



COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
CENTER FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS AND RECONCILIATION
PRACTICES FOR PEACE IN ETHIOPIA: PATHWAYS FOR
SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN ETHIOPIA.**

BY: JIREGNA TADESE

FEBRUARY, 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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BY

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FEBRUARY, 2020

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, and all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full in any other university.

Jiregna Tadese Terfa

Signature_____

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Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| ACLED | Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset |
| AHRE | Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia |
| ASG | Albright Stonebridge Group |
| BMZ | German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| CBT | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration |
| DPI | Democratic Progress Institute |
| EPRDF | Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front. |
| FDRE | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia |
| HOPR | House of Peoples Representatives |
| ICTJ | International Center for Transitional Justice |
| IDEA | International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. |
| IEP | Institute for Economics and Peace |
| IPI | International Peace Institute |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| LTDH | Ligue tunisienne des droits de l'homme (Tunisian League for Human Rights) |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OLF | Oromo Liberation Front |
| OPDO | Oromo People Democratic Organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PM | Prime Minister |
| PTSD | Posttraumatic Stress Disorder |
| SNNPR | Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region |
| SOLiD | South Med Social Dialogue. |
| SSR | Security Sector Reform |
| TPLF | Tigray People Liberation front |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |

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| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UGTT | Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (Tunisian General Labour Union) |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UTICA | Union Tunisienne de l'industrie, du Commerce et de l'artisanat |
| WFD | Westminster Foundation for Democracy |

Abstract

Ethiopia is undergoing massive political reform since April 2018. However, the sustainability of this political reform is depending on to what extent the reform is capable of identifying and addressing major national issues through national consensus and reconciliation. The study aims at exploring the major national consensus agenda and the need for national reconciliation at one hand and the effective implementation of the political reforms initiated in Ethiopia to build sustainable peace. The qualitative research methodology was employed and semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted. The key informants are selected purposely from different professions and political affiliation. The data collected from all interviews were analyzed through critical discourse analysis and secondary data had been analyzed systematically. The study explored that the FDRE constitution, federalism, institutional independence, democratic system, national flag, national emblem, national heroes, economic model or economic policy, privatization, government interference in the market and the issue of equal distribution of resources, political culture, culture of tolerance, and promoting cultural identity are major national issues that should be addressed through national consensus. On the other hand, historical narratives, past regimes injustice and the issue of social cohesions, political and economic marginalization, ethnic extremism, and the issue of boundary demarcation are major national issues that should be solved through national reconciliation in order to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. The available legal, policy and institutional frameworks are enough to conduct national consensus and reconciliation to bring fruitful outcomes. Despite critical challenges, the current political reform also has the potential to transform the fragility of Ethiopia situation into consolidated democracy and able to build sustainable peace. The medemer discourse, on the other hand, is one of the most important principles of togetherness, unity, and forgiveness that bridges the horizontal relationship among the societies and brings sustainable peace in Ethiopian. The general public is willing to address the national issues through national consensus and reconciliation but the political elites are manipulating their political interest over national issues. The national consensus and reconciliation model of Tunisia, South Africa, and Rwanda are the best models that the reconciliation commission of Ethiopia should take into consideration to bring successful outcomes. Key words: National consensus, National reconciliation, National dialogue, sustainable peace, political reform.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Situated in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country and home to more than 80 ethnic groups. Ethiopia is an important player in Africa, exerting considerable political and economic influence, regionally and continent-wide. It is also in the middle of a political and economic transition with a new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D), who has been pursuing reforms at an unprecedented pace and scope (ASG, 2018:1). The new Prime Minister has apologized to the population for the mistakes of the past, ended the border war with Eritrea and dismissed key government officials from the old regime. He also lifted the state of emergency and liberalized the economy (Weber, 2018:1). The current political reform trend and scope is a departure in terms of operationalization from the past reform intervention in the country. However, the success of reform will depend in large measure on the ability to build national consensus on the reform agendas and on the reopening of the economic and political space in Ethiopia in the manner that all citizens believe included and benefitting (ASG, 2018:1).

Ethiopia has for long time maintained a poor record of human rights. Since the turbulent elections in 2005, the space for diverse political actors and opinions has gradually been truncated and put under control. (Harald, Lie, & Mesfin, 2018:1). After the adoption of the infamous Anti-terrorism proclamation in 2009, Ethiopian authorities have charged hundreds of citizens with terrorism by criminalizing and politicizing dissident acts. Journalists, political party leaders and members, bloggers, other human right defenders and peaceful demonstrators have in different times been arrested by Ethiopian authorities, some facing lengthy prison sentence (AHRE, 2018:9). Harald, Lie, & Mesfin argued that the previous political reform situation of Ethiopia have found that there is narrow political space, and the fact that, in many of the so called elections in the country, the EPRDF has captured nearly all parliamentary seats, which has made, the peaceable political dialogue and reforms difficult (Harald et al., 2018:1).

Despite impressive economic success, the government's restrictive and centralized approach to citizen governance, along with its poor human rights record and high youth unemployment levels led to large protests over the course of the past four years. In 2015 the two large ethnic groups in Ethiopia, the Oromo and Amhara began taking to the streets to demand land reform, full political participation, and an end to human rights abuses in a country (ASG, 2018:2). The protests took place mainly in the Oromia region and spread across different part of the country. It is generally seen as part of a movement that began in April-May 2014, when students across several locations in the region protested a plan to expand the boundary of the capital, Addis Ababa (hereafter, the Addis Ababa Master Plan). The 2014 protests, led by university students, were comparatively small and situated in the Western part of Oromia. Then after the demonstrations quickly gained momentum, and farmers, workers and other citizens soon joined the students in collective marches, boycotts and strikes (ACLEDA, 2017:1).

Kassa argued that systemic, pervasive and institutional discrimination prevailed in the military and security apparatus where more than 95% of the senior officer corps stayed from the same ethnic group. The ruling elite with their kinfolk embezzled public funds, and amassed wealth through corruption, graft, tax evasion, and illegal money laundering (Kassa, 2018:4). The continuation of the protests revealed widespread suspicion of the Ethiopian regime and enduring grievances among different ethnic groups. The overall and root causes of grievances are related to the way federalism is implemented and power and resources are shared and the systems that maintained this unjust scenario for many years, with adequate response to the root causes. The Ethiopian government's unrelenting use of lethal force against largely peaceful protesters has played a major role in bolstering a shared sense of oppression among the Oromo and other ethnic groups (ACLEDA, 2017:1).

Despite fragility of the state, Ethiopia's third prime minister is off to a promising start. Abiy's April 2 inaugural address promoted messages of national reconciliation, justice, and accountability, including a commitment to crack down on corruption. His listening tours across the country to meet with Ethiopia's various ethnic groups, youth, and opposition parties and the attempt to secure legitimacy, in the context of the so far unelected government of Ethiopian, have been well received, as has his commitment to the private sector to address obstacles that

frustrate business development and to open up Ethiopia's economy (ASG, 2018:3). In the context of this research problem background, the current research works on the role of national consensus and reconciliation practices for sustainable peace in Ethiopia is aimed to explore the agenda of the national consensus and reconciliation practices in order to contribute for the current national consensus and reconciliation initiative in Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the most challenging issues facing the international community is the peaceful resolution of numerous harsh and violent conflicts. The challenge is posed on two levels. The first involves the temporary management of the conflict; it usually involves negotiation, mediation and arbitration, and consensus among leaders and elites, although it still requires support by the general population. The second, deeper level involves reconciliation, which is a very important element of peacebuilding and involves a number of actors of different social levels that participate synergistically and complementarily in that process (Kovačić et al, 2017:11-12).

In the field of conflict resolution, negotiated rule making, and collaborative problem solving, stakeholder dialogues are viewed as processes of consensus building. It is a process of seeking unanimous agreement. It involves a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. Consensus has to be reached when everyone agrees they can live with whatever is proposed after every effort has been made to meet the interests of all stakeholder parties. The consensus-building approach has a number of purported instrumental advantages over formal (non-participatory) policy-making procedures. It claims to: reduce conflict, increase compliance, improve policy, prevent litigation, and promote public participation. Involving stakeholders and reaching a mutual agreement among them is assumed to decrease the chance that they will not comply with the policies that result from the process or and that they will go to court to fight against the proposed policies. A consensus-building approach also claims to have a number of secondary effects such as: building new relationships and trust, creating new partnerships and organizations, and establishing joint learning (Kerkhof, 2006:282).

There is a consensus that reconciliation involves the formation or restoration of genuine peaceful relationships between societies and that this requires extensive changes in the socio-psychological repertoire of group members in both societies. To build long-lasting peace, national reconciliation is the most effective way for divided societies to confront threats to their stability, and to promote durable peace as well as viable democratic institutions and practices (Castillo, 2016:270). Torrent argued that reconciliation leads people to collectively internalize the meaning of peace and accept the differences of the other. In some way, through a reconciliatory process, one integrates the essence of “the other” creating thus a new common or shared identity (Torrent, 2011:24). It can be said that reaching reconciliation is mainly based on radical changes in psychosocial relations both in relation to one’s own group and its thinking, as well as towards the recent opponent, which includes the transformation present at the emotional level - transforming the collective sense of fear and hatred into hope and positive orientation towards a common future (Kovačić, 2017:11).

Ethiopia has suffered structural as well as human identity crises for over a century. The Ethiopian political structure has been in a dilemma of being an empire, nation state, multinational state and even a complex chiefdom. Many Ethiopians have sacrificed their life to resolve these dilemmas while not few choose to remain in denial (Lenjiso, 2018:1). Kebede also argued that the institutional building and the democratization process of Ethiopian is aborted, it is a transition in which the overall outcome of this process manipulated, dictated and controlled by the party in power as a project of political state capture. This is because, the political system of Ethiopia is not as such a product of political bargain, genuine competition and a national consensus of an inclusive approach to governance. It is rather a winner-take-all mentality outcome of political craftsmanship of the EPRDF (Kebede, 2013:273).

Geda argued that Ethiopian governments have never been accountable to the people. This created a fertile ground for insurrection and offered opportunities for people to express their grievances or greed only through violence, often at negligible opportunity cost to the opposition but relative high cost to the incumbents (Geda, 2004:25-26). The political system of Ethiopia is characterized by political and economic state capture, absences of genuine competition among political parties, weak and vulnerable national governance institutions, such as the parliaments, judiciary and

corruption watchdog agencies (Kebede, 2013:273). Apart from structural and institutional problems, there were political injustice, marginalization, religious and ethnic conflicts, political exploitation, violence and genocide in history of state building. These seeds of past injustice and conflict are growing rapidly in the current political, social and economic arena of the country. At the same time exacerbating and being as fuel for the causes of different displacement and conflicts in different parts of the country (Yarnell, 2018:4).

Previously the government has closed doors for inclusive national dialogue, consensus and reconciliation to solve the country's problems. The lack of national consensus on major national issues and lack of national reconciliation is leading the country into fragility and political deadlock. At the same time, it is hampering the economic development and harmonies relationship among the peoples. Salih, Eshete, & Assefa argued that, for the political reform process to be successful and national consensus and reconciliation to be fruitful, government and major political forces (such as civil society, media, women, youth, professionals, workers and peasant associations, among others), must go beyond canvassing the opinions of officially appointed committee members, experts, and opinion leaders. The democratic and political space for democratic engagement must be expanded to ensure civic organizations participated in the political reform process. Therefore, without creating a public space for civic engagement in the political reforms process, the reforms will not be politically, socially or culturally embedded, peoples-centered and owned or potentially fall-short of meeting the national aspirations for sustainable peace and development (Salih,Eshete, & Assefa, 2018, p.1).

Lenjiso also argued that successful national dialogue and consensus in Ethiopian needs to ensure a chorus of different voices to become a united front that advocates for a common agenda of peace, unity and prosperity. For this context sensitive dialogue roadmap is necessary. One of the prerequisites for this context sensitive dialogue roadmap is ensuring participation of the major political and social stakeholders. They must submit their contribution on the format and the content of the national dialogue itself. Then, thoroughly discuss the ideas presented by each political and social stakeholder and use that as an input to develop an inclusive roadmap, model and its implementation strategy. This step can also be used to define “inclusivity” itself. (Lenjiso, 2018:1).

Therefore, studying national consensus and reconciliation to identify scientifically the reform pathways for sustainable peace is imperative at this time. The significance of studying national consensus and reconciliation and indicating pathways is important to inform policy. However, much studies have not been conducted about the issue in Ethiopia. A study result is available, as far as the researcher has conducted the extensive review, "pardon, amnesty and the prospect of national reconciliation in Ethiopian; the law and practice," by Abera Nigus, in 2006. The study focuses on the concept of reconciliation in dispute resolution of collective criminal act and effect it resulted in the disputed parties. The study also discusses the criminal application of reconciliation in Ethiopia and its prospect based on the prevailing practice of the country. However, the previous study does not address: National consensus on major issues as pathway to sustainable peace; National reconciliation on major conflicts issues as pathway to sustainable peace; Therefore, the current study fills the research gap: national consensus and reconciliation, in the framework of pathways for effective reform in Ethiopia. To fulfill this, the study aims at exploring the major national consensus agenda items and the need for reconciliation at one hand and tries to recommend the pathways for effective implementation of national consensus and reconciliation reforms initiated by the current government of Ethiopia. Therefore, the study is comprehensive, timely and links sustainable peace with national consensus and reconciliation.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to explore the major national consensus and reconciliation agenda for indicating the pathways for implementation of reforms leading to sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Based on the above general objectives the following key specific objectives are identified. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore the major national consensus and reconciliation agenda in Ethiopia.
2. Assess the reforms underway towards building sustainable peace in Ethiopia.
3. Analyze the link between national consensus, reconciliation and sustainable peace in the context of the demand for reform pathways in Ethiopia.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the major national consensus and reconciliation agenda in Ethiopia?
2. To what extent the reform underway supports towards building sustainable peace in Ethiopia?
3. What is the link between national consensus, reconciliation, and sustainable peace in the context of the demand for reform pathways in Ethiopia?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study has academic and policy justifications. Even though several studies are available in other countries, much studies had not been conducted concerning the issue in the Ethiopia contexts. This study would help the academia by adding new findings. This would in turn contribute a new result for the existing literature. It can be also a baseline for the future studies since the problem is not researched very well. So, this study would add new findings and perspectives for the academic literature and academia in general.

The study also has a policy justification. The country is trapped between the successful achievements and several challenges. It's also in the middle of political and economic crises. The reform is at the crossroad and unable to address the potentials threats. Also achieving tremendous success. This study would help the policy makers as well as the driver of the political reform to identify major national issues that should be given priority in order to succeed the current political reform. It would also help the reconciliation commission by showing them in which major conflicting issues they should focus in order to bring successful outcomes and sustainable peace.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are critical issues in conducting research. It helps to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable manners from the part of the researcher. The study took into consideration the general research principles and those that are more specific to the type of research while collecting the data. Based on this, the study considered the following ethical issues. All research participants who were involved in the study were part of the research

based on their consent and willingness. Research participants had been informed about the objectives of the research before starting the interview and then started interviewing after getting their good face. The tape recording also used based on their knowledge. Respect for anonymity and confidentiality is another ethical issue. The research participant's identity did not link with their responses and free to give and withhold as much information as they wish. Research participant's private information such as beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and records did not be shared without their knowledge or consent. The last but the most important ethical issue is researcher's free from bias. The study selected the research participants based on inclusive selection criteria. They were from different professions and political affiliations. Finally, the researcher was free from personal bias and emotion in analyzing the collected data.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of the study is delimited to exploring the major national issues that should be addressed through national consensus and reconciliations and the progress of the current political reform, the challenges and its potentials to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Since the problem is not researched very well in the Ethiopian context, this study can be served as a baseline for future studies.

To a certain extent, this study may have some limitations due to the broad nature of the study and large numbers of actors that should be engaged in the study. This, however, would not negatively affect the validity of the overall findings of the study. Indeed, an attempt is made to counterbalance such limitations by cross-checking data gathered through secondary sources as extensively as possible.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five different but interrelated chapters directed towards the main objectives of the study. The first chapter deals with the introductory sections of the study. This section deals with the introduction part of the study, objectives of the study, statement of the problem and goes until the organization of the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review. In this section, the study reviews related literature which are conceptual and analytical issues that are relevant to the issue under investigation. Chapter three of the study deals with the

methodological part of the study, it deals with instruments of data collections, sources of the data and methods of data analysis. The fourth chapter deals with the discussions and findings parts of the study. It deals with exploring the major findings of the study and discuss the research questions in detail. Chapter five is the final section of the study, it deals with the conclusion and the recommendations part of the study.

Chapter Two:

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Conflict

The word conflict is derived from the Latin word *conficere* meaning to “strike together”. Conflict is a state of human interaction where there is disharmony or a perceived divergence of interests, needs or goals. There is a perception that interests, needs or goals cannot be achieved due to interference from the other person or people (Wyk, 2007). It’s an inevitable aspect of human interaction; conflict is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflicts can be waged violently, as in a war, or nonviolently, as in an election or an adversarial legal process (Snodderly, 2011:14). Lexically, conflict means fight, struggle or battle, clash, contention, confrontation, a controversy or quarrel, active opposition, strife or incompatibility, to meet in opposition or hostility, to contend, to be contrary or to be at variance” (Tariku & Seid, 2013).

Conflict is more than mere difference; it arises from a direct clash in the values or goals of protagonists. The presence of conflict thus infers none other than a win/lose outcome, in which one set of values or goals takes precedence over others. Power is at the heart of this dynamic; conflict is a struggle for power, i.e., the capacity to enact values or goals that annul those of others. And the process of articulating these values and goals among groups thus becomes, by necessity and definition, a political one (Hayward, 2018:589). In understanding conflict, it is imperative to examine the sources of discontent and animosity, to identify the phases of evolving relationships between adversaries, and to illuminate the escalation of their struggles and the eventual recession of violent cycles to the peaceful resolution of differences (Jeong, 2008:4).

The sources of adversarial relationships are not limited to tangible economic interests or control over power, but also extend to value and identity differences. The antagonisms in question may arise from interpersonal tensions between government leaders, labor management issues comprising multinational corporations and manual workers, disagreements between states on foreign policy directions, or international quarrels over trade imbalances and disparities in decision-making power at the World Bank or other international organizations (Jeong, 2008:5).

2.2 Peace and Sustainable Peace

The word “peace” evokes complex, sometimes contradictory, interpretations and reactions. For some, peace means the absence of conflict. For others it means the end of violence or the formal cessation of hostilities; for still others, the return to resolving conflict by political means. Some define peace as the attainment of justice and social stability; for others it is economic well-being and basic freedom (Snodderly, 2011:40). Peace in classical Judaism was seen as a necessary precondition for the preservation of the existence of humanity and also a requirement for its development. This means that peace was defined with an explicit reference to the internal working structures of a society: source, creator, supporter, multiplier and protector of all that is good in heaven and earth. In the Old Testament, the term Shalom is used to define the conformity between God and man, and the condition for peace is the total defeat of the enemies of Israel. Peace is given through the power of the divine ruler, from whom the granting of internal justice is also dependent (Schilling, 2012:18).

“Sustaining peace,” as enshrined in the joint General Assembly/Security Council resolutions on peacebuilding, offers a new approach to enhance the capacity of societies not only to address the immediate consequences of conflict but also to prevent the outbreak of violence using peaceful means (Mechoulan et al., 2016:1). It also requires a well-functioning justice system that offers citizens, regardless of social status, a more attractive alternative to violence to resolve personal and political disputes. If people feel they have no access to justice to address their legal needs and to assert and protect their rights, they are more likely to resort to violent means, undermining the establishment and consolidation of peace (UNESCO, 2016:3).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) strongly emphasizes the interconnection between peace and development, linking peace even closer to inclusive governance, participation, rights and security. It asserts categorically that ‘there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development’. It sets targets for reducing all forms of violence in all countries, ensuring access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. It underpins the need to address the root causes of conflict by synergizing the imperatives of peace, sustainable development and human rights, ‘from conception to execution’ (UNESCO, 2018:62).

Efforts to sustain rapid economic growth must be accompanied by interventions aimed at creating durable institutions and strengthened public organizations responsible for designing and implementing policies and strategies for ensuring lasting peace and human security. Creating durable institutions for peace and security begins with an articulation of a clear vision, policy and strategy on peace-building (UNDP, 2012:5). Sustaining democratic peace requires in particular strengthening good governance and accelerating institutional reform. It calls for a radical reform of the state and profound changes in the styles of government. Post-conflict peace-building entails integrating the intertwined agendas of peace, democracy and development. Societal reconciliation, democratization and economic reconstruction are seen as three mutually reinforcing dimensions of sustainable peace, development and democracy (Santiso, 2002:4). Peace does not exist in its own right. The relative peace of a society is underpinned by the material and cultural circumstances of that society, whether it is the efficiency of the formal institutions of government, the strength of the economic conditions, or the strength of the cultural and informal norms that relate to corruption (IEP, 2013:6).



Figure 1. Pillars of positive peace

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

2.2.1 Concept of Negative Peace

Negative peace refers to the absence of war, fear, direct violence and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. It requires institutional reforms to prevent acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals or groups. Negative perception of a former enemy or conflicting party is neutralized or shifted after a violent conflict is settled. In this scenario, there may be little or no hostility but the conflicting parties may be skeptical to engage in positive interactions that might lead to building trust. During the period of negative peace, there is no emphasis on dealing with the causes of violence or conflict. Rather, it is limited to addressing the manifestation of factors that led and lead to violence (Schilling, 2012:22).

Galtung defines 'positive peace' as the absence of structural violence, which concerns structure-generated rather than actor-generated harm to human beings. Structural violence refers to the social, economic and political conditions embedded in unequal, unjust and unrepresentative social structures that contribute systematically to violence, inequality and injustice, or lack of access to social services contributing to death, poor health, or the repression of individuals or groups of individuals within a society. These conditions threaten the very survival of an individual – his or her general physical well-being, personal identity and freedom of choices (UNESCO, 2018:30).

2.2.2. Concept of Positive Peace

Positive peace is the absence of indirect and structural violence, the absence of unjust structures and unequal relationships; it refers to peace on different levels like behavioral, attitudes or structures. Positive peace is filled with positive contents such as the restoration of relationships, the constructive resolution of conflict and the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population. Positive peace encompasses all aspects of a good society that one might envisage for oneself: universal rights, economic well-being, ecological balance and other core values. It describes a situation where justice and fairness reign, it seeks to promote and improve the quality of life (Schilling, 2012:23).

2.3 Conflict Transformation

Transitions from violence to peace in protracted social conflicts stretch far beyond the signature of a peace accord between warring parties, and demand sustained third-party support for peacebuilding, development and reconciliation programs in post-settlement societies. The systemic and web approaches to intervention especially call our attention to the need for linking short, medium and long term visions and processes, enhancing cross-sector coordination among external and internal agents of peaceful change, and encouraging more coherent vertical linkages between macro-political, civil society and community based initiatives (Dudouet, 2006:67).

Conflict transformation is a recently developed concept that emphasizes addressing the structural roots of conflict by changing existing patterns of behavior and creating a culture of nonviolent approaches (Snodderly, 2011, p.15). It is an approach that seeks to transform the very systems, structures and relationships which give rise to violence and injustice. It is a long-term, gradual process which must involve wide-ranging and comprehensive actions and actors across different sectors of society as they work together to develop strategic goals for change (Balfe & Witt 2016:7). It is concerned with addressing the various manifestations of conflict and the underlying conditions, attitudes and relationships that give rise to, and sustain violent conflict, with a view to developing sustainable peace (BMZ, 2010:12). Conflict transformation is about transforming the way that societies deal with conflicts, moving them from violent to nonviolent means. Its goal is to build just, sustainable societies that resolve differences nonviolently (Frazer & Ghetta, 2013:6).

Conflict transformation proposes an integrated approach to peacebuilding that aims to bring about long-term changes in personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. Recognizing that societies in conflict have existing systems that still function, conflict transformation focuses on building up local institutions as well as reducing drivers of conflict (Snodderly, 2011:15). By focusing on the wider social, political and cultural sources of a conflict, conflict transformation goes beyond the concept of conflict management, which focuses on the constructive handling of conflict so as to contain it and prevent the use of violence (BMZ, 2010:12). Conflict transformation can take place in at least four different ways: Actor Transformation, which involves either major internal changes within the original parties to the conflict or the addition

[and, presumably, subtraction] of new parties to the conflict. Issue Transformation, which involves an alteration of the political agenda of the conflict through a transformation of what the conflict is “about”. Rule Transformation, which involves a change in the norms involved in the conflict and the limits within which the parties conduct their relations. Structural Transformation, which involves changes in the whole structure of inter-party relations (Mitchell, 2002:6). In short, transformation involves a marked increase in the parties’ sense of empowerment or self-determination, and in their capacities for recognition or responsiveness to others – and this is the objective of a transformative approach to a conflict, rather than either simply reaching an agreement about the issues that appear to divide the parties or – even less desirably – having intermediaries construct a settlement to which the parties are then expected to adhere (Mitchell, 2002:11).

2.4 Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a program designed to address the causes of conflict, the grievances of the past and to promote long-term stability and justice. Often it is understood as the phase of the peace process that takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping. On the other hand, peacebuilding is an umbrella concept that encompasses not only long-term transformative efforts, but also peacemaking and peacekeeping (Schilling, 2012:28). The ending of overt violence via a peace agreement or military victory does not mean the achievement of peace. Rather, the ending of violence or a so-called ‘post-conflict’ situation provides “a new set of opportunities that can be grasped or thrown away”. The international community can play a significant role in either nurturing or undermining this fragile peacebuilding process (Lambourne, 2004:2). Peacebuilding has become an overarching term for an entire range of actions designed to contribute to building a culture of peace. The term peacebuilding became part of the policy vocabulary through the United Nations Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace Making and Peacekeeping of 1992. Peacebuilding has often been described in the post-conflict context (though the term is used by some before and during conflict) as action to identify and support measures and structures that will strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict (OECD, 2008:15).

Peacebuilding was first defined as action to prevent the recurrence of violence after a peaceful solution had been achieved. Since then peacebuilding has also come to refer to action carried out to prevent conflict. Originally conceived in the context of post-conflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction, the term peacebuilding has more recently taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons, supporting broad-based education, and aiding in economic reconstruction. In a larger sense, peacebuilding involves a transformation toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance structures—the long-term process of addressing root causes and effects, reconciling differences, normalizing relations, and building institutions that can manage conflict without resorting to violence (Snodderly, 2011:41).

