



Addis Ababa University College of Development Studies

Center for Environment and Development Studies

**Assessing Environmental Programs and Advocacy in Ethiopian Political
Parties' Electoral Debates**

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DECLARATIONS

I Abiy Hailu Gebretsadik, registration number/I.D. number GSE/6657/11, do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially or in full, by any other person for an award of degree in any other university/institution.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEUP	All Ethiopian Unity Party
AFG	African Green Federation
AMC	Amhara Media Corporation
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
Derg	Provisional Military Administrative Council
EBA	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority
EthZema	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESAT	Ethiopian Satellite Television
ESDP	Ethiopian Social Democratic Party
ETV	Ethiopian Television
FBC	Fana Broadcasting Corporate
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEP	Freedom and Equality Party
Hibir	Hibir Ethiopia Democratic Party
KGP	Kaffa Green Party
NAMA	National Movement of Amhara
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NEBE	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
OBC	Oromia Broadcasting Corporation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
USD	United States Dollar
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group

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Abstract

Various studies reported that political parties play a critical role in promoting environmental causes and green development policies. In light of this, the major objective of this study was to assess Ethiopian political parties' environmental programs. Hence, party programs during the 6th General Elections were utilized as data. The findings revealed that Ethiopia's political parties somehow exercised environmental policy integration (EPI) and advocacy in their programs. EPI was particularly witnessed in their discussion of alternative policies for the agriculture sector. The parties tended also to take stronger positions on the issues of environmental and natural resources conservation and pollution. One of the interesting findings of this research is Kaffa Green Party, which, as the first and only green party in Ethiopia, is found to be implementing EPI in most of its sectoral programs.

Keywords: *Environmental policy integration, environmental advocacy, political parties, green economy, environmentalism, political parties' program, manifesto, Ethiopia*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, and delimitations of the study as well as the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopia's social and economic existence is highly dependent on the environment and its resources. This makes the sustainable use of natural resources among the top policy agendas. Accordingly, the development strategies such as the CRGE strategy are set to enable Ethiopia to become a middle-income country by 2025 with no net increase in carbon emissions (FDRE, 2011).

According to Daley (2015), environmental problems are significant barriers to Ethiopia's sustainable development ambitions because of the country's reliance on agriculture and forestry resources and its historical legacy of severe and widespread environmental deterioration.

On the other hand, Taki (2019) noted that Ethiopia is regarded as a pioneer state, not least in terms of environmentally sustainable development, it has an emblematic role within the African context. It is one of the few countries with an ancient state culture, not to mention the fact that it is the only state in Africa to resist and avert European colonial ambition. These and other prominent positions in the African context make it the seat of the continental organization, the African Union.

Yet, with a gross national income of 960 USD per person, Ethiopia is one of the poorest nations (WB, 2022) and due to its strong reliance on rain-fed agriculture and natural resources and its relatively limited capability for adaptation to anticipated changes, it is one of the countries in the globe that are most vulnerable to climate variability and climate change (WBG, 2021).

To make sure that the country achieves sustainable development that does not degrade the environment, policymakers and stakeholders have to make sure that environmental concerns are integrated with sectoral policy discourse.

In this regard, political parties will have a big impact on how well governments create and carry out green development policies as stated by Carter, Ladrech, Little, and Tsagkroni (2017), and hence in mainstreaming and integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies.

Particularly, the progressive nature of political parties towards the environment has its impact on adopting environment-friendly policies. For instance, Ladrech, (2017) stated that progressive parties can serve as a link between the present situation and low-carbon policy initiatives since they hold a crucial place in national party systems for guiding the economy and society toward a low-carbon future.

Further, Milfont, Davies, and Wilson (2019, p. 2) stated that political ideology is one of the major and unswerving forecasters of the state of environmentalism— ‘broadly defined as concern for the environment, and support for environmentally-friendly attitudes, intentions and behaviors.’

Hence, political parties sit at the forefront of actors that influence environmental policy formulation and adoption. And in most cases, it is their respective party programs that shape policy formulation once the parties manage to hold onto office.

However, Gebru, (2014) stated that Ethiopia’s party system has a clientelist nature (parties seek to mobilize support through ethnic and patron-client networks,) than a programmatic one (when political parties predominantly generate policy, mobilize support, and govern based on consistent and coherent ideological positions). Yet, the country has now brought about change in rhetoric and seemed to be in the direction of pursuing a multi-party system that gives parties in the opposition the chance to come up with, influence, and criticize a wide range of sectoral policy issues including environmental policymaking.

In fact, unlike in other parts of the world, particularly, Europe where green parties emerged in 1970s, the Americas, and Asia, the inclusion of environmental concerns in electoral debates and political party programs is still an understudied phenomenon in Ethiopia. On the other hand, in

the past decades, there are reports of the green parties' emergence in Africa, (AFG, 2010). In light of this, it is proper to study Ethiopian political parties' environmental programs.

Political parties' positions on various policy issues including the environment can be taken from their statement during election campaigns and in their manifestos and programs. For instance, Ladrech, (2017) stated it is crucial to keep in mind the policy positions the so-called "parties of government" choose concerning climate policy while trying to comprehend not just the EU attitude on the subject, but also the governments of individual member states. These positions can be taken from what they promise during election campaigns – in their campaign manifestos and platforms - as well as what they do once in government.

Electoral debates are organized with the goals of increasing voter knowledge and access to information about policy platforms and promises, making it easier for voters to vote for candidates who share their policy preferences, and promoting policy-based campaigning, (Kramon, 2019).

As to Leinaweaver and Thomson (2015), environmental problems and public concern for the environment have prompted political parties to devote attention to this theme in their electoral appeals, albeit the level to which they have done so varies by party and election. Hence, the environment has become a crucial election issue and a new facet of politics.

While in other parts of the world, several studies were conducted to analyze parties' environmental policy preferences, for instance (Carter et al, 2017, Barros, 2018), in Ethiopia's case, no such research was conducted. Hence, the major aim of this study was to assess environmental policy integration, and advocacy in Ethiopia's electoral debates and party programs using the 2021 general election as a case in point.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Having a natural resource-dependent economy which is mainly manifested in the age-old rainfed agriculture sector, Ethiopia faces severe environmental problems. This calls for effective policy measures to ensure the goal of balancing economic growth and sustainable utilization of environmental resources. Hence, the environment needs to be part of the policy discourse to

improve the social and economic situation and livelihood as well as realize a low carbon economy, and sustainable use of natural resources.

Due to their very nature, political parties are the main drivers of policymaking and hence sit at the forefront of various actors and stakeholders in coming up with a solution to environmental problems.

As demonstrated in various studies (Beland, and Boucher, 2015; Ladrech, 2017; Cherkashchenko, 2020), political parties in other parts of the world particularly in Europe, both in the opposition and government, played a significant role in introducing green development agendas which led to the formation of pro-environment policies. In this regard, the case of many green parties, social democrats, and parties at the left and center-left can be mentioned.

For instance, the findings of Leinaweaver, and Thomson (2015) showed that during EU-level negotiations, governments with parties that prioritized environmental protection in their manifestos are more likely to propose pro-environment measures and that political ideology and the resulting party identification were both found to be significantly associated with environmental concern.

Besides other ideological issues, research shows that political parties prioritizing environmentalism in policy discourse play a role in mitigating climate change and averting environmental pollution.

The results of the study by Debus, Knilu, and Heichel, (2010,) show that aspects of party politics affect the number of environmental initiatives that are adopted. As a result, more environmentalist policy views are adopted by the political parties, which increases the number of environmental measures. For this reason, political parties are among the major stakeholders who should be concerned about environmentalism and a green economy.

In the African context, due to the socio-economic condition, it is inevitable that environmental issues will become the center of political discourse. Death (2016, p. 1) indicated that ‘environmental politics is right at the beating green heart of the contemporary African condition.’ Further, ‘instead of seeing the environment as a side issue, or a concern which arises once

poverty has been addressed,' he argued 'we cannot understand African politics without understanding the political governance and contestation of environmental issues.'

As indicated in the cited studies above, for instance (Ladrech, 2017), political parties' positions regarding environmental issues can be taken from electoral debates as such issues take center stage in western electoral debates. However, this is not the case in Latin America. Ryan (2018) indicated that possibly, one of the political issues the climate agenda faces in the Latin American context is that, despite having a fair amount of social consensus, it is not seen as a politically and electorally salient issue.

In the African context, though some green parties brought environmental issues to the electoral discourse, they have not been able to earn significant votes to win seats in parliament. For instance, Wachira (2022) indicated that in Kenya, which held its fifth general elections in 2022, four of the 93 registered political parties were green parties which is a lot for Africa where there are only 22 official green parties. Yet, 'despite a young population highly concerned with climate change, none of Kenya's green candidates were elected on their ticket.'

However, Ethiopian political parties' stance towards the environment in their programs to tackle socio-economic challenges is an understudied subject. It is not clearly known if Ethiopian political parties formulated strong environmental programs to influence policy and public opinion toward the sustainable use of the environment.

Particularly, while election debates allow political parties to bring forward their environmental agendas and programs to the public and policy discourse and play a key role in raising environmental awareness among the public, there is a knowledge gap regarding the place of environmental topics in Ethiopia's electoral debates. Hence, the inclusion of environmental concerns in electoral politics and the emphasis political parties give to environmental concerns in their programs in an unexplored area.

Previous studies on the topics rather focused on other stakeholders and regimes than political parties. For instance, by presenting the case of forest policy-making in Ethiopia, (Arts, Ayana, and Wiersum, 2018) illustrated the strategies of Ethiopian NGOs, and how and to what extent they have impacted policy decisions regarding the environment. Dechassa, (2015) also reviewed the environmental management during the imperial, Derge, and EPRDF periods in line with the

environmental concerns and policies and economy. While his research presented the various approaches the regimes followed regarding the management of the environment and their shortcomings, it was entirely focused on regimes, not political parties.

Further, environmental issues have become a research interest for diverse fields of study. Cruz (2017) indicated the issue of environmental concern has garnered and sustained scholarly interest over the past half-century, propelling research in sociology, psychology, political science, anthropology, and communication, among others. However, in the Ethiopian case, environmental issues have not been studied from diverse scholarly points of view.

Hence, this research will fill the knowledge gap by assessing environmental programs and environmental policy integration, and advocacy in Ethiopia's political parties' electoral debates. The results of this research will contribute to the literature on political parties' environmental programs, environmental policy integration and advocacy, and environmental politics in Ethiopia. Hence, this work will offer empirical contributions to the scholarship.

1.3 Research questions

This research tried to address the following research questions:

1. What is the place of environmental topics during political parties' electoral debates?
2. In which sectoral policy discussions do Ethiopian political parties demonstrate environmental policy integration? And which environmental topics are discussed the most frequently?
3. Do Ethiopian political parties engage in environmental advocacy in their programs and electoral debates?
4. Do Ethiopian political parties propose solutions to the country's environmental problems? If so, what are their alternative solutions?

1.4 Objectives of the study

General objective

The general objective of the study was to assess Ethiopian political parties' environmental programs.

Specific objectives:

1. To assess the inclusion of environmental concerns in electoral debates and political parties' programs
2. To assess the practice of environmental policy integration among Ethiopian political parties and identify frequently discussed environmental topics
3. To examine the exercise of environmental advocacy among Ethiopian political parties and the priority they give to environmental concerns in their effort to address development
4. To identify political parties' alternative solutions to the environmental problems Ethiopia faces

1.5 Significance of the study

Though one of the defining features of political parties is to influence policy, there have not been many studies regarding the stance of Ethiopian political parties on the issues of environmentalism and EPI. As political parties play a key role in the adoption of a pro-environment policy, this research will have contributions to future research in the area by assessing Ethiopian political parties' environmental programs. It will make significant contributions to future studies that particularly focus on the relationship between party programs, policy formulation, policy output, and impact on environmental performance.

In addition, without understanding political administration and environmental arguments involving people, land, animals, plants, forests, natural resources, energy production, water use, and agriculture, it is difficult to understand the discussion of African politics due to the economies' dependence on the natural environment. Hence, the significance of this study lies in

the fact it explores the relationship between the environment and politics which in turn has a substantial impact on the livelihood of the society.

