2015). As well, he considered everybody should be treated equally and suggested baptism to have the same religion and language. Therefore, the Sidaama people underwent mass baptism. But the following issues challenged their adherence to the new religion they received. Firstly, baptism was ordained by the state as official religion. Secondly, *neftegna-gabbar* relationship had not been improved as co-equal. Thirdly, despite reform in *neftegna-gabbar* system, the life of Sidaama peasants became miserable due to multiple taxation system (Tolo, 1998; Betana, 2012).

Even if the nobility continued to have unmitigated power over the peasantry including the Sidaama, the emperor wanted to modernize the country. In this respect the 1944 decree on 'regulation on the establishment of missions' enhanced the operation of the missionaries in

Sidaama. There were fast proselytization due to missionaries' engagement in development works and expanded education and provided health services in Sidaama. But, there were ups and downs for the operation of missionaries due to opposition from the ruling aristocracy (Kifle, 2007; Tolo, 1998). The administrative structure and chain of command during Haile Selassie (1941-1975) includes: Emperor—Provincial Governor—Sub-Provincial Governor—district governor—balabat—qoro (Kifle, 2007). Chiqashum was the lowest level of government structure (Markos, 2014). Sidamo governorate general was one of the fourteen governorate generals in the country (Ibid). Different rulers were served as governor general such as Ras Abebe Aregay (1941-1942), Ras Mengesha Seyoum (1955-1958) and Dejazmach Bekele Beyene (1959), and Ras Andargachew Mesai (1961-1964) (Lindahl, 2005). Sidamo governorate general (Sidamo Teklay Gizat) included Sidama, Wolayta, Gedeo, Borena, Jemjem and Arero (Ambaye, 2018).

Sidaama understood the fact that the coming back of *neftegna* may expose them to more brutal rule and decided to take up arms left aside by Italians led by its prominent Ejjetto (heroes) leadership of Yettera Bolle (later, Grazmach) and Hushula Xaadiso (Wolassa, 2016; Kifle, 2007). They were of course successful in resisting the establishment of the bureaucracy in the Sidaama at least for a year (Ibid).

Indeed, the armed settlers got back in Sidaama despite fierce resistance which resulted in massacre of the Sidaama prominent elders and clan leaders at Ashisho, currently located Bursa Woreda in 1941. The infamous act of taking revenge on Sidaama by returning *neftegna* remembered as the time of the second terror (*LayinkiShibbirre*) (Markos et al. 2011: 79). The clash was primarily attributed to the resistance of Sidaama public to returning armed settlers who came to subdue to the rule of the restored emperor (Markos, 2014). This laid foundation for the development of Sidaama nationalism which later culminated in the establishment of the Sidaama Liberation Movement (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 19 February 2016).

Following the restoration of the imperial rule, the emperor promised reform which ensures equality for all Ethiopians. Religion was taken as one of elements to build national sentiment. To this end, the Sidaama people once again ordered baptism to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in which thousands were baptized. The conservative nature of Sidaama people was one of challenges to follow Ethiopia Orthodox Christianity wholeheartedly (Betana, 2012: 203-205).

Change of name of a person as well as renaming places instead of recognizing one's identity was pursued as part of enhancing *Amaharanization*. An individual was supposed to undergo such a change to be candidate to join school and being employed in civil service. Moreover, conversion to Ethiopia Orthodox Christianity was compulsory even if it was least achieved despite after forceful mass conversion (Wolassa, 2016: 234-235). Tolo (1998:124) argues that 'To win the support and the hearts of the farmers, it was proclaimed that everybody was equal. There would be no difference between Amhara and Sidama. All were Ethiopians and should follow the same religion and use the same language.'

Surprisingly, the baptized were not those who preached and got the necessary church teachings, however haphazardly and forceful undertaken simply through the order of the state. The state's purpose was not to expand the membership of the church but to have supremacy over the public and ensure its dictatorship; legitimatizing its authority as derived from God; divine king right. That is why its baptism was unlikely to the doctrine of the church which is without the will of the believer (Wolassa, 2016: 280; Tolo, 1998: 125). The Sidaama generally were against forceful baptism as well as fasting. This probably resulted in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to have a smaller number of followers nearly 3% in Sidaama today despite its early presence than any other sects who came later in the region (Wolassa, 2016: 279-280).

In the meantime, the arrival of particularly the missionaries contributed to the change in socioeconomic system of Sidaama. As it was discussed above, the missionaries maintained a good relationship with the public and they harnessed specifically the social infrastructural development. The establishment of the schools enabled the spread of education than before and the health institutions helped the people to have access to public health that basically expected to enhance modernization (Tolo, 1998: 160-163). Even if the Protestants have been less tolerant to culture of the Sidaama like the ancestor worship, sacrifice provisions and rituals of different kind, their contribution in socioeconomic development is significant. Besides, it remained intact with Sidaama land right and feeding practice that has given it more legitimacy to fast proselytization. Unlike the attempt of imposition of *Amharic* language and culture by then empire builders, the missionaries were accommodating to the language and culture of the Sidaama except veneration, worship of forefathers and rituals (Interview, academician, Shabadino District, 27 April 2015). Furthermore, cash crop production has significantly

influenced the socio-economic development in the Sidaama. Particularly, production of coffee in the Sidaama has significantly contributed to the socio-economic development in the region. The development of coffee cooperatives broadly the Sidaama coffee union enabled the association of coffee producing peasants at the grass roots. However, the marketing systems of the coffee industries were not rewarding the producers. The issue of fair pay for producers has remained for decades. Despite this, the 'Sidamo' coffee has become brand globally which can enhance the Sidaama identity (Wolassa, 2016).

The Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity was the most acknowledged religion used to forge a unity of the country. In Sidaama as well thousands were baptized as part of order of the state. The church; however, less likely effectively made them disciples due to the conservative nature of the Sidaama. Fasting was typical example on part of those who refused to follow the religious practice important to be disciple. In the meantime, the arrival of new missionaries helped Sidaama to make a choice. But the operation of these missionaries was limited due to the political system of the time that made seriously scrutinized each and every aspect of their activities. Probably for fear that the foreigners may induce the change in society; missionaries passed a tortuous stay in the Sidaama. Despite some over lordship accepted their stay in their region aimed at civilizing the nation as part of modernization. However, owing to the pressure from the armed settlers and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, they were requested to leave for the Sidaama. Besides, the Italian occupation that was in favor of Catholicism put as pressure on other foreign based missionaries to leave the country. Remarkably, the restored emperor, nevertheless, with zeal to modernize the country passed a decree 1944 that was instrumental for the operation of missionaries in the country which helped the missionaries returned to their country (Tolo, 1998; Kifle, 2007: 92-93).

In the subsequent period, some reform attempts were expected to alleviate the plight of the *gabbar* system. The early 1940's government started to pay salaries to its officials in provincial administration. It declared to abandon corvée labor and other forms of tribute bestowed to landlords though decree 1941 save for taxes and dues set by central government. In 1942, the imperial government introduced a uniform rate of taxation on land country wide payable in cash and to pay salary for provincial officials. The customary tribute from the land was further banned

in 1944. But, the customary services and dues to the Church continued being legalized through decree in 1947 (Markakis and Nega, 1986).

In spite of the reform made by the regime it remained futile to impart change in the life and livelihood of peasants who were found to be *gabbars*. The land tax reform never improved the situation of the tenants in the south including the Sidaama. It simply transferred the burden of taxation by the landlords to his tenants who were subjected to multiple taxations which were harsher than in the previous times. Precisely, what the reform brought about was legalization of the oppression. The Sidaama people could not have access to urban lease of land and less provision of social infrastructural development mostly in the rural part where the majority lives. Over all, they faced social, cultural, economic and political marginalization and exclusion. Modernization for Sidaama was farfetched and exploitation was a defining feature. This led to Sidaama nationalism though it was nascent in its early development (Interview, academician, Hawassa, 21 August 2015).

The deepening absolutism that led to the wretchedness paved a way for public resentment of different form that exhibited in peaceful opposition and violent ways in the country. Fundamentally, the scope and objectives of the resistance varies. These include the Wayane rebellion of the 1943, the Gedeo peasant uprising in 1960, the Bale Oromo uprising from the 1963-1970 and the Gojjam peasant uprising in 1968. Though the oppositions against the regime was crushed by the army of the state at different point in time, the oppositions laid foundation for the ultimate popular rebellion that finally deposed the emperor from the crown (Bahru, 2002: 215-218). Addis Hiwet (1975:88) confirms the fact that:

...Despite the numerous revolts in the 1940s and the equally endemic political conspiracies in the same period, the regime of feudal autocracy consolidated itself. Haile Selasse's post-war regime totally rejected the slightest call for reform. Police and military repression was so inhabiting that the social-cultural life was stifled and stunted, for even genuinely a political cultural organizations were suspected of political pretensions. Feudal autocracy, while suppressing every attempt at organisation by any class or any section of it, still defended and safeguarded organisation as its sacred privilege.

The promulgation of the revised constitution of the 1955 was hoped to create a political space through election for the representatives to chamber of Deputies. During the time, Sidaama had some representatives that include Woldeamanuel Dubale, Assefa Baallango, Taafasa Hammesso and others. The estimated representatives from the Sidaama were four. People used to go to appeal to the extent of *zufan chilot*, crown court which was also seen as a kind of change to seek justice than the predecessor. However, members to the senate were handpicked by the emperor. On the other hand, property qualification to be candidate for election for the lower house restricted popular participation. Consequently, the constitution aimed at further entrenching absolutism that provided a little room to promote the public interest in general. The constitution basically remained rhetoric in terms of putting into practice the civil liberties. In reality, genuine social, economic and political reform became unrealistic. The charismatic and religious personality of the emperor made the state strong and helped him to control all public life. Haile Selassie, to a greater extent, consolidated the oppression through constitutional provisions and decrees what the Menelik II instituted through war of conquest in the context of Sidaama (Wolassa, 2016: 295- 296; Kifle, 2007: 147; Bahru, 2002: 206- 207).

Notwithstanding, the militancy of the state for any view that was not in accord with the ideology of the state, the Sidaama people were not passively subdued. They were in resistance at different times in history since the conquest of the nation by the army of the Menelik II in 1890s. Land grabbing, exploitation of labor and appropriation of resource were the driving reasons for Sidaama peasantry to revolt that finally resulted in political struggle-quest for their autonomy. On the other hand, Sidaama intellectuals who were part of Ethiopian student movement had played a significant role against the imperial government basically forerun by the students from Yirgalem town which was epicenter. It was associated to student movement that focuses on land tenure, nations, nationalities and people's freedom and self-determination. The forceful assimilation in 'nation-building' project at the expense of the conquered people's identity led to peaceful and violent opposition like in other parts of the country. The resistance by the notable Sidaama heroes gave leverage to the mass uprising opposed to the regime, whose a few statues currently found at Sidaama Cultural Hall, in Hawassa town. The struggle varies from the insurgency war to an organized form (Wolassa, 2016; Markos, 2014; 85 and Interview, non-Sidaama, Hawassa, 24 April 2015). Leenco (1999: 4) states:

One outcome of the conquest by these northern Christian highland rulers or Abyssinians was the extension of their traditional autocratic style of government over the peoples they subjugated. Seen in this context, the standard view of Ethiopian political tradition as being deeply autocratic is essentially correct. One should not, however, overlook the fact that it stands in contrast to the political tradition of the Oromos, Somalis, Sidamas, etc. The egalitarian nature of these societies' political life prior to the conquest is also now widely acknowledged. Northern domination of the entire country's political life thus easily resulted also in subordinating the portrayal of all other peoples' history, culture and political tradition to that of the north.

The nationwide resistance to the autocracy was caused by socio-economic, cultural and political conditions. Neither the rural nor the urban masses were beneficiaries from the system. A few privileged wanted to keep the status quo while the majority, forerun by elites, held the position of either a genuine reform or change of the regime. The regime's strong military muscle, built by its western allies, easily tamed the opposition. 'Land to the Tiller' was one of the major demands that catalyzed mass support as the Ethiopian peasantry was under precarious socio-economic conditions. Besides, those who stand for the fundamental change persisted in a bitter struggle for equality, social justice and democratic rule.

The twin class-struggle and national oppression led to the 'national question' that the imperial government was hesitant to address. Despite the furious and bloody opposition, the regime had a little appetite to make a genuine reform. Indeed, the mass opposition in which the Ethiopian student movement was a nucleus had brought the imperial regime to an end in 1974 (Addis Hiwet, 1975; Bahru, 2002 and Interview, opposition party leader, Hawassa, 9 September 2015). In the context of Sidaama, the entrenched oppression and exploitation led to unprecedented resistance movements against the Imperial regime. The resistance by the Sidaama students, who were part and parcel of Ethiopian student movements and war of insurgency by different heroes of Sidaama, laid a ground for a more organized form of struggle which was realized during the Derg regime. Boni contends that 'It was precisely on this wave of resistance towards the end of Haile Selassie's reign that the Sidama's opposition was able to reorganize itself and undertake a new

and more organized riot against the imperial regime which collapsed on 12th September 1974 pursuant the Ethiopian popular 1974 Revolution' (2020: 23).

3.3.4 Derg (1974-1991)

The Derg, the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) came into power through the popular revolution that overthrew the monarchy. The absence of organized political party and vibrant civil society in the country paved a way for the military to hold on power. When the Derg was further consolidating its power than establishing civilian government, the popular upsurge ousts the imperial government later led to multi-ethnic and ethno-nationalist forces struggle. The Derg continued to monopolize its power through repression of different forms (Merera, 2011b: 30-31). Bahru (2002) spells out:

The proclamation that deposed the emperor transformed the Derg into the provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), which assumed full state power. Simultaneously, it suspended the constitution, dissolved parliament, and banned all strikes and demonstrations. What had started as a slogan ('Ethiopia First') now became a creed; opposing it was judged to be treason. A child of the popular movement, the Derg now disowned its parent. And that fact became the recipe for collision with the popular elements of the February upsurge, notably the students and teachers. For the Derg and its supporters, 12 September came to be celebrated annually as the crowning moment of the popular movement. For the opposition, more particularly the civilian left, it marked the day when that movement was derailed.

Accordingly, there were covert and overt oppositions to the military in power. The opposition, gradually, led to establishment of several multiethnic and ethno-nationalist parties to confront it. The proposal put forward to establish a civilian government side-lined by the regime. The regime was not willing to relinquish and/ or share state power; instead, it kept on consolidating its monopoly of power becoming ally of the Socialist block specifically to the Soviet Union (Markakis, 2011: 167-169; Bahru, 2002).

The 1975 land reform proclamation of the regime was to respond to longstanding demand of the public under ‘Land to the Tiller’. It helped the Derg to harness mass support particularly from the peasantry who were eager to have tenure security. In effect, it officially put an end to the feudal autocracy (Merera, 2011b: 31).

The nationalization policy of the regime transferred private owned properties such as commercial and industrial enterprises, urban land and extra houses including the rural land to public ownership. In this, the regime apportioned to the larger share of the resources that gradually helped to build its economic base to enhance its dictatorship in much more vigor (Bahru, 2002: 240-241).

Sidaama ardently welcomed the land reform proclamations of the 1975. The dismantling of the *gabbar* and return of their land made them optimistic about the regime’s commitment to the radical change. The land reform; however, could not ensure economic freedom. The very reform relapsed into socio-economic bottlenecks of the other kinds. Though they had a right to produce on their land; the marketing system curtailed them not to enjoy a competitive price. They had also to work on the state farms. The command economy policy of the regime discouraged private ownership where an individual strives to change life and livelihood. This gradually frustrated the expectation of peasantry ultimately led to tenure insecurity that resulted in poor productivity and mass impoverishment (Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 18 June 2015; Seyoum, 2015: 17).

The forceful villagization and recruitment for the national services further made the Derg unpopular. The villagization policy was justified on the ground to enhance better social and economic development through the provision of infrastructure and the conscription of armed members simultaneously geared toward building the military power of the regime to defend any possible threat to the motherland. At the end of the day, the Derg had tight control and used force to quell whatever opposition. Despite this, the struggle against the regime continued unabated including in the Sidaama (Merera, 2011b: 32; Seyoum, 1998: 113). Increasingly the regime vigorously pursued centralization policy anchored in the unity of state. As a result, social, economic, cultural and political development of diversified peoples of Ethiopia was less likely entertained (Seyoum, 1997a).

Regarding political participation, the Derg allowed the establishment of different associations such as Peasant Association, Youth Association, Women Association and so forth. To some extent, people from the different regions including the peripheries assigned to the state structure. At the time, the Sidaama political elites also had the opportunity to have leadership role, by and large, at grassroots level. The locus of power; however, was dominated by ethnic groups other than Sidaama at district, sub-province and province level where Sidaama had little representation and participation in the administration. But, in the later years of the Derg the regime gradually started to appoint the political elites of Sidaama including in its higher echelon. But further tight control of the regime and harsh measures against any dissidents curtailed the public interests. The system, thus, could not bring a fundamental change in political landscape from the previous (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 2 September 2015; Wolassa, 2016: 297-298).

However, hope for democratic dispensation was decimated by regime's lust for power that denied any room for the opposition. The socialist assimilative policy of the regime was akin to its predecessors and naming in ethnic tone also had no institutional recognition (Interview, academician, Hawassa, 20 May 2015). Besides, the price fixation for products undermined economic development through heavy hand of government intervention (Merera, 2011b: 38). Though the people had right to their land through Land reform proclamation of the 1975 mostly in the South that commonly allowed them to have production right, however, limited their economic development by restricting them to sell their produce only at the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) tightly controlled by the state since 1977 and farmers sell much of their produce in the price rate lower than the actual market price (Kifle, 2007).

In Sidaama, the regime apart from its repression of different form put under control any dissent views that could contribute to the socioeconomic development. The regime made stark difference in terms of expanding education particularly to the rural areas where the majority resides. Specially, the adult literacy campaign as part of development through cooperation campaign was a novel program for enhancement of basic education was essential to spread education in Sidaama (Anbessa, 2007; Bahru, 2002).

Sidaama was one among the fifteen languages recognized by the Derg regime but it was used with geez script. The decrees and proclamations of the regime were announced for Sidaama public in its language from Ethiopia Radio Station. Besides, afforestation was massively

undertaken in the Sidaama region to mention some such as Wondo Genet, Magara and Worancha forests (Interview, academician, Shabadino District, 27 April 2015). Moreover, the Derg planted several manufacturing industries in Sidaama but dominantly agglomerated in Hawassa. (Wolassa, 2016).

The subsequent decrees and proclamations led to greater extent of strengthening the dictatorship of the regime contrary to public expectation following the revolution. As part of the ‘National Democratic Revolution’ promulgated in 1976, declared ‘right to self-determination of nationalities to the extent of regional autonomy and self-administration’, culminate in the establishment of People’s Democratic Republic. Undeniably, the promise of a democratic unity to the Ethiopian state devoured by the regime that saw the grant of such right as a threat to regime’s security (Merera, 2011b).

The Derg violently engaged in struggle against its oppositions which called for the establishment of a ‘Provisional People’s Government’. It battled with EPRP (Ethiopia People’s Revolutionary Party) that was formed in 1972 incidence commonly known as ‘Red Terror’ from 1977-78 in response to EPRP launched urban-guerilla warfare targeted at state officials coined as ‘White terror’. The regime turned its face versus its important partner MEISON (All Ethiopian Socialist Movement) established in 1968 that led to the assassination and political persecution of many of its leadership and members. Derg demolished the two big contenders; easily vanished other civilian left clandestine political groups such as the Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples’ Revolutionary Struggle (Ich’at), the Wezlig (the Labour League) and the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization (Malerid) used to operate in the 1970s. The regime indeed beat multinational movements dominantly in terms of membership like EPRP and MEISON. Nearly for a decade, the regime ensured its sole dictatorship of course challenged its authorities by ethno-nationalist liberation forces that at end brought the overthrow of the regime (Bahru, 2002).

The villagization and conscription of the youth to the military undertaken through the use of force frustrated peoples’ expectation for a democratic Ethiopia. The cadres of the regime used to forcefully appropriate resources that led to the impoverishment of the Sidaama people. The right to use their produce as well as labor were suppressed similarly to the previous regimes under disguise of nationalization. The majority of its productive citizens were meant to serve in coerced national military service. Given the public discontent and the dictatorship of the regime,

the Sidaama joined another revolutionary struggle like other counterparts. The Sidaama who had a lesson from the military regime which devoured any dissent views mainly the leftist parties who advocate for civilian government operating in the country. Finally, the Sidaama decided to continue struggle from Somalia where they established the military training center in Mogadishu in 1977. Its main objective was ensuring the right to regional autonomy for Sidaama (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 17 August 2015). Merera (2011b: 38) contends:

One of the pitfalls in the military regime's policy was its attempt to solve by the use of force the problems posed by various marginalized ethnic and/or regional movements. This provoked a more organized and a more serious challenge from the national liberation movements of various types. There were many liberation movements operating in various parts of the country at the time. The OLF was operating in western, eastern and southern parts of the country. The IFLO and WSLF in the East and the Sidama Liberation Front (SLF) in the South, while the ELF, EPLF and the TPLF (the better-organized and armed liberation movements) were operating in the northern perimeter.

The Sidaama Liberation Front (SLF) is one of ethno-nationalist forces established in 1977. Different insurgents of the Sidaama significantly contributed to the formation of it since the early 1970s. Indeed, the regime assassinated many of the early founders. Meanwhile, the late Woldeamanuel Dubale who served at different capacity particularly as an elect to the lower house of the parliament and the judge of supreme court in Hararege Province during the Haile Selassie regime and as an administrator of the Sidamo Province during the Derg regime joined the SLF in 1977 in which he became the party leader. The SLF later was coined as the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) in the same year (Wolassa, 2016; Kifle, 2007).

Woldeamanuel secretly and actively participated in the civilian leftist party MEISON (All Ethiopian Socialist Movement). When the Derg's dictatorship further entrenched, he left for the official position and joined the group of people who established the Sidaama Liberation Front (SLF) in 1977 which was later renamed as the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) (Markos, 2014 and Betana, 2012).

It was a heyday of the regime's dictatorship to operate domestically. As it discussed above, the regime suppressed almost all advocates of the people's government in the country. The SLM accordingly had a military base in Mogadishu, capital of Somalia. The objective of SLM was to struggle for the right to self-determination of the Sidaama people within the Ethiopian polity (Markos, 2014). According to Woldeamanuel, the founder and late leader of the SLM:

The goals of the Sidama people [in its organized struggle in the late 1970s and the 1980s] were the removal of all types of oppression that had been imposed on them by the ruling class, the respect of their basic rights of which the ruling class deprived them, and the creation of a system in which they and other Ethiopian peoples would live in equality. The main and principal goal of the SLM is to ensure; that the Sidama national group governs its own territory through its own democratically elected leaders; that it is represented in the federal government, at a national level, by its own democratically elected representatives; and that its language and culture are respected (Quoted in Kifle, 2007: 203).