Peacebuilding consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation and societal transformation. Peacebuilding is a long-term process that occurs after the violent conflict has slowed down or come to a halt. In a narrower sense, peacebuilding is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building and political as well as economic transformation. This consists of a set of physical, social and structural initiatives that are often an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation (Schilling, 2012:29). It covers a broad range of measures that are implemented in situations affected by violent conflict for the explicit purpose of promoting lasting and sustainable peace. Thus, peacebuilding is defined in terms of its context and its purpose. Many of the elements of peacebuilding are the same as measures used in development co-operation in peaceful areas, but since the context and purpose are different, they require an extra-sensitive approach to what should be done and how it should be done. Justice and order are important aspects of peacebuilding in a post-conflict situation where there is a need to end violence, disarm combatants, restore the rule of law, and deal with the perpetrators of war crimes and other human rights abuses. The need to overcome or transform the enmities developed during a violent conflict and “build bridges between ordinary people” suggests a need for reconciliation (Lambourne, 2004:4).

2.5 National Dialogues and Consensus Building

Dialogue is a conversation or exchange of ideas that seeks mutual understanding through the sharing of perspectives. Dialogue is a process for learning about another group's beliefs, feelings, interests, and needs in a non-adversarial, open way, usually with the help of a third-party facilitator (Snodderly, 2011:19). In any society where normal political processes and governance institutions are unable to channel conflict over the fundamental principles and structures on which the state is based, national dialogue offers a potential process to generate a new understanding of state-society relations. Such national dialogue may become a pivotal historical moment, reconstituting the social contract (Barnes, 2017:5).

National dialogues are nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far reaching political transitions. In conflict situations, national dialogues present a valid way to overcome internal rifts and to rebuild relations between the state, its institutions and different groups in a conflict-torn society, to ideally reach a new social contract between the various interest groups to the conflict (Blunck et al., 2017:21). Depending on the context, National Dialogues can be employed as mechanisms for (a) crisis prevention and management, a shorter-term endeavor, undertaken strategically as a means to resolve or prevent the outbreak of armed violence, breaking political deadlocks and reestablishing minimal political consensus (e.g. Tunisia); or (b) fundamental change, with a longer-term trajectory, envisioned as a means to redefine state society relations, or establish a new 'social contract' through institutional and constitutional changes (e.g. Yemen).

National dialogues are negotiating mechanisms intended to expand participation in political transitions beyond the political and military elites. Their ambition is to move away from elite level deal making by allowing diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations (Papagianni, 2017:1). It is becoming an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and political transformation. In the past several years, national dialogues have been proposed or carried out in a diverse group of countries and circumstances. These processes, initiated through political pacts, civil society activism, internationally-brokered peace agreements, or other mechanisms, have been used to address a wide variety of issues (Murray & Stigant, 2015:1).

National Dialogue is an inclusive process for building national consensus around social, political or economic concerns through an open and tolerant exchange of ideas. To be considered a National Dialogue, the process must be on a national scale and address national issues, and involve honest and constructive dialogue (Murray, 2017:4). It is also being used to refer to processes that are the antithesis of political transformation and peace. They have been used to stall democratic processes and postpone elections, bolster political elites' efforts to maintain the status quo, and assuage the citizenry's grievances without any real intention to act on concerns expressed (Murray & Stigant, 2015:4).

Initiating, conducting and facilitating dialogue has become one of the key tools in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In support of the objectives of conflict transformation, comprehensive dialogues are seen as seminal for the transformation of relationships, the promotion of empathy, and the rapprochement of particular groups after conflict (Planta et al., 2015:4). National Dialogues attempt to bring together all relevant national stakeholders and actors (both state and non-state), based on a broad mandate to foster nation-wide consensus with respect to key conflict issues. As such, they offer a useful approach in promoting public participation and helping develop a new social contract. Often following severe national crises or open armed conflict, they are set in motion to move away from elite deal making, allow for broader societal participation and gather popular consent and support for fundamental political reforms and constitutional change in periods of political transition (Blunck et al., 2017).

Political parties are fundamental pillars of democracy. In young and post-conflict democracies in particular, they have important tasks of undertaking reforms that promote democracy, development and resolve conflicts in a sustainable manner. Political party dialogue is often the only sustainable way to address head-on the underlying structural and/socio-political bottlenecks for political reform. In polarized societies, political party dialogue is the best path to achieve inclusive solutions to institutional weaknesses, or politics of identity and religion/region. Political party dialogue also contributes to peace building, democratic consolidation and sustainable socio-economic development by rallying political parties around a shared national development agenda. In this way it can safeguard post-conflict initiatives such as capacity

building for public institutions. Strengthening or repairing relationships, and nurturing a sense of political parties as competing colleagues—not enemies—underpins political party dialogue. It allows the participants to reflect, exchange views, outline their respective positions, and undertake steps towards reconciling these positions in order to achieve a common vision. Political party dialogue can take place in formalized settings—such as (permanent/semi-permanent) party forums—or informal consultations on specific thematic issues (IDEA, 2013, p.1).

The agenda of a National Dialogue may include virtually any political, social or economic issue. They frequently consider: values and shared understandings of the nation; confidence-building measures (e.g. release of prisoners, repeal of restrictive laws); constitutional issues (e.g. a process for future constitution-making or substantive decisions concerning constitutional arrangements); electoral systems and dates for elections; political arrangements, whether transitional or permanent; political parties; transitional justice; land; extractive industries; and the treatment of marginalized groups among other things (Murray, 2017:14).

2.6 Consensus Building and Sustainable Peace

In any political transition or political reform, fragile or failed states leaders need to find ways to bring different groups and actors together to forge a sense of common bond and purpose – to decide what kind of country they want and how this ambition can be achieved. One of the most crucial mechanisms to achieve this objective is national dialogue or consensus. Various spaces and forms of political dialogue or consensus can help to achieve these goals. Kaplan & Freeman argued that this important mechanism of dealing with major national issues can bring representatives of key groups together and tackle sensitive and complex major national issues about the past and future of a particular nation (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:31).

National dialogue or consensus encompasses a broad and wide range of activities from high-level negotiations to community-level reconciliation which takes place in many forms across the national boundaries. Kaplan & Freeman argued that the main aim of this national dialogue and consensus is to achieve practical and peaceful solutions to national, regional, or local challenges

during the democratic transition and political reform. On a wider and broader level, national dialogue or consensus seeks to address drivers of conflict including root causes of conflicts, foster national reconciliation and build greater consensus and social cohesion. The result of this national dialogue and consensus can be greater legitimacy for institutions, the state, and greater convergence across different groups around a common program to solve problems and a common vision of how to live together. It is also essential in building trust among rival groups, fashioning a new social covenant and contract, establishing a set of political rules to govern society and forging a shared national identity and vision (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:31).

In the national dialogues or consensus process, it is important to distinguish between tangible and intangible outcomes. Tangible outcomes are concrete outcomes shaped or informed by the agenda and mandate. It is usually outlined the building blocks of political, social and economic change through institutional and constitutional reform. Intangible outcomes are subtler and harder to measure. They may not have been anticipated or planned per se, but emerge organically from the experience of the national dialogue or consensus process itself. It can be a change in relationships and an emerging culture of dialogical exchange. Depending on how the implementing and nurturing happens, both tangible and intangible outcomes may have short- and long-term implications for a national dialogue or consensus process in terms of facilitating political transition, mitigating crises, resolving conflicts and creating the foundation for fundamental social change (Blunck et al., 2017:142).

The practical experience of many countries shows that governments or other political actors invite political elites and concerned bodies to discuss on national issues when their country is in the political, economic or social crisis. The specific results of the dialogue which is addressing the major national issues depends on the objectives and the agenda of the discussions. The outcomes of the dialogue and discussion would be constitutional change or reform, leadership change, power-sharing or new economic policy. Wählich noted that Lebanon's national dialogues have been part of the country's political and new social fabric. It has served as an important consensus-building mechanism for core political actors to address issues of common national concern. The aim has been to find consensus among the ruling elites to jointly tackle issues in a way that allows political buy-in from all key political actors (Wählich, 2017:4).

These national wide dialogues and comprehensive discussions which are composed of political parties, civil societies, and other political and non-political actors would bring significant and positives changes in the country's political or economic situations. The same is true in Yemen. The Yemen national dialogue conference was intended to be the foundation stone for new and strong institutions that would form the basis for a new compact between the citizens and the state. The main focus was on discussing elements of the new constitution, addressing the southern and Huthi issues, and seeking national reconciliation and transitional justice within the framework of a comprehensive democratic system (Wählisch, 2017:42).

2.7 Concept of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a relatively new term in the conflict resolution literature. The new currency of the term and its increasing application are due, in large part, to major international developments that brought issues of justice, historical truth, and reckoning with history to the core of social agendas in many countries and increased international awareness of the importance of these issues for resolving ethno-national conflict. This has been the case, for example, in countries that witnessed transitions from authoritarian regimes involved in gross human rights violations against their own citizens to fledgling democratic regimes in which issues of what was termed transitional justice (Rouhana, 2004:33). It has emerged as a master narrative of our time, offering a promise to remedy the harm done and heal both society and individuals from the experiences of violence and conflict. The academic literature has answered the question of how a society moves from a past of conflict and division to a shared future in very different ways (Eastmond & Stefansson, 2010:4).

The term reconciliation can be found in theological roots, referencing a Christian point of view, for instance, to restoration between God and a person, or between individuals, often in association with forgiveness and confession. In the vast majority of the post-conflict reconciliation literature, recuperating a relationship— mutual understanding and acknowledgement, and sharing common goals for the future—are commonly captured phrases. Reconciliation represents a common future between perpetrators and victims or members of hostile groups not as a “continuation of the past” but as the "possibility of a constructive relationship" seeking humanity and acceptance (Roncin, 2011:42).

Reconciliation is a process that is fundamentally ‘about building relationships of trust and cohesion’ at multiple different levels, from the individual, inter-personal and communal to the national and international levels(Bradley, 2012:6). It is the long-term process by which the parties to a violent dispute build trust; learn to live cooperatively, and create a stable peace. It can happen at the individual level, the community level, and the national level. It may involve dialogue, admissions of guilt, judicial processes, truth commissions, ritual forgiveness, and Sulha, a traditional Arabic form of ritual forgiveness and restitution (Snodderly, 2011:44).

Reconciliation is a long-term process the basis of which is recognition of the past and responsibility for the decisions taken and their consequences, and taking concrete steps towards building confidence. It can also be considered a renewal of peaceful relations between the entities, which, if nothing else, at least do not harm one another, which consequently creates confidence that such a relationship will remain in the future, and it is important to note that the desire for revenge has been rejected. The reconciliation process rests on the development of a shared vision of the future with the simultaneous recognition and assumption of responsibility for the past by establishing various mechanisms for attaining justice, healing, restitution, reparation and restorations. It also involves building positive relationships that are marked by values of trust, tolerance, acceptance of similarities and differences, but also the change of dominant attitudes about each other, as well as the transformation of emotions – the culture of fear, distrust and violence should be replaced by respect for human rights and diversity, participatory political culture and culture of inclusiveness. (Kovačić, 2017:12).

Reconciliation consists of restoration and healing. It allows the emergence of a common frame of reference that permits and encourages societies to acknowledge the past, confess former wrongs, relive the experiences under safe conditions, mourn the losses, validate the experienced pain and grief, receive empathy and support, and restore broken relationships. It creates a space where forgiveness can be offered and accepted. The element of forgiveness as an outcome of reconciliation is of special importance in cases of unequal responsibility, when one party is attributed with responsibility for the outbreak, and/or maintenance of the conflict, and/or for misdeeds done during the conflict (Bar-tal, 2008:368).

The path toward reconciliation comprises many aspects of recognition of harms and historical injustices; however, it is also inclusive of having collaborative agreements and development activities that are fair and balanced for all parties. An atmosphere of reconciliation is aided by apology and based on a connective discourse about historical injustice and confrontation. The act of public acknowledgement and apology begins to formulate accountability and is an essential step in starting dialogue. The end goal of the dialogue must be the renewal of the partnership in question (Geboe, 2015:6).

For genuine reconciliation to take root, four key issues must be addressed: justice, truth, historical responsibility, and restructuring the social and political relationship between the parties. First, the term of reference for reconciliation is justice, not the existing power relations between the parties or the basic human needs of the parties. Justice, which is central to reconciliation, is not a central part of the applied or theoretical conflict resolution discourse. Although those involved in official international conflict resolution often invoke the language of just agreements, in fact power relations, not justice, generally determine the outcome of agreements. Second, reconciliation places special importance on historic truth, particularly truth about wrongdoing. The argument here is that truth should be established and publicly disseminated, and that there are many reasonable ways of arriving at the truth. Third, it is essential for reconciliation to have the parties agree on the historical responsibility for human rights abuses. The parties involved in mass physical and cultural violence such as colonization, occupation, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and state sanctioned oppression are expected to face their historical responsibility and their role in human rights violations. Fourth, reconciliation entails political and structural change guided by some sort of justice. The structural changes can be dramatic and are determined by universal standards of equality and human dignity, international law, and international human rights agreements regardless of the implication for the acquired privileges and dominant identity of the perpetrators, who will inevitably have to lose some of the privileges they unjustly gained (Rouhana, 2004:37).

From a psychological point of view, one aspect of reconciliation stood out as essential for investigation: the assumption that truth telling is healing and thereby will lead to reconciliation.

Truth telling has come to play a pivotal role in reconciliation processes around the world. It is hoped that truth commissions will provide a judicial balance for post-conflict societies and they have become a fundamental part of peacebuilding. Truth-telling mechanisms have been described as contributing to “any of the following...truth, assisting victims, reconciliation, healing, interracial unity, reconstruction, public deliberation, rule of law, justice, accountability, and institutional reform” (Brounéus, 2008:15).

In contrast to the above assumption, the psychological research findings show that there may be risks involved in reconciliation and truth-telling procedures. First, a risk related to the re-traumatization when giving testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa. Second, the early psychological intervention after trauma, so called one-session debriefing, should cease as it may increase the risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. One-session debriefing and witnessing in a TRC both involve short and intensive trauma exposure, an important common denominator. If there are risks involved in one-session debriefing this may also be the case for giving testimony in a TRC. Third, in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and neuro-psychology short trauma exposure may lead to re-traumatization. The same risks might happen in national reconciliation, consensus and peace building initiative process in Ethiopian. However, if the government takes a lesson from South Africa truth and reconciliation commission’s truth telling procedures and the reconciliation process, and state building initiative in Burundi, it might bridge the broken relationship and become successful in national consensus and reconciliation initiatives. (Brounéus, 2008:15).

2.7.1. Social Reconciliation

The construct of social reconciliation undoubtedly remains controversial. The word reconciliation derives from the Latin expression *conciliatus*, which means “coming together.” Strictly speaking, reconciliation implies a process, that of restoring the shattered relationship between two actors. The adjective social simply indicates that the emphasis is on group, and not individual, reconciliation. Social reconciliation interventions are therefore specifically designed to foster intergroup understanding, strengthen nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms, and heal the wounds of war. They differ from conventional projects and programs in that their primary objective is to promote social reconciliation, and not to provide services or advance

economic, social, or political development (Kumar, 1999:9). Socio-political reconciliation after violent conflict is widely seen as crucial in promoting a more peaceable future. The “significance of reconciliation is that it underlines the need to overcome individual and collective trauma that passes from one generation to the next, which perpetuates the cycles of violence”. Reconciliation is seen as necessary because “hearts and minds are ravaged by war and violence, and their healing is no less critical a need than the reconstruction of burnt out villages”. If these needs are left unaddressed, the risk of a return to violence is assumed to escalate (Dahl, 2007:55).

2.7.2. Political Reconciliation

After a conflict between communities or nations has been led to an ending phase, political reconciliation requires that both parties be brought closer to the point they may have respect for each other’s rights and can live peacefully together. When the conflict passed through war or mass atrocity, reconciliation is especially hard to achieve. There are limits to forgiveness that may state significant barriers on the pathway to reconciliation. Preserving or restoring human rights is an imperative category on seeking for reconciliation during and after a war. The essence of a forgiveness and reconciliation process can be perverted seeking for stop fighting and peace building, without really reaching healing and transformation (Kumar, 1999).

2.7.3. Reconciliation and Development

In post-conflict settings that have undergone mass violence and social disruption and are transitioning to peace, reconciliation is an imperative device, needed to end the vicious cycle of violence and to establish a long-term blueprint for development. Reconciliation is an extremely crucial factor in a post-conflict setting, particularly when the origin of violent conflict is intrastate in its nature, yet the relevant connections between reconciliation and development are often ignored or understated. In relating development to conflict studies, the potential of development to contribute to post-war reconstruction and reconciliation" and the prevention of further conflict contends that: [development can be targeted in ways that aid post-war reconstruction and reconciliation. [...] In an ideal situation a mutually reinforcing relationship can be established between development and reconstruction. Formerly divided peoples can come together for the joint pursuit of economic growth and social progress (Roncin, 2011:70).

The establishment of economic institutions that behaved as ‘honest brokers’ also played an important role in the economic development process and in bridging the ethnic divide. The lessons and experience gained from Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate that economic development can play an important role in commencing the long-term journey towards reconciliation in a post-conflict environment. Economic and business development activities encourage inter-ethnic confidence-building, communication and co-operation. They support the deeply held desire of the conflict-affected citizens to find security through employment and greater income, they allow governments to focus on infrastructure improvements, and also support the private sector in meeting its growth and profitability desires. Economic development encourages tolerance between the different ethnic communities. Although tolerance between the different ethnic communities does not guarantee reconciliation; it may pave a long-term generational foundation or environment that could lead to a reconciliation process in the future (Gamberale, 2005).

2.7.4 Transitional Justice and Reconciliation

Societies that experience chronic civil wars under authoritarian regimes seek various approaches to deal with past repression, injustice, and trauma when they reach periods of “transitional justice”, i.e., processes and mechanisms used to address past abuses and ensure accountability which serve justice and achieve reconciliation (Ear & Doung, 2009:1). In a society emerging from authoritarian and/conflicts, measures of transitional justice should pave the way for national reconciliation. They should also help build new institutional and legal structures to consolidate democracy and human rights (Fegiery, 2014:1).

Transitional justice refers to a set of measures that can be implemented to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses that occur during armed conflict and under authoritarian regimes, where ‘redressing the legacies’ means, primarily, giving force to human rights norms that were systematically violated (Bradley, 2012:6). It’s an Efforts to address a legacy of large-scale human rights abuses that cannot be fully addressed by existing judicial and non-judicial structures (Snodderly, 2011:51).

The different measures that together make up a holistic approach to transitional justice seek to provide recognition for victims, foster civic trust and promote possibilities for peace, reconciliation and democracy. They include criminal prosecutions of those most responsible for violations; reparations programs that distribute a mix of material and symbolic benefits to victims (including compensation and apologies); restitution programs that seek to return housing, land and property to those who were dispossessed; truth-telling initiatives that investigate and report on periods of past abuse; and justice-sensitive security system reform that seeks to transform the military, police and judiciary responsible for past violations (Bradley, 2012:6).

Transitional justice has been a key strategy in coming to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses in international peacebuilding and ensuring accountability and stability. The main argument of this paradigm is that the violent past has to be settled before a real transition to sustainable peace can be made; for this purpose the mechanisms of truth and justice are seen as pivotal and have been implemented in a wide range of post-conflict societies since the 1980s. Justice can be retributive, in which case criminal tribunals are set up to punish those responsible for gross human rights violations and to establish a factual record. The main tenet of transitional justice is that the prosecution of perpetrators individualizes guilt and thereby puts an end to the demonizing of whole groups (Eastmond & Stefansson, 2010:6).

Transitional justice normally encompasses legal, moral and political considerations to uphold justice and rule of law. It consists primarily of two forms of justice: retributive and restorative. The most common approaches adopted are trial and reconciliation (through truth commission). The trial approach emphasizes the need to hold accountable those who have committed human rights violations. In Germany, for instance, the successors of the Nazi regime held an international criminal tribunal, the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal, to trial top war criminals. The reconciliation-through-truth commission approach stresses “amnesty,” based on principles of forgiveness and moving forward to restore the relationship between the victims and perpetrators. South Africa, for example, established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996 to deal with the apartheid regime by promising non-prosecution to those who confessed completely their past crimes (Ear & Doun, 2009:1).

2.7.5 Fundamentals of Reconciliation Process

Processes of reconciliation are designed to contribute to the improvement of relationships damaged as a result of wrongdoing. Since the past cannot be changed, wrongdoing cannot be undone. Therefore, one might argue, the only way to overcome a painful past is to suppress the memory of it. Policies of forgetting in the name of reconciliation have been pursued by a number of states in recent decades, including Cambodia, whose prime minister advised his fellow citizens in 1999 “to dig a hole and bury the past,” while granting amnesty from prosecution to Khmer Rouge leaders. (Radzik et al., 2019).

2.7.5.1. Truth

Truth telling, some scholars claim, can end ongoing suffering of victims and survivors who lack information about what happened and who was (or was not) responsible for abuses. It can counter and prevent certain forms of denial (e.g., among white South Africans about how bad apartheid was). Truth telling may also serve as a form of reparation for those not actually implicated in crimes. Efforts to record and archive this information, as well as to distribute it in the form of educational materials, aim at ensuring that future generations will not repeat the past (Radzik, et al, 2019) The truth of what actually happened has to be revealed in order to write a common history for all communities previously confronted. The need of a common history marks the beginning of shared beliefs that will unify the communities in the future and thus enable a peaceful living together. The truth is a transformative power for all stakeholders: public, victims and perpetrators (Torrent, 2011:21).

2.7.5.2. Apology

Apologizing is perhaps the most explicit way in which wrongdoing can be acknowledged. A well-formed apology requires at least acknowledgement of both the fact of wrongdoing and responsibility by the wrongdoer, as well as an expression of regret or remorse. Ideally, the wrongdoer directly addresses the victim. This is not possible in all cases, of course, as when victims have passed away. However, apologies made to indirect victims, such as the families of survivors, as well as apologies simply performed before broader, interested communities are well established in practice (Radzik et al, 2019).

The apology is also necessary because it is a formal acceptance of responsibility, so that both parties are labeled: the victim and the perpetrator. Furthermore, an apology is a speech act that seeks forgiveness, but it has to be noted that if the apology does not seem natural, it may be counterproductive. Finally, when we talk about an apology as an official and diplomatic act, we have to be aware of the fact that states are legal abstractions, not ethical persons. Accordingly, apologizes can never mean the same thing for states as for individuals (Torrent, 2011:22).

2.7.5.3. Forgiveness

The apology has called for forgiveness. This is the only act in the whole process of reconciliation that empowers both the victim and the perpetrator in a moral sense. It is a sign sent by the victim of compassion, understanding and will to build a common and peaceful future. The forgiveness substitutes de culture of revenge and thus keeps further the possibility of a return to a violent context. It is eventually an expression of love and mercy and the forswearing of resentment (Torrent, 2011:22).

2.7.5.4. Reparation

The term ‘reparations’ has been used more and less broadly to refer to efforts to repair the harm that results from a wrong or conflict. A narrow use of the term refers to a transfer of goods or wealth that is intended to directly compensate for goods that were taken, damaged or destroyed. The payment is made either by the party who was responsible for the harm, by the wrongdoers’ descendants or other beneficiaries, or potentially by a third party acting on the wrongdoers’ behalf. This sort of transfer is perhaps better labeled ‘restitution.’ Transfers made in response to losses that are not literally replaceable or monetizable, such as deaths or injuries, are also referred to as restitution or reparation. A still broader use of the term includes material transfers that have a more purely symbolic function. These payments are meant to send a conciliatory message of some sort rather than to suggest that the wrong or harm is being paid back. One friend’s gift to another after a quarrel could be an example of a symbolic reparation in everyday life (Radzik et al, 2019).

Truth, apology and forgiveness constitute the moral content of any reconciliatory process. Next requirement for this process to success is the reparation. This is the material punishment the

perpetrator has to pay to the victim. It is a restorative fine to cover the physical and/or psychological damaged caused to the victim. It is usually an economic penalty but it can also be accomplished with properties (Torrent, 2011:22).

2.7.6. Initiatives to Promote Interaction

Once the moral wounds have been faced and the reparation has been paid off, it is time to promote initiatives aiming to consolidate a positive and constructive interaction among the previously confronted communities, that is to say, to bring the parties to an actual reconciled state. These initiatives can turn the negative peace (non-violent context) to a positive peace (interactive context) removing thus the possibility of a new conflict (Torrent, 2011:22).

2.8. Analytical Framework of the Study

2.8.1 Process and Outcomes of National Reconciliation

Despite their differences, successor governments in democratic and post-conflict transitions often grapple with a similar set of moral, legal and political challenges. Foremost among these is the question of ‘what to do about the past’. Countries emerging from periods of armed conflict or authoritarian rule have typically suffered significant violations of human rights and humanitarian norms. In all instances, successor governments face the dilemma of what to do about the legacy of violations (Freeman, 2005:5-6).

Reconciliation” represents a process as well as a goal for that process. As a process it refers to political, social, and legal components. As a goal, there are two types of reconciliation that need to be identified; both are relevant for protracted armed conflicts. Intra-generational reconciliation, i.e. a process between person’s who themselves have experienced, or committed, atrocities, or those that have suffered and carried the burdens related to that suffering. On other hand, inter-generational reconciliation processes, deal with those individuals and groups who have to come to grips with prejudices, memories, and who have had to grow up in divided communities, due to past grievances and divisions (Nordquist, 2006:13).

It is usually considered that reconciliation is necessary when societies or groups within a society that are in conflict develop widespread beliefs, attitudes, emotions and motivations that maintain that conflict, thus the opponent is delegitimized, which prevents the development of peaceful relations. Reconciliation as a social outcome requires a broad and stable social consensus and support - both structural and cultural. Structural elements include a series of activities of a formal type such as demilitarization, the exchange of representatives in all relevant social spheres (economy, politics and culture), the establishment of regular communication and dialogue between the leaders of countries, the exchange of information and cultural assets. If it is a conflict within a state, then it is necessary to implement institutional reforms such as political integration and the establishment of structural equality and justice based on respect for human and civil rights. In the economic sphere, a reorganization is also necessary in order to include all social groups in equal circumstances in the economic system (Kovačić, 2017:10).

At the national level, the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of a peace, which allows citizens to live without fear that they will be the subject of attack or harm, is an important aspect of reconciliation. At the community level, the restoration of one's status and the clarification of the truth relating to the conflict also foster reconciliation. The most significant intervention that can be made, however, is the creation of conditions that enable former enemies to live side by side in the certainty that one side will not be harmed by the other. While people living together do not have to like each other, mutual respect as the basis for future interaction builds social cohesion (Sooka, 2006:321).

Reconciliation must be understood in the context of a holistic set of objectives including: Justice for victims; accountability of perpetrators; clarification of the truth relating to the causes of the violence and conflict; establishment of democratic institutions and rebuilding of those destroyed through the conflict; dealing conclusively with the factors that gave rise to the conflict; elimination of the fear of living together; rebuilding of trust in government and its institutions; Sustainable peace, building social solidarity amongst citizens (Sooka, 2006:321).