1.6 Scope and delimitation of the study

This study aimed to assess environmental programs in Ethiopian political parties' electoral debates and programs. The research particularly focused on EPI and advocacy as well as proposed solutions to environmental problems.

In terms of political parties, the research was delimited to 17 political parties - 14 parties that took part in election debates in which environmental topics were discussed, and three political parties that didn't take part in the debates.

The research also delimited to electoral debates organized during the 6th General Elections in 2021. Again, the thematic analysis part of this research was delimited to debate sessions that are broadcasted on ETV, FBC, Ahadu TV, Radio, AMC, Walta TV, and ESAT during the 2021 General Elections in Ethiopia.

In terms of research method, the research mainly applied a qualitative method of thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentile were also applied to measure the frequency and share of environmental themes in the debates and programs.

Thematically, the study is delimited to the concepts of environmental policy integration and advocacy as well as environmental and green political theories and ecological democracy. Geographically, the research is delimited to Ethiopia's boundary.

1.7 Limitations of the study

One of the major limitations of the study was the absence of previous research on the topic in the Ethiopian context. This has its own impact and created a challenge in the choice of research methodology. In addition, the disinclination of political parties to take part in an interview on the research topic (some rejected interview requests; others responded that their positions on the issue could be taken from their programs and policy documents; then again others opted to discuss their general positions rather than responding to each interview questions) prevented the

application of triangulation in the research. But, in order to minimize its impact on the results of the research, political programs were also used as data besides electoral debates.

1.8 Organization of the study

To achieve the stated objectives, the entire research paper was structured into five different chapters. The first chapter was the introductory part of the paper, which provides an overview of the paper with the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter describes the related literature review, which was mainly about theories, as well as conceptual and empirical frameworks regarding which discussed environmentalism, green economy, climate change, sustainable development, environmentalism and green economy around the globe, Africa, and in the Ethiopian context, Ethiopia's political party system, the impact of political affiliation, ideology, and party manifesto on environmentalism, the emergence of green parties and green nationalism, as well as elections and environmental issues. The third chapter deals with the design and methodology of the study to present the techniques and procedure used to gather and analyze data in the study and the justification for the choice of data selection/sampling and analysis methods.

The fourth chapter presented findings, results, and discussions. The first sub-topics of the chapter discussed the inclusion of environmental issues during Ethiopian political parties' electoral debates and party programs using descriptive statistics. The next sub-topics discussed environmental policy integration in sectoral debates and party programs, parties' positions and advocacy for environmentalism as well as their proposed solutions to the country's environmental problems using the qualitative analysis method of thematic analysis. The fifth chapter is the last chapter that drew conclusions and suggested recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aimed to assess Ethiopian political parties' environmental programs during electoral debates. Hence, the unit of analysis for this research was Ethiopian political parties. As a theoretical and conceptual as well as an empirical review, various studies conducted on the issue and related matters in the contexts of Ethiopia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas are presented in the literature review.

2.1 Theoretical framework

2.1.1 Environmental political theory and ecological limits

Vanderheiden (2020) stated according to the assumption of environmental political theory, environmental change has revealed a "sustainability imperative" in light of which other fundamental principles need to be re-examined. Hence, it is inevitable that this idea of sustainability poses challenges to how political theorists have thought about fundamental political values and principles. The inability to accommodate to sustainability imperatives will lead to 'erosion and eventual irrelevance' of the well-established ideas in the political discourse, (p. 11).

Accordingly, Vanderheiden suggested that at its core, environmental change is a problem of scarcity that necessitates that humans live within the bounds of ecological limitations. As a result, in order to take into account, the reality of ecological limits, we must reconsider "existing social and political notions and values." (p. 10).

2.1.2 Green political theory

As to Vincent (2018), the idea that green political theory is focused on the very survival of the entire natural ecology of the earth is one of its major draws. As a result, it also discusses the prerequisites for the human species' biological survival, and hence from the perspective of

humans, it could be claimed that the green theory articulates the prerequisites for the continuation of meaningful human life.

‘Green political theory conceives of itself as ‘green’, ‘environmental’ or ‘ecological’ because of its key focus on nature. Nature is seen as a crucial entity in its own right – of which we are just a very minor part. Thus, green theory is not a conventional theory, disinterestedly examining the value status of the non-human world,’ (Vincent, 2018, p. 182).

On the other hand, as to Barry, (2014), while ecologism or green political theory, being the most recent of schools of political thinking, besides focusing on issues that are extremely old in politics and philosophical inquiry – ‘such as the relationship between the human and nonhuman worlds,’ it is also characterized as ‘dealing with some specifically contemporary issues such as the economic and political implications of climate change, peak oil, overconsumption, resource competition and conflicts, and rising levels of global and national inequalities’ (p. 1).

2.1.2 Ecological democracy

Ecological concern and engagement, on the one hand, and democratic legitimacy and procedure, on the other, are two sets of appealing core normative ideals that are combined to form the concept of ecological democracy. These two systems of values, however, are very dissimilar and difficult to reconcile. Ecological democracy theorists have long wrestled with these two promises and have always had to deal with the clear possibility of conflict between them (Schlosberg, Backstrand, & Pickering, 2019).

The majority of theorists in ecological democracy have concentrated on identifying, fostering, or promoting synergy between these two fundamental and ideal sets of values. Accordingly, Schlosberg et al (2019) stated that on the one hand, some thinkers emphasized that environmental democracy has centered on changing current democratic institutions to better represent environmental values or achieve environmental goals. On the other hand, proponents of a more comprehensive ecological democracy call for a radical break with the neoliberal state and a shift toward decentralized, organic, and grassroots democratic practices that embody ecological values and give more weight to the interests of future generations and nonhuman animals.

2.2 Conceptual framework and definition of concepts

2.2.1 Environmentalism, environmental protection, and green economy

Harrison and Boyd (2018) stated that concern for the environment and its protection against excessive human exploitation are defined by the word "environmentalism." Environmentalism doesn't represent a political or ideological objective. The term is derived from the Ancient Greek words oikos ('household', 'habitat') and logos ('science', 'argument').

Bastianoni, Hamilton, Partizi, and Macintosh, (2018; p.1342) defined environmental protection as 'the prevention of unwanted changes to ecosystems and their constituent parts. This includes the protection of ecosystems and their constituent parts from changes associated with human activities, and the prevention of unwanted natural changes to ecosystems and their constituent parts'

As to Harrison and Boyd (2018; p. 275), two subgroups of what has come to be known as the "green movement" or the "greens" (with or without a capital "G") are environmentalism and ecologism. Although the phrases "environmentalism" and "ecologism" were originally used synonymously, most people can now tell them apart. 'Environmentalists believe that green issues, however important they are, can be addressed within the existing political and economic structures. To succeed, this would require wise government, appropriate legislation, and the voluntary adoption of environmentally sound practices by consumers. Ecologists deny that this is possible. The environmental crisis is so great, they believe, that only a thorough ongoing reorganization of the political, social, and economic system would achieve a solution. This would necessitate a massive change in human values.

The idea of the green economy itself has a long history in academia than the way it is applied to policy legislation, (Antikainen et al, 2016). In reaction to the undervaluation of environmental and social costs in the current price system, the green economy was initially introduced in 1989. (Le Blanc, 2011).

The idea of a green economy has since been expanded. A green economy is defined 'as low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in employment and income is driven by public and private investment into such economic activities,

infrastructure, and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services,' (UNEP, 2012).

The Green Economy was acknowledged as a tool to achieve sustainable social, economic, and environmental development at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) in the framework of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. Accordingly, (UNEP, 2012) has further characterized a green economy as "one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities."

Further, green growth "is about fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that the natural assets continue to provide the resources and the environmental services on which our well-being relies," (OECD, 2011).

Citing other similar definitions, for instance by World Bank, (Antikainen et al, 2016) stated that all these definitions demonstrate that the green economy is an "umbrella" notion that covers several implications concerning growth and well-being, or efficiency and risk reduction in the utilization of natural resources.

2.2.2 Climate change and sustainable development

According to UN Climate Action, climate change refers to 'long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle.' However, since the 1800s, human activities—primarily the combustion of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas—have been the primary cause of climate change. Fossil fuel combustion produces greenhouse gas emissions that serve as a blanket around the planet, trapping heat from the sun and increasing temperatures.

According to UN Climate, while many believe that rising temperatures are the main effect of climate change, the story doesn't really begin with the temperature increase. Changes in one place might have an impact on changes in all other areas since the Earth is a system in which everything is interconnected. Intense droughts, water scarcity, destructive fires, rising sea levels,

flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms, and a decline in biodiversity are currently some of the effects of climate change.

The UN conference on the environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 formally adopted the concept of sustainable development defined by the Brundtland report as a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UN, 1992).

2.2.3 Environmental policy integration and advocacy

One of the aims of this research was to assess the integration of environmental concerns in Ethiopian political parties’ sectoral policy discussion during electoral debates and in party programs. Accordingly, van Oosten, Uzamukunda, & Runhaar, (2018) stated that Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) refers to ‘the incorporation of environmental concerns into sectoral policies to reduce policy incoherence and achieve synergies to more effectively address environmental problems such as environmental degradation.’ For instance, in order to balance agricultural output, environmental conservation, and livelihood demands at the landscape level through multi-stakeholder decision-making, landscape governance can be seen as a particular, geographical embodiment of EPI.

As to Gomeseria, R.V (2018) one view on how to take care of the environment while ‘living with your loved one’ in a sustainable environment is advocacy. However, as to Jickling, B. (2003) like other topics, advocacy also has different colors and is not always easy to define or pin down. Strong advocacy, however, is frequently characterized by escalating appeals for a cause, course of action, or ideologically supported position.

Azad, (2018), stated fundamental causes of environmental issues are people's attitudes toward the environment, which can only be changed via education. Education helps people make moral choices that support the resolution of environmental issues.

2.2.4 Environmentalism and green economy around the globe

Buseth, J.T. (2020) reported that between 2007 and 2009, the political, popular, and energy elites began to pay more attention to global environmental concerns as a result of the food, finance, and energy crises which represented a unique moment in history to tackle environmental and

economic challenges simultaneously. Major policy influencer institutions across the globe, such as UNEP, OECD and the World Bank, began developing methods to address economic, environmental, and global poverty crises. The efforts bore fruit by conceptualizing the green economy at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012.

To respond to environmental challenges and the economy, the path the industrialized countries chose is focused on market-based and technological solutions in renewable energies. On the other hand, countries in the Global South focused on the natural resources sector to implement a green economy.

Accordingly, Buseth, J.T. (2020) stated predominantly, the two narratives led to the setting up of green economies in the Global South: 'first, a neo-Malthusian 'problem narrative' of resource degradation, scarcity, and overpopulation in poor countries, and second, a 'solution narrative' saying that we can overcome the crises by modernizing natural resource management and utilization.' Hence, the natural resource management discourse in the green economy in the Global South is represented by the 'degradation' and 'abundance' narrative which states that natural resources are under threat, but they are also abundant and could be used to stir green growth.

Bergius and Buseth, (2019) in the global south, green economy implementation is often interpreted as environmental protection along with modernization of, and shifts in access to and control over, natural resources ('green sectors').

Having an agrarian economy, Ethiopia's development strategy is dependent on the natural environment. On the other hand, Ethiopia is a country that experienced severe environmental degradation. According to Daley (2015), soil erosion and land degradation, deforestation and forest degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and other sorts of pollution are the key environmental challenges impacting Ethiopia, aside from climate change. Hence, the situation brought with it a major development policy challenge.

Based on these, the above rapid and desk-based study argued that unless suitable environmental management measures are incorporated into development planning, Ethiopia's anticipated rapid growth and development transition will surely result in considerable environmental harm. Such

integration should happen in the transport sector, industry, urban housing and construction, water and energy, forestry, and agriculture.

2.2.5 Political parties and Ethiopian political parties' system

ACE project defines 'A political party is defined as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office.'