The SLM used to have a large number of contingents with strong social base at home and internationally. The SLM launched a massive military attack through guerilla warfare to the regime in its presence in Sidaamaland from the 1977-1983. The regime responded through lethal land and air attack. SLM was finally successful to debacle the army of the government in which the SLM was able to control over one third of districts of the Sidaama namely Harbagona, Bansa and Haroressa and partly controlled the rest districts. In the deadly battle, the SLM fought with the Derg. It is difficult to provide a precise statistic of the loss of lives and property (Wolassa, 2016; Markos, 2014). In the deadly battle the military government had with the SLM, the government deliberately hid the figures from the public and international organizations (An Africa Watch Report, 1991). But it is estimated that over ten thousand were killed, hundreds of thousands were displaced and loss of significant amount of properties (Markos, 2014; Wolassa, 2016).

During the Derg time, Sidaama was under Sidamo Administrative Region that constituted Sidama, Wonago, Borana, Jemjem, Wolayita and Arero sub-provinces. The Sidama sub-

province specifically includes Awassa, Dale, Shebedino, Bensa, Arbegona, Wondo, Hagereselam, and Aroessa (Seyoum, 1997a; Markos, 2014). At the early years of the Derg, Sidamo Administrative Region was ruled by Shaleka Tefera Wolde Tinsae (Betana, 2012: 234). Later on, Shaleka Girma HabteGebriel and Tefera Endallew served as administrators of the Sidamo Administrative Region (Wolassa, 2016; Betana, 2012).

To effectively ambush the SLM stronghold and operation in Sidaama, the Derg designed a new military tactics. Basically, the regime established ‘Anti-SLM’ militia that turned war in between two brothers, of course each died for different goals. The SLM was adamant to achieve autonomous region for Sidaama by overthrowing the military dictatorship. In the opposite ‘Anti-SLM’ militia was basically supported the Derg because of the reforms that was introduced and opposition to SLM’s alignment with Mohammed Siad Barre’s government (Markos, 2014; Kifle, 2007).

The SLM could not endure to pursue further battle due to several reasons to mention. Primarily the Sidaama region ravaged for nearly seven years battle combating the military regime tremendous loss of lives and properties. The prolonging battle further worsened the livelihood. Secondly, shedding fellow brother’s blood following the establishment of ‘anti-SLM’ militia was taboo in Sidaama culture and it eroded the social base for the organization when the public lost more sons and bothers in the battle fighting within. Thirdly, as they fought fiercely an extended battle they were challenged by limited technology of war, supply and logistic problems abated to confront counter-insurgents. Fourthly, subversion and geographic distance were among the challenges. Taking these fundamental issues into account, the SLM top leadership decided to retreat in exile from where to continue the struggle and some army members started to pursue ordinary life in the country up till the regime deposed in 1991(Interview, legal expert, Hawassa, 26 May 2015; Markos, 2014).

In brief, there were tremendous loss of life and destruction of properties when SLM fought against the Derg which was well militarily postured even from Africa. The subsequent establishment of ‘Anti-SLM’ guerrilla, which was further aimed to restore the command of the territories which were in the hands of the SLM guerrilla force through heavy hand backed by government led to the defeat of SLM. Besides, the declined support to the SLM because people could not endure to continue the war that claimed the lives of an estimated over ten thousand and

threatened their livelihood gradually eroded the legitimacy of the conduct of war in the hinterland (Kinkino, 2019; Markos, 2014). Moreover, the treachery by a given military commander who had become subversive to the Derg deliberate miscommunication led to debacle of Brigades weakened the zeal of rebel army to further confront the Derg. The leadership finally left the country and later returned home during the transitional period after the fall of the Derg (Ibid).

On the other hand, the peasants who could not bear the repressive policies and cruel administrative system that brought unintended results revolted in different parts of Sidaama against the regime. The regime took ruthless measures to crush any dissent views and it had deaf ears to listen to their grievances, in its place it ordered a mechanized army which mercilessly killed many hundreds, the war in Borricha (Currently Borricha woreda), at a place namely called Sadamo Dikicha was notable in this regard. The deadly battle took a day and over 500 people were gun down. The deadlock lasted for six months till the regime took over control of the area (Markos, 2014: 93-94; Samuel and Barry S.Hewlett, 2016). Markakis (2011: 200) particularizes:

While the Sidama gabbar welcomed the Land Reform, they were wary of other Dergue schemes such as villagisation, and strongly resented the state purchasing monopoly of agricultural produce. A trend among local communities to boycott government programmes culminated in a mass protest in 1978 in a place named Borricha. Fighting broke out when the Dergue cadre attacked the protesters who were armed, and a battle lasting twelve hours ensued. Identified as a nest of counter-revolutionaries, the area became a target for punitive measures.

In the same year, the Derg turned its face to quell Wotara Rassa (at present in Malga woreda) uprising. The demand of the public was more or less similar to the Borricha revolt. The intervention of the regime was less violent unlike the Borricha battle where the military used excessive power. It is said to be a mix of diplomatic-military engagement. As compared to Borricha battle the casualties were limited as well. The recent study reveals 100 death tolls as the result of the conflict (Markos, 2014: 94; Betana, 2012: 254 and Wolassa, 2016).

Later the Derg promised to bring about structural change for different regions reconstituted the state to address socio-economic, political and cultural realities. After several years of confrontation, the Sidaama people also expected to enjoy out of a new restructuring. Accordingly, the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN) was established in 1984 to restructure the state based on the political, social, economic and cultural realities on the ground and examine the existing state structure and administrative system. The regime through such study envisioned the formation of the Peoples' Democratic Republic which was finally achieved in 1987. The Derg, however, was less likely convinced with the recommendations put forward by the scholars who carried out the research. The political pressure of the time made the regime to make use of some part of the recommendation in inversed way. Consequently, the political interest overshadowed the basic essence of the precedence of the economic development (Markakis, 2011; Seyoum, 1997a).

Thus, the regime reorganized the administrative structure and established twenty-five administrative and five' autonomous regions. The 'autonomous' regions were Eritrea, Aseb, Tigray, Ogden and Dire Dawa. The rearrangement was from political vantage point which excludes social, cultural and economic realities on the ground (Ibid). The Sidaama which is located in the south central Ethiopia little benefited from the new administrative restructuring. The primacy, nevertheless, was given to the peripheral regions which hoped to persuade the armed ethno-nationalist forces with the goal of secession.

The promulgation of the 1987 PDRE'S constitution in the late years of the Derg and the declaration of People's Republic of Ethiopia was said to ensure popular rule through democratic ethos. The process and practice heavily undermined by the dictatorship of regime it had brought no significant change. The constitution further consolidated the rule of person (Tesema and Zekarias Kenea, 2007; Bahru, 2002). As a result, the constitution was driven by political expediency that made no any better of social and economic conditions of the people.

In Sidaama, a genuine political participation was stifled. The insurgents and including the regime's high-ranking officials faced a tragic act of assassination and many of them were beheaded or hanged. The regime took some of those corpses to exhibit in different places including markets to terrify and subdue the public (Wolassa, 2016; Betana, 2012). Human and

democratic rights were curtailed. On the contrary, this rather fuelled Sidaama nationalism and ultimately culminated in the establishment of Sidaama Liberation Movement in 1977 (Ibid).

The struggle spearheaded by the ethno- nationalist forces in different parts of Ethiopia finally celebrated victory over the Derg that culminated in the establishment of the Transitional government of Ethiopia in 1991 (Bahru, 2002; Seyoum 1997a). In this epoch the Sidaama people significantly contributed to the national struggle that led to final oust of the Derg (Wolassa, 2016). Sidaama in the post-1991 Ethiopia would be explored in depth in the chapter five of this dissertation.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on origin, history, culture, geography and politics of Sidaama. Sidaama people have established egalitarian indigenous institution and governance. There has been transfer of power in every eight years for successive Luwa (age-set) in five cycles. However, the exact date of the establishment of those indigenous institutions is not clearly known in Sidaama. In the indigenous leadership, functions are intermingled; however, leaders are not despotic. They usually engage in host of basically administrative and cultural issues. Even if women and children do not attend the assembly of elders, their interest and issue shall be represented by a given elder. Sidaama is a clan-based federation in which every clan exists independently but maintains the unity of the Sidaama. Regardless of autonomous status of each clan, Sidaama is a cohesive society. There has been long established common asset that effectively cement every clan together. Even if there have been conflict of interest, Sidaama's conflict management and resolution system has enabled them to exist for the most part peacefully.

The incorporation of Sidaama in the central state, however, resulted in conflictual State-society relations at the outset. The conquest of Sidaamaland led to the establishment of feudal system anchored in *Gabbar* system. In the gult system basically adopted in the South, Sidaama people have been reduced to tenants in their own holding of the land. Accordingly, Sidaama people generally exploited to their labor and their resources appropriated. Therefore, Sidaama people, though in an organized form, started to resist the state which forcefully centralized them and imposed on them the 'nation-building' project. This in turn has resulted in further oppression of the Sidaama which at the same time fueled the Sidaama resistance to the oppressive state system. The change of regimes did not bring any transformation in Sidaamaland. What is changed in

Sidaama as Seyoum Y. Hameso calls 'the system of oppression'. Though the coming of Derg gave a relief to Sidaama and other oppressed people in the southern part by officially declaring the land reform of the 1975 and allowing mass association at the grass roots level, however, the fundamental 'national question' mostly economic and political rights were suppressed. This led to the establishment of Sidaama organized form of struggle known as Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) in 1977 under leadership of late Woldeamanuel Dubale.

Sidaama through its organization, SLM launched guerrilla war against Derg from its military base in Mogadishu in the Sidaama land. Through years of fighting enabled to free at least one-third of Sidaama and also attempted to control the remaining parts of the nation. The establishment of anti-SLM by the military regime led to strategic thinking in which the SLM leadership decided to cease war given different reasons mainly further battle turn to war within which costs lives of many and may ruin the region. Indeed, the leadership left for the country and its military force recruited mostly from peasantry turned to ordinary life.

The restructuring of Ethiopian State following the coming of EPRDF into power in the 1991, the SLM attended the 'Peace and Democracy' conference convened in Addis Ababa from July 1-5 that was instrumental in adopting the Transitional Charter and establish the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). Sidaama represented 87 seats in the Council of Representatives (COR) with two seats. However, when EPRDF/TPLF wants to further consolidate power and ultimately marginalize the opposition contrary to its promise for democratic and federal Ethiopia. SLM following the major opposition, OLF to the regime withdrew from the Transitional government. Instead, the ruling party established a surrogate party, Sidaama People's Democratic Organization (SPDO) which was loyal to the regime. Consequently, the Sidaama quest for regional statehood was suppressed for the last nearly 27 years. Indeed, in the referendum conducted on the 20 November, 2019 those who supported for Sidaama regional statehood voted with an overwhelming figure, 97.7%.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FEDERAL ARRANGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA AND THE SIDAAMA

This chapter analyzes the federal arrangement in Ethiopia in post-1991 and the Sidaama. It particularly deals with the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Sidaama experience. The chapter examines the federal system of Ethiopia with particular focus on the practice of federalism, fiscal federalism and decentralization, participation and representation. Also, it briefly looks at socio-economic development in Sidaama. It assesses federalism in Southern Ethiopia where it studies the Sidaama in the SNNPR. More specifically, the chapter explores how different political parties namely the Sidaama People's Democratic Organization, SPDO; and SEPDM's Sidaama branch; Prosperity Party and Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM). It also examines views of segments of the Sidaama society and outsiders within the current structure of the Southern region. Generally, it discusses if there are genuine democratic practices and rule of law that enhance equitable share of power and resources.

4.1 The Transitional Government of Ethiopia

The EPRDF came to power in May 1991 following the overthrow of the Derg. In July 1991, it convened the 'Peace and Democracy' conference in Addis Ababa. Representatives from different ethnic liberation movements and prominent individuals attended the conference. During the conference an interim constitution, the transitional charter was approved and the Council of Representatives which constituted 87 seats served as an interim legislative body (Hashim, 2010:5; Wolassa, 2016: 146). Among the 87 seats, EPRDF had the share of 32 seats, followed by the OLF to which 12 seats were allocated and the other over 20 groups was given two to three seats. This basically accounted for the EPRDF's victory over the Derg has enabled it to takeover a large number of seats in the Council of Representatives than the rest of the parties (Seyoum, 1997a: 80).

The Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) was one of the armed oppositions movements during the previous regime and which was invited to attend the 'Peace and Democracy' conference convened in Addis Ababa in July 1991. It obtained two seats to represent the Sidaama in the Council of Representatives (COR) (Markakis, 2011: 285; Wolassa, 2016: 303-304).

The EPRDF was initially established by the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) and EPDM (Ethiopian People's Democratic movement) in 1989. It was composed of the TPLF and the

EPDM. Later on, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM) and the Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) joined the coalition. From the very beginning of the EPRDF coming into power, the TPLF was the dominant figure in the coalition of parties wherein to dictate the country's political scene. The TPLF initially struggled to liberate Tigray later transformed itself to headway to Ethiopian leadership in which it became the major power broker since the transitional period (Bahru, 2002: 265; Merera, 2011b: 39 and Wondwosen, 2008). Bahru (2002: 265) remarks reports in brief as:

...EPRDF was far from being a united front of national liberation movements waging a common struggle in equal partnership; the predominant position of the TPLF was beyond dispute. Moreover, although EPDM was mainly active in Amhara-speaking areas, it did not at this stage [at a time] present itself as an Amhara organization. The alliance with OPDO was also an arrangement of second resort, after negotiations to forge a front with OLF had collapsed. As for the EDORM, it barely survived the attainment of victory in 1991.

The Charter during Transitional period proclaimed the need to redress past injustices and declared exercise of self-determination rights of ethnic groups. Also, it claimed that the document recognized individual rights. The preamble of the Charter affirms the fact that:

...the military dictatorship was in essence, a continuation of the previous regimes and its demise marks the end of an era of subjugation and oppression thus starting a new chapter in Ethiopian history in which freedom, equal rights and self-determination of all the peoples shall be the governing principles of political, economic and social life and thereby contributing to the Ethiopian peoples and rescuing them from the centuries of subjugation and backwardness (Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia, 1991).

The Charter declares to restructure the state on ethnic basis to address democracy. It gives due emphasis to respect for human rights per se. The right to self-determination of ethnic groups both internal as well as external was a central part of the document. No sooner, contrary to its promise the ruling party EPRDF/TPLF tempted to consolidate power and narrow down the political space for the opposition (Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia, 1991; Merera 2011b).

The drive to hegemonic control by EPRDF/TPLF may be attributed to its control of the military power. As well, controlling significant number of seats in the Council of Representatives (COR) and transforming its army to the national army were instruments that laid the foundation for the regime to have significant control of political power (Mesfin, 2011; Merera, 2007b). Besides, the legacy of authoritarian political culture undermined democratization of the country (Merera, 2007b; Walle, 1993). International Crisis Group (2009: 4) comments on the same as:

The EPRDF's superior military and political authority and its determination to reshape Ethiopia on its own terms soon brought it into confrontation with its junior partners in the TGE. Particularly significant were the growing differences with the OLF between mid-1991 and the beginning of 1992 over whose forces should administer the Oromo-inhabited territories. Those differences, as well as competition between the OLF and the OPDO, escalated into clashes in which the TPLF routed the OLF.

It was reported that EPRDF was not committed to practice provisions accorded in the Transitional Charter and showed a little appetite to genuine democratization (Leenco, 1999). The most interesting issue was to consolidate its power at the expense of other partners in the interim-government. The power-politics was at play than rule of law in stark opposition to what it declares. This ambivalence has mounted pressure particularly up on the major armed opposition such as OLF to withdraw from the transitional government. Accordingly, OLF withdrew from the interim government in June 1992 (Ibid).

Later, the Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM) followed the OLF and left the Transitional Government (Wolassa, 2016; Leenco, 1999). SLM's withdrawal from the Transitional Government was as the result of the narrowing down of the political space for the opposition

political parties in uncontested bid of the EPRDF/TPLF to control power. Besides, the SLM considered that realizing its major goal, the right to self-determination of Sidaama, was farfetched (Ibid). Consequently, rule of law and democracy were obstructed by the hegemonic aspirations of the regime. Finally, when the ruling party EPRDF/TPLF started to persecute top officials of SLM, SLM leaders went into exile (Ibid). Seyoum further (1997a: 81) explained that:

Within a year's time, it became crystal clear that organizations outside the EPRDF found themselves on the margins of the political process. Uneasy coalition as it was, it was dissolved within a year when, after ceaseless pressure, open and systematic intimidation, major groups and ethnic representatives were ousted or barred from the transitional process before the regional elections.

Added to this, the promise of conducting all inclusive, free and fair election was undermined by the hegemonic aspiration of the ruling party to consolidate the political power. Thus, the international observers of the June 21, 1992 regional and local elections stated that the exclusion of major contenders of the power adversely affected the exercise of multi-party politics in the new regime. The EPRDF had more a relaxed political space to promote its own program that helped it to become a dominant political player since the establishment of the Transitional Government. Generally, elections failed to ensure multi-party politics and they were not free and fair (NDI, 1992).

According, to Lyons, so far elections in Ethiopia including the June 1992 could not change the electoral landscape in the country in the stark opposition to the promise of a new regime in power to usher a democratic era. The EPRDF's dominance continued to be unabated given its incumbency advantage that pushed the opposition to the margin of the power. Ultimately, the June 1992 and the subsequent elections failed to ensure pluralistic political system which is essential to democratic future of the country. EPRDF along with its affiliates specifically has won 96.6% in the June 21, 1992 Ethiopian Election (Lyons, 2010).

Ethiopia lacks democratic institutions that may enhance electoral democracy which is essential to democratize the country. Consequently, the June 21, 1992 elections of Ethiopia did not

proclaim the multi-party politics. The heyday of elections resulted in the withdrawal of the major contenders and unprecedented dominance of the EPRDF. The elections lacked competitiveness and was not ‘free and fair (Tafesse and Aklilu Abraham, 2007). The EPRDF won landslide victory in June 1992 election which became advantageous following the withdrawal of major opposition as well as it swiftly moved to the establishment of affiliate parties to represent chiefly their respective ethnic groups. However, the outcome of the election was condemned by both the contenders and international observers (Yacob, 2007).

To entrench its dominance, the regime further embarked on help to establish Peoples’ Democratic Organizations to counter parties which were contenders from the same constituency or else reverted to armed struggle. The ‘Peace and Stability Committees’ were essential to mobilize public to support the ruling party, EPRDF/TPLF (Markakis, 2011, Seyoum, 1997a and Vaughan, 2003). At a time, in the Sidaama, the ruling party EPRDF managed to establish Sidama Peoples’ Democratic Organization (SPDO) as a replica which was a common strategy used in different ethnic groups of the country. The replica is its affiliate than its contestant, SLM (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, CSO Head, Hawassa, 23 July 2015).

As reported by International Crisis Group (2009:4) ‘By the end of 1993 the Council of Representatives that ruled the TGE was largely reduced to the EPRDF and ethnic-based political parties of its making. While the TGE claimed multi-ethnic representation, it included no parties with differing views or policies on ethnically defined citizenship’. Details of the federal experiment, taking Sidaama as a case in point, are explained in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

The union of the previous five regions into a single region, SNNPR was condemned by the opposition; Southern Ethiopia People’s Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) as a top-down imposition from the center without the interest and will of the people concerned simply to ensure control. (Aalen, 2002; Vaughan, 2003). Southern Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Front (SEPDF) counters it as the merger was meant to effectively utilize resources in general (Ibid). Accordingly, the debate whether the merging of the southern region is feasible or not has divided the ruling party and the opposition. Previously, the Sidaama was reconstituted as region eight but later was given a zonal status in a new restructuring (Wolassa, 2016; Darota, 2015). Such restructuring was advocated by the officials of ruling party as ‘Unity’ most matters whereas the opposition like the SLM proclaims that Sidaama must be organized under its own region to

enhance its socio-economic and political development. The southern region whether it is organized by ethnicity or geography has been the bone of contention primarily by the ruling party and the opposition (Merera, 2011b; Wolassa, 2016 and Vaughan, 2003).

The 1995 FDRE constitution formally declared for the restructuring of the state in ethno-linguistic lines. Accordingly, nine territorial based regional states and the federal capital, Addis Ababa were established. The constitution, recognized the right to self-determination including secession of ‘nations, nationalities and peoples’ (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Despite having over 80 ethnic groups in the country, the constitution formally granted regional status to a few ethnic groups. Regional states were organized in the name of dominant ethnic group namely Oromia, Amhara, Somali and Tigray. Whereas, the SNNPR, Gambela and Benishangul Gumuz are multiethnic states (Assefa, 2007: 243-244; Merera, 2011b: 89-90). The Ethiopia constitutional aspiration of providing every ‘Nation, Nationality and People’ the right to self-government even including independence was unattainable given economic and political reasons. Despite this, there have been demands particularly in the Southern region to remake a status. The Sidaama quest for regional statehood has been part and parcel of this claim. The current study shall examine it in-depth in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

4.2 The Ethiopian Federal System: Principles and Structures

This part of the dissertation tries to investigate the need for restructuring of the Ethiopian state following the change of regime in the post-1991 period and the debate surrounds it. Basically, the ethno-linguistic federalism of Ethiopia has been challenged at the outset by the opponents and appreciated by its advocates including the ruling party to overcome the national ills (Assefa, 2007; Merera, 2011b). Accordingly, this part briefly overviews the rationale behind introducing ethnic based federalism in the country and how it has addressed ‘national Question’.

Following the victory over the Derg for the most part by the ethno-nationalist forces, ethnicity became an organizing principle of the state. In the process, the multinational parties failed to mobilize effectively since the 1980s and post-1991 period. Even the existing parties remained to urban constituencies where in the large part of the rural Ethiopia ethnic-based parties have begun to get prominence. Merera (2011b:41) contends that:

The victory of the EPLF and TPLF not only sealed the fate of the military regime which mis-ruled and deranged the country for seventeen years, at least for the time being it also ensured the supremacy of the ethnic movements over multi-ethnic political forces. This is partly the result of conscious effort by the TPLF, which consciously made sure that the multi-ethnic political groups were marginalized and the various ethnic groups are either encouraged or forced to be mobilized according to the image of the TPLF.

There has been differing views with regard to the formation of federal system in the country. Ethiopia is in essence ‘holding-together’ type of federal system in which the previously unitary form of state was restructured in federal system. Nonetheless, either based on constitutional provisions or from its practice different studies identify the country in coming together, holding together or in different categories. Assefa (2007: 217) indicates ‘In terms of origin, while some contend that it is a ‘coming together’ federation, the Ethiopian federation as it appears on text reflects both aspects of ‘coming together’ and ‘holding together.’

Accordingly, the preamble of the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE Constitution, 1995) clearly attests the will of ‘Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ of Ethiopia to establish a political union and uphold it. The same holds true for the 2001 Revised Constitution of the Southern ‘Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State Constitution. In conformity to this fact, Turton (2006: 18) underlines that ‘The Ethiopian Constitution, as noted earlier, presents itself as the result of a bargain, freely entered into by the “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples” of Ethiopia’. This implies that Ethiopian federation is a ‘coming-together type’ where every ‘Nation, Nationalities and Peoples’ has been committed to forge the federal system.