2.8.2 Actors of Reconciliation

Reconciliation takes place simultaneously at the level of governmental bureaucracies and civil society, spilling over from the former to the latter. It is supported by the institutions and leadership of the state and involves as many members of society as possible. The various efforts might involve elites or prominent figures in ethnic, religious, academic, economic, intellectual and humanitarian circles, as well as local leaders, business persons, community developers and educators at the grassroots level (DPI, 2015:13).

2.8.2.1 Top-level Actors

Top-level actors include the most prominent military, political and religious leaders characterized by broad public visibility and legitimacy in representing groups in conflict. The approach to peace building and reconciliation from these instances gives a primary responsibility to leaders of conflicted parties whose consequences of negotiations and agreements, usually at the first stages of the ending of the conflict, considered crucial for the acceptance of the idea of peace building and reconciliation by the rest of society (Kovačić, 2017:15). Demonstrating peace and reconciliation through their discourse and behavior, they become important role models for the transformation of attitudes and behavior in the population (Brouneus, 2007:32). The top-level reconciliation not only requires time and patience but also involves complex bureaucratic procedures, high costs and political goodwill, dedication and commitment from all involved (Babo-Soares, 2004). At a national level, inclusive reconciliation requires all political actors to acknowledge and accept their political interdependence, and their shared interest in legitimate state institutions (WFD, 2017).

2.8.2.2 Middle level Actors

The middle level actors are made up of ethnic, religious leaders, intellectuals, leaders of civil society organizations, and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from the economic sphere. It is principally about individuals who do not have political and military power or embody them, but they maintain relationships with the highest level who know their work. These types of actors also have a good insight into the “situation on the ground,” they know the social context as well as the power relations at the highest social level (Kovačić, 2017:16). The middle-range actors and methods for reconciliation influence attitudes and behavior in both top-level decision makers

and the grassroots community because they are close to both constituencies. Problem-solving workshops with middle-range leaders is a typical middle-range method for promoting sustainable peace (Brouneus, 2007:7). At a middle level, inclusive reconciliation requires different groups to accept that all groups are part of society and equally worthy of sharing in the benefits and resources of the state (WFD, 2017).

2.8.2.3 Grassroots Actors

Grassroots actors make up the largest number of people who are focused on maintaining their own livelihoods and first to feel the atmosphere sprinkled with animosity, intolerance and hatred in everyday life. In addition, this includes members of civil society organizations dealing with projects at the local level as well as people who generally work “on the ground” in different areas of life from education to health (Kovačić, 2017:22). A strong process of reconciliation at the grassroots level will be a difficult threat to belligerent leaders: experiencing constructive relationships with former enemies – with the sufferings of the past in mind – the peace of the present will be too precious to waste on further war (Brouneus, 2007:7). At grassroots level, inclusive reconciliation requires engagement with fellow members of society to understand the divisions of the past and ways to reconcile individual, communal and ideological differences in a way that begins the journey towards improving relationships through promoting fairness, equality and building trust (WFD, 2017).

2.8.3 Aspects of Reconciliation

2.8.3.1 Religious Aspects

The term reconciliation has strong religious connotations. In Christianity, reconciliation between God and humanity through Jesus is a fundamental theme. One approach to the Bible’s concept of justice is that it can be seen as interpersonal reconciliation, which focuses in particular on the issues of compassion, mercy and forgiveness. Interwoven in the theological context of reconciliation is also the notion that human justice is limited. Justice can never achieve full retribution for the victims, especially not for the dead, but the theologian hope is that victims will be vindicated after death. Reconciliation is from this point of view seen as the “ultimate fulfillment of justice”, requiring forgiveness (Brouneus, 2007:14).

2.8.3.2 Socio-Cultural Aspects

Culture is the rich and complex blend of beliefs, attitudes, and behavior regarding everything from food to art to politics and religion in a certain society. Culture shapes how we perceive ourselves and others. Violence, fear and hatred during war result in the modernization of old myths and stereotypes to explain one's own or some other group's gruesome behavior and thereby justify whatever atrocities are committed. After the war, the societal and cultural fabric is drenched with these beliefs. They can be seen in how history is described, how the language is used, in education, the media, theatre etc. In order to live in peace, these beliefs must be questioned and transformed (Brouneus, 2007:13).

The relationship between conflict and culture is complex. Given these complexities, the rebuilding of society in the aftermath of violence requires careful context-specific interventions. These interventions could enable societies to re-imagine new cultures of peace, justice and equality. They could also facilitate trust building, empathy and respect for others as well as create platforms for dialogue, healing and forgiveness. Art and cultural activities have as much potential to build peace and facilitate processes of reconciliation as they do to fuel cultures of violence and conflict (Naidu-silverman, 2015:10).

2.8.3.3 Economic Aspects

Reconciliation can be seen as a key aspect of the broader reconstruction process and involves individuals coming to terms with past human and civil rights abuses, oppression, and violations of the rule of law and private property. The past violations of human, civil, and property rights by certain individuals must be addressed, but when doing so, a balance of retribution and reconciliation should be established (Coyne, 2007:1). Studies show that post-civil war societies are significantly more likely to experience civil war again than societies with no prior experience of war. Economic development seems essential for peace, and peace is essential for reconciliation. Furthermore, and more specifically, in the work of truth commissions around the world the importance of economic compensation has become unmistakable. Reconciliation must go hand in hand with economic justice. Survivors of atrocity and injustice have often been denied access to for example education, jobs, housing, and medical care. When the time comes for building a new and peaceful society, the gaps are vast between former perpetrators and

survivors regarding all areas. Reparations and compensation strengthen the rule of law, reconciliation, and the overall process of institutional reform (Brounéus, 2007:12).

2.8.3.4 Political Aspects

Political reconciliation involves the repairing of damaged relationships among members of a society. One important aspect of the repair that reconciliation requires consists of the (re-)establishment of mutual respect for the rule of law (Murphy, 2007). Political attempts of reconciliation after internal conflict are essential in the quest for peace. Political aspects of reconciliation events are defined as including: 1) a meeting between senior representatives of the former opposing factions; 2) a public ceremony, covered by national media; and 3) ritualistic or symbolic behavior that indicates peace. An example of political, symbolic behavior indicating peace is the official apology – an increasingly common phenomenon over the last years.(Broun, 2003). Reconciliation requires general acceptance of the institutional order. Widespread acceptance of a common set of rules of public life is constitutive of peaceful political processes. Societies unable to generate such acceptance are marked by divisive strife and even violence. Acceptance is a pro-attitude toward, or an endorsement of, a state of affairs. The establishment of a peaceful political community after a period of conflict arising from severe injustice requires resolution of some of the central terms of the conflict; and acceptance of the terms of the resolution often requires public expressions of appropriate regret about at least some of the injustices that occurred (Moellendorf, 2007:211).

2.8.3.5 Psychological Aspects

Psychological trauma research has shown that it is of great importance to heal traumatic wounds in order for life to continue without the trauma becoming cemented in physical and/or mental disorder. Victims of torture and other human rights violations often have a feeling that no-one would believe them if they told their story – just as they often have been told by their perpetrators. Official acknowledgement of past atrocity and injustice is important for working with individual traumatic experience because it validates past experiences and helps restore dignity and self-esteem (Brounéus, 2007:12).Past traumas do not simply pass or disappear with the passage of time. Psychological restoration and healing can only occur through providing the space for survivors to feel heard and for every detail of the traumatic event to be re-experienced

in a safe environment” Psychologically one feels a sense of security after an act of reconciliation. This psychological self-assurance can become a stepping stone toward better communal harmony and freedom that liberates one from damaging human relationships (Samson et al., 2015:.2).

2.8.3.6 Juridical Aspects

There are three dimensions of justice that must be taken into account in peacebuilding and reconciliation after internal conflict: The rule of law: the apparatus of the justice system must be restored as it has usually broken down and lost all legitimacy during the war. The rebuilding of the rule of law also “may serve as an indication to combat- ants and civilians in war-torn societies of a return to security, order, and stability.” Rectificatory justice: addressing the injustice and pain that has been suffered by people during conflict. Politically it is needed to establish legitimacy and stabilize peace; and psychosocially it aids to understand and heal trauma. Distributive justice: “addressing the underlying causes of conflict, which often lie in real or perceived socio-economic, political or cultural injustice” in order to prevent further violence (Brounéus, 2007).

2.8.4 Political Dialogue and Consensus Building

National dialogues are negotiating mechanisms intended to expand participation in political transitions beyond the political and military elites. Their ambition is to move away from elite level deal making by allowing diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations. National dialogue processes have had a variety of mandates in transitional settings. In some cases, they kick-started political transitions: they appointed transitional governments, transitional constitutions and constituent assemblies. In other cases, they have themselves drafted constitutions while still in other cases they have drafted constitutional principles which were handed over to a constitution drafting body. In yet other cases, national dialogues have simply, but usefully, engaged all actors in a political process and designed future negotiation processes which took binding decisions. In these latter cases, the goal of the dialogue was to build enough trust and to design the process through which the country might resolve some of its most contentious problems (Papagianni, 2017:1).

Political dialogue refers to a wide range of activities, from high-level negotiations to mediation to community attempts at reconciliation. These processes of political dialogue are complementary and normally run in parallel. The dialogue must be political in nature and aimed at addressing threats in a society which can cause a lapse or relapse into violent conflict. The objective of political dialogue is to achieve practical and peaceful solutions to problems. At a deeper level, the aim is to address conflict drivers and foster reconciliation, build a greater national consensus and social cohesion, and define a shared vision of the future. In many cases regular state institutions are not functioning properly because they have been compromised by political bias, corruption, and inefficiency. The role of political dialogue in such contexts is to strengthen the legitimacy of institutions by building consensus on and trust in their proper functioning. As a result, political dialogue in all its forms plays an indispensable role in efforts by national actors and the international community to respond to violent conflict and to build national vision in fragile contexts (Odendaal, 2011:4).

The contribution of political dialogue to post-violence reconstruction and reducing fragility is its role in facilitating consensus, strengthening legitimacy, building trust, promoting reconciliation, and enabling productive coalitions between important actors. Dialogue plays a necessary role in violence prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. It is also indispensable in institution building because of its contribution to strengthening the legitimacy of institutions and in ensuring 'best fit' solutions (Odendaal, 2011:33).

2.8.5 National Dialogue Actors and Major Areas of Consensus

Initiating, conducting and facilitating dialogue has become one of the key tools in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In support of the objectives of conflict transformation, comprehensive dialogues are seen as seminal for the transformation of relationships, the promotion of empathy, and the rapprochement of particular groups after conflict (Planta et al., 2015:4). National Dialogues typically involve key national elites, including the government and the largest (armed or unarmed) opposition parties, and occasionally the military. Other groups who participate include those representing wider constituencies such as civil society, women, youth, business, and religious or traditional actors. The wider population is often indirectly included through broader consultation processes (Paffenholz et al., 2017:9). It attempts to bring

together all relevant national stakeholders and actors based on a broad mandate to foster nation-wide consensus with respect to key conflict issues. As such, they offer a useful approach in promoting public participation and helping develop a new social contract (Planta et al., 2015:4).

National Dialogues provide an inclusive, broad, and participatory official negotiation framework, which can resolve political crises and lead countries into political transitions. They are convened to address issues of national concern, typically longstanding causes of conflict that have been brought to the fore by political protest or armed insurrection. With mandates that include political reforms, constitution-making, and peacebuilding (Paffenholz et al., 2017:9). Major areas of national dialogue consensus include the creation of a timetable for elections, the designation of a transitional government, amendments to the constitution or the adoption of a new constitution (Harlander, 2016:33). An effective national dialogue convenes a broad set of stakeholders for a deliberative process. To maximize the dialogue's potential to address the real drivers of conflict, all key interest groups should be invited to participate (Murray & Stigant, 2015:2). Inclusive negotiations and political transition processes consisting of relevant stakeholders is, therefore, crucial to make war-to-peace and political transitions more sustainable (Zachariassen et al. , 2016:3).

Chapter Three:

Methodology

This chapter highlights the methodological issues of the study. The chapter covers the research design, sampling technique, Instruments of data collection, and methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design Approach

The study employed an exploratory research design approach employing the qualitative research paradigm. An exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome. It is also on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when research problems are in a preliminary stage of the investigation. The main purpose of such studies is that of formulating a problem for more precise investigation or of developing the working hypotheses from an operational point of view. The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights. As such the research design appropriate for such studies must be flexible enough to provide an opportunity for considering different aspects of a problem under study (Kothari, 2004:33).

3.2 Sampling Technique

For this study, non-probability purposive sampling is used. Specifically, the researcher adopted purposeful sampling. In purposive sampling, items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher; his/her choice concerning the items remains supreme. In other words, under non-probability sampling, the organizers of the inquiry purposively choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample on the basis that the small mass that they so select out of a huge one will be typical or representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004:59). This enabled the researcher to select interviewees with relevant information regarding the problem under study.

3.3 Instruments and Methods of Data Collection

3.3.1 Key Informant Interview

The in-depth interview had been a source of primary data for the study under investigation. In-depth interviews with key informants had been used as a major source of data collection. For this study, the researcher selected eleven (11) research participants from different political affiliation and professions. These research participants are Academicians (3), Public officials (2), Opposition political party leader (1), Government Ministry (1), Public opinion Maker (1), Journalist/Human Rights Defender (1), Researcher (1), and Legal Expert (1). These research participants are believed to have better knowledge about the issue and represent the views and opinions of the majority of the people in the study. The study selected these participants based on the active involvement of the researcher participants. The participants are actively engaging in the current political development of Ethiopia. They are highly involving in the current political atmosphere of Ethiopia. Even though only one opposition political leader is part of the research, the rest of researcher participants have different political ideologies and perspectives. Semi-structured face to face in-depth interviews had been used to gather important information.

3.3.2. Document Research

For this study secondary sources of data had been also used. The secondary sources of data including reviews of published documents, research reports, policy briefs, conference papers, Newspapers and journals, other documents relevant to this study had been used. Previous researches which have been done in different countries that deal with the research problem under study had been systematically reviewed and summarized. Therefore, documents and researches relevant for national consensus and reconciliation practices and the reform agenda in the country had been reviewed and analyzed.

3.3 Methods of Data Analysis

The primary sources of data were in-depth interviews from academicians, government officials, political party leader, legal expert, public opinion maker, journalist, and researcher on the area of conflict management and peace building. First, the researcher Organized and prepared the data for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews and sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information. Then the transcribed data had been interpreted. The primary data collected from interviews had been analyzed qualitatively through critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, discrimination, hegemony, institutions, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. It focuses primarily on *social problems* and political issues. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (Schiffrin et al., 2001:467).

The data collected from secondary sources such as research reports, conference reports, policy briefs, newspapers, etc.... had been analyzed qualitatively through systemic review. The researcher had been used a systematic review to identify, collate, and systematically summarize all empirical evidence on a specific research topic, using explicit, systematic, transparent, replicable methods that are designed to minimize bias (Polanin et al., 2016). The aim is to extract relevant information systematically from the publications and to identify all available and reliable publications regarding a specific problem, to evaluate their reliability and to compile available data in a qualitative manner (Crowther & Lim, 2010).

Chapter Four

Discussions and Findings

This chapter focused on the discussions and the findings parts of the study. It includes the analysis of primary and secondary sources of data in order to explore the problem under study. The study discussed each research questions in detail based on the data collected from in-depth interviews and secondary sources. While the interview data is analyzed through critical discourse analysis, systematic review is employed to analyze the data obtained from secondary sources. This discussion and finding parts of the study have six major themes and sub-themes.

4.1 Major National Issues and National Consensus

Ethiopia was in the situation of a fragile or failed state over the past four years. There were mass protests against the government. There was mass killings and tortures by the government military forces to stop the protests. The country was full of chaos and on the verge of collapse. The youths were protesting against the government in order to make their questions get answered. The question of the protester's has political, economic and legal aspects. Accordingly, the grand protests were able to bring new changes in the country, among others, the change in the top leadership. The protests which mainly arose in the Oromia Regional State were able to bring Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) into the premiership position, which is from the Oromo ethnic group and OPDO party. Currently, Ethiopia is in the process of unplanned political reform. There are structural and leadership changes in the country. The issue of national dialogue and consensus is part of the political reform. However, there is a controversy on which major national issues should be given priority in order to succeed the current political reform and brings sustainable peace. In this part of the analysis, the research focused on exploring the major legal, political, economic, and socio-cultural issues that should be addressed through national consensus in order to build sustainable peace and succeed the current political reform and why these issues are very important to the long-term future of the country.

4.1.1 Legal issues

Legal frameworks are the most important pillars of the state to function properly and to secure peace and order. It also provides a baseline for the state to make viable foreign policies and to protect sovereignty. Weak legal frameworks might affect the democratization process and hinder the active participation of citizens in their internal affairs. It also causes conflicts and affects the judicial process. The constitution is one of the wings of legal frameworks which are the highest law of one state. Constitutional related issues such as amendment or revision or change can be sources of conflicts in most countries. It also leads political groups to fight for constitutional reform or absolute change. Nyei noted that the constitutional reform provides opportunities for countries in transition to deliberate and find solutions to the divisive issues that led to crises. Equally noteworthy is the fact that processes of constitutional reform – due to their polarizing nature – could return a country to a crisis if they fail to gain legitimacy through popular participation and consensus-building by the people. For a constitutional reform exercise to be considered legitimate, the processes leading to a new or revised constitution must be inclusive, participatory and transparent, and the outputs must be based on popular consensus (Nyei, 2015:7).

The constitution is the causes of quarrels in the Ethiopia political sphere. Thus, the current constitution which is endorsed in 1995 is one of the contested major legal issues. The very contentions aspects of the constitution start from the question of representation and participation during the draft of the constitution. One of the interviewees indicated that the legitimacy of the current constitution is in doubt among the public in general and the political elites particularly. Some groups argued that they were either not represented or not well represented in the drafting process of the constitution and there was no public consultation and discussion during the drafting of the constitution. These groups believe that the current constitution is generating a fertile ground for ethnic-based politics than politics based on political ideology.

Ethiopians need to begin the national consensus process from the constitution itself. As we know it, the process of the constitutional foundation was contested as if it was not participatory enough. There are members of the society who believe they are not represented well.... In extension, the political relationship between groups is rough. The

state structure prefers some group over the others. For example, there is a fertile political space for ethno-national groups than ideology groups (Interview with a Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019).

The practical experiences of Some countries showed that when there are contentions regarding the constitutional issues and the issue generate conflicts and hinder the peace of the nations, the state calls for national dialogue to discuss on the constitutional issues either to repeal the constitutions, or amend some articles. Kaplan & Freeman argued that a formal state-initiated national dialogue or consensus exists extra-constitutionally, and is designed either to play a role in the writing of a new constitution or the reform of major defects in an existing document. It thus needs to be linked to a process and set of institutions that achieve one of these objectives. For example, in Colombia, the peace process with the M-19 rebel group was integrated with a constituent assembly that produced the country's 1991 constitution. In South Africa, political dialogues determined the constitutional framework and the process for the establishment of a constitution-making body and holding of elections (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:31).

The national dialogues or consensus address issues of overarching national importance, a constitutional component in their outcomes can be expected. These can range from agreeing on a constitutional review process (Kenya), making constitutional amendments (Jordan), to adopting a new constitution (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Mali, and anticipated for Yemen). Constitutional changes can also include crucial measures towards the decentralization of the state, which was the case in Bolivia and Mali among others (Blunck, Vimalarajah, Wils, Burg, & Lanz, 2017:145).

Public consultations and lack of discussion during the draft of the EPRDF constitution is one of the major issues that make the existing constitution not to have legitimacy by the public and becoming causes of disagreement among different actors. Even though there were some discussions with different actors and representatives, the discussions and debates were not intensive and inclusive. Much input was not taken from the public and the voice of the people is not heard and accepted properly. As a result, the constitution is considered as a book of the ruling party rather than the highest law of the state.

In Ethiopia, the issue of public discussion on the constitutional draft is a major question among different actors. Many actors believe that the 1995 constitution, specifically each article of the national constitution, was not discussed by the general public. They argued that the process of the constitutional draft was not discussed by the general public and was not participatory. It is not legitimate and acceptable by the general public. Due to this, it is considered as the ruling party constitution, not the state constitution (*Interview with a Public official 1, 2019*).

The issue of constitutional legitimacy is imperative for the general public to accept the constitution as the law of the state and to refrain from doing wrong things the constitution does not allow to do so. It is also crucial for the government to enforce the law without challenges and full of confidence. Vliet, et al., argued that for a constitution to be embedded in such a political, social and cultural way, the process through which it is drafted (or re-drafted) is of great importance. There is increasing evidence that constitutions enjoy broader legitimacy if they emerge from inclusive, representative and participatory processes that allow all political actors to forge common institutions (Vliet, et al., 2012:12).

The realistic experiences of the constitutional reform or change showed that the inclusiveness and full participation of each citizen in the process can bring the required legitimacy and acceptance of the constitution. This, in return, makes the state and societies peaceful and halts the happening of conflicts as a consequence of lack of the constitutional legitimacy. For instance, South Africa transformed from a race-based, closed and secretive apartheid state to a fully-fledged democratic state in April 1994 following the first national democratic election. Democracy in South Africa is premised on a progressive and transformative Constitution enshrining a Bill of Rights with the universal adult franchise. The very process of constitution-making was consultative in the broadest possible sense, involving the participation of South Africans from every corner of the country (Nwasike, 2018:12).

The constitution is the ultimate legal document that should be obeyed and legitimized by the general public. Regarding the legitimacy and public acceptance, the FDRE constitution lacks this major ingredient of one constitution. The 1995 constitution is a source of ethnic conflicts and

quarrels. It's a risk rather than an opportunity for the country's unity and harmonious relationship among the people. It also opens the door for ethnic-based political competition rather than competition based on merit and ideologies. Apparently, it is highly criticized for polarizing the people of the country.

The constitution is the sacred book of a State which should be respected to have a unified and very advanced state. While to be a legitimate Constitution, the citizens of the State should have no major departure on it. The FDRE Constitution has apparent limitations in striking the bipolar nationalisms which are prevailing in the current politics of the Country. Besides, the Constitution propagating ethnic oppression in the past regimes which cannot be backed by admissible and relevant pieces of evidence and perpetuating fear and suspensions between brother ethnic groups (*Interview with an Academician 2, 2019*).

Some more specific issues also raised as major legal issue that should be discussed and addressed through national dialogues and discussions. Two major provisions of the FDRE constitutions, articles 39 and 40 are some of them. These two articles are the most controversial articles among many political actors. There are two extreme groups who argues on this issue. The Interviewee argued that:

Apart from to the entire contents of the constitution, there are some controversial articles which should be taken into account for national dialogue and consensus in order to bring sustainable peace. These provisions are articles 39 and 40. These two major provisions are the most contested and questioned articles of the constitutions. Article 39 of the constitution deals with the rights of nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia to self-determination up to secession. And article 40 of the constitution deals with the right to property, the right to ownership of rural and urban land. This article exclusively provides the right to land ownership to state and the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or other means of exchange (*Interview with a Public official 1, 2019*).

There is lack of national consensus among the political elites regarding the FDRE constitution and the constitutional provisions. The lack of common agreement among political actors makes the constitution to be short of legitimacy. This lack of acceptance and disobeying the constitutional provisions opens the door for quarrels and becoming the cause of conflicts many times. The government was manipulating each article of the constitution whenever they want to crack down the opposing parties. The opposing parties were also doing the same thing. The interviewee argued that:

The FDRE constitution is one of the major legal documents that should take into the table for discussions and understanding among the elites and the people in general for the mutual trust and proper implementation of the constitution. There is a lack of understanding and mismanagement of the constitution for the sake of power competition between the ruling party and the opposite parties. The ruling party abuses the constitutional provisions whenever it wants to accuse and sue the opposing parties. On the other hand, the opposing parties did the same thing when they want to blame the government. In addition to lack of legitimacy and empathy, the issue of implementation is a major issue that should be discussed and come into consensus on how to apply the provisions properly and how to get the appropriate acceptance by the general public in order to bring sustainable peace and democracy in Ethiopia (*Interview with Government ministry, 2019*).

In addition to the FDRE constitution, some major legal issues should be considered and taken into account for national dialogue and consensus in order to bring sustainable peace and democracy in Ethiopia. For example, since 2009 the ruling party drafted repressive laws to crackdown the voice of the opposing political parties and those who are against the government ideologies and policies. Three major issues such as civil society proclamation, anti-terrorism law, and broadcasting law are major legal issues that should be considered and to be addressed through national dialogues and inclusive discussions. Comprehensive discussions and debates with legal experts and other political actors should be considered in order to build common consensus and agree on how to reframe them again. Broad and intensive discussions would help to foster the

national consensus process and also help to revise and reexamine the existing laws. The interviewee argued that:

The major legal issues like the anti-terrorism law, the charities and civil society proclamation and broadcasting law could be considered as the important legal issues that need wider discussion and consultation with different actors and experts in order to reach on national consensus. Through amending, revising and inviting all the concerned citizens and political parties, national consensus can be reached. I do believe that these actors can contribute a lot to create national consensus and reconciliation in Ethiopia (*Interview with an Academician 1, 2019*).

The inclusive process of the national dialogue is the success factor for bringing positive outcomes of the national dialogues which is a great achievement for attaining the objectives of the agenda of the discussions. The participation of several actors would contribute a lot for having a different perspective on the issues under discussion and to have common stands to achieve these objectives. Blunck et al., argued that the involvement of many actors in the process of national dialogue and consensus has a paramount role to bring the necessary change and helps to achieve the objectives of the forum. The active participation of actors can establish the political and social environment conducive to legitimate constitution-making, and establish a procedural or substantive framework (or both) for a future constitution. In a broader sense, a strong national dialogue that engages with political, economic and social issues can contribute to creating the necessary preconditions for sustainable constitution-making (South Africa, Tunisia, Benin). During a constitution-making process, dialogue between key stakeholders is often essential to resolving underlying political problems that are blocking the process (Tunisia) (Blunck et al.,2017:31).

For instance, the Tunisia national dialogue and consensus successfully resulted in the formation of the new constitution and the dispensation of a democratically elected government. As a result of the outcome of the national dialogue and consensus, Tunisia is now considered as one of the democratic nations in the world. Critically looking at the achievements of the national dialogue and consensus, it can be noted that they were not only limited to the political perspectives, but

they were also felt at the economic level. By effectively bring together the two opposing sides; the national dialogue was successful in stopping the persistent strikes and demonstrations that had threatened the economy of the country (Guo et al., 2015:63).