Ethiopia adopted a multiparty system after the 1991 government change, allowing different political parties to compete with their various agendas in the public interest (Mude, 2021). Based on the degree of programmaticity of the political parties operating, political system is classified as 'programmatic' or 'clientelistic' (IDEA, 2012 cited in Gebru, 2014).

"A political system is said to be programmatic when political parties predominantly generate policy, mobilize support, and govern on the basis of consistent and coherent ideological positions. However, when most or all parties seek to mobilize support through ethnic and patron-client networks, the political system is known as clientilistic," (Gebru, 2014). And the study revealed that the Ethiopian political party system was not programmatic.

Discussing the importance of programmatic parties, Cheeseman, et al (2014) stated that political parties with substantial programming components are held accountable by the general public because they are perceived to better represent different social groups by integrating their preferences and acting in those groups' best interests.

2.2.6 Political parties' perception of environmental problems and policy

According to Pollex and Berker (2022), to yet, research on partisan disparities in environmental policy has produced mixed findings. Although it is generally believed that political parties have an impact on policy, some academics have found that parties differ in their view of environmental problems. Accordingly, while parties have a wide range of perspectives on the issue 'ranging from simple to holistic views on the environmental policy' their study showed that 'some parties, e.g., Green parties, coherently show a holistic problem perception while others, e.g., Liberals, differ considerably, casting doubt on the assumption of clear-cut party family positions.'

2.3 Empirical review

2.3.1 Studies about the state of the environment in Ethiopia

Several studies were conducted in the context of the current state of Ethiopia's environment and the environmental challenges the country is facing. Kebede (2016) looked at the difficulties of maintaining the resource base while sustaining the economy and catering to an expanding population that is heavily reliant on natural resources for sustenance. By adopting a political ecology viewpoint, the study thoroughly investigates how human activity affects the environment in Ethiopia, defining the environment in terms of the quantity and quality of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable.

Further, by taking into account the assertions made by environmentalists who are voicing a number of worries about the spread of floriculture in Ethiopia, including the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, the disposal of waste, and the protection of water bodies, Getu (2022) assessed the industry's environmental impact and the threat it is creating to the natural environment.

Similarly, the result of the study by Teklu, Hailelassie, and Mekuria, indicated low levels of local community awareness of the use, handling, and management of pesticides. Applications of pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides contaminated surface water systems and had varying degrees of risky effects on aquatic creatures and plants (i.e. from no or insignificant risk to acute and chronic levels).

2.3.2 Environmental management during various governments in Ethiopia

In the Ethiopian case, there have not been studies that specifically focus on environmental concerns and politics. However, studies were conducted by focusing on the environmental management practices of different regimes rather than the stance of political parties.

Dechassa (2015) briefly reviewed the environmental management during the imperial, Derge, and EPRDF periods in line with the environmental concerns and policies and economy. The author stated that environmental concerns mainly received attention after WW II during the emperor's reign of the 1960s. For example, in 1965 three forest laws namely were enacted for the first time. During the Derge time, the top-down approach to environmental protection

activities failed to bring the desired outcome. Ethiopia clearly recognizes the environment as a key and important pillar of sustainable development following the Kyoto Protocol and incorporates it into development planning.

As to Taki (2019), despite being engaged in various greening activities such as implementing the CRGE strategy and national reforestation program, Ethiopia's lack of implementation capacity prevents it from carrying out ambitious environmental plans. Furthermore, the desire for economic development and the lack of robust regulatory systems encourages the conversion of forests and fields to agriculture to continue.

2.3.3 The impact of political affiliation and ideology on environmentalism

Political ideology is one of the major and unswerving forecasters of the state of environmentalism, (Milfont et al., 2019). In this modern-day, political positions have a huge impact on shaping how policies regarding the environment are framed. Hence, political ideologies and affiliations are among the major factors in deciding the fate of the environment in the future. In this regard, the above-mentioned studies attested to the fact that political ideologies and affiliations have a significant influence in determining environmental concerns at the societal level.

While several research were conducted regarding social, health, and economic factors that affect environmental concerns, political factors are a particularly interesting case. For instance, Cruz (2017) and Milfont et al (2019) conducted studies on the relationship between political affiliation, political ideology, and environmental concern, the two variables which are the focus of research in the area.

As to Cruz (2017), 'political party affiliation refers to the major political party with which someone generally identifies. Political ideology, conversely, describes where someone falls on the spectrum of political beliefs, ranging from strongly conservative to strongly liberal.' Having the purpose of examining the relationships between political party affiliation and political ideology with environmental concern, his study identified that both exhibit significant positive relationships with environmental concern, according to the results of two meta-analyses conducted. However, the relationship with political ideology is stronger.

As to Milfont et al (2019) also, there is strong evidence that there are links between political ideology and environmentalism, 'with self-identified political liberals being more pro-environmental than conservatives.'

In their study, Leinaweaver and Thomson (2015) asked 'why do some governments have more environmentally friendly policies than others? Accordingly, part of the answer was governing parties' ideological positions on environmentalism'. Their party-based explanation was put to the test using unique indicators of national environmental policy for governments in 27 European Union countries. The findings show that 'governments with parties that emphasized environmental protection in their manifestos are more likely to propose pro-environment policies during EU-level negotiations.' According to Cruz's (2017) study, Political ideology and party identification were found to be significantly associated with environmental concerns.

In their paper, Beland and Boucher (2015) estimated the causal impact of Democratic vs Republican governors on the states' levels of five major air pollutants and found that 'the concentrations of NO₂, Ozone and particulates are significantly lower under Democratic governors'. Hence, air pollution levels are highly impacted by political affiliation.

Again, the analysis of manifestos of European parties since the mid-1990s by Ladrech, R. (2017), showed that social democratic parties demonstrate more pro-climate policy in their manifestos than their counterparts in the center-right.

On the other hand, using exploratory analysis of the relationship between political parties and climate change in Latin America, Ryan (2017) found that in Latin American politics, climate skepticism and explicit opposition to the climate agenda have not been common. In recent years, mainstream parties and coalitions have tended to integrate climate change with "low intensity," as evidenced by their support for moderate and incremental solutions to solve the issue.

Further Barros (2018) analyzes the profile and proposals of the Brazilian political parties that defend radical environmentalism or ecosocialism and found that out of the 35 parties, eight parties were identified as ecosocialists whose common characteristic is the critique of capitalism and liberal environmentalism.

Barros (2018), analyzed the adherence of Brazilian political parties to the liberal environmentalist discourse, understood as the one that seeks to reconcile capitalism with ecological sustainability. Accordingly, out of the 35 registered parties, 22 incorporate ecological problematics in their agendas, which accounts for 62.5%. Out of that number, 13 can be categorized as liberal environmentalists.

2.4 Emergence of green parties and green nationalism

2.4.1 The emergence and impact of green parties

Most research in the area indicates that green parties emerged in Europe during the 1970s and 80s. Using the party family as an analytical framework, Van Haute (2016) concluded that in Western Europe, ‘there was a clear trend towards the emergence of new political issues revolving around environmental concerns and opposition to nuclear energy policy but also around pacifism, human rights and radical democracy. These issues initially pushed forward by environmental movements or groups were progressively politicized, as they were not adequately addressed by existing parties. It opened up the political space for the emergence of Green parties.’ While they prioritize the environment as a "salient concern" in their ideological and programmatic views, they have gradually begun to incorporate other topics into their manifestos and have taken a pragmatic attitude on the subject of the environment itself.

After reviewing literature regarding the emergence of green parties which linked their birth to various factors, van Haute (2016) concluded that ‘any comparative or classification exercise cannot make abstraction of the fact that Green parties have grown out of their respective national contexts and have been exposed to these contexts from their foundation. Ideologically and organizationally, green parties may thus be more diverse’.

Cherkashchenko, (2020) conducted a quantitative analysis of panel data that is based on the Manifesto Project and the ParlGov datasets and includes elections in 23 European Union member states covering the time period of 1980-2018 examining to assess if the presence of green parties affects environmental issues’ saliency on mainstream left-wing parties’ agenda. The findings demonstrate that ‘green parties’ performance measured by the share of seats which

these parties acquire during elections has a negative effect on established parties' emphasis on environmental issues in the elections which follow.'

2.4.2 The emergence of green parties in Africa

While the people's livelihood is highly dependent on the environment and nature and environmental issues are highly intertwined with poverty or poverty reduction discussion, the environment is treated in African politics as a side issue or a concern that arises once poverty has been addressed, (Death, 2016). However, in recent years, there have been movements and political parties that specifically focus on environmental issues and green politics.

Though green parties are a recent phenomenon in the African context, there have been movements to unite parties that focus on green politics in the continent. The African Greens Federation is a coalition of political Green Parties and Green Movements in Africa. AGF was officially launched on 17th April 2010, during the African Greens Congress held in Kampala Uganda.

It was through this project that African Greens were able to have exchange programs in Western, Northern, Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa regions. After the first exchange visit to West Africa-Ghana and Benin, it was agreed that a Preparatory African Greens Meeting be held in Benin in July 2009 to set the agenda and prepare documents for the African Greens Congress. After these exchange programs, new parties were created in Zambia, Uganda, and Rwanda and finally, the African Green Congress was held in April 2010 in Kampala Uganda. While AFG members came from 22 African countries, green parties from Eastern African countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda are members.

2.4.3 Green nationalism

The emergence of green parties has also cleared the path to the emergence of 'green nationalist parties' in some parts of Europe. Using the case of minority nations, Conversi, D and Hau, M. F. (2021) looked into the possibility of a "green nationalism" among progressive and social democratic sub-state nationalist groups. The study found, over time, there has been an unanticipated rhetorical and ideological consistency in how minority countries see and advocate

climate concerns and show ‘how sub-state political actors actively seek to use this link with climate-related environmental issues to bridge policy issues.’

2.5 Election and environmental issues

Slothuus (2015) underlined that information on political parties’ positions on political problems is one of the most important sorts of political communication. Political parties have long been seen as a crucial force impacting public opinion. Political parties offer voters vital clues by adopting sides in policy disputes and "branding" policy initiatives with a party name. Citizens will be able to understand political issues and establish relevant policy choices by relying on the positions of political parties.

Debates also influence the subsequent behaviors of elected political parties, (Kramon, 2019). In addition, their stance on environmental issues can be studied using their party manifestos and programs.

As to the findings of Leinaweaver, and Thomson (2015), the strength of their government’s policy on specific environmental concerns is influenced by the amount to which governing parties prioritize environmental protection as assessed by their electoral appeals. This suggests that parties not only adopt the green language, but they also at least partially implement green programs after they are elected to public office. With mainstream parties advocating support for environmentalism to varying degrees, green politics is an essential component of political rivalry in contemporary democracies.

Yet, in Europe, the formation of green parties is more associated with the continental election (for the Eu parliament) than national politics. Since 1984, there has consistently been a presence of green parties in the European Parliament, (van Haute, 2016). This is despite not having a strong role in their national party systems, and European elections became an important focus for party development. This is also attributable to the favorable electoral system in the EU election

Taking the protection of the environment as ‘a luxury good’ using data from four election studies in Denmark and Germany that explicitly ask respondents to rate parties on one particular luxury goods issue, Abou-Chadi and Kayser (2017), found out that ‘voters who perceive the economy as weak indeed punish governing parties more severely when they associate them with

environmental policies; conversely, a green reputation when the economy is expanding garners left-wing parties higher vote probabilities.’

2.5.1 Green parties and elections in Africa

Although there is still a long way to go for environmental parties in Africa, the climate catastrophe may hasten their rise. (Cascais, 2015). However, as of yet, the electoral performance of green parties in the few countries they exist is not momentous. Despite the presence of 22 green parties in Africa, according to AFC, they have not yet reached a level to have a meaningful impact in terms of electoral politics.

For instance, in Kenya, which held its fifth general elections in 2022, four of the 93 registered political parties were green parties. ‘Yet despite a young population highly concerned with climate change, none of Kenya’s green candidates were elected on their ticket,’ (Wachira, 2022). In addition, the Partido Ecologista - Movimento da Terra (PEC-MT) in Mozambique, which specializes in environmental issues has not been able to send a single member to parliament since it was founded in 1997(Cascais, 2015).