Assefa (2007: 218-219), on the one hand, explains the fact that the federal system of Ethiopia is ‘holding together’ type. The previous unitary state claimed to devolve power to the units that constitute the federation. On the other hand, the Ethiopian federal system is considered as putting together type where the ruling party has wielding power to command state apparatus that has given overriding power to the national government and as well as has strong presence in different units of federation through member political parties or its affiliate parties (Keller, 2002). Stepan (1999: 22) defines it as “‘putting-together” federalism, a heavily coercive effort by

a nondemocratic centralizing power to put together a multinational state, some of the components of which had previously been independent states. The USSR was an example of this type of federalism’.

Still, some have gone to state that Ethiopia’s federal system in practice depicts ‘withholding’ kind as the federal government stands too reluctant to genuinely devolve power to sub-national levels of governments. In this regard, Ghai (2000: 11) writes:

Ethnically based federations or regional autonomies have different structures and orientations from federations like Australia or the United States. Naturally, ethnic federations emphasize diversity and multiplicity of values. Such federations are more likely to be the result of devolution or disaggregation, as in Canada, India, Spain, Papua New Guinea and Ethiopia. Because they start with a centralized structure and because there is unease about the political implications of devolution, national powers tend to be dominant and not infrequently to have the power to suspend regional governments.

The restructuring of the Ethiopian state along ethno-linguistic lines has led to contending views. The proponents justify this on the ground that the ethnic federalism aims at rectifying the ‘national oppression’ salvaging the country from disintegration (Aalen, 2002: 47; Mesfin, 2011). The federalization has been anchored in establishing units that would exercise self-rule and simultaneously will have fair representation and participation at shared rule (Ibid).

On the contrary, the opponents hold the view that recognition of ethnic federalism in the Ethiopian context undermines loyalty to the state in which different peoples of Ethiopia were participated in a ‘nation-building’ project. During the time there was significant number of population movement to different parts of the country that resulted in intermarriage and effective intermingling of the people. According to the view of the opponents, the post-1991 restructuring of Ethiopian state was based on ethnicity that has been a threat to the national integration (Semegn, 2007; Tesfaye, 2002). Despite the argument of the opponents, Ethiopia adopted ethnic federalism anchored on principles borrowed from Stalin’s theory of nationalities. Ethnicization in the case of Eastern Europe resulted in disintegration of the then federation such as the USSR,

Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Mostly, lack of democracy has adversely affected the existence of genuine federalism in Ethiopia unlike the Western counterparts. Besides, the hegemonic role of one-party rule is a challenge to democratization in the country (Kymlicka, 2006:54).

Semegn argues that ‘national identity and unity’ are being devoured by the ethnicization project, what he calls ‘veiled tribalism’ of EPRDF. He further argues even if the system becomes archaic to serve a multinational society in the 21st century, the regime still vigorously claims that federalism is its *modus vivendi* to address question of ‘Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ of Ethiopia (2007).

It is a fact that Ethiopia Ethnic based federalism has partly addressed the past injustice and demands of the cultural and linguistic autonomy. It has nevertheless resulted in conflict of various kind particularly boundary making and identity-based conflicts. And conflict over access to power and resources in a new structure of the state by different political entrepreneurs are also common challenges to the state. Generally, the federal system has partly contributed to the recognition of linguistic and cultural rights far from the unitary state that had denied any room for the recognition of diversity. Nonetheless, rights enshrined in the constitution are not by and large implemented (Tsegaye, 2010a; Asnake, 2013 and Interview, academician, Hawassa, 20 March, 2015).

The ethnic federal system suffered exhibited poor constitutionalism and lack of democracy (Asnake, 2009). Inter-ethnic relations have been tense as a result of differences over boundaries of ethnically constituted administrative units and controversies over sharing of resources and levels of autonomous self administrative units provided to ethnic groups. Tensions and conflicts over these issues appear to be accentuated by political entrepreneurs who are said to be the most beneficiaries of the resource sharing that the federal system brings about (Ibid). Aregawi contends that:

The realization of the pitfalls accompanying ethnic politics may, however, lead the nation eventually to forge a rational design where diversity becomes a more balanced building block of wider unity in a system that combines respect for the facts of diversity and the politico-economic needs for a workable unifying framework in a less ethnic

federal form that would discourage political manipulation of ethnicity (2008: 384).

Besides, the attempt to promote ethnic rights did not bode well for citizenship rights. In the process, there were people who were neither willing nor able to identify themselves as members of entitled 'indigenous' ethnic groups. The political scene has been predominated by the indigenous groups where exogenous groups have limited opportunity to equitable representation and sharing of resources (Selassie, 2003; Kidane, 1997).

The instrumentalization of ethnicity is observed in most instances where political entrepreneurs contest for power and resources. This polarizes inter-ethnic relations and undermines the effort to strengthen national unity. Re-negotiation of identity and statehood are the other issues that undermine the stability of sub-national units (Alem, 2003; Asnake, 2011). Moreover, the heavy dependence of sub national governments for their political and economic viability on the centre and weak human rights protection and promotion, limited constitutionalism and lack of democracy have made the federal practice ineffective (Ibid).

Thus, the most common challenge has been competing ethnic nationalism overrides multi-ethnic politics which is essential to forge unity of the country if it tailored in a democratic federal system. Concerning different perspectives of federalism as per discussed above Shapiro (1995: 123) is summarized below:

Although there are many who see federalism as the best alternative to civil war among conflicting groups who loathe each other for nationalistic, tribal, religious, or racial reasons- and indeed, some form of federation may be the last, best hope for survival in many parts of the world- others have argued forcefully that the stronger the forces of ethnicity (or other similar factors) within each unit in a federal system, the less chance the federation itself has of surviving and prospering as a political entity: the centrifugal forces are simply too great.

As stated now and then, the Ethiopian federal experiment has experienced various challenges. Most importantly, there has been ethnic nationalism for self-determination and competition for fair share of power and resources. The current pace of federalization, however, reveals that the country has been sluggish to ensure democratic federal system (Assefa, 2007; Wolassa, 2016).

Further, the Ethiopian federal system did not emerge from the will of population of the constituent units; instead it was top-down imposition architect by the ruling elite (Asnake, 2009). It could not effectively ensure the demands for justice, equality and freedom due to it has failed to get the consent of the wider population during its design (Cohen, 1995:165; Kymlicka, 2006: 58). It is the ruling elite who forerun the federal experiment at locality along with loyalists to the national government. The public has a little stake particularly in decision making as well a little to benefit from the system. Moreover, a different treatment of some groups and the incorporation of the right of secession in the national constitution would be a challenge to the viability of the federal system (Ibid).

The FDRE Constitution Article 46 (2) asserts ‘states shall be delimited on the basis of the settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the people concerned’ (FDRE Constitution, 1995). The inclusion particularly the secession clause has become debatable. Also, the incorporation of secession clause is said to be the most radical measure the Ethiopian government has taken. Accordingly, Vaughan drawing lesson from previous ethnic based federal experiments (and the other) says ‘ethnicization’ political scene to the extent of inclusion of the secession clause in Ethiopia is a risky business. While in the face of integration attempt falls apart in the former Yugoslavia and in the midst of Pan-Somalia, suggesting ‘ethnic-line’ federalism seems ill-advised venture. As well, at global level ‘ethnicizing-politics’ is in hot debate assessing multi-ethnic societies effort to strike a balance ‘Unity in diversity’ (Vaughan, 2003: 15).

On the other hand, in the view of Berhanu although the ethno-linguistic arrangement had been tragic in the former USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, to the opposite the long standing multiethnic mature federations such as Switzerland and India exemplify the fact that ethnic based federalism not always leads to disintegration (Berhanu, 2007: 33-34). Similarly, Assefa argues that what led the former communist federation to fragmentation had not been the fact that they were ethnic; instead poor institutionalization that was characterized by rigorous centralization

and poor culture of democracy-what he refers to ‘federation in form than in operation’ that left then ‘ethno-nationalist’ movement with a little choice, except to go away from the union. Conversely, the experience of Switzerland and India has shown so far the successful multiethnic federal experiment that challenges the ‘Balkanization’ thesis (Assefa, 2006: 137-138).

Regardless of the debate, Ethiopia follows the majoritarian parliamentary system (Asnake, 2009). At federal level, there have been two chambers namely the House of Peoples’ Representatives (Lower House) and the House of the Federation (Upper House). The House of Peoples’ Representatives (HOPR) has the power of legislation in its jurisdiction. Whereas, the House of the Federation (HOF) has no legislative power but interprets the constitution and entrusted with power of revenue sharing and determines the subsidy member states receive from the center (Solomon, 2016).

Meanwhile, the Ethiopia experiments ethnic based federalism with a right to self-determination to the extent of secession for Nation, Nationality and People (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Accordingly, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are represented in the House of the Federation (HoF). It is a political organ with unusual role of interpretation of the constitution (FDRE Constitution, 1995; Asnake, 2009).

Interestingly, the HoF where ‘Nations, Nationalities and peoples’ are represented has no law-making function. This has provided a room for both national government and states to assume sole responsibility of making laws and policies through legislation of their respective legislative council (FDRE Constitution, 1995; Zemelak, 2014: 92). Accordingly, unlike the experience of other federations, Ethiopia uniquely has a unicameral legislative body (Assefa, 2007). This may provide a leeway for unprecedented intervention by the federal government and dwarfs collective decision making over issues of a common concern in a shared rule. The regional states have been expected to execute national laws and policies than have a stake to legislate at national level that may further undermine their self-rule (Kalkidan, 2010). Mesfin contends that the HoF can play a pivotal role in fostering inter-ethnic relations and limit the intervention by the national government in the regional affairs. It can also work to avoid unfair treatment of while allocating budget subsidy to the regional states (Mesfin, 2011: 152). Exceptionally to other federal countries experience the House of the federation in Ethiopia is in charge of constitutional

interpretation and umpiring the federal system (Abebe, 2013: 59-60). Assefa (2007: 228) describes:

As far as the law-making function at federal level is concerned, the Ethiopian constitution leaves it solely to the lower house. The states and consequently the ethno-linguistic groups that constitute the states have no say on those powers reserved to the federal government. If federations are strictly considered to be based on the principle of shared-rule and self-rule in the sense of requiring the participation of the states at the center, the Ethiopian federation departs from it significantly. A genuine federation not only guarantees autonomy to the states but also incorporates the states in the central decision-making process. In this regard one can state that the constitution fails to protect the less populous states which it claims to empower and protect.

4.2.1 The Ethiopian Practice Federalism

The constitutional commission that drafted the FDRE Constitution did not effectively consult the contending political parties, social movements and public at large during the drafting of the Constitution (Assefa, 2007; Merera, 2003). This paved a way for effective control of power by the EPRDF through a principle of ‘democratic centralism’ – in the orientation of Marxist/Leninist ideologies with a little distinction of the state and party (Leenco, 1999; Karat, 2010).

Tsegaye argues that the making of the constitution failed to secure legitimacy from the concerned stakeholders. Because of this, the constitution did not take into account the egalitarian indigenous political culture of rational communication and reconciliation of communities when it deals with dissenting views, peaceful political opposition and civil society (Tsegaye, 2010b). Weak constitutionalism also discredited the attempt to ensure legitimacy. Particularly, the fusion of legislative and executive branches of the government, as well as absence of check and balances deteriorated the hope of enhancing culture of democracy. The country has done little in employing ‘redemptive constitutional practice’, which helps to some extent to fill gap of public legislation and endorsement of a constitution. The indigenous leadership basically accountable to

the public has been eroded by accountability upward in less accord to the constitution (Abebe, 2013; Tsegaye, 2010b).

Consequently, federalism and centralized ruling party structure have become incongruent. In this realm, it is not uncommon to see top-down imposition of centrally designed policies. Those who oppose such practices may be labeled as ‘the few, anti-peace and anti-democratic forces’ (Aalen, 2002; Data, Summer/Fall 2005-2006: 147).

The Federal Constitution of Ethiopia declares ‘member states in the federation shall have equal rights and powers’ as per Article 47 (4) (FDRE Constitution, 1995). In practice, the national government has assumed hegemonic role through its doctrine of ‘democratic centralized decision making’ that has given the national government leverage to dictate the fate of the country whereby the states compelled to follow centrally designed policies and strategies instead of implementing their own policies and strategies. Therefore, states are expected to be accountable to the party in power than to the people. In the country it is difficult to differentiate party and the state which adversely affects genuine practice of federalism (Aalen, 2002: 85).

Similarly, Merera contends that ‘revolutionary democracy’ brand of ideology which the ruling party espouses serves dual but contradictory purposes. On the one hand, it pretends to liberal democracy in terms of constitutional provisions. On the other hand, it enhances democratic centralism labeled on Marxist-Leninist ideology which is the life line of the ruling party that in turn overshadows what is constituted in the constitution (Merera, 2011b: 68).

In similar logic, Zemelak states that though the constitution of Ethiopia affirms the fact that regional states have the right to establish local level governments and design their own policies and strategies depending up on reality on ground. In practice, they are subordinate to the decision of the center. The democratic centralism principle of the ruling party predominates all levels of government where the regional states usually implements the central designed policies and strategies contradictory to what the constitution stipulates (Zemelak, 2014: 91). Aalen (2002: 85) specifically maintains that:

The centralized party structure of the EPRDF is clearly contradictory to the provisions of the federal and regional constitutions, which give these levels the right to self-administration. It promotes upward

accountability to the party organs above rather than downward accountability to the people of the region, woreda and kebele. The constitutional rights for the regions to formulate and implement plans and policies are severely diminished by the fact that the regional governments, which are all under the EPRDF's hegemony, follow the centrally designed policies and five year plans.

The Ethiopian federal experiment has been subsumed by consolidating the hegemonic power of the ruling party EPRDF/TPLF at the expense of ensuring genuine federation and sovereign power for 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples'. In this, the envisioned goal of ensuring democratic and federal system has been unlikely to attain in the near future. Unlikely to the spirit of the constitution and the federal 'contract' the regime in power less likely effect change in subsequent control of axis of national power by elites most commonly from the center (Leenco, 1999: 209- 210; Merera, 2003: 137-138). Meanwhile, when Hailemariam Dessalegn was the Prime Minister from one of the peripheries he was expected at least to improve inter-ethnic relations and better ensure unity of the country. However, he assumed a legacy to implement ideals of the regime in power which challenged the political transformation in the country. Ultimately, it led to public protest, which brought about political change where he left for the political office (Wolassa, 2016; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

System for the Intervention of the Federal Government in the Regions Proclamation No.359/2003 has given mandate for the national government to intervene in the regional affairs when state administration request the intervention to arrest the deteriorating security situation to defend the constitutional order. The joint session of the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of the Federation can authorize intervention in the case of human rights violation. Moreover, the House of the Federation also entrusted with the power to order the intervention of the federal government when any member state acts against the constitution (Proclamation No.359/2003 of Ethiopia).

Nonetheless, Kalkidan argues that there has been an overwhelming exercise of power by the federal government including in regional affairs. Specifically, System for the Intervention of the Federal Government in the Regions Proclamation No.359/2003 has enabled the national government to entrench effective control, which makes certain its dominance. Sometimes, the

federal government intervenes to suppress genuine public demands (Kalkidan, 2010). Dereje (2006: 215) comprehends that:

The primary reason why the federal experiment is faltering is that the post-1991 political order has produced new and insecure political minorities, and the political actors have failed to strike a political bargain and articulate a regional interest. Instead, they have sought to capture fragments of the regional state and its institutions. In the vent, they have increasingly recognized and exploited the rationality of violence in the politics of group entitlement in what he calls new relations of dominance.

Taking advantage of its law-making rights conferred on the constitution, the federal government further promulgates different proclamations and policies that further strengthen its dominance. The ruling party, EPRDF assumed unbridled exercise of power at national level through coalition of parties such as the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Parties other than these were administered by the affiliate parties to the EPRDF that include the Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP), the Somali Peoples Democratic Party (SPDP), the Gambella People's Unity Democratic Movement (GPUDM), the Benishangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front (BPDUF) and the Harari National League (HNL) (Aalen, 2002; International Crisis Group, 2009 and Zemelak, 2014). These parties worked to make real the hegemonic aspiration of the EPRDF with little contestation to it. This provided leverage to the ruling party to set out what it feels best serves the country with little participation of those regions in national law-making process. Despite states in the federation right constitutional have to make laws, policies and strategies, instead they were frequently seen implementing national laws, policies and development plans in anemic role to their makings in reversal to self-rule (International Crisis Group, 2009).

More recently, as part of its reform process EPRDF dissolved its member parties and formed Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP) which is believed to enhance national prosperity and usher an era of peace, development and democracy. At the present, the EPP has transformed the previous affiliate parties to become members equally with previously member parties in the EPRDF

coalition (Ethiopia insight, 2019). Following this, the dominant role of TPLF in the coalition was on decline and gradually retreated from the Prosperity Party. Currently, tensions grew between the TPLF and the federal government ultimately culminated in armed confrontation (The Guardian, 2020).

Meanwhile, EPRDF had operated in broader geographic domain wherein the party structure was indistinct to administrative structure of the state. Before the reform it was usual that ethno-linguistic parties were largely established in support of primarily the TPLF and later by the EPRDF akin much more to the ruling party than the very people they claim to represent. Attempt to consolidate strong center has made the decentralization ineffective (Assefa, 2007; Merera, 2011b). For Abbink (2011:602) ‘The federal order is a very complex structure. This is evident from the Constitution, the many additional laws and proclamations issued since 1994, and the institutional layers established top-down. It has in actual practice led to the emphatic presence and interference of the federal government via the ruling party and its officers/employees (cadres) to create an effective governance structure and monitor or sanction “deviations”’.

More specifically, the principle of ‘democratic centralism’ anchored in the EPRDF in stark opposite to the rhetoric of democratization and constitutionalism. Ethiopia is likely comes in the classes of pretend democracies according to Dominique E. Uwizeyimana (2012) prototype of political regimes. During the EPRDF regime the country probably in disguise of liberal democracy geared towards as an avenue in international relations particularly persuading the western powers and subsequent elections stamp the stay in power of EPRDF for over two decades (Merera, 2011a; Záhorkík, 2011). Merera further writes as:

Sadly, the democratic upsurge of the 1974 which ended an out-of-date autocracy that used to claim the ‘mandate of heaven’ and promised a new era of revolution and prosperity quickly ended in a bloody military interlude that decimated the cream of one dynamic generation. The change of regime in 1991 and the charter that followed it promised yet another era of peace and prosperity by creating a nation state of equals and multi-party democracy. Once again, much of the promise made has become empty and consequently, the country and its

people continue to wallow under what seems to be an all-round crisis that has led millions to despair and hopelessness (Merera, 2011b: 151).

The 2005 election of Ethiopia was remarkable in its attempt to open political space. At the time, Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia was broadly representing the southern region contest in election which was competitive. As well, the major opposition like Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) obtained a significant number of seats. When the oppositions appealed to vote-rigging, the government as well claimed the same in some constituency it contested. Meantime, the opposition preferred to boycott the parliament as they claimed votes were rigged by the ruling party. Finally, the election could not ensure political pluralism in the country, in the opposite; the ruling party controlled a significant number of seats with a little change in political landscape. Far from ensure a multi-party democracy the incidence at the end led to post-election violence culminated in detention of leaders and members of the opposition parties (Lyons, 2010).

Therefore, the promise of decentralization became rhetoric in which the regime becomes adamant to its consolidation of power like its predecessors. Consequently, decentralization has not geared towards the local autonomy in which public participation simply meant to approve the decision of the ruling party that usually leads to undemocratic governance (Merera, 2007a). The political space for peaceful opposition has been narrowed-down where there is intolerance to divergent interests that provide a chance for alternative policies. The politics of neo-patrimonialism has undermined equitable access to social services and socio-economic benefits by the citizenry. Control has remained a defining feature of the regime (Abbink, 2009). The federal experiment has exerted some effort to enhance cultural and linguistic rights. Nonetheless, it could not equally address particularly a right to self-determination to the extent of secession for over 80 ethnic groups in the country (Abbink, 2011). Thus, the federal experiment of Ethiopia has gone inverse to the doctrine of republican where an electorate has a supreme power in participatory democracy to elect for its representative (Ibid).

Merera further explains that regarding rule of game of democratization and decentralization of the country no genuine consultation was made and reached at negotiation by leaders of communities or else organized forces on behalf of these communities (Merera, 2007a). On the top of this, he argues the policy making process of the regime is based on democratic centralism,

a central element in Marxist-Leninist praxis in which party interest matters the most in case it contradicts with public interest. This has adversely affected the local autonomy and genuine public participation that are essential for democratization and decentralization. The regional states normally exert effort to implement what has been decided at the center and less likely responsive to the will of the people (Ibid).

Ethiopia requires genuine institutional reform independent of partisan politics. Democracy and genuine federalism cannot be achieved in contemporary institutionalization of the state that has given utmost leverage to ruling party and mistreats its contenders (Aalen, 2006; Merera, 2011b). The Ethiopian state failed with ‘nation-building’ project, now attempting to build ‘Unity in diversity’ in the current regime. The over two decades and half experiment yet not ensure effectively building unity without jeopardizing diversity. Still, there have been autonomy quests by different ethnic groups simultaneously concern to have unity of the federation. The structure that has tailored to ensure multinational nature of the Ethiopian people and unity of state has been bewildered so far. This calls for a new restructuring of the state once again to effectively accommodate diversity and forge the unity of the country.

Despite this, the ruling party EPRDF vowed to ensure democracy and development simultaneously in the country through its ‘Democratic Developmental State’. At this juncture, let us briefly look at whether ‘Democratic Developmental state’ of Ethiopia variant may help to empower the lower levels of the government unlikely to the dominant role of national government both in democratization and the development of country. Therefore, here this study examines whether ensuring both democracy and development at a time was attainable in the country.

The attempt of establishing ‘Democratic’ developmental state in Ethiopia was drawing lesson from the experience of Asian Tiger economy such as Korea and Taiwan to bring about national development through Growth and Transformational Plan (GTP) set out at different stages like GTP1 and GTP2. Accordingly, Ethiopia strived to achieve development and democracy simultaneously. There were host of factors that may weaken the success of democratic developmental state of Ethiopia that include weak institutionalization, clientelism, inability to build competent bureaucracy and lack of public legitimacy (Abebe, 2013: 71-74; Samuel, 2011:34 and Randall, 2007).

The practice so far revealed that the democratic developmental state of Ethiopia brought about a little change in ideals of ruling party. Since it endeavors to ensure development forerun by the government in the selected sector of the economy, it seems it gave an impetus for a further consolidation of power by the government. Besides, the twin goal of ensuring democracy and development was overshadowed by one-party dominance in disguise of multi-party. The country, therefore less likely attained democratization and constitutionalism which help it realize its development as major goals of the state both at home and abroad (Ibid).

This development model in Ethiopia, which promised both development and democracy, helped the national government had remained to be a dominant actor in which the states were supposed to follow the development plans of the national government usually decided at the center (International Crisis Group, 2009).