To conclude, based on the data collected from in-depth interviews and secondary sources, the study explored major legal issues that should be addressed through national dialogues and consensus. The finding indicates that the FDRE constitution is one of the major legal issues that should be discussed and debated through inclusive discussions and reached on national consensus. The study explored that the FDRE constitution is one of the contested and controversial issues in the current political sphere of Ethiopia. There is the issue of public discussions and consultations during the draft of the constitution. The discussions were not all-inclusive and comprehensive. It was not participatory and all-encompassing. Only a few stakeholders had discussed the during the drafting process. The issue of representation is also the causes of contentions and disagreements. Some sections of societies are believed that they are not well represented in the constitution. In addition to the general content of the constitution, the study explored that articles 39 and 40 of the constitution are some of the provisions of the constitution which are still contentious and controversial. These specific articles need deep discussions and consultations with experts and stakeholders and also with the general public. So, realizing national consensus on the FDRE constitution in general and some provisions of the constitution in particular through all-encompassing discussions is essential for bringing sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

4.1.2 Political issues

The Political change or political crisis in one nation is one major factor that enforces the government in power to engage in a national dialogue to discuss and address the major national issues through comprehensive and all-encompassing discussions. The discussions might include several actors from opposition political parties to civil societies and religious leaders. The issues of the discussions might range from governmental change to structural change. The discussion issues also depend on the political context and situations of that state. These inclusive discussions and dialogues have the potential to bring a new change and transform the fate of a nation. Blunck et al., argued that during times of political upheaval or crises in state legitimacy,

national dialogues and consensus often produce new or renovated political structures. New political settlements and power-sharing agreements may emerge. Often, institutional changes have been agreed upon, such as setting up a national unity government, restructuring parliament and agreeing on certain checks and balances. Reforms in policing, judiciary and rule of law, as well as improvements in institutional practices can also be a part of the change. For instance, the Processes of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) can accompany national dialogues and consensus; however, these sensitive topics tend to be discussed in more confined and exclusive political spaces (Blunck., 2017:145).

Since from its beginning, the current federal structure or federalism in Ethiopia has been criticized by many actors and political parties. On the other side, the current federalism has been romanticized by several actors including the ruling party. Ethnic groups are the epicenters of the federal system in Ethiopia. There are two divergent groups of elites who are fighting against each other regarding which kind of federalism the government should follow. These two groups of elites always present their justification for why they prefer ethnic federalism or federalism based on the geographical setup. The interviewee argued that:

The federal system is one of the contested issues in Ethiopia that should be addressed through national dialogues and consensus. There are two extreme groups in the current Ethiopian political arena. One group is a supporter of ethnic federalism and the other group is against the current federal system. Those groups who are against ethnic federalism argue that this system will make the nations and nationalities selfish and think only for their groups. This might make the nations and nationalities not to fight for the common goals. On contrary, the supporter of ethnic federalism argues that the current federal system of Ethiopia is helping the nations and nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to cultivate their culture, preserve their history, protect their religions and customs (*Interview with public official 1, 2019*).

The realization of dispute settlement through national dialogues is an important factor for forging peace and development. Having a discussions forum with different actors concerning the nature of the federation is one of the most imperative steps in Ethiopia politics. Since the nature of the

federation is disputable political issue, Political actors including the ruling party and the opposing parties should discuss this essential issue intensively. Intensive discussions and debates will help the country to run out of the conflict traps and backwardness. Cultivating the culture of dialogue and discussion is very significant for reaching on national consensus. The intensive discussions and debates on the nature of the federal system and its outcomes has a potential to bring about peace and stability not only for Ethiopia but also for the horn of Africa.

The nature of the federation itself is one of the disputed political issues that should be addressed through an inclusive national dialogues and consensus among the political elites. Whether it should be ethnically based or not should be discussed and reached a decision based on national consensus. Once national consensus is reached among the general public, the government and the political elites on the nature of the federation, sustainable peace will prevail in Ethiopia and the country will be the hope of stability for the horn of African countries. The stability of Ethiopia has so many implications for the internal peace of the horn countries (*Interview with an Academician 3, 2019*).

There is a polarization of viewpoints on the nature of the federal system. Two divergent groups are tremendously placing their interpretation concerning the current federalism system which the ruling party was using it for more than two decades. These two groups, ethnic-nationalist, and Ethio-nationalist are the major players in the current political landscape. Both groups always blame and highly criticize each other in uncivil way. However, they never discuss the issue and agree on the problem literally. Denouncing each other doesn't bring anything and the necessary change at all. Discussion on the issue of federalism with inclusive dialogues and the comprehensive forum will help the two opposing groups to solve the problem and bring national consensus.

It is a public secret that there is an apparent conflict between Ethiopian nationalism on one hand and ethnic nationalism on the other since the inception of Ethiopian student's movement in the 1960s. These bipolar views of nationalism came up with arguments for and against the amendment of the FDRE Constitution. Ethiopian nationalist near completely needs the dismantling of ethnic federalism. While the other side of

nationalism propagators needs the perpetuating of the existing ethnic-oriented political system (*Interview with an Academician 2, 2019*).

The two extreme groups of political elites are playing the major political game under the umbrella of Ethiopian politics. The major cause of their arguments is the nature of federation or federalism. These groups, the ethnic-nationalist and Ethio-nationalist, are always justified why they are advocating for the ideas they have towards federalism or the nature of the federation. For example, Ethio-nationalist argued that the ethnically based arrangement of state structure exacerbates the conflicting interest of regional states and thereby nation-nationalities. And hence this arrangement should be revised and the nation's nationalities must convene at the national level to resolve conflicts. On the other hand, ethnic nationalists argued that those who are advocating for Ethiopian nationalism are those who want to go back to their tribalism under the cover of vague “Ethiopianism”. These two extremist groups must seat together and discuss their difference, identify what is right or what is wrong in the system and find sustainable solutions.

The land and nationality issues are the core problems that have hunted Ethiopia for so long. These days, the opposition groups and EPRDF are still struggling to tackle these problems; although, they attempt to address with terminologies such as citizenship and nation nationalities. These two components have to be addressed once for all; otherwise, Ethiopia will not stir in the right direction where rule of law, democracy, and good governance prevail (*Interview with a Researcher, 2019*).

Mohammed Ademo, Ethiopian born editor of Aljazeera debated that division and mistrust are increasing in Ethiopian politics. Ademo argued that, "growing mistrust and schism among Ethiopia's already fragmented political elite has further polarised the public. The debate over Ethiopia's future is now dominated by two opposing axes: Ethno-nationalists and Ethio-nationalists. The former calls for a new social contract under the country's multinational federation while the latter, perhaps by masking their tribalism under the cover of an amorphous Ethiopian identity, disparage ethno-nationalists as narrow and inward-looking tribalists” (Ademo, 2019). In his piece of commentary, Ademo critically argued that those who are crying for Ethiopian nationalism are those who want to bring the previous kingship periods of the rule

which are already dead and which will not come again. He argued that the advocates of Ethio-nationalist are wearing fake “Ethiopianism” masks to fulfill their untouchable dream to bring back the dead political regime which was full of oppressions and injustices.

On the other side, Mahmood Mamdani, a professor of Columbia University argued that "the system of ethnic federalism was troubled with internal inconsistencies because ethnic groups do not live only in a discrete "homeland" territory but are also dispersed across the country. Nonnative ethnic minorities live within every ethnic homeland. He asserted that, federalism based on geographical setup is helpful for Ethiopian to check the power of the government and protect the country from authoritarian rule. Mamdani debated that ethnic federalism couldn't bring positive changes for Ethiopia but it creates endless minorities and another oppression. The federal structure which is based in territorials is very important to address the challenges of the state and build a strong federal structure (Mamdani, 2019).

The unlimited and antagonist nature of the arguments between Ethio-nationalist and ethno-nationalist would be a big challenge for the current political reform to be sustainable. The unmanageable competitions of these two competing groups which is not based on democratic culture would affect the political transition and the democratization process in Ethiopia. It should be controlled and managed based on rules and discipline. Unless the backfire effect of these hostile arguments might affect the current political reform.

Mebratu Kelecha, a Doctoral researcher at the University of Westminster asserted that “the biggest challenges for the current leadership will come from competing for nationalism and their potential links to organized politics. The new leaders seemed to have embraced a pro-Ethiopian nationalism and enjoy broad-based support. For some time, it seemed this support was lasting support. But there is no guarantee that this support from the rival nationalist movements will continue because their alliance is not strategically based on shared political visions. This exacerbates the challenges facing the current transition. On one hand, the fierce rivalry between the various competing nationalist movements may not create a fertile ground for the development of democratic culture" He argued that “the inability of the government to tame these nationalist movements to the extent that it undermines the possibility of transition to democracy (Kelecha, 2019).

Democracy is a key mechanism for addressing differences and disagreements. Building a democratic culture and fostering the democratization process is an important solution to tackle political or identity questions. Democracy has the potential to transform conflicts into opportunities and solve problematic issues peacefully. In his piece of article, blogger Befikadu Hailu argued that "the answer for national and identity question is not nationalism of Ethno-nationalism, rather its democracy. Nationalism is only a good tool to mobilize people against the other. That has been witnessed anywhere in the world, and it is being witnessed in Ethiopia. The Ethno-nationalism in Ethiopia has transferred past oppressions to the regional level. Now, Regions are doing what historical Ethiopia has been accused of" (*From blogger Befikadu Hailu Facebook post, June 22, 2019*).

Democracy has a paramount role to change the conflict situations into peaceful conditions through dialogues and discussions. It has the power to change the culture of political participation from a low level to active and full participation. Democracy can solve differences and conflicts through dialogues and debates. Cheema argued that democratic governance provides a useful set of tools for conflict prevention, management, and resolution including rebuilding fractured communities, political reconciliation, security sector reform, reintegration programs, and the enhanced role of civil society during the conflict and post-conflict situations. Also, democracy promotes national unity by providing institutional mechanisms by which different ethnic groups can express their views and influence the process of making a political decision in the country (Cheema, 2005:221).

Institutional independence is another major political issue that should be addressed through inclusive dialogues and consensus. Inclusive dialogues and comprehensive discussions are crucial on how to build these institutions. For more than two decades, democratic institutions in Ethiopia were instruments of the ruling party. They were like a toothless dog and was not independent at all. They were serving the interest of the ruling party and the government was using these institutions for its purpose either to accuse its opponents or throwing them in jail. Those periods were the period of institutional decay.

Democratic Institutions like judiciary, board of election, human rights commission and other very important institutions were serving the interests and wishes of the ruling party. The weakness and non-partisan features of these democratic institutions were playing a major role for the mess and conflicts in the country. However, currently, there are opportunities to discuss the issues and bringing the issues in the roundtable discussions. Discussing and reaching on national consensus is very important to improve the performance and the independence of these institutions. Having a wide discussion with different actors and experts through comprehensive dialogues and consultations on how to build independent and impartial institutions should be the major task of the government and the opposing parties and other concerned bodies.

The major political issues are institutional independence of the electoral board, the incompetence of houses of the federation, and other democratic institutions. These institutions were machinery of the ruling party. The electoral law should be revised and proportional representation must be recognized by this law, the role of the house of the federation in the law-making process must be increased and democratic institutions should be reorganized and led by neutral professional persons (*Interview with Academician 1, 2019*).

Ezekiel Gebissa, a Professor of history at Kettering University, argued that “the key aim of reform should be to establish broad acceptance of the basic rules of democratic political competition. Electoral laws must not be a gift of the ruling party to the opposition and the people. Ethiopians must view electoral laws as impartial. Gebissa noted that the drafting process must be inclusive and the product one that respects the rights of all stakeholders. Overall, laws must be reformed in a way that offers opportunities to strengthen electoral management bodies as independent, impartial, credible and professional institutions” (Gebissa, 2018:18). The interviewee also argued that:

Judiciary independence (Art. 78 and 79) and the power of constitutional interpretation is another area that needs national consensus. 62 (1) gives the power of constitutional interpretation to the House of Federation. As the House of Federation is a political organ, it cannot naturally address objective legal interpretations. According to the

principle of separation of power, legal interpretation including constitutionality is bestowed to the judicial branch. The Judicial Administration Council (Art. 79 (4)) is a sort of political body that hinders and even controls the judges (*Interview with Academician 3, 2019*).

Democracy is the best instrument to strengthen the judiciary system and helps to function properly and impartially. The strong judicial system also supports other institutions in fostering the democratic culture and democratization. Cheema argued that an effective judicial system and process are necessary to strengthen democracy and good governance. Some of the problems that constrain the effectiveness of the judicial system and process are the lack of independence of the judiciary, court delays, outdated laws and slow procedures, corruption in the judiciary, increased crimes and violence crisis in prison system and the lack of legal training facilities and outdated curriculum in law schools. The independence of the judiciary-including objectivity in its operations, its accessibility, its transparency, and predictability, and its ability to protect human rights, private property rights, and the legitimate interest of the state is a necessary condition for courts to effectively perform their primary functions (Cheema, 2005:169-173).

The public trust in the legal system and democratic institutions have been lost as a result of the misuse and lack of impartiality. Getting back public trust and legitimacy is a difficult task for the current leadership. The leadership needs to work tirelessly on institutional building and realizing the faith of the public. However, the effort of building these institutions should be the responsibility of each citizen. Apart from the general public, national dialogue among government, opposition parties, civil societies, and other concerned bodies is very significant to reach on a national consensus regarding the structure, the power, and the independence of these institutions.

The political system is run often with no regard for adhering to the FDRE constitution. This has led to a lack of legitimacy for the ruling party and the FDRE constitution. The way to rebuild the legitimacy of the federal constitution is through reforming the political system, separating it from the grips of the ruling party and bringing it under an independent legal system. The legal system suffers from a perception of being politically driven, misused as a political tool. The way to rebuild the faith the public and the political elite have in the justice system is to reform into an independent branch of government. To

do so, this requires the input of political elites outside of the ruling party, EPRDF. An example of a reform agenda is the establishment of a Constitution Court as proposed by Dr. Negasso Gidada, one of the framers of the constitution (*Interview with a Public opinion maker, 2019*).

The state administrative structure is another major political issue that needs national consensus. Just like the issue of federalism, two divergent groups are arguing for the current state modality and against the current state structure. Public dialogues and inclusive discussions are imperative to bring these two ideas into the roundtable discussions and addresses the issue. All-inclusive and comprehensive national dialogues is an important mechanism to reach an agreement and reaching on national consensus. The result of national consensus will bring sustainable peace and this in return help to foster the national economy.

The biggest issue that needs to be addressed through national consensus in Ethiopia is the modality of the country's administrative structure and set an end to the extreme options floating for several decades. The economic and other issues I hope can be addressed within a normal government operation rather than national consensus (*Interview with Legal expert, 2019*).

In addition to this, the interviewed researcher further noted that;

The modality of governance and the future of the country itself need consensus, mainly based on its history. Some groups advocate Unitary Ethiopia that does not respect its diversity and these who advocate dismantling Ethiopia all together and forming new entities. They are both equally dangerous (*Interview with a Researcher, 2019*).

Building a democratic system, having national hero, national emblem and anthem are some of the major political issues that should be addressed through inclusive dialogues in Ethiopia. Similar to other contentious national issues, these fundamental political issues need wider discussions and debates. These issues were the causes of conflicts and quarrels in different times. Many conflicts have been happening over the past one and a half years because of the flag and national hero. The same is true concerning national anthem and emblem. There are also

divergent attitudes among political elites regarding the democratic system. Even though everyone aspires in building a democratic system in Ethiopia, there is a disparity of thoughts and mechanisms on how to establish this system. Inclusive discussions and dialogues would solve these major political issues.

Over the past 27 years, there was not a democratic system in Ethiopia. The system is controlled by a few individuals and their families. The absence of a democratic system blocks public participation in different issues. This blockage of public participation creates a lot of bad things in Ethiopia and the current problems in the country have been created as a consequence of the lack of a democratic system. So, the National consensus on creating a democratic system is a key above all. If we agree on how to create a democratic system, the remaining national issues will be simple to address. Indeed, reaching a consensus on a democratic system will facilitate and make easy the national consensus process (*Interview with Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

The interviewed academician has also asserted that;

Having a national hero, emblem and anthem is a major national issue that should be addressed. Most of the advanced western nations have their own national hero's, emblem and anthem while we have no such minimum thresholds which can ease the process of national consensus in Ethiopia (*Interview with an Academician 2, 2019*).

It was evident that there were violent conflicts among the youths in the capital of Addis Ababa and the surrounding cities related with the flag. The flag war is intensified after the new leadership comes to power. On 9 September 2019 thousands of Addis Ababa's residents arrived in the central square and national stadium to welcome exiled opposition leader Berhanu Nega. Supporters of Ginbot 7 have been enthusiastically waving the old Ethiopian flag, which lacks the star emblem associated with the EPRDF. On the other hand, in 15 September another huge rally took place in Addis Ababa. At this time the rally is prepared to shows supports and solidarity for the leaders of Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). However, before the event, which was peaceful and festive, there were clashes between city residents and young Qeerroo from the Oromo hinterland because of the issue of the flag" (Gardner & Rosser, 2018).

To conclude, based on the data collected from interviewees and secondary sources, the study explored that major political issues such as federalism, institutional independence, democratic system, national flag, national emblem and the issue of national heroes are the major national issues that should be addressed through comprehensive dialogues and inclusive discussions. These major political issues were causes of conflicts and controversies in different times. They were contentions as well as not well discussed. Dialogue forums with the political elites and the public in general will facilitate the discussions and shortcut the long path of democratization. Having inclusive discussions and deep consultations will fasten the national consensus process. Giving solutions for these national issues will ease the democratization process and bringing sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

4.1.3 Economic and Socio-Cultural issues

Economic issue is one of the major factors that enforce the government to resign either voluntarily or through public protests. When the economy is unable to function properly, the state incapable to pay back foreign debt and the people unable to afford to live, these factors forces the government in power to resign or political elites to discuss on how to address the issues through inclusive dialogues and discussions. The same is true for socio-cultural issues. Kaplan & Freeman argued that economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, and inflation are major factors that enforce the people of one country to protest against the government. On the other hand, lack of good governance, corruption, resources mismanagement and labor exploitation are some of sources of grievance to protest against the government in power. Kaplan & Freeman further asserted that all these economic issues can be solved either by changing the government or reforming the government stricture or bringing economic reform. For instance, frustration over jobs, incomes, and prospects combined with anger over cronyism and economic domination at the hands of one ethnicity, religion, or class – often plays a prominent role in conflict and the overthrow of a regime. This has been true since at least the French revolution and was a major factor in the Arab spring (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:82).

The Political reform or regime changes in one nation as a result of economic frustration should focus on how to get solutions for these economic crises. These economic crises need to be addressed through national dialogues and discussions. The inclusive debates and dialogues with economic experts and the political elites would solve these issues and this in turn would foster the transformation process and help to manage the crisis. Blunck et al., argued that outcomes under social and economic reform seek to redress the particular socio-economic challenges a country face. These can include a commitment or concrete steps to improve social services and education (Bolivia and Jordan respectively), land reform (Kenya), measures to fight corruption (Bahrain) or increase economic competitiveness (Poland). In Yemen, working groups were concerned with social and environmental issues, as well as with comprehensive, integrated and sustainable development. Some processes are known to focus exclusively on development issues, to generate a coherent national development policy (Blunck et al., 2017:146).

For more than two decades, the government of Ethiopia was following the path of developmental state which is successful economic model for the East Asian countries. The model is supposed strong state intervention in the market, as well as extensive regulation and planning. It's the state that is focused on economic development and takes necessary policy measures to accomplish that objective. The application of model was controversial throughout the past two decades. Economists and development practitioners were criticizing the model in its approach which is far from contextualizing the Ethiopia context. Without agreement and making comprehensive dialogues on this economic model, the application of the model seems an end at this time.

The Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, is proposing a new model of the economy "homegrown" economic model. The model resembles to the liberalization of the economy. The model has been criticized by economists and political elites from the very beginning. Having inclusive national dialogues and debates on which economic policy or which model is significant for the current Ethiopian economic problem is very important. A comprehensive dialogues and discussions forums among the economists and experts concerning the proposed economic model would help to address the economic problems. Discussing and reaching on consensus on the issue will decrease the risk of implementing the policy and also bring necessary changes to the economic

crisis. Concerning this issue Professor Alemayehu Geda (Ph.D), and Ayele Gelan (Ph.D) argued as the following respectively:

A closer examination of the “homegrown” economic policy reform shows that it does not look as homegrown as claimed. It is strikingly similar to a typical IMF program for reforming developing countries and copied from such templates. It does not start with understanding the real economic problems at home. As a result, the review and diagnosis in the policy are based on such templates instead of the real issue on the ground. The fundamental sources of the macroeconomic problems of the country are missing.... the policy prescribes a solution without identifying these root causes of the problem (Geda, 2019).

There is no credible evidence to suggest that the economic reform agenda was truly homegrown. For starters, there is no traceable background study. Economic reforms must be preceded by a thorough diagnosis of the health of the economy, as well as identifying structural bottlenecks and macro-sectoral imbalances. There was no background study conducted to generate evidence to inform the decision to formulate Ethiopia’s recent economic reform program, “broader diagnostic analysis” or otherwise (Gelan, 2019).

Ethiopia is producing large number of graduate students each year. These young graduates are seeking a job after graduation. Unfortunately, the country's economic capacity is unable to provide jobs for all these graduates even for the half. The economy couldn't absorb the demand and unable to provide jobs. These were the causes of grievances and protests over the past four years. Addressing the unemployment crisis requires discussions and debates among the experts. Having comprehensive dialogues and discussions on how to address the unemployment issues and which economic model is appropriate has a paramount role in solving the issues to some extent. The national social dialogue in Jordan on economic issues includes factors such as substantial unemployment (most critically among the youth), the refugee crisis and its impact on the national labor market and public infrastructure, and the size of the informal sector, which

currently represents an estimated 30% of the national economy, all weigh heavily on the national environment for social dialogue (SOLiD, 2018:11).

At the root of all of Ethiopia's challenges is economic security. Ethiopia, with close to 70% of its population is under 30 years of age which needs a job for survival. The country should attain economic development and growth to meet the needs of its young population. The way forward is to give political space for various economic models to compete in the country. Reaching a national consensus on the very fact that all economic models should be given political space without threats or repression is key to economic transformation. Elites need to reach a consensus on the need to accommodate all views in the political discourse (*Interview with a Government ministry, 2019*).

Another interviewee also asserted that:

Politics determine the economic system. If the political atmosphere is good it will ease the process of economic consensus. In the economy, there are controversial issues including land ownership and market liberalization. The level of government intervention in the market should be limited. The market should decentralize and free from state intervention. There should be strong integration among regions and regional markets. And the regional government should cover their expense. The government should follow a free market economy path (*Interview with a Public official 1, 2019*).

The new leaderships should be aware of how they take over the power. They come to power as a result of four years of youth protests against the government. One of the major factors for the public demonstrations was the economic questions including unemployment, inflation, and distribution of resources. Since the protester's question was an economic issue the government should commit to do so. The leadership should give priority to protesters' questions. Ezekiel Gebissa further argued that:

The success of the transition to democracy, therefore, depends on the management of the economy. The “authoritarian bargain” must be replaced by a “democratic bargain” that envisions a broader distribution of the benefits of aggregated growth. In constructing a new bargain, transition leaders need to give priority to economic grievances – such as

rising unemployment and inflation – that have provoked mass protests. The focus of the “democratic bargain” should be on equity, fairness, and inclusiveness for the most vulnerable in society (Gebissa, 2018, p.19).

The post-conflict state reconstruction is one of the difficult tasks for one government. Once the conflict has been stopped and the government in power changed, the task of the new leadership should focus on those previous challenges that make the former government stepped down. In Ethiopia economic demand of the youth especially the issue of unemployment and job creation need special attention and should be addressed. Political elites and experts should be discussed and debated on how to solve these problems.

The biggest issues to be solved in post-conflict are the economic problems as well as the political ones. Ethiopia is in a unique situation to take any path of conflict management. In other words, after three years of public demonstrations, we have EPRDF in power. These require a lasting solution to meet the uprising youth's demands in Oromia, Amhara, and any other regions. To address this phenomenon, the national consensus is primordial so that the unity of Ethiopia will be protected (*Interview with a Researcher, 2019*).

The political leaders during the transition or the political reform must focus on what brings the reform or the transition. The leaders should concentrate on the real problem on the ground. Giving proper solutions and prioritizing the challenges are recommendable to sustain the reform. The success of the transition or the reform depends on to what extent the leadership is doing to solve those problems. Kaplan & Freeman argued that the transition leaders who ignore the economy do so at their peril. Growth that produces a wide distribution of gains (through increases in jobs, incomes, and entrepreneurship) is important to a wide range of intermediate goals crucial to the success of a transition, including encouraging youth to stay away from extremist groups (a strong economy provides better alternatives); major political actors to work together and accept agreements (a strong economy offers incentives to support the changes these embody), and the general population to have patience for reforms in other areas to show results. A vibrant economy feeds upon itself (by encouraging investment) and improves the dynamic

everywhere else because it rewards more people (giving them incentives to focus on economics and not politics) and spreads optimism in its wake (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:82).

Privatization is another major economic issue that should be addressed through national consensus in Ethiopia. Currently, the government is proposing privatization of some government-owned enterprises including telecom, logistics service, Sugar Corporation, and Ethiopian airlines. The justification of the government to privatize these public enterprises is lack of foreign currency in the national bank and inefficiency of these enterprises. However, the issue of privatizing these enterprises is creating controversies and mistrust. Intensive and open debates among the economists, academicians, policymakers and political elites are very important before the implementation of the proposal. Reaching on consensus would bring the proper path to implementing the proposal and reduce the risk of economic crisis. Kefyalew Gemed and Hussien Berisso argued that:

It is generally understood that privatizing inefficient state-run organizations would enable governments to raise funds that would be invested in social programs such as education and healthcare. However, the policy remains controversial and the relative roles of ownership and other structural changes in promoting economic efficiency remain uncertain. Some believe that what belongs to the public should remain with the public, while others argue that private enterprises are better situated to be run by private businesses, not the government which has failed to run its mega-companies in the first place. These companies, the argument goes, have (if run by private businesses) the potential to generate the revenue that is needed to support the ambitious economic growth and other social services (Gemed & Berisso, 2018).