Despite these difficulties, several African green movements have had some modest successes, particularly in Rwanda, Madagascar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR) won an impressive 4.55 percent of the vote in the 2018 elections, gaining two seats in parliament. In Madagascar, the Greens of the "Parti Vert Hasin'I Madagasikara" formed a coalition with the "Tous Ensemble Movement" of Andry Rajoelina in the run-up to the 2014 elections. Since the coalition's victory at the polls, the country's environment minister has been a member of the Parti Vert. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, even though, the Green party has no deputies in the National Assembly, it has as a member, an active environmental activist, who held the post of environment minister for many years (Cascais, 2015).

The above mention literature can be used as a background to study the issue in the Ethiopian case.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter dealt with the description of the research process, methodology, and design. It provides information concerning the data collection, sampling, and analysis methods that are used in undertaking this research as well as justifications for the use of the selected approaches.

This research aimed to assess the practice of environmental policy integration and advocacy among parties, their proposed solutions to Ethiopia's environmental problems as well as the inclusion of environmental topics and concerns in electoral debates and party programs. Hence, the unit of analysis for this research is Ethiopian political parties.

3.1 Research design

To solve the research problem, this study adopted a qualitative research approach. For the majority of cases, the research adopted a qualitative method of document (electoral debates and party programs) analysis.

Books, articles from newspapers and scholarly journals, institutional reports, and books are examples of such documents. Besides, the term document is used to describe a wide range of content, including visual sources like photos, videos, and films. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Morgan, (2022) stated document analysis, when used to examine previously published texts, enables academics to carry out investigations that they might not otherwise be able to finish.

In fact, there were also cases where document analysis was used to address environmental studies. Carter et al (2017) applied document analysis to study political parties' environmental policy preferences. Their study 'presented an innovative approach to hand-coding parties' policy preferences in the relatively new, cross-sectoral field of climate change mitigation policy. It applies this approach to party manifestos in six countries, comparing the preferences of parties in Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and the United Kingdom over the past two decades.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that deductive researchers work from the top-down, starting with a theory, then hypotheses, and finally facts to support or refute the theory. On the other hand, inductive researchers start at the bottom and work their way up, using the perspectives of the participants to create bigger themes and a theory that connects them. In this research, an inductive research method was applied as it analyses the perspectives of parties regarding environmentalism i.e the theme categories were formed based on the discovery in the data set, which was then used to address the research questions.

3.2 Study of the parties

Currently, there are 53 legally registered parties in Ethiopia. According to NEBE, out of the 53, 20 are country-wide parties. Then again, the 20 country-wide parties also include a front of five political parties as well as a coalition of four parties. The remaining 33 are regional parties. According to their programs, the parties follow liberal and social democratic principles while some take a centrist position by using the amalgam of the two. KGP was found to be the only party to follow the principle of green parties.

3.3 Data Collection

To assess political parties' environmental programs, the party programs in the electoral debates during the 6th General Elections were utilized as a dataset. As stated by Ladrech, (2017) the positions political parties took during election debates and in their election manifestos and party programs provide information about their environmental programs.

Accordingly, after gathering information regarding the number of debates each TV station hosted during the campaign period of the 2021 general election from the NEBE and the TV channels, the selected debates were collected from the respective TV channels' online and other platforms. In addition, the respective party programs were collected from the parties themselves.

Further, to assess the share of environment and green economy in the election debate topics, the major topics of each debate were collected.

Debates as a source are chosen for this research because election campaign debates are useful to assess the agendas that political parties give priority to in their programs. The parties engage in electoral debates using their election manifestos and programs as references. Eder, Jenny, and Müller (2016) distinguished between three functions that a manifesto can serve: provide a party position; establish supremacy over other policy positions of the same party, and thereby streamline the party's campaign; inform voters.

Debates are also organized with the goals of increasing voter knowledge and access to information about policy platforms and promises, promoting policy-based campaigning, (Kramon, 2019, pp. 5).

On the other hand, Zúñiga, N, Jenkins, M. (2018) stated political party programs will be used as a data source since they convey a political party's beliefs and values as well as the concepts, demands, and policies the party favors.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that documents can be used in the same ways that observations and interview data are. This is because these sources reflect peoples' beliefs in a similar way to the information a researcher would gather from observations and interviews. Additionally, compared to other qualitative methods, using pre-existing documents as data presents less of an ethical conundrum.

3.4 Sampling

In general, the main goal of social science research is to identify behavioral patterns within particular populations. But an investigation of entire populations is impossible due to physical and economical constraints. Hence, in order to observe and analyze the population of interest, the researcher must select a representative sample from that population, (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The method of purposive sampling was used to develop the sample of debates for the research. According to Sharma, G. (2017) purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, represents a collection of sampling strategies that rely on the researcher's judgment in choosing the units or data bits to be analyzed. During the 6th General Elections, all

in all, 15 TV stations¹ hosted a total of 75 debates. Using a purposive sampling technique, for the thematic analysis part of this research, the programs of political parties that participated in the 20 sectoral debates hosted by ETV, Ahadu TV, FBC, AMC, Walta TV, and ESAT were utilized. Accordingly, out of the total of 53 legally registered parties by NEBE, the programs of 14² parties that participated in these debates are selected as a sample. In addition, the political programs of three political parties³ that did not take part in the selected debates were also used. All in all, the programs of 17 political parties were used as a sample.

The justification for choosing the debates broadcasted on Ahadu TV, ETV and FBC is presented as follows: For a document analysis, a researcher might employ purposive sampling, according to Flick (2018). It is impossible to predict how many documents a researcher should choose before beginning a study of this kind. This figure is based on the research questions and other elements of the investigation.

Finding the point of redundancy is necessary to determine whether a sample is large enough. At this stage of the investigation, researchers stop gaining new insights after gathering new data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Accordingly, though the EBA encouraged all TV stations to organize debates in an inclusive and participatory manner (hence all debates are considered official), in collaboration with the NEBE and based on the media outlets' proposal, it identified Ahadu TV and Radio, FBC and OBN to organize debates based on their proposal (The Ethiopian Herald, 2021). As the two major national parties mainly based in the Oromia region (OFC and OLF) withdrew from the elections, OBN didn't manage to host many debates. Hence, the party programs used in the debates

¹ Afar TV, Ahadu TV and Radio, AMC, AMN, Asham TV, Arts TV, ESAT, ETV, FBC, Mereja TV, Prime Media, OBN, SRTV, South TV, and Walta TV,

² EthZema, ESDP, NAMA, Prosperity Party, EPRP, Hibir Ethiopia, FEP, Enat Party, AEUP, Amhara Democratic Forces Movement, New Generation Party, Balderas for True Democracy Ethiopian National Unity Party, and Renaissance Party

³ OFC, ONLF, and KGP

organized by Ahadu TV and FBC were selected as data. In addition, debates hosted by ETV were chosen as the TV station is the only national TV with greater social and national responsibility. This makes the three TV stations have greater responsibility in organizing inclusive and participatory debates which accommodate diversity in terms of political parties' participation, debate topics, etc.

Out of all the debates organized by these channels, the debates hosted on sectoral programs that are linked to environmental, green economy, climate, and sustainability issues were selected. Hence, debates held on the topics of economy, agriculture, rural development, food security, industry and investment, land policy, and urban life and infrastructure were selected.

After the thematic analysis of the selected debates, as more themes that deal with the environmental, green economy, climate-related and sustainable development were discovered in the above-mentioned sectoral programs of the parties, debates organized on similar topics by other media outlets were also included to make the data more inclusive in terms of the number of political parties and to find the point of redundancy. Three media outlets i.e AMC, Walta TV, and ESAT are found to be hosting a debate on the economy, agriculture, rural development, food security, industry and investment, land policy, and urban life and infrastructure. In addition, ESAT also hosted the only debate on the topic of population policy. Hence, by including all of these, all in all, a total of 20 debates were selected as data for this research. Accordingly, the programs of 14 political parties that participated in these debates were included in the sample.

The justification for selecting the programs of the three parties that didn't take part in the debates is presented as follows: OFC and ONLF are selected as these parties, together with other parties, withdrew from the election and did not take part in the debate, hence their inclusion in the data makes the study more inclusive, and KGP is selected among regional parties and for declaring itself as a party that follows the ideology of a green party and green principles.

3.5 Methods of analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to debate transcripts and political parties' programs to identify environmental themes that address the research question. In other cases, for instance, to measure the share of environmental issues among the electoral debate topics, the inclusion of environmental concerns in the discussion of sectoral programs, and the frequency of

environmental and green economy themes during the thematic analysis phase, descriptive statistics were utilized.

The thematic analysis helped in identifying phrases, sentences, and concepts in the parties' programs and spoken words that correspond to the concepts of environmentalism and green economy. The debate parts with themes or mentions of environmental concerns and green economy as a major topic or sub-topic were coded and categorized using descriptive codes. This also can apply to sectoral policy debates to address the research questions. Further, the party programs were also coded in the same way to examine and gain an understanding of party positions towards environmental issues. The codes from the debates and programs were categorized into themes based on their similarity to address the research questions.

Though there are several research methodologies used to analyze party programs in terms of a particular policy area, together with discourse analysis and content analysis, thematic analysis is one of the three main approaches utilized so far in other similar research.

Delahunt & Maguire, (P. 3325, 2017) defined thematic analysis as "is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data". As it is a method, rather than a methodology, its advantage is that "unlike many qualitative methodologies, it is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective. This makes it a very flexible method..."

Thematic analysis is an appropriate and powerful method to use when seeking to understand a set of experiences, thoughts, or behaviors across a data set (Braun and Clarke, cited in Kiger and Varpio 2020).

In addition, thematic analysis is chosen because it can be used with a little bit of quantitative analysis on qualitative data. A modest amount of quantitative thinking is introduced by the thematic analysis into a qualitative method, for instance in terms of the frequency and percentage share of the themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSIONS

As discussed in the literature review, political parties play a key role in mainstreaming and spreading environmental, green economy, and climate-related and sustainability messages. One of the platforms for parties to promulgate these issues in the public arena is electoral debates. In addition, as political parties' programs and manifestos receive wider attention during election times, the inclusion of environmental and green economy issues in these documents provides a favorable opportunity to bring forth these topics to the public discourse.

Accordingly, data from political parties' debates during Ethiopia's 6th General Elections are used to address the research questions. In addition, as some political parties did not participate in the debate – either because they withdrew from the elections due to various reasons or were not selected to take part in the debates by the organizers due to the selection criteria – the party programs of selected political parties are analyzed to address the research questions and to make this study more inclusive and reflective of the general picture.

4.1 The inclusion of environmental topics in electoral debates

To assess the inclusion of environmental issues during the 6th General Elections debate topics, the major topics of all the 75 debates broadcasted on 15 television channels are collected. Accordingly, the data shows that environmental issues have not been selected as a major debate topic. The sectoral topics that were frequently entertained in the debates are mainly focused on social issues (health, education, gender, youth, persons with disability), economy and development (unemployment, the role of government in the economy), foreign, national security and diaspora policy, the land policy as well as agriculture, rural development, and food security.

While social issues such as health and education, economic issues such as unemployment, as well as political issues such as land ownership and the federal structure were burning issues among the parties and the public and hence grabbed the attention of the media outlets that organized the debates, the inability of professional associations, non-governmental organizations and civil societies and similar institutions that work on environmental issues to collaborate with

the media in organizing debates led to the absence of environmental topics from the debates. The evidence for this is that besides the burning issues mentioned above, sidelined electoral topics such as gender, youth, persons with disability, culture, tourism, and sports were included in the debate as major topics, and civil sociality organizations that work on these issues played a key role in organizing these debates in collaboration with the media outlets.

4.2 The integration of environmental concerns in sectoral programs of parties

Environmental themes received varied attention in the sectoral debate and program discussions. While several themes that deal with environmental concerns were found in some sectoral discussions, in others, they were absent. The following discussion shows in which sectoral programs political parties discuss environmental themes the most during electoral debates and their programs.

But first, to gain a clearer picture in addressing this research question i.e comparing the frequency of environmental themes in the sectoral debates/programs, it is important to present the frequency of the sectoral topics in the list of debates selected as data for this analysis. The table below shows the frequency of sectoral topics in the 20 debates selected for this analysis.