The Ethiopia's path of development justified in the doctrine of 'democratic developmental state'. In effect, Ethiopia formulated 'the growth and transformational plan' that envisioned to make the country a middle income. For this cause Ethiopia set long-term vision as 'To become a country where democratic rule, good governance and social justice reigns, upon the involvement and free will of its people; and once extricating itself from poverty and becomes a middle-income economy' (FDRE GTP, 2010: 7). What was constituted in the vision part was heavily drawn from major components of development which essentially include economic growth to secure food and other requirements for the population; social justice to reduce inequality; employment as a means of earning an income but, as well, because of its ethical and social value; participation as political involvement and social sharing; and independence as freedom from external domination (Wolassa, 2016).

Ethiopia is in the face of maladministration that commonly manifested lack of good governance, poor democracy culture and limited constitutionalism which is less likely to achieve its claimed vision. Many argue that developing countries like Ethiopia need to have democracy to boost their development. But there has been a counter argument that proposes development should precede democracy. The poor performance of a country in democracy and good governance undermined the success of 'democratic developmental state' that is 'development with democracy' (UNDP, 2012; Adejumobi, 2000). Ethiopia, despite its promise of realizing both democracy and

development at a time, it was predominately a developmental state than democratic developmental state (Fesseha and Abatewold, 2017).

Nevertheless, the democracy and development nexus has remained quite controversial. On the one hand, it is argued that democracy is essential for economic development. Conversely, it is stated that authoritarian regimes economic boost reveals the fact that countries develop without democracy. Accordingly, the debate concerning the relationship of democracy and development and whether democracy is an end itself has continued (Adejumobi, 2000).

Democratic developmental states often undermine self-administration rights of their regions. Obviously, national governments impose decisions made at the center and member states had no room to effectively participate in the decision-making. Consequently, the democratic developmental ideology was incongruent to the federal system in the country (Jebena, 2015). The following sub- section of the dissertation discusses how decentralization process and the fiscal federalism of Ethiopia have impacted local socio-economic development in the country.

4.2.2 Fiscal Federalism and Decentralization in Ethiopia

Fiscal federalism basically deals with the constitutional allocation of expenditure responsibilities and revenue raising power. It in turn attempts to overcome the vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances through the central government provides grant (Solomon, 2008).

In federations, sub-national governments have asymmetry in terms of natural resources endowment and capacity to raise revenue. Accordingly, the distribution of revenue as per constitution between the regions leads to difference in their financial capacity (Assefa, 2007; Solomon, 2008). To settle constitutionally assumed responsibilities regions require inter-governmental fiscal transfers. This calls for adjusting both vertical and horizontal imbalances through provision of subsidy (Solomon, 2008).

Most commonly, fiscal asymmetry in the federation arise from differences in the level of development and natural resources endowment. Accordingly, grant transfer is concerned mainly with addressing the vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances (Assefa, 2007). Thus, member states are heavily dependent on the transfers from the center. However, for the most part unconditional grant transfers particularly in Ethiopia give leverage for states to settle their expenditure responsibilities based on their priorities (Ibid). In Ethiopia, the fiscal regime has

been evolved through time. The HOF is in charge of setting criteria to allocation of subsidy that states receive from the center. But the criteria differ from time to time. It varies from the early year focus on 'war torn' areas to maintain the unity of the state to claims to have fair share from the 'national cake' by different ethnic groups in the country (Ibid). Different scholars (Asnake, 2009; Markakis, 2011) noted the higher administrative hierarchy the better access to subsidy from the federal government in Ethiopia. Similarly, in Ethiopia different ethnic groups have requested for a higher administrative hierarchy to have better access to subsidy from the center. According to (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2019) the Sidaama quest for regional statehood, among others, aimed at proportional share from the national coffers.

In Ethiopia, the House of the Federation (HoF) entrusted according to Article 62 (7) to 'Determine the division of revenues derived from joint Federal and State tax sources and the subsidies that the Federal Government may provide to the states. Broadly speaking, decentralization is hoped to enhance public participation and self- government of units. The ultimate purpose of such a process is ensuring development and equitable share of resources. The lower levels of government given weak revenue generation and incapacity to make autonomous decision could not achieve the required level of development.

Therefore, local governments could not generate revenue that matches to their expenditure obligations. Though the constitutions acclaim the devolution of authority; however, the actual practice reveals that lower level of the government is predominated by the central designed policies and plans in opposite accord to decentralization. Consequently, the local initiatives essential to development and democratic public decision making have been less likely promoted. At the same time, lower levels of the government depend on grants from the center and the national government sets standard concerning the expenditures pattern of units (Keller, 2002).

Principally, the exiting imbalances both vertical and horizontal made the units in federation asymmetrical. Hence, the level of development varies from state to state and a given local government to another. The units in federation could not generate adequate revenue to finance their assigned responsibilities. There is significant difference between capacities to generate revenue from one region to the other. The federal government raises substantial amount of revenue up on which regional states will have budget subsidy from the center (Aalen, 2002). This hurdles the effort of local government autonomously buttress their development that

resulted in inadequate development of infrastructure, limited employment and unfair share of resource. Besides, lack of good governance and weak institutionalism provided a little room for the local initiatives which is the kernel of bottom-up approach to development (Wolassa, 2016).

To ensure autonomous sub-national governments they should have adequate revenue raising capacity to finance their constitutional assigned responsibilities. However, states in Ethiopia have not been capable of financing their responsibilities by themselves. Consequently, they have been dependent up on the grants from the center to settle obligations they assume. More specifically, nearly 80% of their budget in the form of transfer comes from the center (Ibid, 156). Also, the political system is predominated by ‘democratic centralized decision making’ and tight control in antithesis to federalism, in Ethiopia states have remained too weak to raise adequate revenue to finance their programs that further made them political dependent on the national government (Interview, non-Sidaama, Hawassa, 8 August, 2015; Wolassa, 2016).

Basically, the conditional and unconditional grant transfers affect the quality of autonomy differently. In the case of unconditional grant transfer states have more leverage to use funds for the priorities to be set by themselves. Whereas, the conditional grants will be used based on the criteria was set by the national government (Assefa, 2007: 160-161). Despite states have access to the multiple sources of revenue as well to concurrent sources of revenue, nonetheless, the federal government has lucrative source of revenue (Wolassa, 2016: 156 and Aalen, 2002:74-75).

It is commonly known that units in almost all federations have faced problem of financial autonomy since most of them depend on subsidy from the center. However, the unconditional grant transfer in Ethiopia likely expected to ameliorate the fiscal problem of the states in the federation (Assefa, 2007).

It is understood that subnational governments are the main actors in decentralization process supposed to significantly contribute in the development of their respective areas. States are also expected to take responsibility to implement nationally assigned obligations of course justified on the ground of the law of the land. Fulfilling such responsibilities requires adequate resources and institutional capacity. However, in most cases sub national units could have not been in command. Their continued dependency on the center has left them in a limited margin of pursuing

local development initiatives that may better garner sustainable development. Besides, subnational governments both political and economic dependence on the center undermines them to enjoy their constitutional assigned autonomy (Ibid).

In this regard, states and local governments have been found in most of the time implementing nationally designed policies and strategies. This may narrow-down chances for local specificity that the federal constitution, 1995 stipulates as per Article 52 (2c) ‘To formulate and execute economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans of the state’. Even if states manage to do so they have no necessary resources to effectively realize their anticipated development goals. Accordingly, public service delivery has become inefficient in many regards. The principal reasons include lack of resource and institutional incapacity (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Similarly, Abbink remarks the Ethiopian decentralization in the following way:

Part of the federal structure is the aim of decentralization and devolution of power and decision making to the ethno-regions: regarding budget, revenue collection, self-administration, the judiciary, and local development planning. This programme of decentralization has had limited results over the past two decades, but it can be seen in the adoption of the locally dominant languages for administrative purposes and the staffing of the new bureaucracy by ethnic locals. A great problem is always said to be “the lack of capacity”, but the more important one has been that of corruption and nepotism (Abbink, 2011: 601).

However, the regional states have been marked by limited sources of revenue and disparity in socio-economic development which would not have abled them to exercise power autonomously to boost their development. The drive to strong center has exerted limited effort in a way out to have self-governing states. The taxation system for example, deepens the dependency of the regional states on grants from the center. The federal government has still retained monopoly of revenue raising power (Aalen, 2002: 81; Keller, 2002:42-45). In the same token, Wolassa substantiates in glaring disparity what is provided by the constitution, the sub-units in Ethiopia have profoundly depend on the national government. This has limited the autonomous functioning of the sub-national governments. It is estimated that nearly 80% of the budget of

those states come from the center to be channeled not only as capital but also recurrent budget (2016: 156-157).

Even those subnational governments relatively better generate revenue locally, cities like Addis Ababa may not be able to effectively address the socio-economic needs of its population. Rectifying fiscal imbalance may help the lower level of governments to realize power and functions assigned to them constitutional and the grant transfer should be tailored in away better enhance socio-economic needs of the constituency (Abu, 2013).

The situations of some of the regional states best explain the weakness of the federation to establish competitive units. States like Somali, Afar, Gambela and Benishangul-Gumuz have been poor in socio-economic development in relatively to other regional states that constitute the federation (Abbink, 2011; Aalen, 2002). This made the effort to calibrate them with relatively developed states in federation arduous. It is common to see the pivotal role of the federal government plays in those regions in terms of assisting them and building up their capacity previously through the Department of Regional affairs and currently by the Ministry of Federal Affairs.

However, such intervention has worked to undermine the practice of self-rule that is integral part of the constitution. Previously marginalized and in a current regime heavily dependent on the center those regions could not govern their public autonomously given different reasons the most common include capacity problem, resource shortage and surveillance by the federal government. On this ground, the socio-economic development in these regions in particular and other regions in general has not been ensured at the level that equitable benefits the public at large (Ibid).

The asymmetry within the Ethiopian federation has been resulted in differing capacity to exercise the autonomy by a respective unit. Moreover, the national government dominating the policy process has an adverse effect on units to embark on implementing what is decided at the center. Especially, the ‘democratic centralized decision making’ principle of the ruling party has overshadowed autonomous operation of states stipulated in the constitution (Watts, 2008:48).

To overcome the fiscal imbalance across constituents of federation the federal government of Ethiopia has adopted equity as essential element in revenue sharing at the center. Conversely, the

equity based budget subsidy focuses a little on efficiency. Accordingly, it has become not an easy to overcome both the vertical and horizontal imbalances through such a mechanism (Ghebrehiwet, 2015).

Attempts have been made to amend the federal grant transfer formula from time to time. However, the decentralization drive which empowered especially *woreda* level of the government since 2002/3 brought challenges to ensure fiscal autonomy by the local level of government in the face of ever increasing appetite for financial resource for both recurrent and capital budgets. There are several problems facing the grant transfer. Firstly, it is not certain how much the federal government transfers in the form of grants. Secondly, unconditional grant may be manipulated at different level of the government while prioritizing preferences. Mainly, public preferences may be less likely articulated when officials' interest prevail. Thirdly, lack of equity and anti-poverty reduction consideration may malaise the fiscal system in the country (Abu, 2013).

The Ethiopian government has been changing grant transfer formula to improve fiscal inequality at different point in time. Given the host of factors including lack of capacity of states to generate adequate revenue, mismatches of the expenditure responsibilities of the lower levels of the government to the fiscal resource at their disposal, and poor culture of prioritizing public preferences have been major drawbacks to the fiscal autonomy of mostly states. Consequently, the fiscal formula has been contested mainly equity versus efficiency (Ghebrehiwet, 2015; Abu, 2013).

The famous Sidaama Economist Wolassa contends that the fiscal system in Ethiopia has been pragmatic. In terms of per capita in 2011/12 fiscal year, for instance, the Harari region received 1601 Birr while the other the largest populous states like the Oromia received 374.90 Birr, Amahara, 424.20 Birr and the Southern region 414.07 Birr each. This implies that Sidaama has received a meager in the same fiscal year (Wolassa, 2016: 156- 157). In the opposite, Assefa argues the most populated states have been become influential in the House of Federation (HoF) to get the most shares out of budget subsidy and shared revenue the federal government provides to them.

As a result, in fiscal allocation formula the weight for population size has increased from time to time. At a time, population size weighs 65% in an over double fold increase from the previous 30%. Whereas the states relatively small in population size have been receiving the small proportion compared to the larger states (Assefa, 2007: 162). The fiscal regime in Ethiopia has been quite controversial in which equity and efficiency have been the hallmarks of the debate. Thus, the fiscal formula in the country should be revisited carefully in away it ensures both equity and efficiency at least to reduce gap of the fiscal imbalance both vertical and horizontal.

According to Aalen the fiscal imbalance in Ethiopia has been a challenge for regional states to guarantee autonomy they have constitutionally. The low level of their socio-economic development and lack of capacity to generate adequate resources locally have been typical problems. The federal government's inter-governmental transfer of revenue may serve to reduce fiscal imbalance. Essentially, equity-based grant transfer has been claimed to enhance the development of the least developed states. However, whether it may improve the socio-economic development of those states or not has been left for unforeseeable future (2002; 81).

Nonetheless, the population, the capacity to generate revenue and the level of infrastructural development essential for grant transfer may challenge the least developed; less populated and poor resources-based regions to have fair share of national-cake. On the other hand, relatively resourceful, most populous and infrastructural better developed regions may complain for lack of efficiency consideration in allocation of grant from the center. Equity and development-based formula favor most the least developed regions. There has yet not been compromise over reconciling both extremes. This might widen the existing fiscal imbalances eventually leads to unbalanced level of development between and among subunits constituting the federation (Assefa, 2007).

Accordingly, the national government in command of monopoly of power has owned major base of resources and sources of taxation that enhance more centralized rule than what constitutionally provided decentralized governance. The regional and local governments mostly of the poor resource bases thus turn to focus more on their recurrent demands than engage in promoting capital projects. This has resulted in members in federation to depend heavily on the center. The center having commendable power and resources may allocate bulk of resources where it has more legitimacy that leads to unequal treatment of units contrary to the aspirations

to establish federation of equal states. In this regard, loyalty to ruling party is a political gauge for any level member of federation to have significant access to resources (Selassie, 2003: 80-81; Keller, 2002 and Kalkidan, 2010).

The development challenge is more sever at the lower levels of the government in which they assumed greater expenditure responsibility with poor resource base. Specifically, their constitutional assigned responsibility is not commensurate to the revenue raising capacity. This has deterred them to augment better socio-economic development of their locality (Aalen, 2002; Kalkidan, 2010 and Wolassa, 2016). The states though had access to unconditional grant from the center the equity-based principle has given a little impetus subunit to exert their best effort to raise revenue utmost and efficiently utilize the allocated budget for socio-economic development of their regions (Assefa, 2007).

Besides, lack of institutional capacity predominated by poor governance has worsen the endeavor to bring development with equitable benefit to the public. The participatory development at the grass root that may bring sustainable development has been less likely practiced as development policies and strategies are imposed from top-down. In all accounts, the ruling party is the main actor in policy-making and oversees its implementation. The policies made at national level and transferred to subnational governments through party structure which is normally expected to conform to with a little room to contest in a way it may bring about major modification or nullify it. In this vein, the national development has become imperative than the local development. One should bear in mind that developing respective locality may give more impetus to local initiatives and strategies essential elements to sustainable development (Ghebrehiwet, 2015; Keller, 2002). Ghebrehiwet points out:

The Federal constitution does not recognize local governments (LGs). Rather, they are creatures of the states. Such arrangement allows the states to structure their LGs in a way that fits their specific circumstances. LGs are major providers of public services. But they have little discretion over capital expenditure as the states determine what, where and when capital investments should be carried out. Moreover, they have no taxation power except over municipal

revenues. State politicians are reluctant to devolve taxation powers on the pretext of managerial incapacity of the LGs (2015: 2).

In overall assessments, establishing self-governing entities should be coupled with the necessary resources and institutional competency which is uncommon in the case of many of local governments of Ethiopia. Besides, lack of institutional capacity to generate adequate revenue and governance problem has become setback to ensure efficient public service delivery (Ibid). Concerning this, Wolassa (2016: 157) specifically maintains that ‘Domestic resource mobilization by both federal and regional state governments remain weak. Ethiopia’s performance in domestic resource mobilization is one of the weakest in Africa. Ethiopia’s tax revenue-GDP ratio is the smallest and on average even below that of the conflict ravaged Central African Republic’. However, the current trend shows that Ethiopia has been better mobilizing domestic resources than ever. Still, tax evasion and avoidance have been central challenges to effectively mobilize the domestic resources (UNECA, 2017).

In the case of Sidaama, the higher administration structure, the regional statehood, is hoped to enable Sidaama to have better subsidy which is proportional to its population size and contribution to the national economy. This in turn can be channeled to the development endeavors (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2019).

4.2.3 Participation and Representation in the Federal System

Unlike to the previous regimes, the institutionalization of ethnic federalism has enabled the minority groups to have representation at different levels of the government. Most importantly, the local governments, by and large, are represented by the co-ethnics. As well, the local councils are predominated by the titular ethnic groups. Accordingly, the participation of the titular ethnic groups has significantly improved. Nevertheless, the participation and representation in terms of competitive democracy has been unattainable (Asnake, 2009).

In the context of Sidaama, the ethnic federal system has provided for more and broader participation and representation compared to the previous regimes (Kifle, 2007). However, lack of democracy and rule of law had severely repressed fundamentally its quest for regional statehood (Wolassa, 2016; Kifle, 2007). In this sub-section, the dissertation discussed how the

‘democratic-centralist’ decision making system of the ruling party- EPRDF/TPLF had affected genuine representation and participation below:

The constitution has guaranteed the fact that there should be effective public participation and adequate representation at all levels of government (FDRE Constitution, 1995). However, Keller (2002: 21) concludes as ‘While there may be federal features and institutions normally found in democracies, Ethiopia has not constructed a system of democratic federalism. Moreover, rather than empowering citizens at the grassroots level, Ethiopia tightly controls development and politics through regional state governments, with very little popular decision-making in the development process’.

The public participation fundamental to sustainable development and democratization process has been stifled by the centralization drive of ruling party in unanticipated outcome to the federal deal. Although there is public participation and representation it is only to rubber stamp what is already decided up there with limited room of effecting major modification or nullify it (International Crisis Group, 2009: 15). Abebe eloquently expresses:

In fact, there has been no instance where any of the regional governments has opposed or challenged any decision, law or policy of the federal government either politically or through the constitutional adjudication system. This indicates that, despite the letter of the constitution which actually creates strong regional states, the Ethiopian state is still characterized by a strong and centralized government with immense powers and control over the regional states (Abebe, 2013: 59).

In sum, state of governance in Ethiopia dominantly promotes centralized rule than what is acclaimed fact of decentralization uttered in the constitution. This undermines the local autonomy essential feature of decentralization and independent decision-making power of the public at constituency.

In the recent years, Ethiopia has experienced public protest from the different parts of the country. The protests in the two largest ethnic regions, Oromia and Amhara have been notable in stark opposition to the rule and decision of the EPRDF government. The government has

responded to those public protests in violent ways and the people persist to struggle despite scarification including life (Allo, 2017). In particular, multitudes lost their life, destruction of properties, dislocation of many and arrest of large number of people. For instance, the reversal of government decision on Addis Ababa Master plan following wave of public protest in the state of Oromia has been part of challenging the decision from the center (Allo, 2017; Wolassa, 2016). By and large, conflicts in the Amhara and Oromia regional states have mounted pressures on the national government which culminated in the resignation of the Prime Minister HaileMariam Dessalegn and the declaration of the state of emergency. Currently, a new Primer Dr. Abiy Ahmed came into power and state of emergency has been lifted. Whether constituents will continue to challenge the policies and laws of the national government or may work in cooperation with the national government is left in the unforeseeable future (International Crisis Group, 2019).

Public participation and genuine representation presuppose the existence of democratic rule, constitutionalism and rule of law. In most cases, party interest overrules public interest which may lead to public tension of different form. The officials in power has more upward accountability than being hold accountable to the public who were the ultimate owners of the power and whom they claim have represented (Selassie, 2003: 78-79). It is apparent that policies and strategies are designed at the center predominated by the party in power. The public representative as well as the public at large has a little role to play in either drafting policy bill or challenging its legislation. At the grassroots level, the public lacks know-how and power to effectively comment on policy and/or legal bill to get their best interest being incorporated. The executive and central committee of the ruling party has been influential in handling national policy matters and oversees their implementation. This undermines bona fide of public policy making in which the public interest shall be effectively considered and guaranteed (International Crisis Group, 2009).

Democratization and decentralization have become the main drivers of the federal rule. The public, therefore, was expected to be the main actor of decision making at every level of the government. In actual practice; nonetheless, decentralization and democratization essential to empower the citizens have become rhetoric. Instead, the ruling party devotes to vigorously maintain the central rule which makes it influential in policy making and legislation on important

national affairs in rubber stamp from peoples' representatives and public as well simple informed about what has been decided mostly at the center. As a result, the venue to challenge bounds of legislation and feasibility of the policy matter is uncommon in stark deviations from the republicanism (Merera, 2007a; Wolassa, 2016: 143-144).

In Sidaama, participation and representation are contested. On the one hand, the government claims that there is effective public participation and fair representation (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 20 August, 2015). On the other hand, the opponents' state that the public participates only to approve what is already decided up there- centrally designed policy and strategy that could not effect significant change or nullify it. Representation is sole business of the ruling party where its loyal takes office in the name of the people (Interview, Opposition party leader, Hawassa, 30 August, 2015).

4.3 Federalism in Southern Ethiopia

The Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) constitute 56 ethnic groups (Darota, 2015; Wolassa, 2016). It has legislative, executive and Judiciary organs of government. Exceptionally to other member states in the Ethiopian federation, it has organized the Council of Nationalities (CON) (SNNPR the Revised Constitution, 2001). The rearrangement of dozens of multiethnic groups in the region serve as museum of diversity in the country has brought about contradictory perspectives. On the one hand, the advocates of the merger forerun by the ruling party the South Peoples Democratic Union (renamed then South Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Movement), currently Prosperity Party justifies the fact that the configuration of the region has been made with the consent of the concerned 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. On the top of this, administrative and budgetary efficiency were most important concern to the merger of the region as well as in the subsequent years different political parties operate within the region had brought together for a concerted leadership (Vaughan, 2003: 249; Aalen, 2002: 89-90 and Ghebrehiwet, 2015: 50).

On the other hand, the opponents argue that the merger is orchestrated by the ruling party with a little consultation of the public in the region. It was made by an agreement a few at ruling circle who later informed the public about amalgamation of the previous five regions into SNNPR state. The reshuffling is made to benefit the party than the people by establishing a region it may have mass support likely to counterbalance the populous and wider regions like Oromia where

there is formidable opposition. The regionalization has much driven by the political interest than efficiency of other types basically the economic and administrative for mutual benefit of the people of the region (Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 26 April, 2015; Aalen, 2002 and Bahru, 2002: 265).