Calculating the cost of privatization is essential before running for implementation. Doing practical researches and doing intensive assessments will reduce the risk of the financial crisis and economic breakdown. The calculation includes having open discussions with experts and concerned bodies. Having practical debates and taking a recommendation from experts has a paramount role in the successful implementation of the policy and the proposal. Negash, Hassan, Girma, & Kebede argued that:

In the sphere of economic policy, the government needs to undertake a comprehensive assessment of economic policies and identify specific areas of reforms. While the policy statement on the privatization is prudent as an indicator of an overall policy orientation of the reform package, several issues need to be addressed before actual privatization. These include, among other things, the need to understand that the political costs of privatization in a period of the post-conflict election could be relatively high and there is need for a series of regulatory and institutional interventions (Negash, Hassan, Girma, & Kebede, 2018)

There is a consensus among the public on the inefficiency of the state-owned state enterprises. These enterprises were not profitable and does not benefit the general public. There were field of grand corruptions and embezzlement. They were debt rather than a benefit for the government and the general public. However, some enterprises are very profitable and icon for the state. Telecom and Ethiopian Airlines are some of the most profitable public enterprises which generate billions of revenues for the state. Privatizing these two companies might be dangerous for the government. Tebeje Molla who is a research fellow in the Deakin University, Australia argued that:

The privatization initiative is highly problematic. While there are state-owned enterprises that could arguably benefit from private management, Ethiopian Airlines is not one of them. Ethiopian Airlines started operation in 1946 when most African nations were still under the colonial yoke. The success of the airline is regarded as embodying the resilience of the country. In other words, if the stated purpose of privatization was to improve the efficiency and profitability of public assets, then the privatization of Ethiopian Airlines is not justifiable (Molla, 2019).

Some major socio-cultural issues also should be addressed through national consensus. The issue of tolerance and peacefully relationship among the people should be solved. The culture of tolerance and harmoniously living together is becoming difficult and challenging. Conflicts are erupting many times and in different parts of the country and costing the lives of many

individuals. Once conflict erupts in one place, it immediately changed to ethnic or religious conflicts and devastates lots of things. Discussions and having intensive dialogues on what erode the culture of tolerance and how to increase tolerant generation is essential to bring sustainable peace and strength of our relationship.

Ethiopian nations, nationalities, and peoples were living together for a long period of time peacefully and tolerantly. However, this culture of peace and tolerance is decaying from time to time in line with the current political development in Ethiopia. Stereotypes, generalization, and discrimination are some of the causes of conflicts in Ethiopia. Peoples who were living together are killing each other. The atmosphere of the revenge and brutality is surrounding the country's environment. The bad perception toward each other should be solved through national consensus as soon as possible (*Interview with a Public opinion maker, 2019*).

The political culture is another major socio-cultural issue that needs open discussions and debates. Our culture of imaging politics should be changed. In our political history, we prefer killing each other for the sake of power rather than peaceful political participation. The exploitation and political participation based on conspiracy was our political culture for many decades. Ethiopia as a country loses so many young political leaders and individuals who envision prospers Ethiopia because of the conspiracy political culture. This issue needs special concern and attention. The public should discuss and debate on the issues on how to change and improve this culture to democratic bargaining. Apart from political culture, there is a culture of disrespecting our common icons including national events and national heroes. We have culture of dishonoring our common heroes and national icons. We focus on our difference rather than our common history and goods times. Having a bad perception toward each other should be discussed and addressed. Having debates and discussions on these issues will bring national consensus and help us to stand together as one nation.

Ethiopian society is deeply divided among different groups and factions. The past 20 plus years' political regime has highly classified the societies. Consensuses on major socio-cultural and historical issues are very important to bring the unity of society. The country

needs to have a common hero or national events like Adwa victory. Our common national events or hero can be a symbol of our unity in diversity. Besides, there are controversial issues regarding Ethiopian history. Their controversy is between 3000 and 100 years old Ethiopian history. Discussing and debating the history of Ethiopia is very important to stretch the national consensus (*Interview with a Public official 1, 2019*).

The interviewed public opinion maker has also contended that;

Our political culture has pushed many capable Ethiopians to avoid politics due to excessive abuse of coercive force by the state. Reaching national consensus is a key to lower the anxiety associated with political participation, this will populate the political pool with capable and principled individuals (*Interview with a Public opinion maker, 2019*).

To conclude, based on the data collected from in-depth interviewees and secondary sources, the study explored major economic and socio-cultural issues that should be addressed through national dialogues and consensus. The finding indicates that agreeing on these major issues will fasten the current political reform and bring a stable economy in the country. The study explored that major economic issues such as economic model or economic policy, privatization, government interference in the market and the issue of equal distribution of resources are major economic issues that should be addressed. On the other hand, socio-cultural issues such as political culture, the culture of tolerance, and promoting cultural identity are major issues that should be solved and addressed through national consensus. Deep and genuine discussions on how to improve our political culture and how to increase our social cohesion would foster the reform underway and sustainable peace.

4.2 Major Conflicting Issues and National Reconciliation.

National reconciliation is a national wide mechanism of post-conflict state reconstruction. It is the process of healing the wound of the conflicting parties. As a mechanism, it has both forgiveness and justice. One of the major factors for the establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission is to investigate and take necessary action to prevent the re-emergence

of conflicts. States establish the truth and reconciliation commissions to explore the crimes and injustice committed by different actors to prevail in peace and justice in the societies. Currently, Ethiopia started the reconciliation process by establishing the reconciliation commission.

Ethiopia is one of the oldest states in Africa which has both glorious and gloomy histories. In the Ethiopian state-building process, there were conflicts and victories. There were wars and peaceful submission. There were bloodshed conflicts, conspiracy, exploitation and at the same time unity, love, and intermarriage. Like any other state buildings in the world, Ethiopian state construction is not free from doubt and peaceful at all. There are an uncivilly debates and controversies among the political elites concerning the state-building process of Ethiopia. Despite these contentions and arguments, Ethiopia is in the new era of political reform. As part of the political reform, the government established the truth and reconciliation commission to investigate the past injustices and wrongdoings to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. In this part of the analysis, the research focused on exploring the major conflicting issues that should be addressed through national reconciliation and why these issues are the most important.

The Past Histories and the way it's transferred to the current generations have multiple impacts. It has positive and negative impacts. The Positive and correct historical narratives have the potential to create unity and togetherness. On the other hand, the historical narratives based on the false sources or written in an unbalanced way would foster conflicts and also endangers the existence of common states. Historical narratives that are written based on facts and in a balanced manner would strengthen the people's relationships in the state. Studies showed that the conflict in Liberia has its origin in the history and founding of the modern Liberian State (TRC, 2009:4).

Handling the historical narratives properly is very important to prevent the occurrence and reoccurrence of conflicts. Managing and correcting the narrative will ease the reconciliation process and build trust and confidence among the societies. The inability to correct the narratives will cost the life of individuals and societies also endanger the continuity of one state. Clark argued that before the arrival of the colonial powers, first Germany and later Belgium, Hutu and Tutsi 'constituted fluid and context-dependent labels that variously denoted a person's status,

wealth or place of origin. In other words, the distinction between Hutus and Tutsis was not ethnically based. A Hutu, for example, could become a Tutsi through ownership of cattle. The colonialists' policies of favoring the Tutsis over the Hutus, however, combined with the consequent marginalization of Hutus in public life and the introduction in 1933 of identity cards fundamentally altered the meaning of these categories. Clark further argued that Colonialism changed their meaning (from status and economic activity to race), institutionalized and stabilized categories that had been more fluid (though identity cards and race measurements) and intensified the connection between race and power. Hutu and Tutsi are artificially constructed ethnic identities created to serve the interests of the colonial powers. Ethnicity per se was the cause of the Rwandan genocide (Clark, 2010:140).

Historical narratives towards the Ethiopia state building is one of the major national issues that should be addressed through national reconciliation. There are two extremes of historical narratives in Ethiopia. These narratives were causes of conflicts in different times and places. One of the major factors for current ethnic-based conflicts is also driven by these kinds of historical narratives. Historians and politicians have been writing the Ethiopian history from different perspectives. However, the way these historical books have been written was controversial and debatable also prejudiced. Some considered that the narratives are biased and does not show the past historical injustices and brutalities. It only glorifies the good deed of the kings and their regimes. It doesn't show how those kings were exploiting and discouraging the identity, culture, history, language, and religion of other peoples in the Ethiopian empire. Different state-building narratives were sources of bloody conflicts in a different part of the world. Having a common understanding of history and historical narratives is very important to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. This can be achieved through national reconciliation.

There is a big problem of understanding history in Ethiopia. This issue needs great attention to foster the reconciliation process and social cohesion. All nations and nationalities understand Ethiopian history differently and from their perspective only. Everybody claims they were the victim of past regimes. For example, King Menelik II is considered as evil in most parts of Oromia. There is a narrative that Menelik chopped the breasts and the hands of Arsi Oromo societies during his expansion. There are also the

same narratives in the southern parts of Ethiopia. In contrary to this narrative, Menelik II is considered as an Angel of God in the northern part of Ethiopia (*Interview with Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

The interviewee also asserted that:

Historical narratives of Queen Yodit are another example. This queen is considered as evil among the followers of Ethiopian orthodox Christianity. The followers claim that the queen burns and destroys many churches and spiritual books during her reign. She was considered a threat to Christianity and the church. Because of this claim, she has been named "Yodit Gudit (ዮዲት ጉዲት) to illustrate her brutalities. On the other hand, she is popular among the Agawu ethnic societies. Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi other historical narratives. The followers of orthodox Christianity hate this sultanate very much. He is more than evil for them. They claim that he was destroying churches and killing Christians. To show his brutalities, they named Ahmed Gagn/አሀመድ ግራኝ/left-handed. The followers believe that he was left-handed and he is the example of devil. From the other side, this sultanate has acceptance and popularity from the believer of the Muslim religion. They believe that Ethiopian history negatively portray the contribution of the sultanate to Ethiopian history (*Interview with Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

Having several narratives towards the same histories may causes bloodshed conflicts including genocide among those societies who were living together for long periods peacefully and with tolerance. The cost of these narratives will devastate and lead one country on the verge of collapse. Fried, argued that one of the greatest issues with history is it always have multiple narratives. There are always two or more different versions of history. This creates understandings of the past that pit people against each other. In designing history curricula, one narrative of “truth” is often selected and taught. Subsequently, “most citizens learn history as a set story – a process that reinforces the mistaken idea that the past can be synthesized into a single, standardized chronicle of several hundred pages.” The narrative is chosen and the conception that there is only one version of history has the potential to deeply impact learners, by unifying or dividing them against one another (Fried, 2017:18).

The historical narratives and curriculums which are based on the wrong histories were creating war and conflicts in the world. Wrong narratives have a negative power to disintegrate the nation and contribute to genocides. Thousands of peoples have been killed each other because of biased and incorrect historical narratives in the world. Fried argued that there are numerous cases of history dividing or marginalizing populations. One such example is pre-1994 history education in Rwanda feeding into the genocide. History taught at both primary and secondary levels propagated a version of the past based largely on colonial stereotypes and interpretations of Rwandan history, which supported the political ideology and rhetoric of the Hutu regimes in power. Fried further argued that these “historical narratives featured heavily in the genocidal propaganda of the early 1990s,” and “played a fundamental role in instilling an ideology of ethnic division and fear among the Hutu population (Fried, 2017:18).

The fabrication of the wrong narratives is one of the causes of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda. The lack of information, the damage of historical records, and lack of human capital which are very important resources to cross check whether the narratives are correct or not is the success factors for those who want to diffuse wrong narratives and exacerbate conflict among the societies. Colonial powers were using these strategies in Africa during colonialism as part of their divide and rule policies. Colomba, argued that the lack of a reliable historical narrative encouraged the Belgians to construct their assumptions about the origins of Tutsi, which transformed each economic identity into ethnic categories that influenced their behavior towards each group. To further complete the social divisions between Hutus and Tutsis, the Belgians began issuing identity cards after conducting a census in 1933. Establishing the practice of identity cards furthered Tutsi superiority that made it easier to discriminate Hutus from Rwandan society (Colomba, 2013:15).

Seeking national reconciliation for the past injustices is one of the difficult and complex tasks. It's challenging to denounce one group of societies for the past brutalities their fathers and forefathers were committing toward another societies. It is problematic to accuse some groups of societies for the atrocities their families or ancestors have been doing. It is very important to take economic remedies to heal the wounds of the past rather than accusing groups of societies for the

violence they never commit. However, the national reconciliation on historical narratives is an imperative and timely issue. This would lead us to have a stable state and peaceful people.

I am not sure if we need national reconciliation. We may need consensus. But, not necessarily reconciliation as it is a complex issue and it is difficult to blame a whole group for something their ancestors have presumably done, but they don't agree upon. It is also difficult to demand an apology for some repression others have done on one's ancestors' long generations ago. Ethiopians may need an extraordinary political and economic measure to heal the wounds of the past but trying to reconcile what is an unclear dividing factor is to create new problems. (Anyway, if any, we need to reconcile the political history narratives. Narratives are takeaways of historical incidents. Different members of society have different takeaways on the same incidents. To work on reconciling these different narratives is one thing, if possible. Otherwise, to make it acceptable that people of the same country can live together while having different takeaways of the past (*Interview with a Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019*).

Historical narratives were major sources of tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia. Politicians are using these narratives for their political games and manipulation. They focus on the dark side of the narratives to gain more supports from those who claim they were victims of past injustices. All countries have both good and bad histories including victories and genocides. Addressing the wrong side of histories will ease the reconciliation process. It's the biased historical narratives that are leading us to unstoppable ethnic conflicts. However, focusing on the good side of the narrative is significant to live together and continue as a state. To do so, discussing and debating on both sides of the narratives are very important to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian histories contribute to a decisive role in ethnic tensions. People of any country have both dark and bright side of history. Unfortunately, politicians have been exploiting the dark side of our history to gain political support by demonizing others. On the other hand, there is a need for intensive researches to rewrite if there are distorted realities. National reconciliation is critically important to rectify our conflicting histories. There is

a need for the implementation of national projects which promote unity, equal economic benefits and opportunities (*Interview with Academician 3, 2019*).

The Past regime's historical injustices are the major national issue that should be addressed through national reconciliation. Ethiopian history is full of historical injustices, discriminations, tortures and mass killings and on the other hand victories, marriage, unity, and living together. Our bright history is helpful for our current situations and to build a developed nation. However, the past injustices should be addressed and the wound of the victims should be healed and the perpetrators should face justice. When perpetrators face justice, the peace will restore and the spirit of living together will shine. It is difficult to bring sustainable peace if the national reconciliation will not take place and the wound of the victim gets healed. The interviewed public opinion maker argued that:

The major conflicts that need to be addressed through national reconciliation are three: 1) Historical injustices, 2) Derg Era injustices, 3) EPRDF Era injustices. Unacknowledged historical injustices are being used for political manipulation by various elements. Without nationally acknowledging the main sources of injustices during the modern Ethiopia nation formation process, the politicization of history will continue to fuel conflict. Given the young demography of the nation, emotional manipulation of the youth by political media and activists is a national security threat that needs to use reconciliation by an acknowledgment of part of conflict avoidance.

Unaddressed Derg era injustices are the underlying root of tension among the older political elite today. These injustices and their institutional memory have pervaded the EPRDF regime too. The gross human rights abuses committed by the EPRDF government are indicative of the deep-rooted Derg era trauma that Ethiopian elites have not recovered from. Addressing the Derg era injustices that were ignored or sidelined because of the limits of time, resources or capacity of the transitional government of Ethiopia in the early 1990s is a key task that will help heal the nation's older elites and purge the institutional memories that have persisted throughout the EPRDF era security, police and military institutions (*Interview with Public opinion maker, 2019*).

The interviewee also asserted that:

EPRDF era injustices are overwhelmingly unaddressed through a reconciliation process of identifying the truth/facts/, acknowledging the truth/facts and addressing the justice needs of the victims and the perpetrators through restorative justice. This era is where the most work is needed. Without at least starting identifying major atrocities and mass killings during the EPRDF era and, as a nation, experiencing the three major processes of reconciliation (truth, acknowledgment, and justice) it is unlikely those atrocities will not be repeated by the same institutions that enabled similar injustices during the Derg and Haileselesie era (*Interview with Public opinion maker, 2019*).

There is a lack of consensus on the necessity of the national reconciliation among the political elites. Some political elites supposed that there were no big conflicts among the general population that need national reconciliation. There were conflicts among different sections of societies as a result of grazing land and boundary conflicts. However, these conflicts were not a kind of conflict that needs to be addressed through national reconciliation. However, National reconciliation is very important between the government and the general population rather than among the people. The interviewee argued that:

There is no national consensus among the political elites whether the national reconciliation is necessary or not. There are a group of political elites who considered there were no conflicts among Ethiopian societies that needs national reconciliation. However, these groups believe that there are victims and perpetrators. The government was killing and torturing the public. The public was the victims of the past regimes and the government (officials) was the perpetrators. The government should take these responsibilities and should face justice. (*Interview with a Government ministry, 2019*).

Starting the national reconciliation among the Ethiopian people is not a fair game. There were no conflicts among Ethiopian people's that needs national reconciliation. Sometimes there are conflicts of interest between individuals and societies. But this doesn't need the complex process of national reconciliations. These people were living together peacefully and tolerantly for a long time. However, intrapersonal reconciliation should take place. Reconciliation with ourselves has

a paramount role to reconcile with friends and others. First, we have to reconcile with ourselves, with our ego, with our mind. This should be the first stage to start a nationwide reconciliation. If we can't reconcile with ourselves, it's impossible to reconcile and forgive others. We have to reconcile with nature. Nature should be preserved and protected. If we can't reconcile with ourselves and nature, we can't reconcile with others. The interviewee argued that:

For the reconciliation process to start, there should be a victims and perpetrators. Ethiopian societies were living together for many years in a peacefully. There might be a conflict of interest between individuals and government officials. There was no conflict among Ethiopian societies. However, reconciliation should start with the individual. To reconcile with other, individual first should reconcile with himself/herself. Individuals should reconcile with nature. If not, nature will payback. We have to protect and preserve nature. We have to reconcile with nature unless we will collect what we plant/deserve (*Interview with Public official 1, 2019*).

The EPRDF regime is one of the brutal political regimes that many societies suffer from. Many have been killed, tortured, disabled, sodomized, and unable to have Children and mentally disabled in the government prisons. The prisons were a room of tortures and brutalities than the correctional center. All these injustices have been committed by government officials and the intelligence services. Having national reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators/the government officials is a good way of dealing with injustices and bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Those perpetrators should face justice and the victims should be healed with proper compensation. The interviewee argued that:

The past three decades were a period of narrow and even closed political space. The National reconciliation is very important between the ruling party and the victims. The ruling government was torturing, killing, displacing, jailing those who consider they are a threat to its power. Journalists, bloggers, academicians, politicians, civil society leaders and the public at large are major targets of the regime. So, national reconciliation is needed between the ruling party as perpetrators and others as the victims (*Interview with a Legal expert, 2019*).

Social cohesion is another major national issue that should be addressed through national reconciliation. Social cohesion is the quality of social cooperation and togetherness in a territorially delimited community. The spirit of cooperation and working together for common goals is a challenging social issue in Ethiopia. The resilient social relationships, a positive emotional connectedness with the community as well as a pronounced focus on the common good are deteriorating from time to time. One of the factors for this critical issue is the economic disparity between the rich and the poor. The poor are demonizing the rich and the rich are living in the state of fear. So, National reconciliation has a paramount role to strengthen the weakened social cohesion. Economic remedial through national reconciliation will address the social cohesion problem, sustain the harmonious relationship and sustain peace in Ethiopia.

There is a big economic difference among the rich and the poor. There is a long grievance and questions. The youth were protesting for equal distribution of resource, economic development and lack of democracy. The large sections of the societies are economically and politically marginalized. So, conflicts that have been generated as a result of political and economic marginalization should be addressed through national reconciliation/economic and political remedy and this would in return will bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia (*Interviewee with Public official 2, 2019*).

Mob justice and conflicts are spreading throughout Ethiopia. Violence and tensions have been rising from time to time. One of the major factors for these conflicts is ethnic extremism. This issue should be addressed through national reconciliation very soon. This ethnic extremism is connected with past historical injustice. Groups of individuals are killing and burning the houses of other ethnic groups and the other groups also in return killing, torture, and looting the member of other ethnic groups. The cycle of violence and instability is increasing over time. This issue of ethnic extremism needs to be addressed through national reconciliation. Those who commit these brutal crimes must face justice from all ethnic groups. National reconciliation will ease this tension and built the broken relationship among different ethnic groups.

Ethnic based extremism has been the reason for the major conflicts. Segregating and attacking people based on their ethnic groups has been propagated for the last two decades. Currently, the country is experiencing ethnic-based conflicts in its worst form. This view of extremism must be remedied before it's too late. Borders conflicts are other major areas of clashes between different ethnic groups. These issues together with the nature of federation should be addressed once and for all through national reconciliation (*Interview with an Academician 3, 2019*).

To conclude, based on the data collected from interviewees and secondary sources, the study explored that historical narratives, past regimes injustice and the issue of social cohesions, political and economic marginalization, ethnic extremism, and the issue of boundary demarcation are major conflicting issues that should be addressed through national reconciliation. These major national issues are causes of conflicts and quarrels in Ethiopia. Lack of proper handling these issues were contributing for the reoccurrence of deadly conflicts. Addressing these issues through national reconciliation would foster sustainable peace and bonds societies' relationship. The study explored that these issues need to be solved as soon as possible unless letting the issues without proper reconciliation and solution will exacerbate further conflicts and weaken the social bond or social cohesion.

4.3 Institutional, Policy, Legal Frameworks, and National Consensus and Reconciliation.

The strong institutional base is one of the characteristics of embedded democracy. It's the manifestation of the well-functioning of the government system and bureaucracies. Institutions plays a decisive role in strengthening the democratization process and transforming the political transition or reform to a peaceful and well manageable manner. Building robust and conducive institutional, legal and policy frameworks has the potential to transform the political reform into a sustainable and successful way. It also supported and give strength for the political reform to be successful. Robust institutions would maintain the peaceful resolution of conflicts and foster a culture of dialogues and consensus. Currently, Ethiopia is in the new path of political reform and transformation. Several achievements have been accomplished as part of the reform. The government is tirelessly working towards institutional buildings and reconsidering the legal and

policy frameworks. In this part of the analysis, the study focused on exploring the capabilities and potentials of the current institutional, policy and legal frameworks to apprehend the national dialogues and influence the national consensus results in Ethiopia.

Institutions are very broad and have strong mandates and potentials to transform the political transition from deadlock to strong and consolidated democracy. The capabilities of democratic institutions to transform the political transition from fragile to stable depends on to what extent they are independent and impartial. Impartiality which is the best quality of strong democratic institutions have a paramount role to change the country's situations. Genauer argued that the institutional frameworks cover a wide range of issues including electoral systems, judicial systems, decentralization, the independence of different parts of the government and the role of local traditional structures or external institutions such as regional organizations (Genauer, 2018:43).

The institutional independence is the most important frameworks that makes one state become more stable after the government change or even in no government situation. Having strong institutional frameworks helps post-conflict state reconstruction and fastens national dialogue and consensus process. Genauer further argued that good institutional frameworks can have an immense influence on how stable and economically vibrant country is. The fragility of states is often exacerbated by how power is distributed. Many conflicts could be avoided if public institutions worked differently. Although many changes are difficult when government capacity is highly constrained, a transition offers a chance to rethink the design of key parts of the state – and creatively make them work better for everyone (Genauer, 2018:44).

The issues of institutional legitimacy is very tough in a fragile state. Getting more and more acceptance as soon as the governmental change is a critical issue. It needs more resources and human capital. Genauer asserted that the Legitimacy of institutional design across rival groups and the general population is crucial in fragile states if the rules embedded in the new system are to be followed. For this reason, the new system's resilience will depend on enmeshing it in society and this implies building on what already works in the country rather than adopting a foreign blueprint – no matter how attractive the latter may seem (Genauer, 2018, p.43). Genauer

further argued that boosting the structural autonomy of institutions, while increasing the checks on them, can expand their ability to operate free of political interference. This will increase their ability to serve everyone equitably – a hard-to-achieve goal in fragile states but one that inclusive oriented leaders must prioritize greatly during transitions (Genauer, 2018:46).

Rebuilding a contested state begins with the design of the political institutions for a new political system. The inclusion of all communal groups in political institutions during régime transition is a central mechanism to generate support for a new political system. Institution-building is considered 'most likely to generate legitimacy for the state when it is inclusive of all major political forces and open to the participation of the public (Genauer, 2018:4-5). Kaplan & Freeman argued that the Political institutions, in fragile states and elsewhere, have an immense influence on how the competition for power – and thus the state – evolves. But naturally, every group and political actor will have different ideas on what these institutions should look like, particularly when it relates to how their interests are served (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015:43). Haider further argued that alongside political context factors, the design of a national dialogue shapes the level of representativeness and the distribution of power within the process. As such, design or process factors can influence the likelihood of reaching sustainable agreements. Key process factors include the degree of inclusion and participation; representation and selection criteria; objective and scope-setting; institutional framework and support structures; the role of authority figures; decision-making procedures; confidence-building measures; and provision for implementation (Haider, 2019:9).

Our culture of addressing national issues lacks civility and negotiation. We prefer to take arm rather than dialogues and discussions. This tendency was creating many messes in Ethiopia's political sphere. Apart from a lack of a civilly culture in addressing our common issues, the issue of institutional frameworks is one of the major challenges that hamper serious dialogues and discussions among the political elites and the government. Democratic institutions were deliberately weakened by the government to serve their interest. The government also paralyzed non-partisan institutional frameworks such as civil societies and media through drafting restrictive laws. The Inability and ill-functionality of institutional frameworks are hindering the current national dialogue and consensus process.

There is a lack of cultural preparation and institutional framework to undergo serious political dialogue among different stakeholders. Culturally, Ethiopians have a weak tendency to criticize each other civilly. They either confront one another with arms, or one dominates while the others submit. Institutionally, the government deliberately weakened civil societies which are the main platforms to raise awareness and advocate for necessary changes based on the mobilization of citizens. On the other hand, the government barely developed an accountable framework where there is check and balance as well as giving people the power to make decisions, or at least, the power to influence decisions. Without these, it is barely possible to bring about consensus (*Interview with a Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019*).

Ethiopians are not well prepared culturally and psychologically to held national dialogue through discussions and in a civil way. The tendency of our society's culture resembles to conflicts and war than solving the issues through discussions. Taking all and leaving no space for a civil way of addressing our arguments and conflicting issues are a major societal problem. This will affect the national dialogue process and outcomes. In addition to cultural challenges, institutional frameworks are not in a favorable condition to held compressive national dialogues and reaching on consensus on major critical national issues. Yohannes Gedamu argued that:

Ethiopia needs strong democratic institutions and a conducive environment for a free and fair election. Ethiopians need to develop a democratic culture that encourages civil and responsible dialogue, which involves listening to one another, something that is badly lacking today. After years of authoritarianism, it will take a while to change attitudes and tear down prejudices built over centuries of political and sectarian strife (Gedamu, 2019).