Table 4.1. Frequency of sectoral topics in the 20 debates selected for this analysis

Topic	Frequency of debates
Economy and the role of government	5
Agriculture, rural development, and good security policy	5
Land policy/ownership and utilization/	3
Urban life and infrastructure	3
Industry and investment	2
Population policy	1
Debate on parties' prioritized agenda	1
Total	20

As can be seen from the table, out of the 20 debate topics selected for this analysis, five were held on the topic of economy and the role of the government, six were held on land policy and urban life and infrastructure (three each), and two debates on the industry. In addition, two debates were included on the topic of population policy and parties' prioritized agenda.

4.2.1 The integration of environmental issues in sectoral programs during debates

The sectoral debate topics in which environmental, green economy, climate, and sustainability issues are discussed are; agriculture, rural development, and food security, land policy, industry and investment, urban life and infrastructure development, economy and the role of government, population policy, as well as parties' priority agendas. Following the coding and categorizing of the debate transcripts and party programs, the environmental themes found were once again categorized into nine overarching themes. The discussion highlights the share of environmental themes in each sectoral discussion during electoral debates

4.2.1.1 Agriculture, rural development, and food security

As can be seen from the table below, out of 260 themes identified in the debates on agriculture, rural development, and food security, a total of 35 environmental, green economy, climate and sustainability themes were identified. These overarching themes are environmental conservation and preservation (19), chemicals and fertilizer compatibility with soil and environment (6), environmental damage and pollution (4), climate change and adaptability (4), green economy (1), and ecology (1).

By merging these six sub-themes into one, the share of environmental themes during the five debates on agriculture, rural development, and food security is calculated and presented in the table below:

Table 4.2 The share of environmental themes during the debate on agriculture, rural development, and food security

Major Sub-themes	Frequency of themes	Percentage share of themes
Agriculture, rural development and food security	108	41.53
Land ownership and utilization policy	34	13.07
Macroeconomy	20	7.69
Environment, green economy, and sustainability	35	13.46
Food security	11	4.23
Politics, governance, and ideology	9	3.46
Indigenous knowledge	8	3.07
Utilization of animal resources	7	2.69
Private sector role and privatization	6	2.30
Natural resources utilization	22	8.41
Total	260	100

As can be seen from the table, 13.4 percent of the themes identified in the sectoral debate have to do with the environmental, green economy, climate change, and sustainability themes.

4.2.1.2 Land policy

Out of 80 themes identified in the debates on the land issue, 12 environmental themes were identified. These are environmental and natural resources conservation (5), environmental damage and pollution (2), chemicals and fertilizer compatibility with the environment (2), ecology (1), green economy (1), and creating green and clean urban centers (1).

By merging these six sub-themes into one, the share of environmental themes during the three debates on land ownership and utilization is calculated and presented in the table below;

Table 4.3 The share of environmental themes during debates on land policy

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Land ownership and utilization and policy	52	65
Environment, green economy, and sustainability	12	15
Agriculture and rural development	6	7.5
Food security	3	3.75
Others	7	8.75
Total	80	100

As can be seen from the table 15% of the themes in the debate on land policy discussed environmental issues.

4.2.1.3 The economy and the role of the government

As can be seen from the table, out of 235 themes identified in the sectoral debate of economy and the role of government, 11 environmental themes were identified which are environmental and natural resources conservation (4), environmental damage and pollution (3), and 1 each for focus on renewable energy, green economy, sustainable development and creating green and clean urban centers. Accordingly, the share of environmental themes during the five debates on the economy and the role of government is calculated and presented in the table below:

Table 4.4 The share of environmental themes during debates on the economy and the role of government

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Macroeconomy	133	56.59
The role of government in the economy	15	6.38
Agriculture and rural development	12	5.10
Politics, governance, and ideology	12	5.10

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Environment, green economy, and sustainability	11	4.68
Private sector role and privatization	11	4.68
Land ownership and utilization and policy	8	3.40
Industry	8	3.40
Natural resources utilization	6	2.55
Food security	19	8.02
Total	235	100

As can be seen from the table, the share of environmental themes in the debate on the economy is around 4.6 %.

4.2.1.4 Industry and investment

Out of 96 themes identified in the industry sector debate, three environmental themes were identified. The three specific themes are regarding environmental and natural resources conservation, creating green and clean urban centers, and environmental damage and pollution, one for each. All in all, the share of environmental themes during the two debates on industry and investment is calculated and presented in the table as follows:

Table 4.5 The share of environmental themes during debates on industry and investment

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Industry and Investment	44	45.83
Macroeconomy	12	12.5
Private sector role and privatization	8	8.33
Politics, governance, and ideology	7	7.29
Wage and Labor	5	5.2

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Ensuring Peace and Security	5	5.2
Energy diversification	4	4.16
Environment, green economy, and sustainability	3	3.12
Others	8	8.32
Total	96	100

Hence, the share of environmental themes during debates on industry and investment is only 3.1 percent.

4.2.1.5 Urban life and infrastructure

Out of 147 themes identified in the sectoral debate on urban life and infrastructure, 10 environmental themes were identified. The 10 specific themes are regarding creating, green and clean urban centers (5), environmental and natural resources conservation/preservation (3), and environmental damage/pollution (2).

By merging these four sub-themes into one, the share of environment, green economy, climate adaptability, and sustainability themes during the three debates on urban life and infrastructure are calculated and presented in the table below:

Table 4.6 The share of environmental themes during debates on urban life and infrastructure

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Urban and infrastructure development	45	30.61
Politics, governance and ideology	25	17
Macro Economy	20	13.6
Housing problem and solution	14	9.52

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage share
Environment, green economy, and sustainability	10	6.8
Energy diversification	9	6.12
Private sector role and privatization	6	4.08
Others	18	12.24
Total	147	100

As the table shows, around 6.8 percent of the themes during the discussion of urban life and infrastructure deal with environmental issues.

4.2.1.6 Population policy

As can be seen from the table, out of 22 themes identified in the single debate on population policy, 5 environmental themes were identified – environmental and natural resources conservation (4) and environmental damage and pollution (1). Accordingly, the share of environmental themes during the only debate on population policy is calculated and presented in the table below:

Table 4.7 The share of environmental themes during debates on population policy

Major sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence	percentage share
Population policy	10	45.45
Environmental, green economy, and sustainability	5	22.72
Politics, governance, and ideology	4	18.18
Others	3	13.62
Total	22	100

As can be seen from the table, the largest percentage of themes for environmental issues were found during the discussion of population policy which stood at 22.7%.

4.2.1.7 Integration of environmental concerns on parties prioritized agenda

On the other hand, during a debate organized by FBC on the parties' prioritized agenda, the parties did not include environmental concerns as major topics.

4.2.1.8 Share of environmental issues in sectoral programs during debates: Summary

The following table summarizes the share of environmental, green economy, climate change and sustainability themes during six sectoral policy debates.

Table 4.8 Summary of share of environmental themes during sectoral debates

Sectoral debate	Number of debates	Number of environmental themes	Percentage share of environmental themes
Economy and the role of government	5	11	4.68
Agriculture, rural development and food security policy	5	35	13.46
Land Policy/ownership and administration	3	12	12
Urban life and infrastructure	3	10	6.80
Industry and investment	2	3	3.12
Population policy	1	5	22.72

As can be seen from the table, the highest number of environmental themes were discovered during the sectoral debate on agriculture, rural development, and food security policy (15) followed by debates on land policy (12) and economy and the role of government (11). On the other hand, only 3 themes were found during the debate on industry and investment. Regarding their percentage share, the highest percentage share was found during the debate on population policy (22.7 %), followed by agriculture, rural development, and food security policy (13.4 %) and land policy (12%). Accordingly, more discussions regarding environmental, green economy, climate-related, and sustainable development issues were held during the sectoral debates on agriculture, rural development and food security, land policy, and population policy.

4.3 Frequently discussed environmental themes in electoral debates

This section discusses and presents which environmental themes, among the nine-overarching environmental sub-themes were discussed frequently during political parties' electoral debates and programs. The themes then will be used to address the qualitative research questions in the next sections. The following table presents the frequently discussed environmental themes during electoral debates.

Table 4.9 Frequently discussed environmental themes during electoral debates

Environmental, green economy, climate adaptability, and sustainability sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence
Environmental and natural resources conservation/preservation	36
Environmental damage and pollution	13
Green and clean urban centers	8
Chemicals and fertilizer compatibility with environment and soil	8
Green economy	4
Climate change and adaptability	4
Ecological issues	2
Focus on renewable energy	1
Sustainable development	1
Total	77

As can be seen from the table, while discussing the environment during electoral debates, political parties tended to discuss more on the issues of environmental and natural resources conservation. This topic is the leading environmental topic during electoral debates. Environmental damage and pollution, green and clean urban centers and the compatibility of chemicals and fertilizer with environment and soil are also the next frequently discussed environmental themes during debates.

4.4 EPI, environmental advocacy, and proposed solutions to environmental problems

In the following sections, to address the remaining research questions, the programs of 17 political parties are utilized as data (14 political parties that participated in the 20 debates selected for this research, and an additional three political parties that did not take part in the debate) based on the nature of the research questions and criteria discussed in Chapter 3. Accordingly, thematic analysis was applied to address the research questions from the data.

4.4.1 EPI during political parties' sectoral policy debates and programs

4.4.1.1 EPI during political parties' sectoral debates

Out of a total of 77 environmental themes identified in the 20 sectoral debates during the 6th General Elections selected for this analysis, some 15 themes are found to be discussing EPI. Accordingly, the selected themes that demonstrate EPI in sectoral policy debates are presented and discussed below.

The integration of environmental concerns was particularly witnessed in the discussion of political parties' alternative policies to the agriculture sector. The parties discussed with emphasis their policies to make sure that the utilization of agricultural inputs to boost productivity does not harm the environment.

The following themes demonstrate how parties integrated environmental concerns in their discussion of agricultural inputs:

During a debate organized by ETV on 28/04/2021 under the title 'Agriculture and Rural Development, AEUP stated:

Our policy takes into consideration the impact on environmental components such as soil in the adoption of fertilizer. We have conducted a study to understand which type of fertilizer is suitable for which type of soil type. Hence, our agricultural input supply policy will be based on this study. This is also the same for best seeds as we have set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure their suitability to the landscape and soil type of a particular area. With this, we make sure that agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and best seeds are compatible with the soil type and the environment.

Similarly, in the same debate, the representatives of the Enat party discussed the need to make sure of the compatibility of agricultural inputs with the environment. The party stated:

To improve land productivity, we give priority to the adoption of fertilizer. However, the problem so far in this regard is that fertilizer has been utilized without research. Fertilizer has been used in different areas without a prior study on the soil type, mineral content, etc. We are planning to change this practice. Before the choice of the type of fertilizer, we have to study the soil type and identify which type of fertilizer is suitable for a particular type of soil.

Further, concerning the utilization of best seeds as agricultural input, Enat Party stated: *Best seed adoption should be introduced based on the study of the agroecology of the area rather than adopting any best seed from abroad.*

The party further underlined in the debate: *The application of pesticides has to also be compatible with the ecology of the area. It should by no means affect negatively the ecology of the area and the living things in it. It should not affect biodiversity and animals. We will come up with research-based solutions for the issue.*

In a response to the criticism of the policy of agricultural input and the claim that the ruling party had not taken precautionary measures to protect the environment, the representative of the Prosperity Party noted:

Regarding input and fertilizer, we have conducted a study to identify which region needs what specific type of fertilizer. This is not only done at the regional level but also for each type of landscape and soil type. Dap and Urea are a thing of the past. Currently, we import five types of fertilizers such as NPSP, Zinc and their application is based on research as we have options to pick fertilizers based on the specific environment.

The above themes show that political parties integrate environmental concerns in their approaches to choosing fertilizer, best seed, and pesticide types to boost agricultural productivity. As the themes imply, while the parties believe applying agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and best seeds is the way forward to boost agricultural productivity, it is also salient to

consider the negative impact on the environment and its sustainability. Hence, they proposed that their respective policies require the research-based application of agricultural inputs.