Despite what is stipulated in the constitution, the Southern region was merged without recourse to referendum. Accordingly, little effort has been made to involve stakeholders regarding the fate of independent existence of those regions or their merger (Darota, 2015: 141-142). According to Ghebrehiwet (2015: 52)

Failure to conduct referendum or ignoring the wishes and desires of the stakeholders in the process of making the giant state of the SNNP has caused the regional ruling party to unnecessarily pay a dear political price. In reaction to the merging measure, political entrepreneurs in the merged Region have rallied their ethnic groups behind them to strive for a higher status. They created grave instability in the SNNP which forced the regional ruling party to restructure the types and numbers of government tiers (Zones, Special weredas and weredas).

Particularly in the context of SNNPR, the government has been repressive to a right to self-determination; a few of demands have been achieved after deadly confrontation like WOGAGODA (Data, Summer/Fall 2005-2006) and after long time wrangling like the Silte, Halaba, Gofa and Konso Cases. What government advocates is the unity of the region than constitutional and democratically treats demands like the right to self-determination (Zemelak, 2014; Oromian Economist, November 4, 2018). The Sidaama's quest for regional autonomy is typical example to the regime's obdurate stand to democratically and constitutionally address the right to self-determination (Wolassa, 2016).

In the SNNPR state the opposition parties were pushed to a margin. For instance, the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic coalition (SEPDC) faced a mounting pressure from the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (SEPDF) which was the surrogate of the ruling party. Then onwards, the political space for the opposition has been narrowed down (Aalen, 2002).

The demand for being organized at different level of government has been a challenge for southern region which advocates integration than address those demands. This has put pressure on the government to give recognition to a few from among several demands. For instance, the case of North Omo zone split into three zones (Wolayita, Gamo-Goffa and Dawuro) and two special woredas (Basketo and Konta) following the bloody WoGaGoDa conflict in 2000 (Data, Summer/Fall 2005-2006). As well Silte separated from the Gurage zone after couple of years persistently demanding a separate administrative unit which finally realized through referendum in April, 2001 despite the focus of government was to ensure efficiency and equity development (Zemelak, 2014; Asnake, 2009).

The lukewarm position of the government to constitutional treat autonomy questions-particularly demands to be restructured at different level of the government particularly in the southern Ethiopia will add to heightening of the tension. Remarkably, denying or deferring right to self-determination for demanding groups including the Sidaama will be source of instability in the country in the future (Villiers, 2012). The government has opted to mantra of 'efficient service delivery' and 'equitable development' than address the status making demands by several ethnic groups in the region and country wide fall short of granting every 'Nation, Nationality and People' right to self-determination including independence (Darota, 2015).

Regardless of the quest for right to self-determination by different ethnic groups in the SNNPR state, the government has adamant to administrative convenience and economic efficiency. Accordingly, instead of granting a separate administrative tier, it opts to merge the existing administrative units. For example Segen Area Peoples' Zone that was established in March 2011 by amalgamating the previously Konso, Burji, Amaro (Koore), Derashe Special woredas and a newly created AlleWoreda is one of the recent developments in the state (Zemelak, 2014; Addis Standard, 2016).

The union faced tense opposition particularly from the Konso ethnic community in peaceful disobedience which lasted nearly to a year by demanding the organization at the zonal level than stay in Segen Area Peoples' Zone. The response from the regional state has been repressive than treating the demand in a democratic approach. Instead of constitutional settlement of the demand what had happened was the deployment of the regional Special Forces to arrest the deteriorating situation. Yet it is not possible to achieve lasting solution. By denying the constitutional right of

Konso ethnic community to have a separate administrative unit the government; nevertheless, opts for keeping them in the union by excessive use of force that has been deepening the problem than resolves it. The irony is that the kernel of conflict the right to self-government of Konso ethnic community yet not resolved may set further obstacle to ensure sustainable peace and development in the region. Therefore, subunits viability requires the constitutional and legal treatment of public demands within the very zone and region wide than resort to force (Addis Standard, 2016). Later, the SNNPR state council endorsed Konso to be organized at zonal administrative unit along with a newly established Gofa and Halaba zones in its meeting on 9/11/2018. Similarly, 44 new woreda structures were recognized by the state council (Oromian Economist, November 4, 2018).

The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region barely fulfills the criteria enshrined in the FDRE Constitution Article 46 (2) (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Despite the fact that those people are contiguous in territory, the most essential elements of ethnic federalism that has been milestones while establishing the other states in the federation such as the language, identity and consent of the people concerned were lacking. Aptly, geography and economic issues have militated ethnic federalism in the region (Darota, 2015). Seyoum (1997a: 82) vindicates 'The "Southern" region is a combination of distinct nations such as the Sidama, Guraghe/Hadiya/Kambata, Wolayta, Omotic and Kaffa which have different languages, cultures and political histories'.

The Proclamation No.7/1992 for the Establishment of National/Regional Self-Governments of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia was only effective in reconstituting the previously five independent regions into a single region, the SNNPR as per Article 3 (2b) that lays down 'The Self-Governments of adjacent nations, nationalities and peoples may, by agreement, jointly establish one larger Regional Self-Government; in such a case, other necessary intermediate hierarchies may be established between the Wereda and the regional levels having regard to the special circumstances of the area' (Proclamation No.7/1992 of TGE).

To put differently, a new regionalization that has reduced the fourteen regions into nine states has been amalgamated only the previously five regions (region 7-11) constituted currently the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State. Such practice has never been applied in the case of other regional states of Ethiopia even if there have been several states

previously from the peripheries that may require administrative and budgetary efficiency as it has been justified in the case of the Southern region. Thus, it is paradoxically why the proclamation applicable only for the southern region than as well to other regional states in Ethiopia (Wolassa, 2016: 147-148).

In comparison to other parts of Ethiopia, Ethiopian ethnic federalism grant of a single region (SNNPR) for about 56 ethnic groups in a country which roughly constitute 85 ethnic groups is pragmatic. Besides, in the region where four language families such as Cushitic/Hamitic, Semitic, Omotic and Nilo-Saharan are spoken the southern region is not officially considered as a federation but it could be considered as a federation within federation (Darota, 2015: 145; Wolassa, 2016: 143-144; Seyoum, 1997a: 74-75).

In its regular meeting, the EPRDF in Addis Ababa at the end of 2000 decided previously ethnic based parties to establish coalition of parties. Accordingly, about 21 political parties in the SNNPR was formed the coalition of parties, SEPDM which laid foundation of the establishment of the SNNPR (Darota, 2015: 140). The southern region is remarkable not only in terms of integrating the 56 ethnic group in a single region but also has successfully transformed their respective Peoples Democratic Organizations (PDO) to the present South Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) where a branch office of the latter has substituted in every ethnic group the former. In this regard, whether a party represents a respective ethnic group may better articulate the public interest than region wide party has remained debatable. The irony is that it enhances much more centralization than professed goal of decentralization (Vaughan, 2003: 249; Interview, CSO Head, Hawassa, 23 July 2015). Aalen in her comparative study of underlying causes behind the establishment of the state of Tigray versus the SNNPRS further clarifies:

The creation of Tigray as a federal unit is apparently a natural consequence of its prehistory, ethnic homogeneity and coherent political organisation. When it comes to SNNPRS, however, it is more of a puzzle why the southern areas were created as one federal unit and not as several, when the areas are so diverse and include so many distinct ethnic groups and large territories. During my data collection in the south, many people expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that

the southern areas were administered as one, while for instance the Harari people, which are in number around ten per cent of the population in SNNPRS,... have their own federal unit (2002: 90).

Regardless of this, in political arena the regime has started bringing into coalition of different PDO's previously representing their respective ethnic groups. The driving reason was administrative and budgetary efficiency. The pronounced goal of granting right to self-determination possibly secession in a region constituting 56 ethnic groups has been tamed by broadly ensuring good governance. Gradually, dozens of PDO's transformed to the current South Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) where its branch operates in different ethnic groups as an overarching regional organization including Sidaama (Markakis, 2011; Aalen, 2002).

Generally speaking, it is discussed above that the southern federation lacks the legal as well as socio-economic and geographic conditions that rationalize it. It is quite differing in terms of language and has unbalanced level of development by sub-units (Wolassa, 2016). The Southern region instead of aid to establish a common asset what has been observed in the region is instability of federation where vowed administrative and budgetary efficiency has curbed by rising administrative costs, fundamental conflict resolution and distance one need to travel to get justice as well as for training and administrative purposes (Interview, non-Sidaama, Hawassa, 3 August, 2015).

The federalization in the country lacks objective regionalization criterion which makes the experiment as pragmatic ethnic federalism. Paradoxically, some ethnic groups with hundred thousand populations have state; whereas, ethnic groups over million populations including Sidaama have failed to achieve regional autonomy. The stubborn position of government regarding the quest for self-determination has been a challenge to ensure a given ethnic groups right to self-government. Moreover, less commitment to democracy and constitutionalism undermines authenticity of the experiment (Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 29 May 2015). Wolassa in this connection remarks as:

The south is ethnically so diverse and too large to effectively administer as one region. Various nations and nationalities in the region are at

different levels of economic development. Sidama is the second largest producer of coffee after Oromia and is therefore the backbone of the Ethiopia economy. The tribes in the lower Omo valley and far west are extremely underdeveloped and need focused attention from the federal government to uplift their socio-economic plight. Therefore, it is extremely sub optimal to subsume Sidama and Mursi under one region (2016: 307).

As it is explained repeatedly, there is a considerable disparity in the level of their socio-economic development by units constituting the southern region. Besides, geographically many of people travel hundreds of kilometers some may even cross two regions like Oromia and the federal capital to get to the regional capital, Hawassa to seek justice. This has led them to surrender their justice due to the distance, cost and bureaucratic bottlenecks which in turn results in being victim to corruption and lack of good governance in their localities. Above and beyond, people in far south west have more ethnic affinity to the Gambela region than to the central and northern part of the southern region. What most characterizes the southern region is geography than ethnicity. It is in general haphazard restructuring that calls for timely consideration in democratic and constitutional approach than hold them together forceful through political decision (Interview, non-Sidaama, Hawassa, 7 August, 2015; Data, 2000).

Reorganization of the Southern region previously consisted of five regional states led the organization of Zone or Special Woreda administration along ethno-linguistic lines. The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State Constitution Article 45 (2) affirms 'The Nations, Nationalities or peoples in the Region shall have their own zonal or Special Wereda administration, delimited on the bases of the settlement pattern, languages, identities and consent of the people concerned'. Accordingly, the Zones and Special Wereda in the state relatively have devolved power at least in theory.

By the same token, the Article 39 of the constitution stipulates the right to self-determination and including right to secession. Particularly sub-article 6 enumerates procedures to establish statehood while sub-article 4 stands for secession version. Based on this, zonal, special *woreda* and *woreda* structure has been granted to different ethnic groups reconstituted the region. Despite the demand including the Sidaama no ethnic group has yet achieved statehood in the

region. Moreover, the practice of the secession version has been rare particularly in the Southern region and in Ethiopia in general (SNNPRS Revised Constitution, 2001 and Beken, 2007: 132-133).

The unique feature of the Southern regional state is its constitute of the lower- the State Council and the upper-Council of Nationalities houses modeled on the federal government institutions- the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of the Federation. In the both cases only the lower house has a law-making power. In actual fact, the institution representing 'Nation, Nationality and People' has devoid of legislative function in the case of SNNPRS and at federal level in general (Zemelak, 2014; SNNPRS Revised Constitution, 2001 and FDRE Constitution, 1995).

There have been dozens of quests for self-administration in the SNNPR at different level of the government. The response of the government; however, has been repressive. But, unrelenting struggle by different ethnic groups mostly led to accommodation of the demand at the local level of government. On the contrary, the quest for establishing the regional state has been seen as a threat to the regional unity. Similarly, the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood had been either denied or deferred. Even if the Sidaama officially- demanded the establishment of its own regional state, the federal government intervened and reversed it at the stage of referendum through the appeasement of development should be antecedent to democracy in the 2005 (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2019).

Nonetheless, the popular demand for Sidaama regional statehood at forefront Ejjetto mobilized the mass at grass roots level which finally led to the endorsement of the Sidaama official demand for regional statehood on 18 July 2018 by the Sidaama Zone Council. Accordingly, on 20 November 2019 the referendum conducted in which the Sidaama regional statehood obtained an overwhelming 97.7% votes (Tronvoll et al. 2020). The Sidaama's quest for regional statehood also led to dozens of demands for establishment of separate regional state by different ethnic groups reconstituted the SNNPR. Following the separation of Sidaama as a regional state, the SNNPR has been under unprecedented pressure by different ethnic groups to establish their own state (Ibid). Recently, on 30 September 2021 the HOF has recommended the NEBE to organize referendum for the couple of ethnic groups from the South west part of the SNNPR to have a regional statehood (Ethiopia Insight, October 2020).

The Sidaama quest for regional autonomy was driven from among other factors to boost its socio-economic development. However, suppression of such demand by different regimes of Ethiopia had limited its socio-economic development. Following the post-1991 ethnic-based federal arrangement Sidaama had demanded regional statehood to have access to better subsidy essentially to improve its socio-economic development. Nevertheless, the response of government was repressive and failed to address the question constitutionally and democratically. The following sub-section briefly discusses the contemporary socio-economic development in Sidaama.

4.4 Socio-economic Development in Sidaama

4.4.1 Agro-pastoral

Sidaama has three major ecological zones such as the highlands, the midlands and the lowlands. The highlands are famous for Enset (*Ensete ventricosum*) production and livestock rearing. The main staple food of Sidaama Enset, by and large, is produced in this region. Coffee- the major export and domestic consumption commodity, Khat (*Catha edulis*) is becoming competitive to coffee production grown dominantly in the midlands. Animal husbandry as well practiced in the region. The lowlands among others primarily produce maize and animal husbandry. The other perennial crops and vegetables grown in Sidaama general include barley, maize, wheat, sorghum, oat, millets, potatoes, sugar cane and others that are produced in different ecological regions in the Sidaama (Seyoum, 2015: 15- 19; Wolassa, 2016 and Hamer, 2007: 208). From among fruits such as mango, apple, papaya, Abukado and others grow in the Sidaama region (SRSFEDB, 2018/2019).

Currently Enset, the staple food of Sidaama, is highly commercialized through its end products such as Waasa (kocho), Bulla and its variety under menu of traditional food at different restaurants in Sidaama region competitive to Enjera, the Ethiopian main diet. It is drought resistant plant as well resists bacteriology effect that maintains the health of the people. It has a high nutritional value and what scholars refer it as ‘A Tree against Hunger’ possibly recommended for ensuring food security (Interview, academician, Hawassa, 28 May 2015; Seyoum, 2015; Wolassa, 2016).

Coffee is the major export item and one of the commodities to earn foreign exchange for the country. Sidaama coffee accounts for 30% of the country’s coffee export and stands next to

Oromia which constitutes 60% of the total. The coffee produced in the year 2018/2019 in Sidaama was washed coffee 95,026.571 tons and unwashed coffee 12, 928 tons totally 107,954.571 tons (SZANRDD, 2018/2019). It is estimated that Sidaama annual produces 110,000 tons of coffee out of which 53,000 tons for the export and the remaining shall be consumed in domestic (Wolassa, 2016: 313-314). Seyoum (2015:21) admits the fact that how the change of climate may have an adverse impact on coffee production, he writes as ‘as the prime cash crop, coffee is crucial to social and economic wellbeing but its sustainability is under threat from increasing irregular rainfall pattern and rising temperature as well coffee berry disease.’ This requires designing an appropriate adaptation mechanism.

Sidaama is known as ever green and self-reliant society (Hamer, 2009: 1-2). In Sidaama, agriculture is predominate economic sector. About 87% of Sidaama people depend on such sector. Sidaama practice a diversified agriculture depending on its agro-ecology. Gradually, its productivity has been declining given shrinking size of the land following the upsurge of the size of population that estimated to be 0.3 hectares per household on average where population density is 533 people per square km, climate change and its poor adaptation, poor technology and poor irrigational schemes despite plenty of water bodies in the nation such as Hawassa and Abbaya lakes and Gidawo, Bilatte, Logita, Galana and Bo’nora rivers (Wolassa, 2016; Seyoum, 2015 and SZFEDD, 2015).

4.4.2 Education in Sidaama

Undoubtedly, investment in education boosts development. Broadly speaking, human capital is decisive to create, implement and adopt new technologies. It enhances productivity and brings economic growth. However, the literacy rate was started to increase in Sidaama during the Derg time. The regime’s literacy campaign was famous to provide mass education late 1970’s or in turn of 1980’s. Afterwards, the EPRDF/TPLF regime expanded education in Sidaama in unprecedented rate (Wolassa, 2016).

In the Sidaama region, the numbers of schools have highly been increasing in the last five years. The primary students registered for the year 2018/2019 and attended the regular class were 486543 male and 462210 female totally 948753 whereas the secondary school students who were registered and attended the regular class in the same year included 76887 male and 55529 female totally 132416. But still further intervention is needed to address the demand for

education and to effectively enroll the School age children (SRSFEDB, 2018/2019). According to Wolassa (2016) in comparison to its ever rising population in Sidaama, the development of infrastructure on education is limited. Mainly, there should be an equitable distribution of the institutions of education in a way that reduces mostly the rural-urban and male-female literacy rate gap.

4.4.3 Health Services in Sidaama

In the contemporary period, there has been massive investment in the health sector. Accordingly, health service institutions have been developed in the various parts of Sidaama. Still, the quality of the service provision and infrastructure development requires further work (Wolassa, 2016). In Sidaama the total health coverage is 70% (SNRS Health Bureau, 2020). According to CSA (2016) nationally under-5 mortality on average constitutes 67 deaths per 1,000 live births but there has been variation from rural to urban areas (CSA, 2016: 125). Thus, 83 versus 66 deaths per 1,000 live birth in rural and urban areas respectively. Besides, Women mortality for age ranges 15-49 for the 7-year period before the 2016 survey is 2.74 deaths per 1,000 populations (Ibid 251). Similarly, for the 7-year period before the 2016 survey for women age 15-49 pregnancy- related mortality is 0.66 deaths per 1,000 populations (Ibid 251). In the context of Sidaama region, for the year 2018/2019 Mothers mortality rate is 29 (SRSFEDB, 2018/2019). Nigatu argues in Sidaama complete or full immunization of children is 37.2% falls far below global standard set at least at 90% at the country level and should not be less than 80% in sub-areas. Besides, the health institutions and population and medical doctors to population ratio have been in a wide gap (2011).

More specifically, in the 2016/2017 in the Sidaama region there has been 13 district hospitals and 1 general hospital, 125 health centers, 524 health posts and different health institutions owned by government, NGOs and private sector. Generally, there are 6, 744 health workers which includes 187 doctors, 174 master's holders, 1, 559 degree holders and 4, 824 are diploma. In the same year the health coverage was 74.5% (SRSFEDB, 2018/2019).

4.4.4 Trade, Industry and the other Sectors

Generally, trade is limited in Sidaama since majority of its population live in rural areas where a considerable number undertake coffee and petty trade whose return as well is not rewarding. The urbanization rate in Sidaama, according to CSA, 2007, is 13% far below the country average of

17% and 40% of the African continent where at present 87% of Sidaama population lives in rural areas. Urban centers have not developed in anticipated pace and poorly developed in socio-economic infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunication networks, clean water and all weather roads (Wolassa, 2016).

There are only a few factories and agglomeration of heavy industries in Hawassa. Recently, Hawassa Industrial park and the recent Agro-Processing Industrial Park in Yirgalem town administration are established. Industry has been least developed in Sidaama. It is mentioned that agro-processing industries are decisive to transform the economy and alleviate poverty through adding value of raw products. The finished products may be consumed locally and/or export oriented. There is yet low level of industrial development in Sidaama. On the other hand, mining is poorly developed except recent Gold mining attempt in highland *woreda* of Sidaama region. In general, Sidaama people's employment rate remains to be low actually it is not over 1%. But the recent industrialization in Hawassa city as well in the other parts of Sidaama is hoped to reduce the widespread unemployment (Wolassa, 2016: 316-319; UNIDO, 2018).

Though resourceful Sidaama's economy is less channeled to the development of the nation and the most vital resource, human resources, is insignificantly developed. Its limited human resource either has not placed in the right place or lack job opportunity that results in a widespread unemployment at present (Seyoum, 1998; Daye, 2015).

Due to limited engagement of Sidaama people in the aforementioned modern sectors, unemployment is one of the most serious problems the Sidaama people have been facing. As per CSA 2007, projection in 2015 from active labor force which amounts to 2.5 million about 50% said either underemployed or unemployed in Sidaama. Unemployment rates however declines in the city for the Sidaama which was about 15% since majority of the population lives in rural area. To employ ever increasing labor force it needs creation of job-opportunities particularly through effective development of various kinds of enterprise both in rural and urban areas. The expansion of industrialization is viable economic strategy in the face of burgeoning youth population. As well, there should be better development of socio-economic infrastructure. Besides, the development of off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities is the most critical to livelihood resilience of its fast growing population (Wolassa, 2016).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the federal arrangement in the post-1991 Ethiopia and the Sidaama. Ethiopia has restructured the state on the ethnic-based federalism. The ruling party has acclaimed it will resolve the ‘national oppression’. Whereas the opponents contend that it is a threat to the national unity. Regardless of the debate, the regime attempted to build ‘unity in diversity’. Accordingly, FDRE (1995) constitution promises every ‘nations, nationalities and Peoples’ have accorded right to self-determination to the extent of secession. But the practice most likely was pragmatic than based on the objective reality. Oddly, lack of rule of law and democracy has adversely affected the federal experiment.

Centrally, the ideologies of the ruling party namely the ‘revolutionary democracy’, ‘centralized democratic decision making’ and ‘democratic developmental state’ have become incongruity to the federal system. Therefore, the sub-national states have become dependent on the center both politically and economically. Distinctively, the major policy decisions are to be made at the center and the states are expected to implement it. Even if states have assumed significant responsibilities but they lack financial capacity to execute it. There has been inequitable share of power and resources in the neo-patrimonial system underlying the regime. Instead of the professed decentralization, what has been in practice is tight control by the central government. Basically, public participation and representation mostly meant to rubber stamp what is decided at the center. The chapter as well examined Sidaama as a case in the federal arrangement of Ethiopia in the post-1991 Ethiopia.

The invitation of Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) in the ‘Peace and Democracy’ conference convened in Addis Ababa from July 1-5 and its subsequent representation in the Transitional Government had given Sidaama a temporary status like Sidaama being organized as region eight and relatively enjoyed linguistic and cultural autonomy than in the preceding regimes. The SLM discouraged by hegemonic aspirations of the ruling EPRDF/TPLF and the gradual narrowing of political space for the opposition could not stay as a loyal opposition contrary to what the regime proclaims i.e. democracy and federalism. Therefore, the SLM decided to withdraw from the Transitional Government following the footsteps of the major contender, Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to the regime.

No sooner, the ruling party EPRDF/TPLF had established the Sidaama People's Democratic Organization (SPDO) as its surrogate which enabled the regime to have free rein in the Sidaama nation. The subsequent period was marked by the 'making and breaking' role of the regime in a little departure from the preceding regimes of Ethiopia in the context of Sidaama. For the most part, state-society relations have remained to be unpleasant. The hall mark is that the fundamental question of Sidaama's quest for its regional statehood forerun by the SLM detracted by its absence.