Institutional legitimacy is a key instrument to get public trust and acceptance. There was a vacuum of strong institutional frameworks which is genuine and stands for the interest of the public and the state. Filling the gap and multifunctional features of these democratic institutions need the help of civil societies and resources. Building strong institutional frameworks also requires the commitment of the leadership and the people in general. Rebuilding and reshaping

robust and strong civil societies are very important mechanism at this critical time. Mebratu, D Kelecha further argued that:

Institutional and political reconstruction is required to entrust people with all sovereign checks and balances. There is a need for strong civil society organizations dedicated to promoting the values of democracy, voter education and constructive engagement with a key actor such as the electoral commission, political parties and the security agencies (Kelecha, 2019).

Ethiopia lacks credible legal and institutional frameworks to deal with the national dialogue and consensus. The inabilities of these institutional frameworks are a result of ethnic-based institutional orientation. These kinds of institutional arrangements are putting the country in the hostile situation and vulnerable to conflicts. The current institutional and legal frameworks are incapable of holding national dialogue with a successful outcome. However, the commitment and the good face of the leadership has a very important role to make these institutional frameworks functional and independent.

It is the absence of conducive policy and institutional frameworks that created the need for national consensus. It is the lack of strong institutional and policy frameworks which was creating conflicts and injustice. So, the prevailing ethnic-oriented Institutional and Policy frameworks should be rectified either through the legitimate procedures of the amendment or political intervention to save the country. A very basic precondition to make consensus process successful and sustainable is political goodwill and proactive leadership from the ruling party's elite (*Interview with an Academical 2, 2019*).

The Institutional frameworks lacks independence and impartiality. These are evident for many decades. These institutional frameworks are unable to repair the broken relationship between the government and the peoples. The nature of their partiality and lack of legitimacy make them not to function properly. Duplication of institutional role and lack of checks and balance among them is also a challenge. There are no such capable institutional frameworks which help to fix the broken relationship and foster national consensus among the political elites. The interviewee argued that:

There are no strong institutional frameworks that would help to foster social cohesion and national consensus. There is no clear roles and responsibilities among the institutions. There is a duplication of roles and responsibilities. Unfortunately, we don't have such strong institutions which is helpful to reach an agreement on major national issues with win-win outcomes (*Interview with a Government ministry, 2019*).

The Institutional and legal frameworks are in a good position right now. The new leadership is working tirelessly toward institutional building. Those partial democratic institutions are now not in their previous position. There is a change of structure and amendment of legal frameworks. Legal experts are revising and reshaping those restrictive laws and legal frameworks. The civil societies and anti-terrorism laws which are some of the restrictive and controversial proclamations have been amended. This is a few of the positive progress toward institutional building and legal frameworks. The positive progress of these institutional, policy and legal frameworks are enough to hold a national dialogue to bring successful outcomes. The interviewee argued that:

Institutional frameworks are in good progress. For example, the Board of Elections is part of the reform. In the past, this board was not legitimate, independent and free. However, the board is gaining more and more acceptance right now. Last time, all political parties signed contractual agreement which helps them to operate in the country peacefully and according to the law. The document is signed after broad discussed with all political parties. On the other hand, policy frameworks are in a good position. The available frameworks are more than enough to discuss and reach an agreement on the major national issue with win-win outcomes (*Interview with the Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

The current political reform is achieving several progresses toward the institutional building. Some of the areas of development are Supreme Court and board of election. The prime minister appoints two women who are not a member of the ruling party to lead these very important institutions. This is one of the great steps to realize the independence of the institutions which helps to foster the democratization process and national dialogue. However, more work is needed

from the government to fully realize the independence and impartiality of these institutions. The Human Rights Watch report indicated that:

The current leadership is leading the reform by giving more focus on institutional buildings. The appointments of independent figures to lead the Electoral Board and the Supreme Court are positive steps that symbolize a desire for institutional independence, but the government hasn't yet made significant progress toward systemic reform of these institutions. Achieving real independence will take time, and with elections just over one year away, expectations are that electoral reforms would have been further long. While acknowledging that a long-term approach will be needed to improve the independence and capacity of institutions, the government needs to make further efforts to increase their independence and to build confidence that these institutions are capable of resolving grievances in an impartial manner (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

There is a promising reform toward institutional building and legal frameworks. The judiciary is one of the most important areas of the reform. Professionals and legal experts are working within the established council to oversee the legal and institutional reforms. The participation of these legal experts and professionals is a great reputation and big move towards the success of the reform. However, the pace the institutional and the legal reform undergoing is not as fast as expected. They are not revising and rewriting those laws as soon as possible. Despite many studies had been conducted regarding the drawbacks of the existing legal and institutional reforms, the council is still conducting and assessing other studies rather than depending on the existing resources. This is slowing the trajectory of institutional and legal reforms to some extent. The interviewee argued that:

There is barely institutional framework to undergo the reform. The challenge begins with it. The legal reform must be completed faster than it may be completed in the pace of revision right now. There are enough researches already done by many stakeholders and academicians about the shortcomings of existing laws and practices. What needs to be done now is putting them together. As of today, only two laws are adopted by parliament after revision. Others including the media laws and remaining electoral laws are not

adopted yet. Institutional restructuring and building trust are the areas untouched so far. (Interview with a Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019)

The First Steps have been taken toward increasing the independence of the fundamental institutions. Very Important measure have been taken by appointing Meaza Ashenafi as president of the Supreme Court. Liberalizing the judicial system is the crucial step to build vibrant democracy. This is incredible progress which is imperative steps to build strong institutional frameworks that are very helpful to hold successful national dialogues. However, the government should work effectively and attentively to make those democratic institutions stronger and more independent. Mebratu, D Kelecha argued that:

The existence of an independent and impartial judiciary is a fundamental requirement of democratic Ethiopia. The recent appointment of a prominent lawyer and women's rights activist Meaza Ashenafi to head the Federal Supreme Court indicates the desire to do away with the basis of authoritarian rule in Ethiopia: executive control over the judicial system. However, creating an efficient and independent judiciary is a long-term effort (Kalecha, 2019).

The prevalence of peace and stability is depending of the availability of the strong institutional frameworks. Having these institutions in place will help us to prevent post-election conflicts and tensions. Once these democratic institutions are established and installed, it is possible to address the questions and grievances of the youths. Once these democratic institutions are fixed it's not difficult to address the major national issues through national dialogues and discussions. However, all concerned bodies including civil societies and political parties should help the establishment of independent and impartial institutional frameworks to foster the culture of open dialogues and discussions. Asebe Regassa Debelo argued that:

The new leadership should take the lead in establishing institutional frameworks and a national roadmap for addressing the grievances that provoked the Oromo protests, as well as resistance by the opposition and other groups demanding political reforms. Political parties, activists, and civil society organizations should engage the government and one

another to foster a culture and practice of open dialogue and tolerance so that conversations relating to ongoing political reforms can be constructive and respectful of divergent views (Debelo, 2019).

Reforming the electoral board is one of the most important parts of any political transition that the new leadership should take into account to lead the reform in sustainable paths. Making the democratic institutions impartial and independent reduces the reoccurrence of conflicts and tensions. Building an amenable and impartial electoral board helps to fasten the national dialogue process and sustainable peace. Genauer argued that two institutions that shape the trajectory of a political transition are the electoral system and a new constitution. Institutional design during a political transition spans a range of institutional choices including the choice of a parliamentary or a presidential political framework; the crafting of legislative, executive, and judicial institutions; and the choice of a unitary or federal system. (Genauer, 2018:23).

The available Policies and legal frameworks are not a challenge to start the national dialogues process and to agree on major national issues. There are plenty of policies and legal frameworks that are helpful to hold a comprehensive discussion. The constitution can be one of the legal frameworks which allow citizens to participate in every affair of their country freely. Regarding institutional frameworks, it needs more effort and works to make them fully independent and impartial. There is also good progress towards the institutional building but it needs more commitment and citizen participation. Proper use of the constitution and other legal frameworks will fasten the national dialogue practice and can bring the necessary outcomes. The interviewee argued that:

There are conducive policies and legal frameworks in Ethiopia. There is no problem with policies and legal frameworks. The government was drafting policies that are helpful to discuss on national issues. These policies and legal frameworks are more than enough to hold a comprehensive national dialogue. For instance, the constitution is one of the fundamental legal frameworks which is helpful to hold national dialogue to discuss on major national issues. But institutional frameworks are weak. However, there is positive progress toward institutional buildings. The government is reforming the democratic

institutions. This would help to foster the national dialogue process to achieve positive outcomes (*Interview with the Public official 1, 2019*).

The government is working to build strong and vibrant institutions which fosters the human rights protection and promotion. Ethiopian Human right commission is one of the focus areas of the current political reform. There is a big opportunity to build genuine and legitimate democratic institutions. The Human rights commission in particular is working tirelessly and with full of commitment towards elevating the human rights protection. There is also a concrete reforms and strong initiatives to keep Ethiopia on the right direction. Despite many challenges, there is a strong commitment and tangible works towards installing the democratic institutions and democratic political culture. Daniel Bekele (Ph.D.) Chief Commissioner, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission argued that:

Despite the challenges, we remain hopeful that there is a historic opportunity in Ethiopia to consolidate human rights gains, to consolidate democratic gains ad keep Ethiopia on the right trajectory. As part of this initiative, one of the tasks we are committed to is a genuine, radical, institutional reform of the commission to make it fit for purpose, in a way that it is able to deliver all the mandates for which it is established, which is one of promotion and protection of human rights (Capital, 2020).

To conclude, based on the data collected from the interviewees, secondary sources and the international reports the study explored that the available policies, legal and institutional frameworks are plentiful to begin the national dialogue and reconciliation process. These frameworks are more than enough to held the national dialogue and reconciliation process in order to discusses and debates on major national issues. They are also capable in bringing the successful outcomes of the national consensus and reconciliation process. For instance, the government is working towards building the democratic and independent institutions such as the National Board of the election, Human Rights Commission, Judiciary, ombudsman and other democratic institutions. The establishment of two commissions: Administrative Boundaries, and Identity Issues Commission and reconciliation commission also very important steps to research and investigate the past injustices and crimes committed. The government also revising bunches

of repressive and restrictive laws. The successful implementation of the Sidama referendum also the indicator of the potential and capabilities of the institutional frameworks to succeed in the national consensus and reconciliation practice. However, this does not mean the frameworks doesn't the need further support and additional works. They need the contributions of the political elites and each citizen. Everyone should play its role towards building strong and legitimate frameworks which fosters the national dialogues and reconciliation process.

4.4. The “Medemer” Discourse, National Consensus, and Reconciliation

Medemer is a new political philosophy or discourse in Ethiopia. The discourse is coined by Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopian prime minister. Abiy Ahmed has been explaining what does “medemer” means and how this discourse benefits the country and the horn of Africa region in different fora. The equivalent English word for “medemer” is synergy. In this part of the analysis, the study focused on to explore to what extent the “medemer” discourse would foster the national dialogue, consensus, and reconciliation process in order to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

Since Abiy Ahmed come to power, he did hundreds of speeches in many forums and meetings to his supporters and for the international communities. “Medemer” is one of the core words or discourse he always uses while addressing the questions of the public and making the public speeches. During his speech in Davos, 2018 for the World Economic Forum, Abiy Ahmed explained the major pillars of the “medemer” discourse. According to his speech “medemer” philosophy has three major pillars. These are building vibrant democracy, economic vitality, regional integration and openness to the world. The discourse has political, economic and foreign policy aspects and implications.

There is lack of clarity about the “medemer philosophy despite Abiy Ahmed did many public speeches and explanations. The Prime Minister was trying to clarify the discourse in several ways since the commencement of his political leadership. However, the confusion around the discourse is still there among the public. In his speeches, he addresses that “medemer” is all about love, unity, and cooperation. “Medemer” is keeping our best common things and perish the negative ones in order to build prosperous and developed Ethiopia. The interviewee argued that:

The "medemer" wording pushed into the political discourse without a definition in the beginning. Therefore, everyone tried to conceptualize it in their wishes. It is "to become one" for those who want a more uniform (centrally strong) Ethiopia, while it is "to become united" for those who want more autonomy for regional powers. It is also understood as "endorsing the reform" for many others. However, Medemer has evolved as a thought representing "to come together with the best outcome"; it is ideal to use the good from the past and use it as a springboard to jump into a new height in the future. (*Interview with Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019*).

The medemer discourse is at the preliminary stage and not well discussed and not go deep. It is not well matured and substantiate. It is at the theoretical level for the time being. However, the concept has political, economic and social aspects of our daily life. It's a cure for our uncivilly way of addressing problems. The discourse would bring successful outcomes to our individual life and the country is general if we practiced it. It would also foster the culture of tolerance, dialogues and reconciliation which are the most important manifestations of peaceful and civilized societies. Linda Yohannes argued that:

Medemer has the breadth, depth and novelty to establish itself as not only the basis of political and economic policies of Ethiopia, but also as an Ethiopian philosophy for this generation and those of the future, drawing on all that should be inherited from our past. But for now, Medemer is just a theory and an assessment of its practice would be premature. Patience, open-mindedness, and active engagement through constructive dialogue and critique will be critically important to offer the great promise of Medemer the chance to bear fruit (Yohannes, 2020).

The Ethiopian politics is full of blaming and shaming each other. It is the political game of exploitation and lack of dialogue. The "medemer" discourse which bases on cooperation rather than blaming, dialogue rather and disagreement, love rather than hate, peace rather than war, inclusiveness rather than exclusion, forgiveness rather than revenge is here to solve all these challenges. The medemer discourse is one of the best approaches that encourage us to sustain our common good things. It is a proper discourse to address our difference through dialogues,

debates, and reconciliation in order to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia. The interviewee argued that:

The "Medemer" philosophy is an approach that builds on what is already productive and positive while correcting counterproductive and corrosive conditions and processes. When it comes to fostering national dialogue, consensus and reconciliation Medemer, at least from the conceptual level, appears to be a highly conducive approach. Medemer's rejection of labeling and framing political positions as dichotomies is the most fundamental shift in Ethiopia's political discourse. The challenge is in how to interpret "Medemer" in action while the country is going through many geopolitical, economic and generational pull and push factors (*Interview with the Public opinion maker, 2019*).

Following the Abiy Ahmed speeches about the medemer discourse, the discourse has become the public discussions and debates. Many scholars and politician discuss, criticize, and support the discourse, and also suggest how it can change the country's political and socio-economic crisis. Some argued that the power of love, peace, cooperation, a collaboration which are the main ingredients of the "medemer" discourse are very important mechanisms to address the country's chronic problems and to reconcile our difference through dialogues and cooperation. The discourse is imperative to shape the political space and to forward Ethiopia from crisis to prosperity and sustainable peace. Jalale Getachew Birru is a doctoral candidate at the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy argued that:

Starting from the first day in office, Abiy Ahmed pleaded for hope, love, and forgiveness. He asked forgiveness from the Ethiopian people for the previous ill-treatment by the government. He reminded the people of Ethiopia that only with forgiveness, love and the "Medemer" concept the country could go forward. The "Medemer" concept – which means "addition" – can be translated as "synergy". It stresses on building on Ethiopia's rich heritage while working together for the future of the country (Birru, 2019).

In his first inaugural speech, Abiy Ahmed underlines the importance of discussions, dialogues, love, unity to change the current situations of Ethiopia. In his speech, cooperation and collaboration are very essential to build bright and prosperous Ethiopia. Changing the ideological

difference into opportunities is very important to transcend Ethiopia into the former glorious time. What we have in common is one country. Discussions and debates on how to transform the current Ethiopian situation into stable and sustainable paths are imperative and the responsibilities of all actors. In his speech, Abiy Ahmed critically addresses the significance of discussions and negotiations in order to address the ideological differences and build one strong nation which is peaceful and flourishing Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is a country of all of us and it is our common house. In one country, there will inevitably be differences in opinion. Differences in opinion are not curses. When we can listen to each other despite our differences and engage in principled discourse, our differences return dividends in the form of blessings. In a fight over ideas, there are solutions. There is strength in cooperation. When we team up, we become stronger. There is no problem that unity cannot resolve. Because it builds a nation. The sentiment that "I rather die than see my idea not to win" destroys families, let alone nations. What we have is one Ethiopia. Above any political thought, national unity is supreme. We need to underline that national unity doesn't mean oneness. Our unity needs to be one that embraces our diversity and highlights our multinational identity (*Hussein, 2018*).

Millions of Ethiopians had been following and watching the speech of Abiy Ahmed, the new prime minister through television and radio. Some peoples were crying and some clapping their hands for his passionate speech. The ears and eyes of everybody were in their radios and televisions. Nobody wants to miss a single word of his speech. His speech touched the hearts of everyone. His speech has positive energies and hopes for Ethiopia. He used words like Ethiopia/Ethiopian, love, forgiveness, peace, justice, unity and other positives words redundantly which are the key pillars of the "medemer" political discourse.

These words have great potential to generate a good political atmosphere and to change the Ethiopian political environment which was full of chaos and conflicts. The study which has been done in analyzing the prime minister's first speech noted that "The P.M. Speech generally consists of 4975 words including salutations. The pronoun "we, our and us" together found to be the dominant figures of the speech word count. The P.M. utilized these pronouns 241 times in his speech, which can be attributed to his persistence with the inclusive approach and his effort to

bring harmony among the ethnic groups to ease the existing ethnic tension." This study also added that Abiy Ahmed used the word Ethiopia/Ethiopians 64 times in his speech. He also uses the word forgives, peace, unity, love, justice, freedom which are fundamental ingredients of the “medemer” discourse repetitively (Chekol, 2019:135-136).

In his Davos speech, Abiy Ahmed said that "if you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far go together." The prime minister quotes this phrase to show the power of cooperation, togetherness, collaboration and working together for a better future. His quote is one aspect of the medemer discourse and shows how cooperation and discussions regarding the national issues would bring success in every endeavor and address the national issues with a culture of tolerance and with the spirit of collaboration. Apart from the national issue, the quote indicates that having the culture of dialogue and discussion on regional and continental issues would foster sustainable peace and development for Africa.

Alemayehu G/Mariam a Professor at California State University argued that the “medemer” discourse is all about giving and taking, partnership, alliance-building, teamwork, giving a hand up and creating synergy for the common good. It’s Being tied together in the single garment of destiny and being caught in an inescapable network of mutuality called Ethiopia. It's also social cohesion and concern for others for the shared common good. He further argued that the medemer discourse has rooted in the philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr, and Ubuntu philosophy. In his idea of "solidarity and concern for the good of others” because we “are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said:

We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. This is a great issue facing us today. No individual can live alone; no nation can live alone. We are tied together. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured (*G/Mariam, 2019*).

Ubuntu “A person is a person through other persons’, or, ‘I am because we are; we are because I am’ ”is one of the most prominent African traditions or principle which has been practiced in some of the African countries since ancient times. It is about humanity or humaneness. It's all about giving respect and compassion for others. It's the principles of empathy, forgiveness, sharing in a conscious effort to resolving common problems. In 1997 South African Governmental White Paper on Social Welfare officially recognizes Ubuntu as “The principle of caring for each other’s well-being...and a spirit of mutual support...Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual’s humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being (Louw, 2001:15).

Arthur, Issifu, & Marfo argued that one of the success factors for the South Africa reconciliation process is the ubuntu principles. *Ubuntu* emphasizes cooperation with one another for the common good as opposed to competition that could lead to grave instability within any community. The principle creates a healthy relationship based on the recognition that within the web of humanity, everyone is linked to everyone else. This is crucial, primarily because, the act of reconciliation symbolizes the willingness of the parties to move beyond the psychological bitterness that had prevailed in the minds of the parties during the conflict situation. This practice makes the *Ubuntu* system more of restorative justice than a retributive system of justice (Arthur, Issifu, & Marfo, 2015:71). Arthur, Issifu, & Marfo further argued that the South African’s *Ubuntu* principle sought to focus on restitution rather than retribution; on restoration of friendship rather than fault-finding, truth rather than fact, on dialogue rather than blame, an apology, and forgiveness rather than zero-sum game; on accommodating rather than avoiding; and on cooperativeness rather than assertiveness (Arthur et al., 2015:73).

Scholars such as Moti Daba Fufa equate the medemer discourse with the ubuntu principle of love, forgiveness, cooperation, collaboration, and caring for each other. This scholar argued that the medemer discourse would foster sustainable peace in Ethiopian through promoting the culture of dialogue, and reconciliation. This would in return bring national consensus and reconciliation. Moti Daba Fufa further argued that Ethiopians have now been introduced to immediate change and new dawn bringing about a new form of Ubuntu which is Medemer. It is a

metaphor for a journey together in spite of potential differences for the sake of love, peace, forgiveness, and prosperity (Fufa, 2018:23). Professor Alemayehu G/Mariam also asserted that the medemer discourse is the same as that of Ubuntu inclusiveness. Medemer is all about cooperation, collaboration, and inclusiveness. In South Africa, they call their inclusiveness “Ubuntu” (I am because you are.” In other words, you are part of me and what happens to you affects me too.) Professor Alemayehu G/Mariam further argued that for Mandela, Ubuntu is the “profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we are to accomplish anything in this world it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievement of others.” When we develop a robust culture of inclusiveness, our identity becomes our humanity. We focus on what makes us human, and not a member of an ethnic group, religion or region. Professor Alemayehu G/Mariam further elaborated that:

When we practice "Medemer", we rise from our narrow ethnicity to our inclusive humanity or Ethiopians. When we practice inclusiveness or Ethiopiawinet, we no longer think in terms of “I, me, mine”. We scale up to think about “We, us, ours” as human beings bound in a single garment of destiny called the New Ethiopia. It is by being inclusive that we can create a peaceful and harmonious society where everyone feels they belong, which means they feel included. When everyone feels included and becomes part of the Ethiopian family, “Medemer” becomes our song of faith, of hope, of freedom, of democracy, of equality, of justice. “Medemer” ushers in our new day, our New Ethiopia, before the rising sun and becomes our anthem, not a slogan, as we march till victory is won (G/Mariam, 2018).

The medemer discourse is a multidimensional concept. It has aspects of forgiveness, unity and togetherness for the common goals. It is the notion of tolerance and peaceful way of addressing our difference despite diverse ideological perspectives. It’s the process of addressing past injustice and marginalization through forgiveness and justice to strength the social cohesion of the society. Ashenafi Alemu argued that “The Medemer concept has a spiritual-moral dimension, promotes servant leadership, and affirms the inclusion of all citizens only by their virtue of being Ethiopian. It will also declare the opening of a new chapter of how identity and nationhood are perceived in Ethiopia”. Ashenafi Alemu a *doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia* further argued that.

The concept of Medemer is trilateral. It has three sides to it. It consists of a strong notion of reconciliation, forgiveness and the primacy of the public. Forgiving the past, with acknowledgement for the damages it has done, in some cases followed by ransoms for the damage by the perpetrator, is a key to help the community continue its coexistence in equilibrium. *It's* also trialectics, the notion of the "third space". *Medemer is* not about "We" and "they". It is about "We" and many other "Wes" (Alemu, 2018).

The medemer discourse has the principle of "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". It's about working together with others rather than working independently. It's all about the politics of cooperation and win-win rather than a zero-sum game. It's all about the politics of dialogue and consensus. It's all about working together synergistically. It is all about working cooperatively and effectively for the sake of common goods and public interest. It's all about peace, love, cooperation, and forgiveness. It preaches love than hatred, cooperation rather than conspiracy, dialogue rather than exploitation, discussion rather than manipulation win-win rather than win-lose. In his Medemer book review, Alemayehu G/Mariam argued that:

Medemer provides the philosophical foundation to build a consensus/civic nationalism-based democracy by creating structures and processes that seek to correct past mistakes, build on existing positive accomplishments and generating innovative new ideas for the future. The author suggests much can be learned from Tunisia's experience in "civic nationalism" which has contributed significantly to the emergence of a stable multiparty democracy (G/Mariam, 2019).

The medemer discourse has the power to change negative situations to positive scenarios. The discourse improves the culture of discussions and dialogues. It fosters the national dialogue, consensus, and also encourages the reconciliation process through comprehensive and all-encompassing national dialogues. The discourse has the potential to change the political culture of our societies which was conspiracy, exploitation, hate to competition, love, forgives, cooperation and inclusiveness and harmonious relationship. In his book review, Alemayehu G/Mariam noted that:

Medemer offers the intellectual a new way of thinking which examines historical failures and successes to reinvent a new society based on a set of core beliefs in society around shared goals, dreams and aspirations. The author argues the best role for intellectuals is to bring diverse viewpoints, facts, and analysis to the marketplace of ideas and try to sell them to the people. By bringing together scattered ideas, discarding old ones and adding new ones, it is possible to develop a synthesis that can help guide Ethiopia out of the shoals of political turbulence, economic decay and social strife (G/Mariam, 2019).

To conclude, based on the data collected from the interviewees, and secondary sources, the study explored that the medemer discourse is the most important political philosophy which has paramount role in order to bridge the broken relationship among the peoples. The discourse would foster sustainable peace by strengthening social cohesion and cooperation. The discourse has the same philosophical foundations with the philosophy of Martin Luter King and the prominent South African principles of Ubuntu. Like ubuntu principles and ideas of Martin Luter King, the medemer discourse preaches about love, respect, humanity, inclusiveness, cooperation and caring for each other. So, the medemer discourse would foster the culture of dialogue, consensus, and reconciliation and these would in return nurture sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

4.5 The Political Reform and Sustainable Peace

The new political reform in Ethiopia is turning into a new chapter of political participation. Ethiopia is entered a new era of politics and political discourse since April 2, 2018. The new political era has begun with the election of Abiy Ahmed as the prime minister of Ethiopia. Since coming to the power, Abiy Ahmed started reforming the country's political system which was previously characterized by narrow political space, bunches of restrictive laws, failed economic system, violence, and grand corruption. In this part of the analysis, the study focused on exploring the major success of the political reform, the challenges the reform is facing and the capacity of the reform to ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

The current political reform in Ethiopia achieved several major successes. The success of the reform has more credit and acceptance internally and from the international communities. It's also recognized and valued by many state leaders and international organizations which are rare cases in Africa. The reform is multidimensional and intensive. It ranges from political to economic from legal to governmental structure from social to historical aspects. The reform has also foreign policy features. It is transnational and not limited to the country's territory.

One of the major successes of the current political reform is the opening of the political space. The political space is widely opened for political participation which is previously unthinkable. The reform provides an opportunity for medias and politicians to exercise their freedom of expression and to reach out to their followers through different means of communications. Many newspapers started to flourish and express their ideas and thoughts without government interference and censorship issues. Prisoned journalists freed from jail and started over their previous activities. The general public starts expressing their feelings and grievance without fear and intimidation. Salih, Eshete, & Assefa argued that the current political environment in Ethiopia offers opportunities for expanding the democratic space relative to where it was after the seismic political opening which ensued since April 2018 (Salih, Eshete, & Assefa, 2018:5). The reform underway which opened wider political space for the political environment is a great prospect for expanding the democratic culture and nurturing the freedom of association and assembly. It has also a significant political impact on making the upcoming election free and fair also competitive.