In addition, the issue of climate change was also discussed in light of the agriculture sector. On the same debate on ETV, Enat Party stated:

Ethiopia's agriculture remains rainfed. Hence, water has a central role in altering the course of Ethiopia's agriculture sector. As agriculture is interlinked with rain, we will work to avert climate change. The attention given to activities that aim to reduce the impact of climate change will receive equal emphasis with other activities in the sector. Otherwise, with the current trend of climate change and water shortage, the country's agriculture sector would be at risk.

Hence, the parties emphasized that as Ethiopia's agriculture sector is rainfed, due emphasis needs to be given to activities that avert climate change. The discussion shows that the issue of climate change needs to receive due attention if Ethiopia's agriculture sector remains sustainable. The above themes regarding agricultural inputs and the impacts of climate change show that these parties somehow integrated environmental concerns when they try to address the issues of the agriculture sector.

On the other hand, the debates on the issue of land were the other platforms where the parties integrated and discussed environmental concerns. In its discussion of Land Policy during Ahadu TV and Radio's debate on 24/04/21, Prosperity Party discussed how its policy of providing landholding certificates to farmers to address the question of land ownership will also serve environmental conservation activities. The Party stated:

We have introduced a landholding certificate to address the question of farmers' land ownership. To facilitate this, our experts have come up with a system of landholding right database. This, besides the main purpose of supporting land administration, will be used to govern natural resources conservation, for instance by identifying degraded areas in the database.

Agriculture and land ownership are not the only debate topics in which parties discussed environmental concerns. During the debate on population policy on ESAT, the parties discussed

environmental issues in light of population policy. Though only one debate was organized on population policy, the share of environmental themes in the debate was among the highest in sectoral debates (22.7 percent of the themes discussed environmental concerns.)

Accordingly, the moderator of the debate asked EthZema Party whether it prepared a separate environmental policy as the representative discussed the environment as a sub-topic of population policy during the debate, organized and broadcasted by ESAT on 13/06/21. The party representative responded:

At a policy level, we have mentioned these issues [environmental issues] to a certain level. We have around 42 policy documents and one of these policy documents is environmental protection or environmental policy. Currently, we have around 117 million population, and around 80 percent live in rural areas. This huge number of rural populations has its own environmental impact. For instance, the rising demand for livelihood options is causing damage to biodiversity and forest resources. In addition, over-farming is the outcome of rapid population growth. Hence, this kind of issue is addressed in our environmental policy.

As the party indicated, the rapid population growth in Ethiopia is one of the major factors that are exacerbating environmental problems, hence the need to come up with a better population policy to minimize environmental risks. This could be taken as an instance of the integration of environmental concerns in the discussion of population policy.

Industry development is another sector where there is a need to integrate environmental concerns as industries are the major sources of environmental pollution. Though fewer themes were found regarding the integration of environmental concerns in the sector during the debates, few parties integrated environmental concerns in their approach to the industry sector. The following themes are instances of EPI in their industrial policy.

During the discussion of the mining sector as a sub-sector of the industry sector, the ruling party discussed its position regarding the environment. During ETV's debate regarding Industry and Investment on 11/05/21, a Prosperity Party representative said: *The party's stance on mining development is that the activity should not cause health problems and bring about any negative*

impact on the environment. It is our policy that all mining activities should take precautionary preventive measures to avoid health and environmental damage.

Similarly, during Walta TV's debate under the topic title 'Industrial Development and Governance', on 19/05/21 a representative of the New Generation Party said: *When building industrial cities or urban centers, we also set strategies to make them clean, green, and conducive for living. We also make sure that the expansion of industries does not cause environmental problems such as air pollution.*

Though the themes lack depth into how this objective could be achieved, it shows how the parties take into consideration environmental concerns in industrializing the country. urban centers.

Generally, the above themes show that parties integrated environmental issues in their discussion of agriculture, land, population, urbanization, and industry policy discussions.

4.4.1.2 EPI in political parties' programs

In the three political parties' programs analyzed, several themes have been identified that deal with the integration of environmental, green economy, climate and sustainability issues in sectoral program discussion.

One of the interesting findings of this research is KGP, which, as the first and only green party in Ethiopia, is found to be exercising EPI in most of its sectoral programs.

As the party calls itself 'green' which gives due emphasis to the protection of the environment, several of its sectoral programs are integrated to achieve environmental objectives. The following themes are extracts from KGP's program to demonstrate the integration of environmental concerns in sectoral programs.

Regarding agriculture and the environment, the party's program (p.11) states: *KGP aspires to implement agriculture and animal husbandry development activities to ensure that the government and forest resources are not wasted and harmed, the environment is enriched and the rural people benefit from education, health, and infrastructure.*

It further states (p. 11): *The effort to ensure the development of agriculture and animal resources should look beyond market orientation and economic returns. Rather, it should first and foremost be based on the ecology of the area to avoid damage to ecological resources.*

There are also other discussions in the party's program that emphasize the integration of environmental concerns in the agriculture sector. This shows that the party's agriculture programs properly integrated environmental concerns.

Similarly, while discussing urban development, the party (p. 14) states:

The party will ensure participatory and inclusive urban infrastructure development in an integrated and sustainable manner. The urban development should not be subject to environmental pollution and should be accessible to all, and offered to the poor community reasonable price.

The party also gives due emphasis to the integration of environmental concerns while implementing industrial policy. The program (p.14) states: *KGP adopts an industrial policy that is integrated with the agriculture sector and natural resources to avoid any harm to the natural environment due to the activities of industries.*

Generally, as a green party that follows the principle of green development, KGP, integrated environmental concerns in most of its sectoral policy discussions.

4.4.2 Environmental advocacy in parties' programs during electoral debates and in political parties' programs

To address the question of advocacy in terms of environmentalism, green economy as well as climate and sustainability issues, a thematic analysis of the political parties' debates and party programs is conducted to identify party positions that advocate for the above-mentioned topics. Accordingly, a large number of themes that advocate environmentalism were identified during political parties' debates and in their programs.

4.4.2.1 The practice of environmental advocacy during political parties' electoral debates

Despite the low level of attention given to the environmental, green economy, climate, and sustainability issues during electoral debates and campaigns as well as in the party programs and

manifestos in Ethiopia, this research managed to discover themes that show the practice of some sort of environmental advocacy in the parties' electoral debates and party programs. During the 20 debates selected for this analysis, some 32 themes are found that either advocate for or demonstrate or call for awareness regarding environmentalism, green economy, climate adaptability, and sustainable development. The following themes demonstrate environmental advocacy and awareness.

During the debates, the parties discussed their concerns regarding the impact of current growth and the future state of the environment and advocated for policies that considered the future state of the environment. During Ahadu TV and Radio's debate under the title 'Economy' on 06/05/21, EthZema stated that:

When we think of rapid and sustainable development, it is salient to think of synergy between sectors to prevent future damage to the environment due to economic growth. We have to be responsible in choosing our growth path because, despite the current economic woes, the path we choose to achieve growth will have severe effects on the environment. The current economic woes further perpetuate vulnerability of the society.

The parties also expressed their concern regarding the attitude of investors towards the environment and the need to have responsible investors in the environment. The ESDP during a debate organized by FBC on 22/04/21 under the title 'Agriculture, Rural Development and Food Security' stated:

We don't have patriotic and responsible investors. So, our concern is that these investors will be granted land via contract and lease and they might damage the natural resources of the area. For instance, they might destroy the forest to produce timber and abandon the area and their project claiming they incurred a loss. Hence, we have to set up regulatory mechanisms and encourage patriotic and responsible investors that reinvest in the country and protect the environment.

Further, FEP during a debate on FBC on 12/05/21 under the title 'Economic Development and the Role of Government' emphasized the importance of environmental protection and green

development. The representative stated: *The party does not only care about the economy but also gives due emphasis to the environment and hence aspires to integrate economic growth with environmental protection and build a green economy.*

The protection, conservation, and preservation of environmental resources were also topics for which the parties' demonstrated advocacy in their debates. EthZema during a debate broadcasted on Ahadu TV and Radio on 06/05/21 under the title 'Economy', stated:

Ethzema's principle of sustainable development has three pillars; Fast and sustainable economic growth that changes the man-driven growth to supply aggregate growth; all members of society must benefit from the growth and development; and this growth/development must use environmental and natural resources in a very responsible and sustainable manner.

The above themes show how parties advocate for the future state of the environment in light of the goal to achieve growth at present.

Other parties also advocated for the application of green principles in undertaking urban development. The Prosperity Party on the debate held on 25/04/21 on Ahadu TV under the title 'Land Policy' stated:

Prosperity Party believes that urbanization is a concept that is closely linked with green development. Due to this reason, we believe that urbanization has to be administered in an organized and coordinated manner with the view to achieving the objectives of green development.

Regarding the preservation of the environment, the ruling party discussed its 'green legacy' campaign and the impact it brought about. Prosperity Party during Ahadu Radio and TV's debate under the title 'Agriculture Policy' on 05/05/21 stated:

The green legacy campaign is part of the natural resources conservation endeavor to restore the country's forests. In the last two years, we have started the green legacy with the participation of all Ethiopians and we will strengthen this. With this, we will strive to realize sustainable and resilient green development.

The party also discussed how it sees this initiative to go beyond the national level. During ETV's debate under the title 'Agriculture and Rural Development' on 28/04/21, Prosperity Party stated:

Regarding the protection of natural resource activities, one of the major components is the green legacy campaign which gathered Ethiopians for the same cause. This practice also takes neighboring countries into consideration and the party plans to undertake the campaign at the regional level. We will strengthen the implementation of the campaign to meet the desired goal.

This can be considered environmental advocacy work that goes beyond the country's territory, initiating environmental conservation work at the regional level.

Further, the parties also gave due emphasis to the protection of water bodies and wetlands.

During the above-mentioned debate, the representative of the Prosperity Party stated:

We have also given due emphasis to the protection of water bodies such as lakes and rivers as part of environmental protection endeavors. The effort we exerted to prevent the expansion of water hyacinth on Lake Tana has been successful and we have gained a valuable lesson in the process to be replicated the practice in other lakes with a similar problem. We have cleared 85 percent of hyacinth from the lake.

The political parties also discussed the issue of wetlands, river basins, and climate change as alarming environmental issues.

During a debate organized by AMC on 21/05/21 under the title 'Land Administration and Utilization Policy', Enat party stated:

The current land policy has significantly reduced the attention given to the ecosystem. Particularly, wetlands have been granted to various economic activities for instance as construction and commercial farm sites. They have been granted development activities without conducting a study on their sustainability. Since the country's ecosystem protection is not wetland centered, this has become one of the factors in reducing the national capacity to withstand climate change.

Hence, the party prioritizes the protection of wetlands. We will encourage the planting of indigenous trees than foreign ones.

NAMA on the abovementioned debate stated: *The current policy has resulted in severe degradation of basins. We can go and see the Tekeze and Nile/Abay basins in this regard. These areas have been severely degraded due to the poor land policy.*

As water bodies, basins and wetlands are central to environmental protection activities, the above themes demonstrated the parties' position towards these environmental components.

Climate issues were the other environmental topics on which the parties took positions

During the FBC debate under the title 'Agriculture, Rural Development and Food Security' on 22/04/21, EthZema stated: *Our natural resource base has been damaged because of various reasons particularly due to the impact of climate change. This is because we haven't conducted adequate work to adapt to or resist the impacts of climate change. This is one of the key policy topics in our party.*

Hence, the parties underscored the importance of wetlands and river basins in Ethiopia's environmental discourse and in the effort to withstand the impacts of climate change as wetlands play a key role to maintain the balance of the natural environment.

The other environmental theme that the parties advocated for during the debates was rising environmental pollution. Enat Party, during ETV's debate on 04/05/21, states: *Pollution is another challenge that the country's urban areas face. Air pollution is easy to witness everywhere. There is also growing sound pollution. The solid and liquid waste management problem is also severe. We will focus on eradicating these problems.*

On the other hand, the parties also discussed the need for raising awareness about environmental concerns starting from the grassroots level to address the challenge sustainably. EPRP, which claims to follow the principle of social democracy during ESAT's debate on 13/06/21 under the title Population Policy stated:

Governments with the principle of social democracy give due emphasis to population growth and hence aspire to realize balanced population growth. This work should start from primary education where we teach our youth how to take

care of nature and their surrounding environment. This would help us directly or indirectly to control population growth.