The ruling Party, EPRDF/TPLF reorganized the previous five regions from region 7-11 in a single SNNPR without consulting the public including the Sidaama concerning both dissolution of the previous regions and haphazardly integrating it into a single region. Since then, the Sidaama people have been vigorously struggling to establish its regional statehood. Nevertheless, even in the current regime in over two decades and half time, Sidaama could not realize its regional state. The most mentioned obstacles have been lack of democracy and constitutionalism. Fundamentally, there has been better socioeconomic development compared to the previous regimes but socio-economic infrastructure has been limited to ensure the development in Sidaama.

Currently, Sidaama once again has formally presented its quest for regional statehood which is now at the stage of referendum to be organized within the nation by the State council. Indeed, the NEBE officially reported that the referendum conducted in Sidaama on the 20 November 2019 in which those who voted for Sidaama regional statehood constituted an overwhelming figure (97.7%). Accordingly, the Sidaama regional state became the 10th member state in the Ethiopian federation on 18 June 2020. The in-depth discussion on the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood is explained in Chapter Five of this document.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SIDAAMA QUEST FOR SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE POST-1991 ETHIOPIA

This chapter explores the Sidaama quest for regional statehood in the post-1991 Ethiopia. The quest was discussed in different chapters of this study. Specifically, chapter three discussed how the Sidaama struggle to its autonomy following its incorporation into Ethiopian state. To restore its autonomy, the Sidaama essentially struggled in unorganized and organized forms. The Sidaama had been part of armed groups that stood against the Derg regime. During the rule of the Derg, the most pressing quest for the Sidaama people was to establish the autonomous region of its own.

As discussed before, chapter four examined the federal arrangement in Ethiopia in the post-1991 period and the Sidaama. It narrated how Sidaama was organized at the time and its quest for regional statehood. During the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Sidaama for a brief period was organized as region eight along with a few ethnic groups which I have discussed in the preceding chapters. However, the formation of the SNNPR forcefully amalgamated the previously established five regions including the Sidaama. Since then, Sidaama has been persistently demanding regional statehood. Twice in the present regime, Sidaama officially demanded the quest for regional statehood. Particularly, in its 18 July 2018 official demand, Sidaama people was pressing for holding referendum as per the constitution; the position of government was remained to be lukewarm. Indeed, referendum was conducted in Sidaama on the 20 November 2019 in which an overwhelmingly 97.7% have voted for regional statehood. The chapter tries to see the likelihood of Sidaama establishing its own regional state.

5.1 Sidaama in the federal system of Ethiopia

The Sidaama people were in relentless quest for their autonomy which they had lost since the conquest of the Sidaama by the Menelik II, late in the 19th century. The modern Ethiopian state was not accommodative to Sidaama indigenous socio-political system which is embedded in egalitarian democracy. Accordingly, the people have been vehemently demanding and struggling through organized and unorganized form in successive regimes since then to regain its independence (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, non-Sidaama, historian, Hawassa, 24 April, 2015).

Obviously, since the conquest of the Sidaama and in the successive regimes of Ethiopia the ‘nation-building’ project was repressive than embracing the Sidaama identity. The people of

Sidaama in turn waged resistance both in unorganized and organized forms towards achieving autonomy in which tens of thousands lost their life and devastation of property (Wolassa, 2016; Boni, 2020). The apogee of the Sidaama resistance was during the Derg regime in which the people struggled against the regime by organized Sidaama Peoples Liberation Movement (SLM) which fought the regime in guerilla war- hit and ran tactics with the intention of demanding internal self-determination for the Sidaama from their military base in Somalia, Mogadishu. The struggle of ethno-national forces including the SLM significantly contributed to the weakening of the regime which was finally overthrown by the EPRDF in May 1991 (Seyoum, 1998; Markos, 2014).

As part of its plan of restructuring the internal administrative system of the country, the EPRDF established 14 regional governments in 1992. Accordingly, Proclamation No.7/1992 of the Transitional government for the first time in history of the modern state in Ethiopia had recognized Sidaama as one of ethnic groups in the southern Ethiopia along with some other ethnic groups such as Gedeo, Burji, Amaro (Koore) and Gidicho constituted under region eight (Proclamation No.7/1992 of the TGE and Wolassa, 2016). The subsequent political development in the region was not suitable particularly for the Sidaama to consolidate the secured achievements. The ruling party EPRDF and the party that represented Sidaama had entered into tense political climate in not more than a year time which led to polarization (Seyoum, 1997a).

Consequently, the SLM leadership and its supporters were labeled as ‘anti-peace’ and intimidated in the process. The legacy of labeling opposition political organizations as enemy was anomalous to democracy which the EPRDF promised to usher in. As a result of the pressure that was coming from the EPRDF, the SLM decided to withdraw from the Transitional government and proclaimed that it resumed its armed struggle (Interview, Opposition Party leader, 9 September 2015). Boni argues the SLM’s organized struggle was periodically divided into the use of violence and guerilla tactics from 1975-1991 and the peaceful struggle in the post-1991 (2020). Nonetheless, the SLM was claimed to return to the peaceful struggle in the late 1990’s. According to Kifle:

The SLM leader and his supporters preferred to lay down arms, negotiate entry with the EPRDF, and continue the struggle through

constitutional means, calling for a regional status for the Sidaamas (until the end of 2005) and democratic governance. Other SLM officials and supporters wanted to continue the struggle through armed means and diplomacy. They formed the Sidaama Liberation Front (the SLF) in 1999, arguing that the achievement of the Sidaama struggle for self-determination, democracy and political equality can only come through a combined struggle: sustained armed and diplomatic struggle (2007: 182).

It was dismay for the organization that spent several years in the battle against the autocratic Derg to revert back to an armed struggle. The EPRDF was more concerned with consolidation of power than allowing a democratic political system to open adequate space for the opposition. The political environment was hostile for parties like SLM to compete against the EPRDF which was in better terms in its military posture and the seats that it used to occupy in the Council of Representatives (COR). The SLM demanded the balance of power and finally withdrew from the Transitional government and its leadership left for exile (Seyoum, 1997a; Markakis, 2011). Merera makes a case as ‘With crude political manipulation, supported by military muscle and the blessing of the Western powers, especially the Americans, who were delighted with the demise of Mengistu’s regime, the EPRDF easily, achieved two of its main political objectives. These were the approval of the Charter and the establishment of a Transitional Government that could be comfortably controlled by its ownself [itself]’ (Merera, 2011b: 70).

Following the SLM departure, from being partner in the Transitional Government, the EPRDF swiftly lent support to the establishment of the Sidaama People’s Democratic Organization (SPDO). Instead of its contender, the SLM, the EPRDF supported its affiliate and this paved a way for easy mobilization in support of EPRDF. In such a process, a genuine opposition which has some level of public support left out from being partner in the Transitional Government representing the Sidaama people and no sooner the party, SPDO, loyal to the ruling party was established in the Sidaama. This resulted in hostility between the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) and then SPDO (later, South Ethiopia Peoples’ Democratic Movement, Sidaama Branch) and currently a member of the Prosperity Party (Wolassa, 2016; Markakis, 2011).

No sooner the Transitional Charter was endorsed and the Transitional Government was established, the ruling EPRDF evolved to be a single party domination than practicing multi-party politics in Sidaama. The SLM though later was registered as a peaceful opposition it did not have conducive political playing field and its headway was set back by obstacles of different kind. The politics of fear and intimidation was the most common challenges for the operation of opposition parties. In Sidaama, in the opposite, the organization SPDO – former- later the SEPDM, which was a member of the ruling coalition, had conformable space to play with that enabled it to lead Sidaama people by landslide victory in consecutive elections (Seyoum, 1998; Interview, legal scholar, Hawassa, 26 May, 2015).

As to public knowledge, members of opposition parties often faced intimidation, arrest and persecution. Also, voters used to be threatened of exclusion from the socio-economic benefit in the economy chiefly monopolized by the government. The ruling party threatened the operation of the opposition parties, civil societies and the general public in opposite accord to the constitution. Those who were loyal to the ruling party may live without fear of being hunted, whereas, those who were activists of public interests had been at loggerheads and faced measures of different kind (Seyoum, 1998; Wolassa, 2016).

As discussed in the earlier, the merger of the previous five regions (regions 7-11) into the SNNPR eventually made Sidaama to assume a zonal status contradicting the constitutional provision that stipulates every ‘Nation, Nationality and People’ to have its right to self-determination to the extent of secession. The merger welcomed by the party ruling Sidaama, SPDO while the opponents contended the merger as a top-down imposition with a little public consent (Wolassa, 2016). This has set a foundation for Sidaama’s struggle for regional statehood in a new regime in power which sidelines the nation’s right to self-rule for its unfolding socio-economic and political interests (Kifle, 2007; Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 26 April, 2015). Wolassa, more specifically, articulates the fact that ‘Surely, the Southern Region was not ethnic based and the Sidama People who are the single largest ethnic group in Southern Ethiopia and the fifth largest in the country, resent losing regional autonomy and being subsumed under the southern region as one of the sub regional structures called zones’ (Wolassa, 2016: 148).

The opponents of the merger hold the perspective that the federalization in the region undermined the regional autonomy of Sidaama even achieved during the Transitional

Government like in the case of the other four incorporated states to form a single state. The southern region neither qualifies for ethnic federalism nor consulted the public which are the ultimate decision makers in a democratic system. It is formed by an agreement of a few elites dominantly the ruling officials who informed the public about the establishment of a new region for 56 ethnic groups in the southern Ethiopia. The Sidaama people were notified about their lumping in a broader region of the SNNP through government officials who claim to represent them (Interview, Opposition party leader, Hawassa, 30 August 2015). Seyoum underscores that ‘Sidamas were not consulted about the dissolution of their own region nor about the merger with the SNNPR. The TPLF/EPRDF leadership imposed its undemocratic and wrong beliefs and policies on the people of Sidama’ (Seyoum, 2002: 5). It may be argued that neither the dissolution of the previous five regions nor their merger into a single region, SNNPR had public consent; instead, it was made through political decision of the ruling party.

Incorporating insights from political economy is useful in this study. The demand for regional status in the Ethiopian federal system has been influenced by the political economy of the country. The Sidaama quest for regional statehood was driven by questions of political power and economic resources. Those who advocated a regional status for the Sidaama contended that the Sidaama regardless of its contribution to the national economy and population size was not provided a regional status (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2019 and Markakis, 2011). They furthermore contended that regional statehood for the Sidaama would enable the ethnic group to have a fair share of the ‘national cake’ that boosts its development (Ibid). When people with a few hundred thousand achieve the regional state, the denial of the regional statehood for Sidaama was considered paradoxical (Asnake, 2009).

Lack of regional status prevented Sidaama to have power of legislation over pressing issues of its concern. Moreover, it is part of its right to self-determination provided in the Constitution. The Sidaama struggle for its regional autonomy continued unabated over several decades since the beginning of an armed struggle by the SLM in the late 1970’s. The sustained struggle of the Sidaama for a regional status culminated in the formation of a region after a referendum which was held on 20 November 2019 in which the Sidaama supported the creation of a regional state by an overwhelming vote of 97.7% (Tronvoll et al. 2020).

On the contrary, the advocates for the continuation of the SNNPR which include elites from the ruling party and pan-Ethiopian politicians argued that the Sidaama would better benefit in the current arrangement than being a separate regional state. They contended that the regional capital, Hawassa city being within Sidaama generates different opportunities for the Sidaama people. It can serve as a big market for their businesses and provides more job opportunities for the people. As to the perspective of them, Sidaama having a separate region does not matter as long as people are able to benefit of the existing opportunities (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 17 August, 2015). To put differently, Sidaama's the most common challenge is ensuring development that may benefit the masses than the claim for regional autonomy that may be a concern of a few elites. Therefore, development should be antecedent than statehood in Sidaama (Kinkino, 2019).

The establishment of Sidaama regional state became a kind of opening a Pandora's box for a region that constitute 56 ethnic groups in which several ethnic groups may be tempted to take footstep of Sidaama. Accordingly, dozens of ethnic groups in the southern region officially demanded for regional statehood which likely led to regional instability that may threaten the regional peace and stability unless it is settled constitutionally and democratically (Interview, government official, 20 August, 2015; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

Proponents of the unity of the southern region further assert that as a matter- of- fact Sidaama can excel its identity promotion and ensure development by exerting its utmost effort within the current organization than strive to achieve regional autonomy since structure does not make any difference. In comparison to other ethnic groups in the region, the Sidaama performs better in terms of cultural autonomy and development. What most important in this situation is building unity through economic integration. First, it is advisable that people would better exploit the existing opportunities (Interview, non-Sidaama, 29 July, 2015). To reach at the most effective structure for the Sidaama, it requires a careful calculus. However, the most acceptable decision can be a decision to be achieved through referendum as per the constitution.

One of Sidaama official from the federal institutions argues that the Sidaama's stay in the southern region may give more impetus to invest in Hawassa and as a result it is essential to enhance its fast growth. The southern region which could be considered is epicenter of diversity of the country has a potential to attract investment and tourism. The city has recently become a

destination of industries by foreign investors and domestic investors who have also been channeling their capital in the different sectors of the economy. The city has also become an ideal choice of tourism industry. On the top of this, the federal government has established the industrial parks in the city. On the contrary, in the face of ever-expanding urbanization or investment Sidaama peasants who settled at the outskirts of the city have been either resettled or displaced with unfair compensation. Moreover, poor management of the allocated compensation has further worsened the situation of the displaced peasants. Therefore, the expanding urbanization and investment should be socio-economically beneficiary to the people concerned so that sustainable development is ensured (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 2 September, 2015).

Power and resource sharing have also been common problems within contemporary Sidaama. The ruling party could not ensure adequate representation of power and fair share of resources for every clan of Sidaama. The resentment particularly of Sidaama Hadicho people to have fair access to power and resources is worth mentioning. Their discontent is that they were least represented at different level of government and little benefit from the socio-economic system. Besides, the people want to be fairly treated in social interaction in terms of exogamous marriage and inter alia. Their claim, therefore, is not having an independent structure like special *woreda* or zone for them instead they were struggling to redress injustice mainly of inequitable share of resources and power as results of unfair treatment of the Hadicho clan of Sidaama particularly by Sidaama political elites (FGD, Darra District, 11 February, 2016).

Consequently, the Sidama Hadicho People's Democratic Organization (SHPDO) was struggling to redress the suppression of Hadicho people within Sidaama. To ensure the unity of Sidaama, the most important question is fair treatment of all the clans constituted the Sidaama than favoring a few of them maintained through neo-patrimonialism. Unbalanced level of development and suppression of some clans may threaten the unity of Sidaama. The Sidaama political elites should consequently look for a way out where every clan should have right to enjoy equal opportunities and equitable power and resource sharing (Ibid).

Furthermore, the existing low level of socio-economic development in Sidaama was exacerbated by poor governance and this has pushed different actors of the Sidaama to exert the most effort to achieve regional statehood (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 26 April,

2015). Nonetheless, the government was repressive to the opposition parties, civil societies and dissidents in Sidaama. Particularly, unemployment has been the most pressing problems in the face of its fast-growing population. Food insecurity and disease transmission have been rising than ever (Kifle, 2007; Seyoum, 1998). Particularly, limited infrastructure development in Sidaama has been obstacle to enhance its development in general (See Wolassa, 2016: 389- 392).

The favoritism policy of the regime for Sidaama like providing state presidency and key positions in governing Hawassa city within the region has led to public discontent on part of other ethnic groups in the region (Darota, 2015: 142-143). Sidaama has always been pressing to have regional statehood than stay in the current region. The ethnic-based federalism in the post-1991 Ethiopia has added an impetus to its demand since Sidaama is one of the largest ethnic groups in the SNNPR and the 5th largest in the country. The movement of regional statehood was advanced when Sidaama youth, the Ejjetto joined the struggle in 2018 (Tronvoll et al. 2020).

As a result, the formation of the southern region has not tamed the vigorous demand of Sidaama for regional statehood and counterproductive to ensure other ethnic groups rights. So, the southern region should be restructured in a way better accommodate the socio-economic and political interests of the different ethnic groups reconstituted the region (Interview, legal scholar, Hawassa, 26 May, 2015).

Sidaama people dissatisfied by the administrative structure they have assumed as one of the zones in the region presented their demand for regional autonomy in writing as per the Constitution. The request was unanimously supported by the zonal council in its 9th Regular meeting on 13 July 2005 and referred to state council in a letter dated on 15 July 2005 (Tsegaye, 2009: 62-64).

In meantime, nevertheless, the federal government through the office of the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi intervened and lobbied the people for creation of more *woredas* within the zone that may better address development and good governance which he said the pressing demand of the Sidaama was relevant. Utmost Prime Minister Meles Zenawi held public discussion at Sidaama Cultural Hall in Hawassa regarding the Sidaama quest for regional autonomy at a time ripe for referendum lobbying the Sidaama to stay in the SNNPR and first better have development through additionally created *woredas*.

The outcome of the final meeting was in favor of the position of the ruling party. Indeed, the demand, which was at the stage of referendum, was reversed by unconstitutional intervention of federal government (Kinkino, 2013; Darota, 2015). Afterwards, the same demand was dropped by the zonal government on 4 May 2006 that deferred the Sidaama people's right to statehood. (Tsegaye, 2010a: 57; Kifle, 2007). Besides, the Sidaama was promised to hold presidential position in the State and have key leadership position in the Hawassa city including the Mayor (Kifle, 2007; Darota, 2015).

The decision was welcomed by the political elites of the Sidaama whereas the oppositions including the SLM claimed that it was tantamount to trading Sidaama right to self-determination for sole political interest. Besides, the renaming of the then Debub University as Hawassa University, encouraging more Sidaama people to enter into city with land leases right and Sidaama to hold key-administration position of both the Hawassa city and the state from among the inducements Sidaama to abandon its quest for regional statehood (Interview, CSO Head, Hawassa, 23 July 2015; Kifle, 2007).

Paradoxically the federal government proposed Sidaama to abandon their quest for regional statehood despite Sidaama people's constitutional right to decide on their fate. More specifically, development and good governance were said to be the most pressing needs of the Sidaama people than regional statehood (Kinkino, 2013; Kifle, 2007). The government instead of committing to conduct a referendum worked to reverse the decision of the regional council by saying the demand for a regional status was the demand of a 'few' (Ibid). The federal government further stressed that Sidaama must have development that may help the majority to come out of abject poverty and ensure good governance (Ibid).

Surprisingly, the federal government came to the conclusion that the Sidaama's regional autonomy quest was a demand of a few, without any public opinion poll. Regardless of this, the government imposed its decision of enhancing development on the Sidaama people as the best alternative than what people had demanded, i.e. the regional statehood (Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 20 May 2015).

One tactic the federal and the regional governments followed to quell the demand for regional statehood was the establishment of more *woreda* administrations. But the newly created *woredas*

were ineffective to bring development due to inadequate funding and limited-expertise (Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 20 May 2015). On the top of this, lack of good governance and neo-patrimonial politics further undermined devolution of power to effectively serve the public interests (Ibid).

In the context of Sidaama, the politics of neo-patrimonialism influenced the Sidaama quest for regional statehood. Government provided diverse inducements to weaken the movement within Sidaama for regional statehood. Particularly, in July 2005 when the Sidaama zonal council unanimously endorsed the Sidaama demand for regional statehood, the federal government intervened and instructed Sidaama politicians who promoted regional statehood to focus on development than advocate a regional state. In doing so, the federal government provided Sidaama leaders such as the the presidency of the SNNPR and the Mayoral office of the Hawassa city (Darota, 2015).

This offer by the government was rejected by the people of Sidaama as the informal approach adversely affected the formal system (Kinkino, 2019). In this regard, the constitutional right of the Sidaama was repressed by concession put forward by the federal government (Kinkino, 2019; Wolassa, 2016). Notwithstanding the Sidaama regional statehood quest was revived vigorously during the reform process within the EPRDF party and the demand later was officially endorsed by the Sidaama Zone Council on the 18 July 2018 (Kinkino, 2019; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

As well, the inducements the federal government promised Sidaama to abandon its quest for regional state as an informal approach was worked against the constitution and the formal structure of the state. Basically, the creation of more *woredas* within the zone, promised Sidaama to hold key-positions both in the SNNPR and Hawassa city may yield the people short-term gains (Kifle, 2007; Kinkino, 2013). The working solution was the government should treat the demands of different ethnic groups for self-administration in the Southern region including Sidaama solely democratically and constitutionally. The 56 ethnic groups within the SNNPR compete for power and resource sharing in existing structure or demand for restructure may evoke instability in the region (Ghebrehiwet, 2015; Darota, 2015). The government sidelining the demands for status making preferred to hold the South as a single region. It was unrealistic to put the heterogeneous groups in a region and attempt to fairly treat them.

Ensuring mutual-benefit for the populace of the region was difficult given differences in socio-cultural, economic and geographic reality on the ground. Conflict occurring in different parts of the region may lead the government to incur unnecessary costs to ensure peace and stability (Ibid). On the other hand, in every effort, the government propagated the unity of the 56 ethnic groups as likely to be emulated while the region was predominated by diversity. It is imperative that the sustainable regional peace and stability nonetheless require the stability of units it constitutes. To this end, public demands should be treated constitutional and democratically than recourse to force (Ibid).

The status of Hawassa has become an issue determining the inter-governmental relations. The city has been contested by the Sidaama, regional state and the federal government at different point in time. On the one hand, Sidaama wants to have its statehood in which Hawassa remains to be its seat. On the other hand, the regional state council decided Hawassa to be self-administered accountable to the regional state detached from the Sidaama zonal administration in 2002 through proclamation number 51/2002 of SNNPR (Kinkino, 2019).

Furthermore, the federal government wanted to put Hawassa under its direct control and to relocate the administrative seat of Sidaama to other location. On May 24, 2002 the Sidaama people were marching to the city in a peaceful demonstration from a place called Looqqe, located at the outskirts of the city, against the decision made by the regional government to make Hawassa to be accountable to the regional government without consulting the Sidaama public (Seyoum, 2002; Tronvoll et al. 2020). According to Human rights Council-Ethiopia Sidaama people who were peaceful demonstrating on May 24, 2002 gun down by the security forces of government in which scores have died, many wounded and arrested (EHRCO, 2005).

The response from the government was violent and as a result the peaceful demonstrators encountered armed forces that fired live ammunition and killed over a hundred people, with 200 wounded, persecution and arrest of hundreds. The incidence was known as the Looqqe massacre (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2013 and Seyoum, 2002). Sadly, the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. The event has been commemorated by the natives of Sidaama in different parts of the world annually. It is one of tragic acts that left scar on Sidaama people committed by regime contrary to its doctrine of democracy and human rights (Seyoum, 2002; Kinkino, 2013). According to Amnesty International Report (2003) on Ethiopia, on 24 May 2002 in Hawassa

peaceful demonstrators were shot down by government security forces in which 25 were died from the civilians and two police officers were gun down by other police officer. Scores of people were detained and tortured. International Crisis Group noted:

Earlier, the forced merger of five ethno-national entities in today's southern region frustrated the Sidama, who settled for a separate zone instead of their own region. When the government [EPRDF] tried to settle competing claims over Awassa [Hawassa] by giving it a multi-ethnic status similar to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, a Sidama protest forced it to back down (2009: 25-26).