The release of political prisoners is another major achievement of political reform. Thousands of political prisoners have been released from jail. Many prominent political leaders including Merera Gudina (Ph.D), Andargachew Tsige, Bekele Gerba and other political figures have been released. Meakelawi and jail Ogaden which was detention and torture centers for many years have been closed and changed to the museum. Jail Ogaden was one of the most horrible prisons where prisoners tortured, no access to adequate medical care, family visit, access to lawyers and even food. Many prisoners have been released and the jail closed in august 2018. The release of the political prisoners provides strength and support for the political reform. It also gives attention and encouragement from the international communities and partners to support the reform underway.

Institutional buildings and legal frameworks are part of political reform. Since the change of the leadership, the government is doing its best to foster the institutional building process. The leadership brings females leaders into the front of the political leadership. The prime minister appointed ten female ministries out of twenty ministries. This is one of the tremendous parts of the reform which is even unexpected and unthinkable in democratized countries. To make the upcoming election free and fair, the prime minister appointed Birtukan Mideksa as chairwomen of the board of election and Meaza Ashenafi as president of the Supreme Court. The appointment of the head of the state, Sahlewerk Zewde is also part of the reform. Apart from this, the reform is supporting democratic institutional building such as an ombudsman, human rights commissions, judiciary, board of election, and other democratic institutions. The establishment of the ministry of peace is also part of the institutional building.

Building conducive legal frameworks are the other key area of the reform success. Restrictive and repressive laws that the previous government was using to silence its opponents and throwing them in jail are now on the process of amendment and some of them are already changed. The reform is forwarding in these areas and showing positive progress. These restrictive laws have been researched by groups of lawyers and experts on the area of improvement. Salih, Eshete & Assefa argued that the web of legal and administrative directives, regulations and policy frameworks which is undergoing unprecedented scrutiny by independent and open-minded experts in their respective fields, is encouraging. It's an opportunity to seized upon and not be allowed to falter (Salih et al., 2018:5).

Former guerilla fighters or opposition parties who were fighting the government for many years back to Ethiopia and start their operation. As part of the reform, the government invites these political parties to operate peacefully. It also lifted the labeling of terrorism from Ginbot 7, Oromo liberation front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). This is one of the magnificent parts of the reform. Currently, more than 135 political parties are operating in Ethiopia. The public discussions also part of the reform agenda. Public discussions were held almost for one year. The discussions were not limited in Ethiopia. Abiy Ahmed was discussing with the Diaspora communities on how they can help the political and economic development of their country. The establishment of the Diaspora trust fund is part of the reform and the public

discussions. The main objective of the trust fund is to collect foreign currency from the Diasporas in order to support the local development.

The scope of the current political reform is broad, transnational and trans-boundary. It's not limited to Ethiopia and Ethiopians. It is also a noble opportunity for neighboring countries and the people of the horn of Africa. The peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea is a major achievement of the political reform. Abiy Ahmed, in his first parliament inaugural speech, said that:

“With the government of Eritrea, we want from the bottom of our hearts that the disagreement that has reigned for years to comes to an end. We would also discharge our responsibility while expressing our readiness to resolve our differences through dialogue; I take this opportunity to call on the Eritrean government to take a similar stand not only for the sake of our common interest but also for the common blood relations between the peoples of the two countries” (Husseini, 2018).

Following the first day parliament speech and other diplomatic works, Ethiopia and Eritrea resolved a decades-long stalemate, signed a peace agreement and agreed to implement the 2002 International Boundary Commission decision. The agreement opened the door for economic and social interaction. Roads to Asmara opened, Ethiopian airlines re-launch the flight to Asmara, Eritrean government delegates including the president come to Addis Ababa for a state visit, family's reunion and social interactions are some of the major achievements of the peace deal and the reform.

The political reform in Ethiopia also succeeding in mediating the horn of African leaders. The Horn of Africa is one of the most volatile regions in Africa. It is full of conflicts and wars. It's the home of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabab and ISIS. It's full of guerilla fighters and extreme poverty. It is also strategic geopolitical region. All these factors make the horn of Africa opportunities at the same time risks. However, the political reform in Ethiopia is changing the risks into prospects and achieving tremendous success. One of the greatest successes of the reform is peace mediation among the horn of African leaders. Following the political development in Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed is succeeding in reconciling the horn African leaders. He

re-builds the tense relationship between Eritrea and Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, as well as Eritrea and Sudan. He also reconciles the political tensions in Sudan between the military and the and the civilian. The reform has also international recognition and concern. Abiy Ahmed won the 2019 noble peace prize for his achievement in making a peace deal with Eritrea and his aspiration and contribution to bring sustainable peace in the horn of Africa.

However, the current political reform is not free from doubts and criticisms. It's not only full of successes and accomplishments. It is surrounded by bunches of challenges and deficiencies. The challenges have Political, and economic aspects and implications. The reform is not going as planned and with the same paces. It is not going with the same pattern and speeds as of the first year. The reform starts facing several encounters from the very beginning. Some of the challenges include the attempt of grenade attack of the prime minister, military coup attempt, internal displacement, ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, political parties struggle within the EPRDF, unemployment, and others.

The political reform is facing multidimensional challenges. The nature of ethnic-based politics is causing many bloodshed conflicts in Ethiopia. It is also hampering the reform from achieving what has been aspired. Sara Mokaddem argued that implementing these reforms will not be smooth sailing for the new prime minister. In Ethiopia's ethicized politics, working together requires a lot of compromises and building a national consensus around the proposed path while major security issues and ethnic-based violence are still at the top of the new government's list. Sara Mokaddem further argued that Now, Dr. Ahmed is facing the challenge of moving the country beyond its inter-ethnic tensions. Unresolved grievances between ethnic groups will destabilize the country and jeopardize democratization under its current federal structure (Mokaddem, 2019:4-5).

The political reform lacks the public participation and discussions. Major political decisions are mostly made by the top government officials without consultation of the general public. There is also a gap of communication and cooperation between the federal and regional governments. The invisible hands of the former leaders in addition to the negligence and network of the previous intelligence command of chain is hampering the peace and order of the societies. The interviewee argued that:

Righting the past wrongs (jailing politicians, repressing media and civil societies, etc.) were the first things the reformist leadership has done. This has gotten it trust and legitimacy. The actions so far conducted to sustain peace. The reform also trying to participate opponents in consultations, trying to listen criticisms, founding commissions, revision of laws, reestablishing government cabinet... but these are not enough. The federal government is virtually reforming while empowered regional governments remain unchanged. Nationalist groups took monopoly of violence over state. Citizens insecurity feeling has increased. (Interview with a Journalist/Human right defender, 2019).

Ethnic extremism is one of the major political challenges of the current political reform. Extremism involves us-versus-them thinking and leads the groups to become more violent to achieve their objectives. They use any mechanisms to achieve their objectives and getting back what they consider belongs to them. Ethnic based violence is becoming the manifestations of our daily life. Millions of people displaced from their residents, hundreds of youth have been killed brutally, thousands wounded and disabled as a result of ethnic violence. The violent ethnic extremism is challenging the peace and security of the societies. People are living in a state of fear and terror. Adeto argued that ethnic extremism can create devastating internal social instabilities, far-reaching political crises, and serious peace and security concerns. The impact of inter-communal tensions and ethnic violence presents a serious challenge for the new leadership across the country. According to Adeto's study a large majority of the research participants (82%) saw the risk of ethnic extremism as considerable, with 44% rating the risk as "high" and 38% as "very high (Adeto, 2019:13). The interviewed Academician 3 argued that:

The major challenge the political reform facing is ethnic extremism. Extremism is evolving throughout the country and causing many damages. The leadership has limited experienced government officials to cope up with the challenge and the rest of government officials are unable and unwilling to deal with such a challenging issue. Most of the officials are from the existing government structure and incapable to go with the reform agenda. There are strong challenges to bring the reform on the ground. The officials are seeking political supports at the expense of national security interests. They

have contradicting political interests which are also causes of ethnic extremism (*Interview with Academician 3, 2019*).

The Youth unemployment and inflation are another major economic challenge the political reform is facing. Hundreds of thousands of students are graduating from public and private institutions each year. The job market and the demand are not balanced and couldn't absorb the demand of the job seekers. The economy is not well functioning and the unemployment crisis is continuing. Apart from unemployment, inflation is hitting the roof of everyone and knocking the doors of every individual. Poor's are unable to afford for survival. Urban crimes are escalating. Pocket picking, mobile picking and stealing becoming the daily fashions of the capital city. The power struggle between the ruling party, misuse of freedom of press and expression are some other characteristics of the political reform. The interviewed Human Rights Defender argued that:

Unemployment, slowed economic growth and activity, empowerment of ethno-nationalist (or generally non-state actors), populism and internal/external power struggles are the major challenges that the reform is experiencing to the risk of regressing. The government must be treating the real causes of societal resentment instead of responding to their symptoms. The love and forgiveness narratives maybe good appeals to emotional response. But they are not lasting solutions. And, the government shouldn't keep itself in bringing up brilliant but none pragmatic solutions for a short time, such as regional integration of the horn. Short term job creation and encouragement of private sector investments must be put in priority (*Interview with Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019*).

Currently the political reform is trapped between tremendous accomplishments and critical challenges. It achieves several major successes and also faces numerous challenges. The question is do the current political reform ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia? How sustainable peace can be achieved? Hearn argued that Sustainable peace will not be achieved if it is relegated to technical development projects. Political leadership in governments and societies will be the key driver of change. Putting people at the center of achieving sustainable peace will require every country to devise its plans based on an understanding of root causes and solutions in each

context. The whole societies and communities must be involved in advocating for and formulating people-centered approaches (Hearn, 2016:3).

The sustainability of political reform is depending on the prevalence of peace and security. Bringing sustainable peace also depends on the sustainability of political reform. We can't detach sustainable reform from sustainable peace. They are interrelated and interdependent. Sustainable peace can be a backbone of development and development can bring sustainable peace. This indicates the sustainability of political reform is a guarantee for the sustainability of peace and development. Salih, Eshete & Assefa argued that fostering peaceful co-existence between Ethiopia people, nations and nationalities and equal treatment of citizens regardless of race, religion, region or creed: Ethiopia would have never been able to realize the levels of economic growth and improvements in health, education, drinking water supply, physical infrastructure, without peace and security. Likewise, Ethiopia will not be able to sustain her tremendous development gains without peace and security (Salih et al., 2018:12).

The Potential and capabilities of the political leaders are one major aspect of sustaining political reform and achieving sustainable peace. The political leaders who are at the forefront of the current political reform have both the competences and commitment to transform the reform and build sustainable peace. These leaders were paid great scarification to bring the reform underway. They were struggling within the ruling party to bring this change which is very risky and needs high scarification. If they can bring this change, they can transform the reform to the highest level and bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

Yes, political reform and peace building are processes. You can't bring overnight. It needs a great commitment to bring the necessary change. The current reform has the potential to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia. The commitment of the government officials plus the current reform can bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. The leaders of the reforms are capable and can produce capable government officials. These leaders were in a struggle for the past three and four years within the ruling party to bring this reform. If they can bring this reform, they have the potential to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia (*Interview with Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

The nature of political reform is complex and multidimensional. It's not fair and justifiable to evaluate the political reform in its early stages. Reform takes time and effort to substantiate in the country's context. It requires time, resources and public participation. You can evaluate the political reform after five years. Early judgment and evaluations might make your decision unbalanced and biased. However, the current political reform in Ethiopia has hope and a very good beginning to bring sustainable peace. Proper implementation of the reform might bring the necessary change. If the political leadership can address the challenges of the reform, political reform has the potential to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

It's early to evaluate the reform. The reform processes may take a long time. The reform may take four to five years to judge. But, the beginning of the reform is hopeful and very good. The current reform can build sustainable peace in Ethiopia if it implemented properly. However, many challenges can hamper the reform to achieve its objectives. If the current leadership able to cope up with these challenges, the reform can bring the necessary change in the country (*Interview with Public official 1, 2019*).

Another interviewed official has also argued that;

Sustaining the reform is not an easy task. It is a complex process and will take some time. For the past three decades, there were questions of democracy, development, and freedom. It is difficult to answer all these questions overnight. Time is needed to judge either the reform is capable or not capable to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Changing these situations requires some time and efforts. There was complex bureaucracy in the country which is inherited from the past political history. However, the reform is hopeful from all directions and capable to bring the necessary change in the country if it continues as the speed of the beginning (*Interview with Public official 2, 2019*).

The current political reform is facing many challenges from the very beginning. Conflicts and tensions are overriding in the country. Deadly ethnic conflicts are erupting in different parts and causing the loss of human life and property destruction. The conflicts are not stopped as ethnic conflicts it also turns into religious conflicts. Mosques and churches have been burned. There are

frequent clashes among university students as part of ethnic conflicts. The local leadership is unable to prevail peace and order in their communities. The possibility of this reform to bring sustainable peace is very rare. The capacity and aspiration of the top leadership are not enough to build sustainable peace. It also requires the goodwill and the participation of other stakeholders.

I don't think the current leadership can sustain peace in Ethiopia. It has already started facing live conflicts in many places. Unelected local leaders couldn't contain these conducts before occurrence nor control them after they occurred. The sustainability of the peace and reform implementation is not only dependent on the leadership capacity of the leaders to the cause but also their capacity to get the willingness of their opponents to participate in the process (*Interview with Journalist/Human rights defender, 2019*).

The current political reform is complicated and facing several challenges. The challenges are intricate and difficult to deal with. The internal power struggle among the ruling party, uncertainty, and conflicts are hampering the reform from prevailing peace and security. The road map of the reform is not clear. Nobody knows where the reform is going. It lacks certainty and consistency. The speed of the reform is not the same as that of the first six months of the reform. Contradiction and confrontation among the political elites are affecting the political reform from building sustainable peace. The leadership is unable to deal with the real problems on the ground. Unanticipated and unforeseen challenges are downgrading the potential of the political reform from achieving its objectives.

I don't think so. First, the nature of the reform is very complicated. In the process, some actors are defined as "enemies" of the change. At the same time, there is a clear sort of confrontation between TPLF and the other sister parties. In general, the reform consists of different actors who have contradictory interests. Also, the reform has no clear road map as to where are we going. The officials who are leading the process essentially lack consistency, determination and capabilities to deal with the real problems on the ground (*Interview with Academician 3, 2019*).

The interviewed public opinion maker also asserted that:

The current political reform is going so fast that it has become a threat to building sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Unintended outcomes of the hasty reform process are the rise of a sense of uncertainty in peace building. The government has become difficult to anticipate and understand due to the intended and unintended complications of the reform process. It is not clear if the government officials are capable, or if the expediency of the reform process is a tactical move to shock the deeply entrenched mid-level and low-level cadres of the EPRDF. In any case, uncertainty is a barrier to peace building (*Interview with Public opinion maker, 2019*).

The political reform neglected the right trajectory of the democratic transition. The transition is aborted and at the crossroad from the very beginning. It's unable to brought necessary change rather adding a fuel on the existing instability. The reform is unable to respond to the internal challenges and domestic peace and order. The PM is encouraging the old regimes elites in the transition process rather bringing new political elites which have new ideas, thoughts and perspectives that fits with the needs of the current political reform. The leadership also neglecting the demands of the protesters and excluding those political parties which promote multinational federation. The leadership is rather promoting and encouraging those political parties which are Ethio nationalist parties and party leaders. Professor Ezekiel Gebissa argued that.

The model of democratic transition adopted in Ethiopia was in any case flawed from the very beginning. The process of designing and implementing a transitional roadmap did not include all political actors. It eschewed broad social and political consensus for a new political system before holding elections. Empowerment of old-regime elites in the transition process, exclusion of nationalist parties, neglect of the protest movement's demands, and antagonistic political forces have now doomed the democratic transition (Gebissa, 2019).

The political reform is going back to the previous regime political manifestations. The political space is narrowing and the government is jailing its opponents. Those torture prisons are changed into new jails which are still doing intimidation and harassment. The issue of Peace and

security are under the question mark. Peoples are living in the state of fears and they are not feeling safe and secure. The justice system, prisoner's protection and treatments are also highly criticized. Yohannes Gedamu argued that:

Abiy's promise to foster national reconciliation through the new national reconciliation commissions seems to be forgotten. The political space that opened up with Abiy's election is closing. And the notorious torture chambers that were closed have been replaced by new jails that operate like the old ones. This throws the promise of a fair justice system into question (Gedamu, 2019).

Despite the tremendous success story, the reform is facing a serious challenge. Violence and insecurity are mounting in different parts of the country. Ethnic and religious conflicts are everywhere. Mosques and churches are target and causes of the violence conflicts. Tensions and lack of peace and order is rising and societies are suffering from fear. The reform is also not working uniformly and the lower structure of the governments is still treating the societies with the old EPRDF mindset. Jon Temin and Yoseph Badwaza argued that:

Despite this lofty rhetoric, the reforms that Abiy and his government have achieved and the even more far-reaching changes to which they aspire are at growing risk. The most immediate threat comes from the rising insecurity and ethnic violence that are in part byproducts of the liberalized political climate. The reforms are playing out in different ways across the country. The party that ruled Ethiopia with an iron grip remains in power, and in many areas too little has changed: Local and regional officials retain the old mindset and work through the old governance structures (Temin & Badwaza, 2019).

Giovanni Faleg, a senior analyst at European Union Institute for Security Studies also argued that:

Despite initial hopes and the mediatic impact of Abiy's reforms, the security situation has not improved. Ethnic tensions and displacement of people continue as ethnic groups have kept conflicts alive in many border areas of the country in pursuit of greater self-determination and autonomy under a reformed federal system (Faleg, 2019).

Sustaining the political reform and building sustainable peace is not an easy task for many post-conflict states. Most of the time Post-conflict state reconstruction and building sustainable peace requires the participation of all stakeholders and the commitment of the political leadership. Strengthening of local capacities and institutions at all levels to address root causes of instability, the establishment of effective democratic institutions has paramount role in promoting sustainable peace, Inter-ethnic dialogue and co-operation are crucial and vital, education is a fundamental element of sustainable peace, Reconciliation and dealing with the past is very important aspects of sustainable peace, the promotion of social cohesion and people to people dialogue are some aspect of sustainable peacebuilding (OSCE, 2018:14-101).

To conclude, based on the data collected from interviewees and secondary sources, the study explored that the current political reform is succeeded in achieving several major political, economic, social and foreign policy accomplishments. Opening of the political space, release of political prisoners, invitation of opposition parties based in abroad, building institutional frameworks, legal frameworks, bringing female leaders into the political leadership, establishment of national consensus and reconciliation commissions, peace deal with Eritrea, and peace mediation among the horn of African leaders are some of the tremendous success of the political reform in Ethiopia. The study also noted that despite these golden achievements, the reform is facing many challenges and deficiencies. Violent ethnic extremism, displacement, unemployment, inflation, urban crime, a power struggle within the ruling party are some of the major challenges of political reform. These challenges are hampering the political reform from achieving its ultimate objectives. These challenges are also hindering the prevalence of peace and security.

The question is do the current political reform is capable to ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia despite all these challenges. The study explored that building sustainable peace is not a simple task and the only role of the government. It requires the participation of all actors in the peace process. There are political commitments and aspirations to build sustainable peace from the government side. The government is working hard toward institutional building and opening the political space which is a very important aspect of building sustainable peace. The reform has also the potential to build sustainable peace and dealing with the security issue. However, several

efforts and works are needed from all political actors and each citizen to sustain the political reform and sustainable peace. So, the study confirms that the current political reform has the potential and the capacity to ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia. This would be more sustainable if the participation of all stakeholders is included and support the political reform.

4.6 National Consensus, Reconciliation and Sustainable Peace

National consensus and reconciliation are the two key mechanisms of addressing major national issues through inclusive dialogues, forgiveness and transitional justice. Most states passed through these processes to transform their countries from fragile situations to stable political system. Some states are successfully transformed their political system using these mechanisms. In this part of the analysis, the study focused on exploring the link between national consensus, reconciliation and sustainable peace. It also explores the readiness of Ethiopian people in engaging in the national dialogues and reconciliation process in order to build sustainable peace. Finally, the study explores the national dialogues or consensus and reconciliation model Ethiopia should follow to transform the current political reform into consolidation and sustainable peace.

4.6.1 The linkage among National Consensus, Reconciliation and Sustainable Peace

National consensus and reconciliation boost the peace building process and helps to foster sustainable peace. The prevalence of sustainable peace and the transformation of the political system from stalemate to stable depends on the successful implementations of the national consensus and reconciliations practices in the post conflicts state or societies. When the political leaders encounter difficulties in addressing the national issues and unable to prevail peace in their country, they call for the national dialogues and consensus to restore order and to build sustainable peace through inclusive dialogues and discussions. At the same time, when the social capital and the social cohesions of the society's declines and conflicts hamper the peace and development of the state, the government launches reconciliation initiative to rebuild trust, unity, and forgiveness among the societies. The studies of OSCE prove that reconciliation aims to overcome conflicts by breaking vicious cycles of mutual misperceptions and divisive memories that often result in violence, through the transformation of political and societal relationships. In

deeply polarized and divided societies, reconciliation processes work toward re-establishing trust, building confidence, and promoting dialogue and tolerance (OSCE, 2018:73).

The national consensus which is the result of inclusive and comprehensive dialogues would foster sustainable peace, reduce the reoccurrence of violent conflicts, improve economic development and fascinate the culture of tolerance. It also cultivates the culture of a peaceful and address conflicts and disagreements. Apart from the community's wide dialogues and consensus, the Political party dialogue contributes to peace building, democratic consolidation and sustainable socio-economic development by rallying political parties around a shared national development agenda. Dialogue can be aimed at achieving specific results: such as drafting a constitution, to reform institutions or systems, or to prepare a national development plan. Or the focus can be more intangible: such as building social cohesion and trust (IDEA, 2013:1)

Sustaining peace on the other hand is a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction, and development (Connolly & Mincieli, 2019:3). Mahmoud, et al., argued that it is conceived as a necessarily endogenous process that requires strong and inclusive national ownership and leadership. It is multi-sectoral and all-encompassing, amounting to a meta-policy deserving of attention at the highest levels of the national government (Mahmoud et al., 2018:7).

The national consensus and reconciliation practice however are not the only means to build sustainable peace. Having inclusive dialogues and discussions on national issues alone doesn't bring sustainable peace. It should be supported by institutional, attitudinal, structural aspects of peace. Sustainable peace requires the functionality of these multidimensional aspects of peace altogether. Mahmoud et al., argued that sustaining peace is underpinned by an infrastructure composed of institutions, norms, attitudes, and capacities spanning different sectors and levels of social organization. These infrastructure needs to be constantly nurtured and updated to adapt to changing contexts and circumstances (Mahmoud et al., 2018, p.7).

The studies of the Institute for Economics and Peace indicate that the eight pillars of positive peace underpin and produce a conducive environment for sustainable peace. These pillars are a well-functioning government; a sound business environment; an equitable distribution of resources; an acceptance of the rights of others; good relations with neighbors; free flow of information; a high level of human capital; and Low levels of corruption. The studies argued that these pillars are interdependent and reinforce each other. The relative strength of one Pillar has the potential to positively influence the others, thereby influencing peace. Due to the interdependent nature of these factors, the weakening or strengthening of anyone Pillar will also weaken or strengthen the other Pillars (IEP, 2013:5).

To conclude, based on the data collected from the secondary sources through systemic review, the study explored that the national consensus and reconciliation practices have direct linkages with sustainable peace. Nations can build sustainable peace through national consensus and reconciliations practices. Once the political reform or the government change addresses the major national issues through inclusive dialogues and comprehensive reconciliations, the probability of conflict reoccurrence is very low. Sources and causes of conflicts would be solved through national dialogues and reconciliation. National consensus and reconciliation have the potential to transform the political transition from deadlock to more stable. This would in return bring sustainable peace. However, having national consensus and reconciliations alone cannot be a guarantee for sustainable peace. Other factors should support a conducive environment for sustainable peace. These factors are structural, institutional and attitudinal aspects and also include the eight pillars of positive peace. So, the national consensus and reconciliation has direct linkage and have the potential to build sustainable peace along with other contributing factors.

4.6.2. National Consensus, Reconciliation and the Public Willingness

The government of Ethiopia established the Reconciliation Commission following the current political reform in the country. The commission established under Proclamation No. 1102/2018 to investigate the gross violation of human rights and to address the political and social conflicts. The establishment of the reconciliation commission is considered as one of the key steps towards building transitional justice frameworks which have a paramount role to build trust and broken

relationships among the societies and foster sustainable peace. The preamble of the reconciliation proclamation stated that:

WHEREAS, it is necessary to reconcile based on truth and justice the disagreement that developed among peoples of Ethiopia for years because of different societal and political conflict;

WHEREAS it is necessary to identify and ascertain the nature, Cause, and dimension of the repeated gross violation of human rights to fully respect and Implement basic human rights recognized under the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and international and continental agreements which Ethiopian ratified and since it is important for the reconciliation;

WHEREAS, it is believed that providing victims of gross human rights abuses in a different time and historical event with a forum to be heard and perpetrators to disclose and confess their actions as a way of reconciliation and to achieve lasting peace;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to establish a free and independent institution that inquire and disclose the truth of the sources, causes, and extent of conflicts and that takes appropriate measures and initiate recommendation that enables for the lasting peace and to prevent the future occurrence of such conflict (*Reconciliation commission establishment Proclamation No.1102 /2018.*)

The proclamation clearly states that the establishment of the reconciliation commissions would help to investigate and address the conflicts and crimes which have been committed as a result of political and social factors. It also stated that the gross violations of human rights would be addressed through investigations of truths and facts. The establishment of the commission also has a decisive role to foster sustainable peace and protect the violations from reoccurrence. It also helps to maintain peace, unity, national consensus and reconciliation among Ethiopian societies.

The national consensus and reconciliation practices would help to fascinate the harmonious relationship, build trust, confidence, and intimacy among the societies. Many states have enjoyed the successful outcomes of the national consensus and reconciliation and bond their society's relationships and build sustainable peace and prosperity. The outcomes of the national consensus and reconciliation practices also depend on the legitimacy of the national consensus and reconciliation process and the readiness of the society to take part in the process. The same is true for Ethiopia. The willingness of the societies to address their historical, social and political conflicts through national dialogues and reconciliations should be take into account to achieve the objectives of the reconciliation commissions and to transform the political reform from fragile to stable and sustainable.