During Ahadu's debate under the title 'Economic Policy' on 30/05/21, Prosperity Party discussed the importance of integrating environmental projects in the utilization of foreign loans. The party underlined the party's practice of using loans and aids to advance environmental causes besides other goals. It stated: *Our loan projects, for instance, the Sheger Riverside and square projects are grand aid projects which have a huge impact on environmental protection besides their impact on employment, health, and poverty reduction.*

The above themes demonstrate that the parties either advocated for or call for more awareness regarding the protection of the environment, climate change, balanced population growth to minimize the negative impact on the environment, and the need to utilize foreign loans and aids to pursue environmental objectives.

4.4.2.2 The practice of environmental advocacy in political parties' programs

The parties also exercised environmental advocacy in their party programs. Particularly, they discussed their advocacy for a green economy and environmental protection. The following themes demonstrate this fact.

The OFC discusses its advocacy and concern for the environment based on the principle of the constitution. The program states: *The Ethiopian constitution stipulates the right of every person to live in a healthy environment. In practice, the EPRDF government has allowed mining companies to pollute the natural environment, denude the forests and deplete the minerals of the earth only to benefit a select few.*

The party further states that it supports development activities based on their impact on the environment. The program states: *OFC recognizes that the people have a basic right to development and it will promote development that reconciles environmental protection with economic growth as well as social and human progress.*

Under the sub-title 'Protecting Land and Natural Resources' OFC's program discuss the issues of natural resources as a collective/common resource.

The ONLF also discusses the issue of the environment in its party program by aligning it with its overall political objective. The program (p.7) states:

Noting the disastrous environmental impact of colonial policies in our country, specifically the steady degradation of our wildlife and water resources, and recognizing that the colonizer implements policies in Ogaden without regard to environmental impact, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) affirms that we shall confront all initiatives, which negatively impact our environment as a matter national duty to protect our environment for future generations.

As a green party, the research managed to find a large number of themes in KGP's program that advocate environmentalism, and the themes are presented below as follows:

As in the case of OFC, KGP starts its advocacy for environmental protection based on the constitution. The program (p.2) states: *KGP first and foremost assesses why the Kaffa people's economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights which are guaranteed in the federal and regional constitutions are not respected.*

Accordingly, it discusses the major reason for the formation of the party which is to advocate for environmentalism and green development principles and preserve Kaffa people's strong bond with the natural environment. The program (p. 2-3) states:

Kaffa is not only people who have preserved their identity and deep history, but they are also the possessor of potential natural resources. Our Party is named 'Kaffa Green Party' as Kaffa has given the world green gold, and coffee; is the home to diverse animals and plants due to the presence of dense forests which the people of Kaffa have preserved using their traditional knowledge, and also for being the source/home for Gojeb and other rivers that flow throughout the year and the waterfalls they created and the beautiful and evergreen natural landscape and resources.

KGP's program also clearly stipulates the party's advocacy for green development. The program on (p.4) states:

KGP is a party that promotes inclusive democracy and green development. It mainly focuses on green environment and development. Therefore, it will implement measures, policies, and strategies to protect and preserve Kafa's natural resources, i.e. the country's precious forest resources, its wild animals, the cleanliness of the soil, water, and air, and in general, the natural beauty and health of the environment from pollution, and state-of-the-art sustainable management systems can be customized to ensure environmental and natural resources protection to ensure the human right of people to live in a clean environment. In addition to taking care of the natural forest resources, it pays attention to the process of maintaining the local ecosystem sustainably by actively implementing a regeneration strategy.

Further one area of advocacy for the environment is to raise awareness of and mobilize the public to effectively protect the environment. This is particularly true for a green party. In a country where most political parties prioritize political and economic subjects, green parties play a key role in raising environmental awareness. In this regard, KGP (p.40) of its program states: *We will increase the participation of the public by providing continuous education and increasing awareness about the importance and protection of natural resources and environmental security.*

One of the distinguishing features of KGP from other parties is its stance on democracy. While most of Ethiopia's political parties are proponents of either social democracy or liberal democracy or a mixture of the two, KDP's position is based on inclusive and ecological democracy.

In this regard, KGP states on (p.4) of its program:

Since natural resources are the basis of the economy, the KGP believes that these natural resources should be managed in an integrated strategy with forest resources. Therefore, the party will advocate for the government to come up with appropriate policies and strategies by following political, economic, and ecological democracy, which are the basis of inclusive democracy.

On (p.160) the party program states: *As ensuring ecological democracy that is compatible with our environment is a part of our social program, the party prevents and opposes any idea or activity that harms the natural resources and ecosystem which is a sense of expression for our society.*

Hence, the existence of KGP as a party in the Ethiopian political landscape is encouraging as it will bring about a paradigm shift in the thinking of environmentalism by introducing the concept of ecological democracy.

4.4.3 Political parties' alternative solutions to environmental problems

4.4.3.1 Parties' alternative solutions to environmental problems during electoral debates

Parties proposed solutions to Ethiopia's environmental problems can be taken from their discussion on the integration of environmental concerns in their sectoral discussions as some of the themes discussed in the section are proposed solutions. For instance, some parties' proposed solutions to environmental pollution due to agricultural activities have an EPI element. Yet, some 16 themes are also found that directly address the environmental problems of the country.

During ETV's debate on 28/04/21, under the title 'Agriculture and Rural Development' AEUP stated:

Regarding the problem of environmental pollution due to agricultural inputs, AEUP will work by prioritizing ecological and environmental protection activities. This will be done by taking into consideration the impacts of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides, and the like on the ecology. Thus, our method takes ecology and the environment into consideration.

This theme is similar to the discussion of EPI.

For the same issue, Enat Party proposed a solution to the problem which is establishing a fertilizer factory that produces fertilizer compatible with the environment. During a debate on AMC on 21/05/01 under the title 'Land Administration and Utilization Policy', the party stated: *We will make sure that a fertilizer factory that produces agricultural inputs to enable farmers to adopt fertilizer that is compatible with the environmental context is established in Ethiopia to minimize environmental harm.*

Concerning the issue of urban pollution, Prosperity Party during ETV's debate under the title 'Urban Life and Infrastructure' on 04/05/21 stated: *The riverside project in the city will protect rivers from pollution. It also provides aesthetic and health values. In addition to the impact of the changing environment, these projects will change the image of the country and create jobs.*

Noting that industries have become the major sources of pollution, EPRP during ETV's debate on 11/05/11 under the title 'Industry Development and Investment' proposed a solution stating: *Industries need to be fairly distributed in a manner that prevents environmental pollution, and fair distribution of income that ensures material development.*

Similarly, ESDP, during ETV's debate on 22/04/21 under the title 'Agriculture, Rural Development and Food security' stated: *Foreign investors who engage for instance in flower production and the like are accused of environmental pollution. Thus, when we lure foreign investment, we focus on sectors that facilitate technology transfer and avoid sectors that damage the environment.*

Further, Enat Party, during FBC's debate on 06/05/21 under the title 'Infrastructure installment and urban development' stated: *To control environmental pollution, we prioritize the recycling of used materials. Further, we will set up an effective system to recycle solid and liquid waste to reduce pollution in urban centers.*

As can be seen above the majority of the proposed solution target the reduction and minimization of environmental pollution in one way or another. However, the parties also proposed solutions to other environmental problems.

Regarding the rising wood consumption and its impact on the environment, AEUP, during ETV's debate on 04/05/21 under the title 'Urban Life and Infrastructure' stated: *Concerning energy development, we will develop a national energy master plan to immediately resolve the issues of huge wood consumption for energy. We will focus on a huge tree plantation campaign and renewable and small electricity generation projects both in urban and rural areas.*

Then again, the parties see adaption as a solution to the impacts of environmental degradation. EthZema during FBC's debate under the title 'Agriculture, rural development and food security' on 22/04/21 stated: *The protection of agriculture's natural resource base is another area that the*

party focuses. Particularly to withstand the impact of environmental degradation, we focus on adaptation to reduce the current vulnerability.

Concerning the rising problem of soil acidity, Prosperity Party during FBC's debate on Agriculture, rural development, and food security on 22/04/21 stated: *We make sure that regions receive an equal distribution of growth and agricultural support. For instance, we have managed to treat and develop acidic soils in Amhara, Oromia, and Sidama regions equally via tea and coffee cluster development and gained encouraging results.*

The parties also proposed that private ownership of land is the best alternative to create a sense of ownership among farmers to engage in the conservation of natural resources.

AEUP, during Watla's debate on 05/05/21 under the title 'Rural development and food security', stated: *We believe that the basic necessity to ensure food security is that private land ownership has to be ensured to the farmers. It is only when the farmers feel a sense of ownership and productivity and engage in an effective soil conservation activity.*

Regarding the problem of declining forest coverage, the parties presented their proposed solution. For instance, Enat party called for an expert-led afforestation program that tree plantation campaigns with a bid to ensure food security.

Enat Party, during ETV's debate on 28/04/21 under the title 'Agriculture and Rural Development' stated:

Deforestation is also a challenge to ensure food security because of its impact on the ecology. We don't think the green legacy campaign is solving the problem of deforestation – it might have a long-run impact but our concern is that most of the trees planted are not indigenous. In addition, the seedlings would not grow to become trees and resolve the problem. The forest coverage is weak in Ethiopia in recent times, so what resources do pastoralists and farmers use to change the country? Hence, we focus on afforestation as a solution by participating experts in the sector.

Further, NAMA during AMC's debate on 21/05/21 under the title: 'Land administration and utilization policy' stated:

We give due attention to environmental protection. The current policy loopholes forced society not to live in harmony with nature and the environment. One of the showcases is the land degradation witnessed in different areas. We will identify agricultural land and areas to be covered with forests. Particularly, the reforestation activity gives due emphasis to restoring degraded land. In addition, we will make sure that the safety of lakes and rivers is ensured. Lakes and rivers are being polluted. This is particularly true for rivers in urban areas. For instance, the invasion of Tana Lake by water hyacinth is directly related to the current land policy where traditional practices dominate.

On the other hand, Hibir party emphasized the need for environmental impact assessment before the implementation of any development projects to ensure the safety of the environment.

During FBC's debate on 22/04/21 under the title Agriculture, rural development and food security' Hibir party stated;

Private investment and proposals have to make sure that the investment benefits the locals. The party accepts private investment project proposals after assessing their impact on the environment and natural resources, (making sure that it) meets socio-economic requirements, it included environmental impact analysis and ensures the benefit of the society. Hence, as long as the public is benefited and the environment is protected, we allow private investment. We make sure that the environment is protected via environmental impact analysis.

Hence, the party advocated for the strict implementation of environmental impact assessment and the consideration of environmental concerns at present and in the future in undertaking development activities.

During the debate, organized and broadcasted by ESAT on 13/06/21, EthZema discussed environmental issues in light of its population policy. The party stated:

Concerning the population policy, we have tried to address the issue of the environment to a certain extent. Ethiopia's problem is not only about a large number of populations. The average age of the country's population is 19.5. The

very young will soon join the job market. In our context, there is a huge possibility for children after 15 to join the job market. This by itself has an impact on the environment. Every year, around three million youth join the job market. As most of them would go into agriculture, it would have an impact on the environment. Hence, besides our plan to reduce child and maternal mortality, we aspire to reduce the fertility rate. We believe that religious and cultural factor has a huge role. Because when we come to urban areas, the major cause of population growth is rural-urban migration but in rural, it is the high birth rate. We will work on bringing attitudinal change in this regard. We have to improve access to family planning in rural areas. Family planning brought a change in urban areas in the last 20 years. We will bring the lesson to rural areas. We also believe that it's not only about awareness but the service has not been there.