The ambitious 'Metropolitan Agenda' of June 2012 promoted by the regional political elites claimed to make Hawassa a 'metropolitan' city in which the regional state will have a predominate role to play in initiating a reform. The agenda calls for a mixed administration of the city that was lauded to improve governance and ensure development through 'Open-up' policy that defies the leadership provided by Sidaama. When the Sidaama people were resisted the decision of the regional government that undermines their self-administration in the city and their position in the regional state, the regional government ordered military intervention which resulted in heinous death of many, arrest and persecution of multitudes. It was finally condoned by both the federal government and as well as the state might have taken into account firm stand of the public to reverse the notorious decision at any cost. Accordingly, the government opted to appease the public than push the agenda to satisfy aspiration of its leaders' unusually to the normal practice (Kinkino, 2013).

The current flow of investment in Hawassa and the city has become one of the most important destines of tourism in the country requires; however, careful constitutional treatment is vital to keep up its fast growth. The top-down imposition regarding how to administer the city without the consent of Sidaama will have a dreadful impact (Wolassa, 2016; Kinkino, 2013).

On the other hand, multiethnic groups in Hawassa city have claimed for adequate representation in the city administration. In the meantime, Sidaama becomes the majority in the city following the expansion of the city which included the rural *kebeles*. The 2005 national election and the subsequent Sidaama quest for regional statehood contributed to the rise of the number of

Sidaama population in the city. In 2006, the ruling party, EPRDF, wanted to reverse the Sidaama regional statehood quest and proposed different inducement to calm down the popular demand. Accordingly, the inclusion of the rural *kebeles* into Hawassa city administration was backed by political motives. The rural-urban migration also contributed to the rise of the number of Sidaama people in the city. Currently, multi-ethnic groups need to have adequate representation and participation in the city administration accountable to the Sidaama regional state (Demissie, 2019).

The most common contemporary problems of the Sidaama are include: underdevelopment, unemployment, corruption, gender inequality, poor resource management, lack of fair representation and equitable share of resources within the Sidaama, at regional and federal government levels and its quota at different international organizations representing the country (Kinkino, 2019; Wolassa, 2016).

The approach taken by the regime to treat these problems of the Sidaama has remained quite differing. Some groups at the forefront the government suggest that Sidaama should first address development related problems than the quest for regional statehood (Interview, government official, Hawassa, 17 August, 2015). Other groups mainly the opposition argues that Sidaama should primarily have its right to regional statehood that buttresses the endeavors to bring development with sense of belonging (Interview, Opposition party leader, Hawassa, 30 August, 2015). Regardless of the debate, a referendum was conducted on 20 November 2019 and consequently the Sidaama regional statehood was obtained with overwhelming figure, 97.7% (Tronvoll et al. 2020). Ultimately, the Sidaama regional state became one of the member states in the FDRE on 18 June 2020 (Anadolu Agency, 2020).

In the following sub-sections of this chapter, this dissertation investigates the justifiability of the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood. This may contribute to a better understanding of the Ethiopian federalism in general and the SNNPR in particular. It also explains how the federal arrangement in the country has affected the ethnic groups demanding for self-determination taking the Sidaama as a case in point.

5.2 Sidaama Quest for Regional Statehood

The Sidaama's quest for its autonomous existence has been made in response to the repressive state structure imposed up on them following the forceful conquest that denied exercise of its cultural and linguistic autonomy. As a result, the Sidaama people made unorganized and organized struggle to reclaim their lost autonomy as it is discussed in the preceding chapters. For a brief time, Sidaama was organized as region eight along with other ethnic groups during the Transitional Government of Ethiopia.

The merger of the previously five regions (regions 7-11) to form the SNNPR led Sidaama to struggle to achieve its regional statehood since 1993 to the actual date of the referendum on 20 November 2019 that reported an overwhelming figure of 97.7% that voted yes for Sidaama regional statehood (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Wolassa, 2016). Abbink refers this as 'Just before and after 1991, the Southern Region has known some movements or groups demanding more ethnic Self-determination, autonomy or cultural rights, but not independence and secession (e.g., the Sidama Liberation Movement)' (Abbink, 1998: 69).

Sidaama had been organized at a regional level during earlier restructuring of the Ethiopian state. However, such arrangement enabled Sidaama to enjoy its cultural and linguistic autonomy than the predecessors' regimes. This was for brief time before Sidaama was merged in south region. Recently, on 20 November 2019 referendum was conducted and with overwhelming figure of voters (97.7%) Sidaama secured regional statehood (Tronvoll et al. 2020).

5.2.1 Contradictory Perspectives on Sidaama Regional statehood Quest

The advocates of unity of the South region, primarily the ruling party, EPRDF/TPLF, puts forward that Sidaama staying within the Southern region is not hurtful. As argued by the advocates the most important is to ensure equitable representation and fair share of resources wherein good governance and rule of law are exercised. The people should exhaust the opportunity available in the current structure. What most enhances the development is not the higher hierarchy of the administrative unit instead the creation of more *woredas* is the ideal choice (Interview, Government Official, Hawassa, 17 August 2015).

In the opposite, the proponents of the Sidaama regional statehood argue that reorganizing Sidaama at regional statehood level is essential because it enables Sidaama people better exercise

cultural and linguistic autonomy enhances its development and utmost achieves its constitutional right to self-determination (Interview, Academician, Hawassa, 20 March, 2015).

Consequently, the haphazardly formed southern region needs to be restructured in a way it gives recognition to the demands of its several ethnic groups. This calls for constitutional and democratic treatment of demands of the Sidaama and other counterparts within the region. Nonetheless, the government stubbornly stands to maintain the unity of particularly the Southern region in a little recourse to constitutionalism. Meanwhile, Sidaama people have persisted on its quest for regional statehood (Kinkino, 2019). Accordingly, which of the view will predominate has been left for unforeseeable future.

The government wants to keep the Sidaama in the southern region to have a region that can counterbalance formidable opposition from within and outside the region. For example, the South, by and large, has remained stable for the last couple of years while Oromia and Amhara regional states have been facing public unrest which ultimately led the government to declare state of emergency to last for subsequent six months which later the government lifted claiming for normalization of the situation (Allo, 2017).

Despite the argument of pro-unity, structure determines the equitable share of resources. Accordingly, in Ethiopia's federal system those who are organized at state level have better access to resources than local level of government. Based on this, it is indisputable for Sidaama to be organized at a state level to have better share of the 'national cake' than its current situation, being organized at a zonal level. The grant Sidaama receives from the national government meager than those at state level (Asnake, 2009; Markakis, 2011).

Sidaama can better promote its social, cultural, economic and political interests if is organized at a regional state level than being amalgamated in the current southern region. This can pave the way forward for development initiation. As well, this can promote employment opportunities for the people. However, Sidaama, the fifth largest ethnic group from eighty-five ethnic groups in Ethiopia, currently has over 4 million populations and it is the most populous ethnic group in the southern region was denied forming its own regional state (Kinkino, 2019; Wolassa, 2016). Thus, no factor may justify the denial of Sidaama's regional statehood other than undemocratic and unconstitutional treatment of the demand (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, Opposition Party

leader, Hawassa, 9 September 2015). This has resulted in discontent of the large majority that has sustained ‘love-hate’ relationship manifested in weak state-society relations with occasional confrontations (Kifle, 2007). Markakis specifically discusses as:

Sidama region became a zone in Debub kilil, but the peoples’ aspirations were for a kilil of their own with Awasa [Hawassa] as its capital. Sidama resentment was fed by a widespread feeling of having lost territory and status in the federal carve up, and the fact that with a population nearly as large as Tigray, the subsidy for Sidama zone was only a fraction of the former’s (Markakis, 2011: 286).

5.2.2 Sidaama Quest for Regional Statehood: Political Struggle and Mass Mobilization

Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) which had the goal of establishing autonomous region for Sidaama was invited to attend the national conference that was instrumental in adopting the transitional charter and creating an 87-seat council of representatives. At the time, Sidaama had obtained two seats represented by the late Woldeamanuel Dubale, leader of SLM and Betana Hotesso (Kinkino, 2013; Wolassa, 2016). Nevertheless, the political landscape had become tortuous for the opposition and no sooner the SLM entered into a tense relationship with the major power broker in EPRDF, the TPLF. The SLM appeared as partner of ‘peace and democracy’ during the transitional period was unluckily quick to retreat from the transitional government following withdrew of the OLF and its leadership to live in exile.

This marked pushing of the legitimate opposition to the margin and in lieu of it the regime rushes to create People’s Democratic Organization (PDO’s) representing different ethnic groups which supposed to be loyal to the ruling party than the former. In the context of Sidaama, the ruling party aided the establishment of Sidama People’s Democratic Organization (SPDO) to fill a political vacuum (Markakis, 2011; Wolassa, 2016). Then onwards, EPRDF/TPLF has dominated the political landscape of the country where the political space for the opposition was narrowed-down (Bahru, 2002: 265; Seyoum, 1997a: 80).

The subsequent political development has witnessed the dominance of the ruling party. Towards this end, the election of the June 1992 celebrated the landslide victory for the EPRDF/TPLF while major oppositions as discussed in the preceding chapters boycotted the election. In the

same token, the SLM boycotted the election (Merera, 2007b; Tafesse and Aklilu Abraham, 2007). Since then, the ruling party has remained to be the only winner of elections in the country.

The formation of the SNNPR state has entered into contending perspectives especially in Sidaama. Though the government justified the fact that it has been made for administrative suitability and budgetary efficiency, the opposition; however, challenges that the merger is against the right of ethnic groups to self-determination (Merera, 2011b:89; Interview, CSO expert, Hawassa, 13 June 2015). The forceful amalgamation of the 56 ethnic groups and dozens of political parties to a single state and organization known as the South Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) respectively were exceptional to the southern region (Darota, 2015).

As discussed earlier, the government wants to ensure multiethnic unity in a single region and party argues that the intention is to better pool resources for regional development. Besides, the government claims that the southern region merger was realized through the proclamation No.7/1992 that stipulates the merger of any of self-government of adjacent nations, nationalities and peoples in its consent to form a broader geographic region. Paradoxically, the very proclamation was only effective in the southern region. Despite the merger several ethnic groups in the region has been claiming for status making at different administrative unit (Tsegaye, 2010a).

Sidaama's quest for regional autonomy was also caused by lack of consultation of the people while amalgamating them in the SNNPR and lack of constitutionalism to achieve their demand for the statehood then afterwards (Kinkino, 2013; Wolassa, 2016). The period from 1993- 2005 was marked by latent mobilization of the Sidaama quest for regional autonomy even if there was no official pronounced demand at a time. The contestation for power and resource sharing in amalgamated southern region has given an impetus the Sidaama to further put pressure on establishing regional state of its own. The hallmark is that the weak and occasional conflictual relations Sidaama has with government in power (Kifle, 2007; Kinkino, 2019).

Despite the affinity, the contemporary Sidaama has mainly to those Cushites disbanded from the Sidaama and live in the current SNNP region. They nonetheless, have their own administrative units and want to buttress their unique identity. Neither the common language and culture, nor

geographic and economic conditions have paved a way for effective unity of ethnic groups in the Southern region. The southern region is so diverse in terms of language, has unbalanced level of development and geographically far apart each other (Darota, 2015; Wolassa, 2016).

The May 2005 elections promised for democratic era as competitive election for the first time in the country's history. The post-election violence; however, thwarted the expectation of many to ensure multi-party politics through electoral democracy. The SLM as well reported it won many of seats in the national parliament and state council, later left the way to the victory of party represented the EPRDF/TPLF in Sidaama following the re-votes (Zemelak, 2014:108; Wondwosen, 2008: 792 and Kifle, 2007).

The period 2005- 2015 marked the rise and fall of Sidaama's quest for regional statehood. Especially, the 2005 election was precursor Sidaama to officially demand for its regional statehood. The underlying reasons include EPRDF had faced backlash in the face of contesting opposition parties who threatened its social base by mobilizing mass during election campaign to vote for them unusually to the regime's expectation. The Sidaama public in mass as well turned to galvanize support for the opposition. At a time, the regime frustrated with unintended mass campaign supporting opposition for 2005 elections (Kinkino, 2019; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

Unexpectedly, the ruling party of the federal government was unable to effectively contest with the oppositions. As the result, oppositions won many of seats but the ruling party undemocratically reversed the results through coercion that in turn obstructed the democratization and federalization processes in the country. This provided a fertile ground for a rise of Sidaama quest for regional autonomy which was vigorously mobilized throughout Sidaama and in the Sidaama Diaspora community. Instrument of mobilization used were social network, accessible media, political parties within both the ruling and opposition parties, and Diaspora community.

Sidaama's officials' quest for regional statehood was deliberated during Sidaama Zone council meeting which was held '2nd round 9th regular session' from 14-17, July 2005 where it was unanimously approved. When the demand was brought at the stage of referendum arrangement as discussed earlier in the preceding chapters, the federal government unconstitutionally intervened and set for its proposal which basically recommended Sidaama should first develop

its region. As part of rapprochement, the regime suggested provision of a key-leadership position for Sidaama both in the city and the state. The Sidaama people were also promised Land lease in Hawassa in a large number as part of a favoritism policy. Centrally, the creation of more *woredas* structure was suggested as an ideal solution to ensure good governance and provide employment opportunity (Ibid).

Finally, the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood is both constitutional and justifiable socio-economically and territorially. The Sidaama people are the ultimate decision makers with regards to whether Sidaama should have right to regional autonomy or stay within the current SNNPR? What is constitutional is arranging the referendum than anything else? (Interview, non-Sidaama, historian, Hawassa, 27 July, 2015). Sidaama's direct relationships with federal government, as a separate regional state from the current structure, can better enhance mutual interest for both the Sidaama and the country at large (Wolassa, 2016; Interview, CSO Head, Hawassa, 25 March, 2015). As well, it enables the Sidaama to have an adequate subsidy proportional to its population and contribution to the national economy that may buttress its development endeavor and may help to create more job opportunity for its burgeoning youth unemployment (Wolassa, 2016).

It was undemocratic to delay or deny the Sidaama to make a decision utmost holding referendum concerning its quest for regional autonomy. More specifically, it is Sidaama's constitutional right to be an autonomous region, fairly benefit from the national economic growth and to have equitable representation regionally and nationally. It will have also legislative power that enables to address its pressing social, cultural, economic and political issues. On the top of these, the Sidaama requires to have committed leadership who best serves public interests than set blockade against it for fear of being rebuked by above authorities' who want instead to impose their ill-founded proposal against rule of law and constitutionalism (Opposition Party leader, Hawassa, 30 August 2015).

A study on the Sidaama's case to assess authenticity of federalism and democracy in the country was the central focus of the current research. Specifically, the study wants to look into whether there was optimism which the regime commits to realize democratization and genuine federalism in the country or not. The case of Sidaama was considered to explore the practice of ethnic federalism in the southern region. Sidaama's quest for regional statehood can be achieved or may

stay within SNNPR shall be determined by the commitment of the government to constitutionalism and democratic rule.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter examined the Sidaama quest for self-determination in the post-1991 Ethiopia focusing on its quest for regional statehood. Apparently, the Sidaama statehood quest was the long standing one. To achieve the quest, Sidaama people paid grave sacrifice mainly loss of tens of thousands of precious human lives and ravage of the region mostly during the armed struggle of Sidaama versus the military regime. The FDRE constitution stipulates the right to self-determination for every Nation, Nationality and People to the extent of secession. However, Sidaama's long-standing statehood quest have had a brief autonomy previously organized under a region eight along with a few ethnic groups lasted not over a year. Later, the Sidaama had been forcefully merged in the Southern nations, nationalities and peoples' region that constitutes 56 ethnic groups. In the subsequent period, there was rise and fall of Sidaama's quest for establishing its own regional statehood. The reaction of the government had mostly been repressive.

The Sidaama intellectuals, youth, the opposition and Sidaama Diaspora community had mostly mobilized the quest for regional statehood through the use of social media, main stream Medias, particularly like SMN, STV and OMN, mass mobilization through political parties even including the ruling party and public rally. The rally was atrociously attacked by the government like the Looqqe massacre.

In Sidaama's quest for regional statehood, individuals who have supported such demand were assassinated, jailed, displaced from their living and working places and persecuted. Despite the repressive measures government had been taking, the Sidaama regional statehood quest was revitalized time and again. Oddly, whenever Sidaama people officially expressed their statehood demand, the government usually had its proposal to impose on Sidaama than address the very demand constitutionally and democratically. The 18 July 2018 Sidaama official demand to establish Sidaama regional state had also belated at the stage of referendum reveals the undemocratic and unconstitutional behavior of the regime.

Despite the mounting pressure from the Sidaama to have its regional state as per the constitution, the reaction of the government was lukewarm while attempted to impose its proposal at the end of the day. However, the Sidaama public at forefront by Ejjeetto had been persistently pushing the official demand of Sidaama to establish its own regional state peacefully and constitutionally. To this end, the people organized different peaceful demonstration at different point in time demanding the government to respond to people's demand as soon as possible mainly in Hawassa and in the whole part of Sidaama zonal administration basically against the delay of the government particularly to inform the public about the actual date of referendum. Instead of response to Sidaama quest for regional statehood at its earliest, the government was more concerned on how to reorganize the south or keep the unity of southern region.

Finally, when Sidaama had been ready to unilateral declare its regional statehood. Nonetheless, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) informed its decision to conduct referendum in Sidaama within five Months which was made at its eve. At odds, the government was relied on its coercive machinery to subdue the peaceful and constitutional struggle of Sidaama and imposed its decision. As a result of this, unprecedented occasion occurred in the Sidaama in which scores of death tolls, displacement, and mass arrest, persecution of many people and destruction of properties. The military engagement of the government in Sidaama worsened the situation than settled the Sidaama regional statehood quest as per constitution and democratic rule. The interest of Sidaama public was to consult issues they were faced free from the coercion of the government. Therefore, they called for unconditional withdrawal of the 'temporary command post'. Meanwhile, on 20 November 2019 a referendum was conducted where the Sidaama's official demand for regional statehood was obtained with overwhelming 97.7% votes. This may provide an incentive to other ethnic groups in the SNNPR to press for similar demands. Meanwhile, the FDRE recognized Sidaama regional state as the 10th member state.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6. 1. Introduction

This dissertation employed a qualitative case study methodology. It used key-informant interviews and FGD to collect empirical data. Additionally, secondary sources of data that were drawn from different sources such as books, journal articles, proceeding papers, reports, conference papers, working papers, internet sources and others were extensively used.

The main objective of the research as outlined in chapter one was to examine the quest for regional statehood by the Sidaama ethnic group within the context of the Ethiopian federal system which allows ethno-national groups to demand regional states or even seek secession to independent statehood. The dissertation on the main considered the discrepancy that prevailed in the application of this self-determination right by considering the case of the Sidaama who have persistently demanded regional statehood starting from the 1990s. The dissertation also examined the multidimensional impacts of the federal system on the Sidaama and how the Sidaama kept alive the demand of regional statehood in spite of repressive measures of the federal (central) government which used both violence and patronage to undermine the demand.

6.2. Summary of chapters

The first chapter introduced the dissertation. Among other things, it presented the objectives, problem statement, research questions and methodology of the research.

The second chapter, presented theoretical and conceptual issues related with federalism, self-determination and mass mobilization. Accordingly, it was noted that federalism basically entails ‘self-rule’ and ‘shared rule’ in which units constitute self-governing entities and participate at a shared rule nationally guaranteed by the constitution. The chapter showed the relevance of federalism for multi-ethnic countries like Ethiopia to better manage diversity and resolve conflicts. The chapter also briefly examined how sub-national units (states) are established in federal states with the purpose of providing autonomy. It was noted in the chapter that state creation (formation of sub-national units) has been the central concern of different countries that have adopted a federal system of government. Some countries, like India and Nigeria, have a long history of state creation, while other countries persistently resist the creation of new states. State creation may either happen through constitutional means or through violent conflicts. The

chapter also outlined theories on the right to self-determination. It was noted here that regardless of lack of consensus on the right to self-determination, it has been in application in the former colonies. But it has been subject to different interpretation that may be abused by statesmen. Despite this, right to self-determination has been challenged both in matured and emerging federations.

The politicization of identity is one of the challenges to ensure stable federation in multi-ethnic federal system. Thus, political entrepreneurs may aspire to use identity as an instrument to access power and resources which may fuel conflicts of various kinds. In the context of this, Ethiopia has adopted ethnic-based federalism which requires cautious handling to manage than exacerbates conflicts. Therefore, identity politics is the major concern in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the Ethiopian federalism needs to be careful in addressing ‘unity in diversity’ to ensure stable federation. Also, ensuring the rule of law and democracy are essential for effective functioning of the federal system.

Mass political mobilization involves the participation of a large number of people either in support or against government towards achieving a common goal. The focus of this study was how the masse has been mobilized towards self-determination for ethnic groups in the federal system. The case of Sidaama was explored to understand ethnic mobilization for self-governing status in Ethiopia. More specifically, the Sidaama people were mobilized based on their identity, culture and language in harmony with the adoption the ethnic-based federal system in Ethiopia. Sidaama struggle for regional statehood went ups and downs in the course of time. The political reform in Ethiopia in 2018 responded to Sidaama’s quest for regional statehood as the forefront *ejjetto* mobilized the masse throughout Sidaama added to the efforts of Sidaama diaspora community in the different parts of the world.

The Sidaama struggle for internal autonomy employed various strategies. Use of media outlets, public rally by different segments of the society and work strike were instruments of mobilization used. Consequently, on 18 July 2018, the Sidaama Zone Council endorsed the demand for regional statehood. The mobilization continued the demand for internal autonomy despite the repressive measures the regime used to take. As a result, in a referendum conducted on 20 November 2019 the overwhelming majority of the Sidaama (over 97 %) voted for a separate region for Sidaama. Consequently, Sidaama regional state became the 10th member of the regional states in the FDRE on 18 June 2020.

The third chapter discussed the history of Sidaama local and regional administration. It was noted in the chapter that the Sidaama was autonomous up until its incorporation into the centralized and modern state of Ethiopia. The subsequent repressive rule in the Sidaama urged them to engage in both unorganized and organized form of struggle. The ‘nation building project’ which was oppressive to the Sidaama identity, language, culture and history further led to the development of Sidaama nationalism. Sidaama significantly contributed to the struggle against oppressive feudal regimes that instituted the *gabbar* system in the southern part of Ethiopia and was ruled by armed settlers. The Sidaama resistance was from the outset of conquering of Sidaama by the army of Menelik II.

Like other resistance across Ethiopia, Sidaama confronted the oppressive regimes for land, power and taxation. Also, the Sidaama elite actively participated in the student movement in the 1960’s which finally resulted in overthrow of the Haile Selassie I regime and the coming of the Derg into power. As per the Derg’s famous proclamation of the Land reform of 1975, Sidaama people were able to access to land and some level of participation and representation in the political system mostly at the grassroots level in early days of the regime. Later, the dictatorship of the regime stifled genuine public interests though Sidaama elites were assigned in higher administrative positions.