The successful process of national consensus and reconciliations requires the active participation of each citizen. Every individual has the right to discuss the national issues either directly or indirectly. The ideas, thoughts and full participation of all individuals have a positive impact on the results of national consensus and reconciliation. Currently, Ethiopia is in the new path of political reform and at the same time on the crossroads. The positive contributions and participation of all citizens in the affairs of their country would transform the political system into a viable and sustainable manner. The contributions of the political elites have also the biggest lion share to decide on the fate of the country. The elites have the capabilities and potentials to mobilize the peoples to transform the current political reform. One of the mechanisms to transform political reform is the national dialogues, consensus, and reconciliation among the political elites. However, the readiness and willingness from the political elite's sides are very low to address the major national issues through inclusive dialogues, consensus, and reconciliations. There are willingness and readiness form the population sides to solve the national issues through discussions and reconciliations. The interviewee argued that:

The general population wants the prevalence of peace and order. The societies were involving in the peace building process throughout their life time. This shows us the aspiration of the society to be part of the reform and the reconciliation process. The problem is from the sides of the political elites. Political elites should first start the national consensus and reconciliation practices with themselves then the public reconciliation will be simple. The political elites should take a lesson from the public.

Addressing the quarrels among the elites would foster and facilitate the national reconciliation and consensus process. The society is always ready to address their differences through discussion and traditional conflict management (*Interview with Opposition political party leader, 2019*).

Another interviewee also asserted that:

The general public is ready to address the major national issues through national consensus and reconciliation. The major problem is from the political elites and the political parties' sides. Once these elites and political parties are willing to address their difference through dialogues and discussions, the public is always ready to be part of the national consensus and reconciliation practices to build sustainable peace (*Interview with Academician 3, 2019*).

The general public is the supporters of the national consensus and reconciliation practice. There is no rationality from the public side to oppose these initiatives. Since the purpose of the national dialogue and reconciliation agenda is to rebuild the broken relationship among the societies, to strengthen social cohesion and unity, to address the major national issues through inclusive dialogues and discussions, there is no doubt from the public sides. They would support the initiatives from the bottom of their hearts since the initiatives are to build sustainable peace and democracy. The societies are always ready and willing to address the conflicting situations through dialogues and reconciliations. The societies are well aware of the value of peace and security. They know very well the worth of peace and the cost of conflicts and war. They have been also working to build peace in their respective communities through traditional means of conflict management. What the public should do is influencing the political elites to address their difference through dialogues and discussions and also the public become active participants for the successfulness of the initiatives. The interviewed public opinion maker argued that:

There is overwhelming public support for elites to reach on consensus on main issues, and for rebuilding damaged relationships among the various stakeholders. These damaged relationships are between: the public and the police, the public and the justice system, the public and the media, the public and the security, the public and

academicians, the public and the investors, the public and education systems, the public and religious institutions, etc. The general public needs to put pressure on political elites to be pragmatic and to compromise. The public is expected to contribute to the reconciliation process since reconciliation will need the public's direct participation and openness (*Interview with the Public opinion maker, 2019*).

The new leadership took power following the popular unrests and demonstrations. The demonstrations which were mainly takes place in Oromia region brings the current political reformers into the position of leadership. The leadership also promised to reform the major political, legal and economic issues. To some extent the current leaders has some legitimacy and popular acceptance compared to the previous leader. This legitimacy is coming from the major achievements of the new leadership and the popular confidence over the reform and accomplishments. However, the legitimacy is not received through popular participation and democratic election. It comes through popular discontents and the new leadership's ambitions to reform the country. Regarding to the consents of the people, the general population can be willing to address national issues through national consensus and reconciliation. However, because of the unelected nature of this leadership there might be a risk or a challenge to attain the desired objectives. The interviewee argued that:

The current government took power by taking advantage of political unrest, and by promising political reform. It has relative legitimacy as compared to previous decades' government. However, it doesn't have legitimacy earned by popular participation, or more formally, by free, fair and well-informed election process. Therefore, it suffers legitimacy crises if it tries to create consensus among antagonizing groups. An elected government can try this. (*Interview with Journalist/Human rights Defender, 2019*)

The interviewee also asserted that:

Free, fair, and well-informed election is relatively accepted way of getting legitimacy of majority. Currently, Ethiopian government has legitimacy gotten from the reform agenda and the sorry state of the previous regime. As times go by, this legitimacy will be lost and people and opponents raise wild demands and expectations. That is why it is wise if the

current leadership uses this opportunity to form an elected government. (Interview with Journalist/Human rights Defender, 2019)

To conclude, based on the data collected from interviewees, the public is happy to address the national issues through national consensus and reconciliations. There is no challenge from the population side to deal with the major political, economic and social issues through discussions, dialogues and reconciliations. What the public needs are peace and justice. The public knows the value of peace very well and aware of the fundamentality of peace for production and trading the produced goods. They are aware of the consequences of war. The major challenges are from the political elite's side. These elites are prioritizing the political power than peace. Conflicts and wars are their political battlefield. They prefer conflicts rather than dialogues and reconciliation in order to address the national issues. So, the general public is willing to address their difference and social, economic and political issues through reconciliations and consensus in order to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia. There is no doubt from the public side.

4.6.3 The National Consensus and Reconciliation Models and the Ethiopia context

The political change or political crisis in one state might lead the visionary political leaders to think about the national dialogues and reconciliation to save their country from the political crisis or to transform the political reform into a sustainable manner. The government, civil societies or other actors might initiate the national dialogues and reconciliation initiatives. The purpose of the initiatives is to safeguard the states from the political stalemate or collapse or to address major national issues. These actors might adopt different models of national dialogues and reconciliation in order to address the challenges the state and the societies faced. They might adopt their own model or take the best models from other countries and contextualize to their local situations. Brouneus argued that there is no magic formula for the national consensus and reconciliation. Each national consensus and reconciliation process needs to be designed according to the specific context: the country, the conflict the country has been through, the culture and traditions it has that can strengthen reconciliation (Brouneus, 2007:14)

Ethiopia is undergoing massive political reform after four years of the political turmoil. The current political leadership take over the political power following the protests and also successfully achieved several deeds. However, most of the questions which have been raised during the protests are not getting answers yet. The questions have political and economic aspects. The government promised numerous things to do but unable to stick on the promises. There is also fragmentation and distrust among the political elite, political parties and other actors on how to transform the political reform. National dialogues and consensus are an imperative mechanism to bring the necessary change at this critical time. Having comprehensive national dialogues and reaching on the national consensus is very important for the current political reform to be effective and to transform into the consolidated democracy and build sustainable peace.

For the sake of sustainable peace, the government established two commissions in order to facilitate the national consensus and reconciliation process. These are the concrete steps the government is taking and also indicates the commitments of the current leadership to address the national issues through discussions and consensus. This in return would help the political reform to be ambitious and successful. The question is which countries national dialogues/consensus and reconciliation model Ethiopia should follow in order to transform the current political reform into a stability in order to build sustainable peace.

Ethiopia could follow the Tunisian models of national dialogues/Consensus and the South African and Rwandan model of national reconciliation to transform the current political reform and to build sustainable peace. These models would help the reform to go sustainably and also build sustainable peace and development. Tunisia is a few of the post-conflict states which transformed the political system into consolidated democracy. Tunisian model is the best model and successfully transform the political system of Tunisia from political deadlock to democratized states in Africa.

From 2010 Tunisians were protesting against the rule of President Zine El Abadine Ben Ali. Following the mass demonstrations Tunisia was on the verge of state collapse and political turmoil. Even though the election was held for national constituents' assembly in October 2011, the political deadlock continues following the assassinations of Mohamed Brahmi by July 2013.

The crisis and worst situation of Tunisia leads a group of civil societies to engage in the successful national dialogue for crisis management. Blunck et al., argued that at this critical moment, politicians and civil society actors engaged in a difficult but successful National Dialogue: Tunisia's General Labour Union, which had in 2012 and 2013 already launched several initiatives aiming to initiate a National Dialogue, led the formation of a Dialogue Quartet (Blunck et al., 2017:300).

Hamidi argued that in an attempt to smooth over the conflict, the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), together with UTICA (the employers' union), the Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH), and the National Bar Association initiated a series of indirect shuttle negotiations between the opposition and the Troika to overcome the political crisis. Tunisian politicians agreed about what needed to be done to complete the stalled transition: approve the Constitution; form a new politically- neutral transitional government to lead the country until the elections, and set up a new independent body to supervise the parliamentary and presidential elections. (Hamidi, 2015:15).

The Tunisian National Dialogue did not unfold as a well-planned process with deliberate design. Rather, the National Dialogue was a response to an acute political crisis in which there was a risk that the country and the transition process would collapse completely. The situation was so tense and rhetoric so harsh that Tunisians at all levels feared that Tunisia would suffer from the same chaotic armed struggle or a new authoritarian, repressive, regime which was what they saw elsewhere in the region (Haugbølle et al., 2017:28). However, the Quartet managed to break the political deadlock by successfully facilitating negotiations for a roadmap. It articulated three issues that would be addressed during the National Dialogue: the finalization of the constitution, replacement of the government with a technocrat government, and preparation of elections. (Blunck et al, 2017:300)

Hannah Hamidi argued that apart from the quartet tireless efforts, the success factors for Tunisian national dialogue were proper application and existence of the five dimensions of Jenson's model of social cohesion which are: Belongingness, Inclusion, Participation, Recognition, and Legitimacy. The political actors in the national dialogue process successfully applied this model of social cohesion to transform their political transition from deadlock to

strong democratic state. The dialogue participants were more committed to their country's unity, making the dialogue much more feasible in the latter case. Realizing the risks of a prolonged political crisis on the country's economy, the politicians decided to negotiate with each other to avoid an economic meltdown. At the height of the political crisis, the Ennahda party was willing to step down from power to restore an acclaimed balance in political participation. National dialogue also allowed it to usher in the future by passing a Constitution which guaranteed tolerance for diversity in the country. The national dialogue was organized by respected independent mediators which give the dialogue process a high level of legitimacy and acceptance among the national dialogue participants and the general populations (Hamidi, 2015:32-33).

The current political reform in Ethiopia would be successful and transform the fragile political situations into sustainable peace and democracy if it can follow the national dialogue models of Tunisia. The mediators in the national dialogue process, the national dialogue Quartet have been honored to be awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize for their relentless efforts to transform Tunisia from fragility. The Quartet did not have a direct mandate but tried to keep the dialogue going through back door talks. When there was a challenge, the Quartet intervened and tried to find consensus. The first task for the Quartet was to clarify the doubts and demands of each of the opposing sides to enter into dialogue about the further process, i.e. to establish a dialogue about the frame for the National Dialogue (Haugbølle et al., 2017:33).

Therefore, the application of the Tunisia national dialogues model could foster the Ethiopia reform agenda and helps to reduce conflicts and quarrels among the political elites. Applying the model may require high commitments from the government and political elites. It also requires independent mediators and observers to engage in the process. It should be the responsibilities of all political elites to bring and agreed on which mediators are capable and impartial to held a successful national dialogue in order to agree on major national issues. Ethiopia should follow the model of Tunisia doesn't mean she should pass the same trajectory and take the model as it is. So, this study confirm that the current political reform would bring successful national consensus among the political elites if it can take the Tunisian model as the best example, take the exemplary experiences and contextualize it based on the current Ethiopia situations.

There are good reasons to think that a truth commission can contribute to rebuilding a society torn apart by violent conflict. By establishing the facts of past violations with rigor and impartiality, it can help to restore victims' rights. By interpreting the conflict's historical context, it can identify the factors that drove the violence. And by providing a respectful and safe space for testimonials, it can pave the way for victims to heal and former combatants to reintegrate into society (ICTJ & Kofi Annan Foundation, 2014:1)

The South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) was created by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995 and it began its work in April 1996. Presided over by Desmond Tutu, the commission was given the responsibility of examining politically motivated human rights abuses, committed between 21st March 1960, and the 10th May 1994 (Hollanda, 2013:12-13). The commission was conceived as part of the bridge building process designed to help lead the nation away from a deeply divided past to a future founded on the recognition of human rights and democracy. One of the main tasks of the commission was to uncover as much as possible of the truth about past gross violation of human rights. The commission was founded in the belief that this task was necessary for the promotion of reconciliation and national unity (TRC, 1998:47-489).

South Africa's truth and reconciliation process is perhaps the best-known example of an institutionalized attempt to build a more democratic future by confronting human rights atrocities from the past. The truth and reconciliation process are viewed as effective by most people and that in fact systematic evidence indicates that the process achieved several of its primary goals (Gibson, 2005:341). It addressed the victims' desire to know the truth far better than trials could have done by engaging with a larger section of the population; by providing an incentive for perpetrators to come forward; and by illustrating broader social and institutional responsibility and complicity. It also provides victims with a respected speaking role, it also offered a greater degree of inclusion and acknowledgement and conferred upon them the status of a dignified primary actor. The commission was able to identify and provide reparations to a larger group of victims than might have been achieved by trials (Stone, 2009:131-132). The South African TRC process also sought to lay the foundation for a strong democracy. It was an important vehicle for achieving national reconciliation and accountability, setting the standard in Africa. The commission also recommended institutional reforms to ensure that such crimes were never

repeated, and the process reinforced critical norms of public participation and local ownership (IPI, 2013:31).

The South African Truth Commission was different to any other commission held in the past. The Commission had to balance the scales between a painful past and a peaceful future. This middle of the road policy leveled much criticism from all sides, ranging from political parties to victims and their families and the general public (Jardine, 2008:1). The main critiques of the TRC – the lack of prosecutions, reparations, and socioeconomic transformation are often referred to as the “unfinished business” of the commission (Brankovic, 2016:7). The amnesty process, which resulted in perpetrators of severe crimes being allowed to walk free, while their victims and their families would never be the same. (Gooley, 2012:39). The commission also criticized for failing to address the socioeconomic effects of apartheid and failing to hold individual and institutional beneficiaries of apartheid accountable (IPI, 2013:31).

Reconciliation in the aftermath of the history of violent conflict in Rwanda is approached as part of a set of deeply interrelated issues, such as individual and social suffering, justice, remembering and forgetting, truth-telling, accountability, forgiveness, trauma therapy, sociotherapy, human rights, and development (Richters *et al.*, 2005:203). Currently, Rwanda provides a far-reaching example of experiments in justice and reconciliation. It also reveals how the combination of international, national, and traditional criminal prosecutions can both facilitate justice and reconciliation (IPI, 2013:32).

In the reconciliation process there has also been an increase in the number of genocide perpetrators confessing and accepting their role in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Social cohesion has been Improved following the reconciliation process. According to the 2015 Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer (RRB), the level of trust, positive interactions and solidarity among Rwandans is rated at 96.1%. Overall, there has been significant progress in fostering peace and unity, as well as in restoring the human dignity and values of Rwandans (International Alert, 2018:2). Given the historic tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, reconciliation in Rwanda necessarily involve the development of a shared identity that takes precedence over cultural, ethnic or tribal bonds. (Amstutz, 2006, P.5).

Rwanda is therefore far in the process of Unity and Reconciliation as confidence among Rwandans has been restored, and Rwandan citizens now share a common vision of their destiny. Rwandans, together, successfully and peacefully build their country as a strong nation-state, and are now called upon by the international community to extend their experience to other nations and societies around the world. Today, Rwanda is a success story with regard to Unity and Reconciliation, as well as development. Strong Unity and Reconciliation foundation and space have now been built in Rwanda, and a strong new secured society anchored on inclusiveness, and the rule of law that guarantees fundamental rights of all Rwandans, has been established. Such tremendous achievements, gave a new face to Rwanda that provides important lessons for other countries (Sentama, 2014:182).

The national reconciliations models of South Africa and Rwanda have been considered as the successful model of national reconciliations in transforming the conflicting situations of their countries and societies. These countries transformed their societies from genocide and apartheid system into consolidated democracy and sustainable peace. Ethiopia should take the national reconciliation models of South Africa and Rwanda in order to conduct successful national reconciliation. However, one of the most important things that should be considered is the conflict situations of South Africa and Rwanda is different from Ethiopia. The national reconciliation process of these countries has a bunch of criticisms and doubts and challenges. So, the study confirm that Ethiopia would transform the current political situations into a consolidated democracy, build sustainable peace and foster social cohesion if she can follow the reconciliations paths of South Africa and Rwanda and contextualize to Ethiopia conflict situations. Ethiopia should take the best experiences, methodologies of these countries and domesticate according to the current Ethiopian context.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study and draws a conclusion based on the findings and provides a recommendation for further considerations and study.

Ethiopia is in the new era of political reform after two decades of political repression. Over the past four years, prior to the current leadership change, there were grand protests throughout the country. Following the mass demonstrations, the Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned from his post and Abiy Ahmed took the position of the premiership. Since April 2018 Ethiopia is undergoing deep political reform. Correspondingly, the issue of the national consensus and reconciliation has become part of the political reform and the agenda of the government. As part of the reform, the government established a reconciliation commission to investigate the root causes of conflicts and disagreements in order to build sustainable peace through national consensus and reconciliation. It also established administrative boundaries and identity issues commission to address the questions of identity and border raised among different ethnic groups. This bold step would help the current political reform to address conflicts and also build trust and harmony among Ethiopian peoples. However, the sustainability and success of the current political reform is dependent on addressing the major national issues through all-encompassing national dialogues and discussions. Addressing these major national issues through national consensus would transform the political reform into consolidated democracy and builds sustainable peace in Ethiopia. These major national issues are themed as legal, political, economic and socio-cultural issues.

The FDRE constitution is one of the major controversial legal issues that should be taken into account in the national dialogues and public discussions. The study has found out that the drafting process of the constitution was contentious and lacks legitimacy and deep discussions with the general public. Some groups believe that the constitution did not represent their interest. The lack of legitimacy and controversial nature of the constitution is leading to conflicts and also hampering the implementation of the constitutional provisions. Apart from the general contents,

article 39 and 40 of the constitution which dealt about the right to self-determination until secession and the right to land ownership is debatable among the political elites.

Ethiopia was within the political crisis and on the verge of failed states as a result of the complex political nature of the state and the narrow political spaces. The democratic space was very narrow as well as dangerous and unable to entertain the different political ideologies and thoughts. The political deadlock and crisis in addition to the EPRDF repressive regime were leading the country into a fragile situation. Political issues are some of the causes of contentions and conflicts among the political elites, the government and the public in general. Major political issues such as federalism, institutional independence, democratic system, national flag, national emblem and the issue of national heroes are some of the major national issues that should be discussed and reached on national consensus.

Ethiopia has registered a fast-economic growth for the past one decade or so. The past regime was able to bring an impressive economic progress through the path of the developmental state. However, despite these success stories, major economic issues were controversial as well as not participatory. The centralized nature of the economic policy and unclear paths of developmental states was the causes of controversy and criticisms. Ethiopia is now shifting from developmental state path to a homegrown economic policy. Like the ideology of the developmental state, the current home-grown economic policy is not free from criticisms and doubts. The policy is facing criticisms from political elites and economic experts. Discussions and debates on major economic issues such as economic model or economic policy, privatization, government interference in the market and the issue of equal distribution of resources have a paramount role to sustain the current economic achievement and in order to bring economic miracle in Ethiopia. Apart from the economic issues, major socio-cultural issues such as political culture, the culture of tolerance, and promoting cultural identity are major national issues that should be discussed and addressed through national dialogues.

National reconciliation would foster sustainable peace and builds strong social cohesion by nurturing the harmoniously relationship among the peoples. The Ethiopia state-building process was not free from bloodshed wars and conflicts. There were ethnic and religious conflicts as well

as marginalization and discrimination in the process of incorporating different societies in the empire of Ethiopia. The seed of past injustices and marginalization is creating fertile ground for the current conflicts and displacements. Reconciliation on historical narratives, past regimes injustices and the issue of social cohesions, political and economic marginalization, ethnic-based extremism, and the issue of boundary demarcation are major conflicting issues that should be addressed through national reconciliation.

Ethiopia is undertaking institutional, policy and legal reform as part of the political reform. Democratic institutions such as the National Board of the election, Human Rights Commission, Judiciary, and Ombudsman are some of the institutions which have a strong capacity to change the rule of the game or to held successful national consensus and reconciliation with win-win outcomes. These institutions are under construction and in deep reform as part of the current political reform. The revisions of some repressive laws and the establishment of the Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues Commission and Reconciliation Commission shows the potentials of these legal and institutional frameworks to start the process of national consensus and reconciliation. For example, the successful implementation of the Sidama referendum indicates the positive change toward institutional independency. However, this doesn't mean these frameworks are fully capable and no need for support. They need strong commitments and works from all stakeholders to climax their independency.

Medemer is a new political discourse that is passing through the political atmospheres of Ethiopia. The discourse has the same philosophical foundation as of Ubuntu philosophy and Martin Luter King's principles. Like Ubuntu philosophy, the Medemer discourse preaches about love, respect, humanity, inclusiveness, cooperation and caring for each other. These principles of medemer would foster the national consensus and reconciliation process and this in return would build sustainable peace and mutual respect among the societies.

The current political reform brings tremendous success both internally and at the international level. The success of the reform ranges from releasing thousands of political prisoners to inviting opposition political parties based in abroad. The reform goes beyond the national territory up to the Ethio-Eritrea peace deal which is recognized internationally and makes Abiy Ahmed to

become the winner of the 2019 Noble peace Prize. However, the reform is not going smoothly and without challenges. Displacement, mob justice, and ethnic and religious conflicts are some of the challenges the reform is facing. Despite all these challenges, the current political reform can transform the current Ethiopian situation into sustainable peace. The political commitment and aspiration from the leadership side and the visible international supports indicated the potential of the political reform to build sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

The National consensus and reconciliation have a direct linkage with sustainable peace. Countries that experience violent conflicts build sustainable peace through national consensus and reconciliation. Inclusive national dialogues and compressive discussions with the concerned bodies regarding the major national issues would foster the culture of tolerance. It has also the potential to transform the political transition from deadlock to more stable. However, national consensus and reconciliation alone are not a guarantee for bringing sustainable peace. The process should be supported both structurally and institutionally. If the process supported with a strong institutional and conducive political environment, national consensus and reconciliation can transform the political deadlock to sustainable peace.

The general public is willing to address the national and local issues through national consensus and reconciliation. The public is always ready towards working to build peace. They know the value of peace and the consequences of conflicts. They are aware of how war and conflicts are devastating. They know the worth of peace and living together in harmony. The problem is often from the political elite's side. The elites are taking advantage of political power than addressing national issues through national consensus and reconciliation. They have the potential to address and change the country's situation into positive and stability. However, they are manipulating their power and capacity over national interest and national issues.

Ethiopia is passing through massive political reform. As part of the political reform, Reconciliation Commission and Administrative Boundary and Identity Issues commission are established to investigate the past crime and injustice committed. These commissions also established to identify the boundary and identity-related conflicts to address and halt. Even though these commissions are not working as fast as expected, they are making their regular

meetings and showing some progress. While working on the issues, the commissions should take some experiences from countries passed through the same political paths. Regarding the national consensus, the model of Tunisia is the best. Ethiopia should take the best experiences of Tunisia and contextualize to the current situation. Concerning the national reconciliation, the model of South Africa and Rwanda is the best for Ethiopia. If the commission can take the best experiences of these countries and contextualize to the local context, the national consensus and reconciliation process and outcome would be successful.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- The FDRE Constitution is one of the major legal issues that are causing conflicts and controversies. The government should facilitate the political environment for open discussions, debates and all political parties, NGOs and legal experts should be taking part in the dialogues forum to address the issue. This can be done through inviting all actors for inclusive national dialogue forums.
- Federalism, Institutional Independence, Democratic System, National Flag, National Emblem and National Heroes are major political issues that need the consensus of the public and political elites. The government should smooth the national dialogues process and discuss these issues with all political actors and the public in general to reach at a national consensus. This can be done through preparing regular discussion forums as preliminary consultations for the grand national consensus.
- Major economic issues such as economic model or economic policy, privatization, government interference in the market and equal distribution of resources are major national issues that need expert level national dialogues and consensus. The government should open these issues for discussions and debates and the economic experts should be able to suggest a recommendation based on the scientific evidence and Ethiopian current context. This can be done through inviting all the concerned bodies especially economists for open dialogues and consultation. Enough budget should be provided for research and assessment for reaching on national consensus based on scientific evidence.

- Civil way of dealing with the political problems and tolerating each other was gone from the country's political arena for many decades. These were costing the lives of many politicians and hampering the current political reform. All political actors and the general public should discuss how to change this political culture; the culture of tolerance, and promoting cultural identity into a positive development. This can be done through comprehensive discussions and consultation with the youths and elders.
- All political parties should be encouraged and supported and also contributed a lot to discuss and debate on major national issues to reach on national wide consensus and bring sustainable peace. This can be achieved through inviting all political actors for the public debates and giving equal airtime for their ideas.
- National Reconciliation on historical narratives, past regimes injustice and social cohesions, political and economic marginalization, ethnic-based extremism, and the issue of boundary demarcation are very essential to foster sustainable peace and transform the political reform. All actors including political elites, civil societies, independent experts and the general population should be taking part in each process of the national reconciliation in order to bridge the broken relationship and to prevail justice. This can be archived through doing extensive studies and having open discussions with all actors in order to contribute their share.
- The current available institutional, policy and legal frameworks are sufficient to held national consensus and reconciliation to agree on major national issues with win-win outcomes and transform the political reform into a sustainable manner. However, more support is needed from internal and international actors to strengthen and fully engaged in building these frameworks. This can be achieved through the active participation of all citizens.
- The medemer philosophy would foster the national consensus and reconciliation practices and also build sustainable peace and mutual respect among societies. The general public should practice the basic principles of the discourse in order to bring sustainable peace and harmonious relationship. This can be done through disseminating the essence of the discourse, including in the curriculum, teaching and preaching the discourse at each level of the societies.

- Despite all challenges ahead, the current political reform can transform the current political situation of Ethiopia into sustainable peace. However, the reform should be supported by all political actors, civil societies, international communities, and each citizen. This can be done through participating all citizens through comprehensive discussions, awareness creation forums, teaching them to refrain from those activities that hamper their personal and societal peace.
- One of the major factors for the lagging behind of the current political reform is the reluctance of the political elites. These elites are gambling over the general population and national issues. The public should enforce political elites to discuss and debates on major national issues to change the current political situation in Ethiopia. This can be achieved through giving equal space for all political elites, developing culture of tolerance, and respecting the perspectives of all political elites.
- The political reform should be supported and transformed into a consolidated democracy. To do so, the engagement of every citizen has a paramount role to bring the necessary change. All actors should be part of the reform and support from the bottom of the heart despite the ideological difference. This can be achieved through giving equal participation for all citizens in their country's affair. These includes creating good environment for active political participation, and creating job opportunities.
- The National consensus and reconciliation model of Tunisia, Rwanda and South Africa could be the best models from which the Ethiopian government should take a lesson. The national reconciliation commission of Ethiopia should take the best experiences of these countries and customize into the Ethiopian context in order to bring sustainable peace and justice. This can be done through conducting intensive studies of the three countries trajectory of political transition. This includes identifying the best experience of these countries, sorting the challenges and contextualizing into the current Ethiopia context.

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