The above themes demonstrate that the parties took a strong stance on environmental pollution due to development activities. They also included proposed solutions to the declining forest coverage which include afforestation and alternative energy development. Strict implementation of environmental impact assessment is also another solution the parties proposed to control environmental damage due to development activities. Some of the parties also stressed that the degradation of the environment due to the rapid population growth and over-farming of land is one of the major components of their population policy. Their programs aim to reduce the damage to the rural environment by controlling the birth rate.

4.4.3.2 Parties' alternative solutions to environmental problems in party programs

The political parties also discussed environmental problems and proposed solutions in their party programs. One of the solutions that the parties proposed in their program to address the country's environmental problems is to increase the participation of the public and establish strong institutions to enforce regulatory mechanisms.

The parties included the need for environmental and social impact studies to ensure any development activity is free from having negative environmental and social impacts.

In addressing the problem of deforestation and desertification, KGP sees the preservation of the Kaffa Zones forest areas, which it calls one of the few unaffected forests in the country, as a solution. The program on (p.11) states:

One of the characteristics of the Kafa zone that distinguishes it from other parts of Ethiopia is that it contains most of the few remaining forest resources in our country. Keeping this situation in mind, any development work done in the area will be done after a study has confirmed the extent of damage it may cause to the area and the forest resources. Our party will work hard to focus on strengthening modern honey production, spices, plant cultivation, eco-tourism, and coffee cultivation associations, and to conduct vocational education and capacity building for the people in this area to advocate for development that goes hand-in-hand with forests, especially as the local forest has suffered from the danger it is currently facing.

Concerning the participation of the public in the protection of the environment, the program on (p.16), states:

Research will be conducted to enable to strengthen and continue the practice of caring for the environment that has lasted for centuries among the community, implement a community-led initiative to raise the environmental awareness of various sections of the society, and prevent the current damage of natural resources that is caused in the name of development and investment.

4.5 Discussion of key findings

While political parties' environmental programs are major topics of discussion during electoral debates in the global North (Leinaweaver, and Thomson (2015), in the Ethiopian case, the finding shows that environmental issues have not been selected as major debate topics. Out of the 75 debates organized during the 6th General Elections, none dealt with the environment as a major topic.

But this does not mean that the political parties didn't include issues of environment, green economy, climate, and sustainable development during their electoral debates and in their

programs. Rather, they discussed these issues by integrating them with other major sectoral topics and sub-topics. Particularly, KGP, a regional green party based in Kaffa zone of the newly formed South West Ethiopia People's region integrated and discussed environmental issues in detail under its sectoral programs.

The highest number of environmental themes (15) was discovered during the sectoral debate on agriculture, rural development, and food security policy followed by debates on land policy (12) as well as economy and the role of government (11). On the other hand, only 3 themes were found during the debate on industry and investment. Regarding their percentage share, the highest percentage share was found during the debate on population policy (22.7 %), followed by agriculture, rural development, and food security policy (13.4 %) and land policy (12%). Accordingly, more discussions regarding environmental issues were held during the sectoral debates on agriculture, rural development and food security, land policy, and population policy.

On the other hand, environmental themes were discovered during the discussion of democracy (inclusive and ecological democracy) as KGP, which happens to be a green party included environmental concerns in most of its sectoral programs of which democracy is one.

While discussing the environment during electoral debates, political parties tended to discuss more on the issues of environmental and natural resources conservation. This topic is the leading environmental topic during electoral debates. Environmental damage and pollution, green and clean urban centers, and the compatibility of chemicals and fertilizer with the environment and soil are also the next frequently discussed environmental themes during debates.

The emphasis given to environmental protection and conservation was in line with Bergius and Buseth's (2019) claim that in the global south, green economy implementation is often interpreted as environmental protection along with modernization. Hence, the green economy discourse in the global south is characterized by its view that while environmental resources are under threat, they are also abundant and underutilized with the potential to stir green growth with proper implementation of environmental protection activities.

On the other hand, the parties did not include other green economy dimensions, for instance, the assumptions of environmental political theory, which stated that environmental change has

revealed a "sustainability imperative" in light of which other fundamental principles need to be reexamined (Vanderheiden, 2020)

Based on van Oosten et al's definition, Ethiopian political parties somehow exercised EPI in their sectoral programs. Out of a total of 77 environmental themes identified in the 20 sectoral debates during the 6th General Elections selected for this analysis, some 15 themes are found to be discussing EPI in sectoral programs.

The integration of environmental concerns was particularly witnessed in the discussion of political parties' alternative policies to the agriculture sector. The parties discussed with emphasis their policies to make sure that the utilization of agricultural inputs to boost productivity does not harm the environment.

The themes showed that political parties integrated environmental concerns into their approaches to choosing fertilizer, best seed, and pesticide types to boost agricultural productivity. As the themes imply, while the parties believe applying agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and best seeds is the way forward to boost productivity, it is also salient to consider the negative impact on the environment and its sustainability. Hence, they proposed that their respective policies require the research-based application of agricultural inputs.

The parties also stressed rapid population growth in Ethiopia is one of the major factors that are exacerbating environmental problems, hence the need to come up with a better population policy to minimize environmental risks. This could be taken as an instance of the integration of environmental concerns in the discussion of population policy. This is compatible with Buseth, (2019) assertion that the 'problem narrative' of green economy ideas in the global south includes degradation, scarcity, and overpopulation. On the other hand, the 'solution narrative' focused on modernizing natural resource management and utilization.

Generally, the themes show that parties integrated environmental issues in their discussion of agriculture, land, population, urbanization, and industry policy discussions.

The themes asserted that the parties integrated environmental concerns in their discussion of sectoral policies for industry, transport, agriculture, and urban development. Besides these, this research also managed to discover themes in the parties' programs that deal with building a

green economy by integrating economic growth with environmental protection activities and the need for integrating ecological concerns in undertaking development activities.

One of the interesting findings of this research is KGP, which, as the first and only green party in Ethiopia, is found to be integrating environmental concerns in most of its sectoral programs.

As the party calls itself 'green' which gives due emphasis to the protection of the environment, several of its sectoral programs somehow took EPI into consideration to achieve environmental objectives. This is also in line with Pollex and Berker (2022), who stated that green parties, coherently show a holistic problem perception. Generally, as a green party that follows the principle of green development, KGP, integrated environmental concerns in most of its sectoral policy discussions.

Despite the low level of attention given to environmental issues during electoral debates and campaigns as well as in the party programs and manifestos in Ethiopia, the research managed to discover themes that show the practice of some sort of environmental advocacy and awareness in the parties' electoral debates and party programs. During the 20 debates selected for this analysis in which 14 parties participated, some 32 themes are found that either advocate for or demonstrate or call for awareness regarding environmentalism, green economy, climate adaptability, and sustainable development.

The themes demonstrate that the parties either advocated for or call for more awareness regarding the protection of the environment, climate change, balanced population growth to minimize the negative impact on the environment, and the need to utilize foreign loans and aids to pursue environmental objectives.

The parties also practiced environmental advocacy and demonstrated awareness about environmental concerns in their party programs. Particularly, they discussed their advocacy for a green economy and environmental protection in their party programs.

The parties also discussed the issue of low environmental awareness in developing countries like Ethiopia as a precursor to environmental problems. As stated by Azad (2018), the fundamental causes of environmental problems are people's attitudes toward the environment, which can only

be changed via education. Education helps people make moral choices that support the resolution of environmental issues.

As a green party, the research managed to find a large number of themes in KGP's program that advocate environmentalism. Further, one area of advocacy for the environment is to raise awareness of and mobilize the public to effectively protect the environment. This is particularly true for a green party. In a country where most political parties prioritize political and economic subjects, green parties play a key role in raising environmental awareness.

One of the distinguishing features of KGP from other parties is its stance on democracy. While most of Ethiopia's political parties are proponents of either social democracy or liberal democracy or a mixture of the two, KDP's position is based on inclusive and ecological democracy which according to Bäckstrand, Pickering, and Schlosberg (2020) 'seek to reconcile two normative ideals: ensuring environmental sustainability while safeguarding democracy.'

Several themes were also found that directly address the environmental problems of the country. The themes demonstrate that the parties took a strong stance on environmental pollution due to development activities. They also included proposed solutions to the declining forest coverage which include afforestation and alternative energy development. Strict implementation of environmental impact assessment is also another solution the parties proposed to control environmental damage due to development activities. Some of the parties also stressed that the degradation of the environment due to the rapid population growth and over-farming of land is one of the major components of their population policy. Their programs aim to reduce the damage to the rural environment by controlling the birth rate.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The first point raised in this research was the inclusion of environmental topics in Ethiopia's political parties' programs during electoral debates. As stated in the literature part, debates influence the subsequent behaviors of elected political parties, and political parties' stances on environmental issues can be studied using their electoral debates and party programs. However, in the Ethiopian case, the findings show that environmental issues were not included as major debate topics during the 6th General Elections.

The second point was regarding the integration of environmental concerns in sectoral policy discussions and the frequently discussed environmental themes. As stated in the literature review, EPI is 'the incorporation of environmental concerns into sectoral policies to reduce policy incoherence and achieve synergies to more effectively address environmental problems such as environmental degradation.' Accordingly, the findings demonstrated that parties integrated environmental concerns in their policy discussions regarding agriculture, land, population, urbanization, transport, and industry. Further, environmental and natural resources conservation, pollution, and the impact of rapid population growth on the environment are frequently discussed environmental themes in debates and party programs. This is compatible with what was discussed in the literature review that the predominant narratives in the discussion of the green economy in the Global South are: a neo-Malthusian 'problem narrative' of resource degradation, scarcity, and overpopulation in poor countries, and a 'solution narrative' saying that 'we can overcome the crises by modernizing natural resource management and utilization'.

The third point was regarding the practice of environmental advocacy among Ethiopian political parties. The analysis showed that the parties advocated for the protection of the environment, climate change, and balanced population growth to minimize the negative impact on the environment. Further, as a green party, the research managed to find a large number of themes in KGP's program that advocate environmentalism and a green economy.

Regarding the proposed solution to the country's environmental problems, which is the fourth point of the research, the parties proposed solutions to environmental problems such as environmental degradation, pollution, and rapid population growth. Some of the proposed solutions are tree plantation campaigns, afforestation, alternative energy development, strict implementation of environmental impact assessment, and reduction of birth rate. The above findings open the door for further research on the topic.

5.2. Recommendations

- Considering the current state of the country's environmental degradation, TV channels and other stakeholders that organize debates should include environmental issues as major electoral debates. This is because, as debates gather more attention to policy issues than at any other time, they provide an opportunity to raise environmental awareness.
- Professional associations, non-governmental organizations and civil societies, and similar institutions that work on environmental issues need to play an active role in organizing debates on environmental topics
- Decision-makers at all levels need to alter their attitude of seeing environmental issues as secondary or sidelined topics in the public discourse
- Stakeholders need to engage more in environmental advocacy work to raise awareness
- As Ethiopia is regarded as a pioneer state, not least in terms of environmentally sustainable development in Africa, more work is needed to have a similar impact on the public's environmental awareness. And for this to happen, political parties should play a key role.
- Political parties, policymakers, and stakeholders have to make sure that environmental concerns are mainstreamed and integrated into sectoral policy discourse
- As Ethiopia's social and economic existence is highly dependent on the environment and its resources, political parties need to include environmental, green economy, climate-related, and sustainability issues as major topics in their programs.

- Political parties sit at the forefront of actors that influence environmental policy formulation and adoption, the integration of environmental concerns in sectoral policies has to receive the utmost emphasis from political parties
- In discussing the issue of green economy, political parties need to look beyond environmental degradation and protection and focus on other green economy and sustainable development initiatives
- Parties need to give due emphasis to bringing solutions to the environmental problems of the country
- Stakeholders need to provide support to emerging green parties in Ethiopia such as KGP
- Future studies can contribute more by addressing unexplored issues in this research such as the impact of political parties' programs in the adoption of government policies toward the environment

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Annex

Data Collection Tools

In this research, primary document data (electoral debates and party programs) were used. Accordingly, the topics for the 75 debates were collected from NEBE's media monitoring unit. The recordings of the 20 debates were collected from the respective TV's stations online platforms. Then again, the political programs were collected from political parties' platforms – online (softcopy) and hard copy.