In the late 1970s, the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) was engaged in armed struggle to ensure regional autonomy for Sidaama and had its military base in Mogadishu. Accordingly, SLM is one of the armed ethno-nationalist forces confronting the Derg regime from the southern Ethiopia. It combated the Derg in different parts of the Sidaama where it was able to control the then three *woredas* and SLM partly controlled the other six *woredas*. Human Right Watch (1991) considers the war in Sidaama as the most secrete of the Derg regime in Ethiopia. After about seven years of deadly battle between the SLM and the Derg regime, the SLM was defeated by the regime. As a result, the leadership of SLM exiled and the large body of its army which was recruited from peasants joined the ordinary life in the country.

The fourth chapter dealt with post-1991 political changes in Ethiopia. In particular it discussed the processes that led to the reorganization of the administrative system of the country following the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). In the July 1991 conference that was held to establish the TGE, the Sidaama Liberation Movement was invited to attend the conference like other the armed groups in the country. The conference adopted the Transitional

Government Charter and established an 87-seat council of representatives. Sidaama were given two seats in the council of representatives. In the gradual political development, the SLM was not in good terms with the ruling party, EPRDF/TPLF. The political climate was hostile to the operation of the SLM and there was not conducive political playground for all the parties as claimed by the parties.

Therefore, the SLM boycotted the June 1992 elections following the footsteps of the major opposition; the OLF that had left for the Transitional Government and its leadership once again continued to live in exile. No sooner, the Sidaama which was previously organized as region eight with a few other ethnic groups was merged into the current southern region. This has devastated the Sidaama quest for regional autonomy. The ruling party made an ally with major ethnic groups commonly coined as PDO's and in the Sidaama the regime established its version named Sidaama People's Democratic Organization (SPDO). Landslide victory for the ruling party during the consecutive elections was part of its capacity to support establishment of its similar version of sister parties in different ethnic groups.

In contrast, the regime, which promised for democratization and federalization, ensured the dominance of a single party. There was inadequate participation of people in decision-making processes. This provides government leverage to implement its policies and strategies mainly designed at the center with a little opposition. 'Centralized democratic decision-making' principle of the ruling party underwent the decision-making power of sub-national governments. Thus, the revolutionary democracy ideology of the regime was baffling to democratization in which it was straddled between the Leninist-Marxist praxis of inner-party democracy and the liberal democracy. The ruling party EPRDF/TPLF attempted to ensure development and democracy simultaneously; however, it was remained to be a single party oligarchy.

In Ethiopian federation, the sub-units are financially dependent on grants from the center. They could not generate revenue commensurate to the responsibility they entrusted in their jurisdiction. The advocates of the Sidaama regional statehood argue that Sidaama being organized at zonal level adversely affected the grant transfer from the center. They further contend that if had Sidaama achieved statehood, it would have accessed to relatively better amount of subsidy.

The Ethiopia state restructuring along ethno-linguistic federalism partly addressed the Sidaama exercise of its cultural and language autonomy which was unlikely in the previous regimes,

which denied any room for the people to enjoy their identity especially for conquered peripheries. During the formative stage of state organization, Sidaama was recognized as one of the regions along with a few other ethnic groups which currently reconstituted the SNNPR. In the subsequent period, however, the state constituted Sidaama and four other ethnic groups merged to form SNNPR. Added to this, there was coalition of over 20 political parties in the region to form the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM). Consequently, different PDO's in the region including the Sidaama led to form overarching political party. Its branch office replaced the previous PDO which government claims to reduce competing ethnic nationalism. The opponents, however, argue that this was made to further suppress ethnic group rights.

Meanwhile, the unity of the southern region was justified on the ground that it enhances administrative efficiency and good governance for ethnic groups reconstituted in the region. Despite this argument, competing ethnic nationalism has continued in the southern state than the unity acclaimed by the ruling government. For instance, the WOGAGODA conflict which later led to restructuring of several ethnic groups at different level of government and the Silte separation from the Gurage were challenges to the ruling party to maintain the unity of the region. Today, dozens of ethnic groups in the southern region have been officially demanding regional statehood than the acclaimed unity of the region following the official demand of the Sidaama for regional statehood on 18 July 2018.

The fifth chapter discussed how the Sidaama raised the question of statehood in 2005. The zonal council formally demanded to establish its own regional state in July 2005. However, the government came up with alternative proposal for Sidaama to have new and more *woredas* and hold key positions including presidency and mayor both in the state and Hawassa city respectively. Later, as usual the government imposed its decision up on the people and the Sidaama's statehood demand was officially reversed. The decision of the government could not evade Sidaama's quest for regional statehood and it was counter-productive to the claims of other ethnic groups predominantly for equitable share of power and resources in the country. Therefore, Sidaama has been persistently demanding regional autonomy, which now once again revives in the Hawassa city and other parts of Sidaama.

Sidaama resentment has been part of the denial of right to internal self-determination which is equated with regional statehood. Most of the armed ethno-nationalist walked rough roads to

independence that led to at least a right to form their own state like TPLF and utmost secede from the country like Eritrea People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Sidaama struggle for statehood, however, only brought about short-lived regional autonomy under the Transitional Government Period. Since then, Sidaama people have been persistently demanding to establish their regional state in the Ethiopian federation. Although the constitution allows the right to regional autonomy, the unconstitutional interference of the federal government deferred the demand when it was ready for arrangement of the referendum in 2006. Sidaama people have been robustly pushing the demand for statehood once again in EPRDF/TPLF regime.

Government officials used to hold discussion with different sections of the public to assess public opinion about why a regional status matter for Sidaama. It was obvious that the demand was formally presented to the concerned councils primarily to the Sidaama zonal council. The Sidaama officially demanded for regional statehood and it was presented to the Zonal administration council in which the council unanimously approved the demand on 18/07/2018. Also, SNNPR state council endorsed the request of the Sidaama Zonal council on 2/11/2018. The council of SNNPR wrote an official letter to the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) demanding the logistic support for the referendum to be held in Sidaama on 21/11/ 2018.

Consequently, lack of constitutionalism and democratic rule either denied or deferred Sidaama regional autonomy quest. Besides, the stand of the government, particularly to maintain unity of the southern region, was a stumbling block for Sidaama to establish its own regional statehood. However, the revitalization of the quest for regional autonomy widespread in Sidaama as expected to change the course to establish its own regional state. The Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) peacefully operating in the country was also expected to push the demand forward by mobilizing the mass to realize Sidaama being a region, which was its longstanding and ultimate goal. Utmost, the Sidaama Ejjetto was relentlessly working to realize the Sidaama quest for regional statehood peacefully and constitutionally.

Moreover, Sidaama Liberation Front (SLF) and Sidaama National Liberation Organization (SNLO) in Diaspora who opt to armed struggle pushing demand of regional statehood for Sidaama pressurized the government to address the demand constitutionally and democratically. Particularly, the parties like SNLO stands to struggle for full emancipation of Sidaama which could be named external self-determination. This quest may be achieved through different means of struggle including armed engagement. The utmost pressing demand of Sidaama people at the

time was achieving regional statehood. External self-determination is likely to be triggered in case the people fade up with and the response of government continues to be repressive. This day, the Ethiopian government invited the opposition operating mostly in Diaspora to come and organize them in the country. In this regard, organization like SLF and SNLO leaders and members came home peacefully and may either continue to press their original goal of emancipating Sidaama or persuaded to accept the grant of Sidaama with regional statehood as a minimum ultimatum.

Indeed, there were conflicts of interests between the Sidaama who claimed to exhaust constitutional rights and was ready to unilaterally declare its national regional state and the government which pushed the public to wait for the five months to conduct referendum as per the decision of National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). Still, the Sidaama are uncertain about the future of Hawassa city and other parts of Sidaama. In the mentioned time, Sidaama was besieged by military and denied right public usual marches to gather at its cultural place namely Gudumaale to consult on the fate of Sidaama regional statehood. In unprecedented incidence Sidaama civilians were targeted and shot down by military that resulted in over 100 death tolls, mass arrest, and persecution of many and loss of properties.

During the process, non-Sidaama people were also killed and displaced. Property loss was recorded following the military intervention in Sidaama and Hawassa city. The public demanded unconditional release of prominent Sidaama Ejjetto members, Sidaama Media Network (SMN) managers and public officials. Also, opening of Gudumaale where Sidaama elders and public deliberate on contemporary issues the Sidaama faced and withdrawal of military contingents, the ‘temporary command post’. Nonetheless, the government wanted to impose its proposal of conducting a referendum within five months for Sidaama.

Finally, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) scheduled to conduct referendum for Sidaama on November 13, 2019 which later rescheduled it for 20 November 2019 in which those who voted for Sidaama regional statehood constitute an overwhelming figure, 97.7%. Accordingly, the Sidaama National Regional State became the 10th member state in the Ethiopian federation. As well, dozens of ethnic groups in the SNNPR have been pressurizing government to establish a separate regional state following the endorsement of the official demand at zonal council of each of them.

6.3. Key-findings

The ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia in the post-1991 period has encouraged ethnic-groups in the country to quest for self-determination at different level of government based on their identity. Sidaama is one of those ethnic groups that demanded regional statehood within the Ethiopian federal system. Accordingly, different ethnic groups have been mobilized based on their identity to be organized at different levels within the federal structure.

The Sidaama demand for regional autonomy dated back to the late 1970s. But the demand had been long-standing for several decades. This was due to the repressive responses of government to address the demand. Despite this the Sidaama quest for regional statehood persisted and became resilient by the joint effort of the elite and the wider society of the Sidaama. Specifically, the use of violence by the government to suppress the demand instead of weakening the demands, it appears to have given a cause for Sidaama activists to mobilize the masses by valorizing those who suffered from government violence. The concerted effort of the government as discussed in this dissertation to prevent the formation of the Sidaama region was rejected by the public and when the federal government allowed the holding of a referendum in November 2019, the overwhelming majority – over 97 % voted in favor of a regional status.

It is important to note that the federal government allowed the holding of the statehood the referendum, after the 2018 political changes – change of the EPRDF leadership. Following the change of leadership in Ethiopia, using the political opening, Sidaama politicians and activists revitalized the statehood demand. The Sidaama youth (*ejjeetto*) were able to mobilize the wider society to demand for the regional state. The new federal administration under the leadership of Abiy Ahmed, even if it initially seemed sympathetic of the Sidaama demand, it became reluctant to organize the referendum as per what has been stated in the laws. The reaction of militant activists to the inaction of the government precipitated into violence in July 2019. In sum, political liberalization following the 2018 political changes and the weakening of the ability of the ruling party to control the regions contributed to the holding of the referendum and finally for the formation of the Sidaama regional state.

The formation of the Sidaama region precipitated similar demands among other zones of the SNNPR. In other words, it paved the way for ethnic groups to be mobilized based on their

identity to form their own regional state separating from the SNNPR state. Accordingly, currently dozens of ethnic groups in the region have demanded to have their own regional state. The referendum to be held on 30 September, 2021 for the ethnic groups in the South western Ethiopia is a typical example of this. It is expected that this may as well encourage other ethnic groups to press for similar demands.

The Sidaama case shows two major contradictions in the Ethiopian federal system. On the one hand, fully cognizant of the fact that all the ethnic groups of the country (which are more than 80) cannot have a regional status, the constitution entitles them the same right. On the other hand, as covering the cost of many regions is too difficult, the federal government uses its power including violence to downgrade demands for regional status. This anomaly in the Ethiopian constitutional set-up appears to be destabilizing. The other problem in this process is the way the right is framed in the constitution. It is something that is going to be implemented unilaterally without the participation of other parts of the federation. This does not provide mechanisms that would allow the protection of the interests of other players raging from the region from which a new region is formed and minorities within the new ethnic region.

7. Postscript

The data for this dissertation was collected in 2015 and 2016 and much of the writing was done before the Sidaama referendum which was held on 20 November 2019. The purpose of this postscript is to provide some major highlights about the Sidaama quest for regional status since 2018.

The Sidaama quest for self-determination was promoted through mass mobilization primarily based on Sidaama identity, language, culture and political history at forefront by Ejjetto in the 2018 (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2019). The Sidaama quest for regional statehood was revitalized in the 2018 following the political reform in the country. There was public mobilization throughout the Sidaama that pressurized the government. This consequently forced the Sidaama Zonal Council to unanimously approve the demand to establish regional statehood on 18 July 2018 (Tronvoll et al. 2020). Finally, on the 20 November 2019 referendum was conducted and Sidaama regional statehood was born at overwhelming 97.7% votes (Ibid).

The Sidaama quest for regional statehood was revitalized in an unprecedented manner following the change in leadership in the former EPRDF in early 2018. After the leadership change,

Sidaama opposition parties including the SLM, intellectuals, and the youth, and the Sidaama diaspora community mounted pressure on the government.

In similar situation, social media played a significant role in mobilizing mass to achieve its goal in the Sidaama struggle for regional statehood. The Sidaama Media Network (SMN) also had its lion's share to hold platforms on the establishment of the regional statehood. There were also unprecedented public demonstrations calling for government to conduct referendum for Sidaama regional statehood as per the provision of the Ethiopian constitution. Added to this, there was three consecutive days work strike to engage the government to settle the quest for Sidaama regional state democratically and constitutionally (Tronvoll et al.2020; Shiferaw, 2019).

They used social media and satellite TV stations to mobilize the public. More specifically, the Sidaama youth (Ejjeetto) activism has played a prominent role to realize the Sidaama's quest for regional statehood. Its cooperation with the contemporary Qeerroo (Oromo Youth Liberation Movement) had significantly contributed to pressurize government to achieve the Sidaama regional statehood demand. Also, the Sidaama Media Network (SMN), Sidaama Television (STV), and OMN (Oromia Media Network) significantly contributed to the struggle for Sidaama regional statehood (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2019).

Predominantly, the Ejjeetto youth group mobilized the Sidaama public to put pressure on the government. They have pushed the goal of achieving Sidaama regional statehood through membership and volunteer contributions from different segments of the society, particularly from business persons. Since the demand was backed by political elites, they also got support from different government bodies both at zonal and regional levels. The youth movement flourished across Sidaama following the wave of popular protests that engulfed the country after the mid of 2014 (Wolassa, 2016; Tronvoll et al. 2020). The most driving goal of Ejjeetto has been to realize the long-standing Sidaama quest for regional statehood. The unity of the Sidaama and the truth (halaale) were the most guiding pillars of Ejjeetto (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2019).

The new leadership that controlled power in Ethiopia following the political changes in 2018 promised political opening up and reforms. The political changes led to the revival of Sidaama's quest for regional statehood. Accordingly, on 18 July 2018, the Sidaama zone council endorsed Sidaama's quest for a regional state.

Subsequently, the demand for regional statehood was presented to the SNNPR's state council. The SNNPR state council in its part endorsed the request of the Sidaama Zonal council as per FDRE constitution Article 47 3(a and b) and the revised constitution of SNNPR, 2001 Article 39 6(a and b) on 2/11/2018. Following this, the SNNPR council requested the National Election Board to provide logistic support for the referendum to be held in Sidaama through an official letter on 21/11/2018 (Tronvoll et al. 2020; SNRS, 2018).

Therefore, the regional council as per the constitution was expected to arrange a referendum within a year. The federal government was, however, trying to impose its solution to the problem. But, the struggle to achieve Sidaama regional statehood was intensified. The Sidaama Ejjeetto exerted pressure on the government to allow the holding of the referendum (Kinkino, 2019; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

Accordingly, Sidaama were organizing peaceful demonstrations at different times. The first demonstration, for instance, constituted Sidaama from all walks of life conducted across the Sidaama zone including Hawassa city on 21, February 2019 demanding the setting of the date for the referendum. In the second demonstration, a three-day work strike took place in Hawassa city, towns, and the whole *woredas* of the Sidaama zone from 13-15 March 2019 to put pressure on the federal government. The third demonstration was a rally led by elder women of Sidaama (*Qaricho*) and it took place in Hawassa city and the whole part of Sidaama on 9, April 2019 demanding the resolution of the Sidaama demand for a regional status through a referendum. (Shiferaw, 2019; Tronvoll et al. 2020).

As the government did not respond to the Sidaama demands positively, Sidaama activists decided to unilaterally declare the formation of the Sidaama National regional state on 11/11/11 E.C that is July 18, 2019. With the blessings of elders, the Ejjeetto took the Sidaama National Regional State (SNRS) flag at Sidaama public square (Gudumaale) in Hawassa city on 14/07/2019 expecting the official recognition of the state. On 18/07/2019, Sidaama expected the Sidaama zonal council to officially declare Sidaama national regional state since the constitution limit of a year to conduct a referendum on regional statehood nearly came to an end. In a move made to curtail the unilateral declaration of regional status, when two days were left to the expiry of the one year waiting time for a referendum, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) declared its decision on July 16, 2019, to conduct a referendum within five months. In response,

there were widespread violent protests mostly across towns in the Sidaama zone and Hawassa city. In unprecedented violence in Hawassa and other towns in the zone, non-Sidaama were targeted resulting in the displacement of many people, loss of property and life. At the same time, due to the security crackdown by the federal army and police which intervened in the zone, scores of Sidaama people lost their lives.

After the July violence in the zone, the federal government established a command post. As part of the security crackdown, several leaders of the Ejeetto, public officials and journalists were detained (Tronvoll et al. 2020; Kinkino, 2019).

Finally, the federal government scheduled to conduct a referendum on November 20, 2019. The overwhelming majority, (97.7%) supported Sidaama regional statehood. Subsequently, the Sidaama regional state was officially established on 18 June, 2020 and the Sidaama region became the 10th regional state in the Ethiopian federation (Borkena, 2020). The formation of the Sidaama region out of the SNNPR triggered several regional statehood questions in the SNNPR. There is now multifaceted contestation and negotiation about the formation of regions that are going to replace the SNNPR (Boni, 2020).

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Appendices

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Academics; Form 01**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. Are you familiar with the history of Sidaama?
2. What is your perception of the Sidaama history in relation to the Ethiopian state during the country’s successive regimes? (Menelik II, Italian Occupation, H/S/I, Derg and EPRDF)
3. How the Sidaama reacted to the rule of the successive regimes of Ethiopia?
4. How the federal arrangement of Ethiopia has addressed the Sidaama’s Question?
5. What is the level of participation, representation and satisfaction of the Sidaama in the federal structure?
6. Who is the leading beneficiary from the federal system in the case of the Sidaama?
7. Are there free and fair elections in Sidaama? How public officials assume public office in Sidaama?
8. What is the most recurring/common problem of the Sidaama today?
9. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
10. How do you predict the future of the Sidaama question?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Government Officials; Form 02**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. How do you understand the Sidaama history?
2. What were the major Sidaama questions in the pre-1991 period under the successive regimes of Ethiopia? (Menelik II, Italian Occupation, H/S/I, Derg and EPRDF)
3. What the Sidaama have been doing to get their demand addressed?
4. In your opinion, has the post-1991 federal restructuring of the Ethiopian state answered the Sidaama’s question?
5. Do you think that the federal arrangement of Sidaama in the Southern federation beneficiary to the Sidaama people? How?
6. How far the Sidaama people satisfied by the federal arrangement?
7. Do you think that the federal system beneficiary to the Sidaama people?
8. What is the major means to assume public office in Sidaama? Do you think, government officials assume office through free and fair elections?
9. What is the Sidaama’s foremost question of today and its base?
10. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
11. According to your prediction, what do you think, will be the future of Sidaama?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Opposition Parties; Form 03**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. What do you understand by the Sidaama history?
2. Do you know how the Sidaama was incorporated into the Ethiopian state and ruled by the successive regimes of Ethiopia (Menelik II, Italian Occupation, H/S/I, Derg and EPRDF)
3. Can you tell why the Sidaama engaged in the national liberation struggle and its achievement to date?
4. Is the federal arrangement meeting the Sidaama’s question?
5. According to your opinion, has the federal practice satisfied the Sidaama’s demand?
6. Who is the foremost beneficiary of the federal system from the Sidaama people?
7. Do people have the mandate to elect public officials?
8. What is the major question of Sidaama today? What its base of it?
9. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
10. What do you think, will be the future of the Sidaama people?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Civil Societies; 04**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. Do you know the Sidaam’s quest for Self-determination?
2. Is the federal arrangement fair to the question of the Sidaama people?
3. Do you think, the existing federal arrangement has addressed the Sidaama’s people’s quest for freedom?
4. Do you think, the Sidaama are satisfied by the existing federal practice?
5. Whom do you think the most benefited from the federal system within the Sidaama?
6. How public officials are elected in the Sidaama region?
7. What is the major question of the Sidaama people that you have noticed?
8. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
9. What do you think, is the future of the Sidaama people?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Non-Sidaama people; Form 05**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. How do you perceive the Sidaama people’s quest for freedom?
2. What was the Sidaama’s question in pre-1991 period?
3. Do you think that the federal arrangement of the post-1991 has addressed the Sidaama question?
4. Is the Sidaama’s configuration to the southern federation beneficiary to the Sidaama people?
5. Have the Sidaama been fairly represented and participating in the federal system?
6. What is the means to assume public office in Sidaama?
7. How do you evaluate the Sidaama’s relation with other ethnic groups?
8. What is the most common question of the Sidaama today?
9. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework.
10. What do you think the best way to address the Sidaama people’s quest for freedom and democracy?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **Elders; Form 06**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. Can you describe the origin, clan composition and history of Sidaama?
2. How the Sidaama was incorporated into the Ethiopian state and ruled under the successive regimes? (Menelik II, Italian Occupation, H/S/I, Derg and EPRDF)
3. In your opinion what were the causes making for the Sidaama national liberation struggle? What were its achievements to date?
4. Do you think, the post-1991 federal arrangement has answered the Sidaama question?
5. According to your understanding, is the present federal system allows participation and representation for the Sidaama?
6. Whom has the federal system benefited the most among the Sidaama?
7. Are there free and fair elections in Sidaama? How public officials come to power?
8. What is the major contemporary question of the Sidaama?
9. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
10. How do you see the future of Sidaama question?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.

Interview Guide for PhD Dissertation on ‘The Federal Arrangement and the Sidaama’s Quest for Self-determination in the Post-1991 Ethiopia’ **FGD; Form 07**

Instruction: This interview guide is prepared purely for the academic purpose, i.e., for conducting a PhD study at Addis Ababa University. The information that you would provide shall be kept confidential and if you want the name can be anonymous. I appreciate your willingness to commit your time to forward your views on the subject.

1. Can you describe history of Sidaama people?
2. How the Sidaama were incorporated into the Ethiopian state?
3. How the Sidaama people were ruled under different regimes of Ethiopia and its reaction?
4. Has the federal arrangement answered the Sidaama question?
5. Who is the most beneficiary from the federal system within the Sidaama?
6. How Public officials are assuming power in Sidaama?
7. What is the most common question of the Sidaama today?
8. In your opinion which one is beneficiary for the Sidaama people: to have its own independent region or to remain in the current SNNPR state framework?
9. What will be the future of the Sidaama’s question?

N.B Further follow up questions could be posed by the interviewer during the interview.