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AN ASSESSMENT ON THE ROLE OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE IN ENSURING DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL TRANSITION IN ETHIOPIAN SINCE 2018

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List of Acronyms

COD	Collective de opposition Democratic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPD	Ethiopia's Peace and Democracy Conference
ELJ	Emergency Loya Jirga
EPPJ	Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GND	Grand National Dialogue
HPC	High Preparatory Commission
HOPR	House of Peoples Representatives
IPI	International Peace Institute
ICD	Inter Congolese Dialogue
I4P	Infrastructures for Peace
ICG	International Crisis Group,
LTDH	Tunisian League for Human Rights
MIND	Multi-stakeholder Initiative for National Dialogue
NDC	National Dialogue Commission
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People Democratic Organization
PM	Prime Minister
TGC	Transitional Government Charter
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation front
TPC	Technical Preparatory Committee
TRC	True and reconciliation Commission
US	United State
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UGTT	Tunisian General Labour Union

Abstract

Recently Ethiopia attempted a democratic political transition in 2018 by allowing opposition parties to participate in the political process. However, the initial attempt at democratic political transition has not been consolidated by numerous obstacles that need to be given serious attention to consolidating the democratic political system. Ethiopia's government organized a nationwide dialogue to solve the country's multifaceted concerns. The main objective of this study was to provide an *assessment of the role of national dialogue in ensuring democratic political transition in Ethiopia since 2018. To achieve this objective, the study employed a qualitative research approach and an exploratory study design. The study used primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.Non-probable sampling, particularly purposive sampling, was employed to select key informants and FGD discussants. The thematic analysis method was applied to analyze the collected data. The findings of the study identified thatthe FDRE constitution, federal structure, historical narratives, national flag, emblems, heroes, social cohesion, and political culture are major national agendas that should be addressed during the planned national dialogue. Governments, political partiesô media, civil society, and external actors are the main stakeholders to be included in the national dialogue. According to the findings, factors influencing the success of national dialogue in Ethiopia include inclusiveness, representation, and selection criteria; setting clear objectives and agendas; credible conveners; public support; linkages with other political processes, and external actors; national ownership; and learning from experience.*

Key Words: ***National Dialogue, Political Transition, Democratic Transition, Sustainable Peace-Building***.

CHAPTER: ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1Background of the Study

forms of rights violations over the years (Awekeo, 2020). Ethiopian politics is also dominated by disagreements on different political agendas, ranging from the very foundation of the nation building process to the constitution, state-society relations, federalism, party system, etc. (Abdulqadir.2020). Additionally, Ethiopian political elites are dominated by a lack of political will, as well as a lack of clear understanding of history; determination to play a zero-sum game of politics to the endgame; lack of the art of compromise; a blurred vision of the future regarding larger societal goals; proclivity for hegemony; and above all, their successful failure to learn from past mistakes and history, all hallmarks of succeeding generations (Merera, 2001).

Ethiopian politics circled viciously into old paths, which were practiced for many years to scramble power. It is also viciously circumnavigated in the war as a result of or in response to political reforms. Similarly, like previous political governments, the current government is unable to ensure democratization and boost development through mutual consensus among different political parties (Abdisa, 2021). However, Ethiopia has never conducted a serious, comprehensive, and all-inclusive national dialogue to address this multidimensional problem. All the regimes used temporary crisis-management approaches to appease and silence the political opposition. However, that doesn't solve the problem; rather it helps the national problems get more complex and violent. And, the country has reached a level where further delay in conducting a national dialogue could cost the nation a lot (Abdulqadir, 2020).

The initial attempts at national dialogue during Ethiopia's Peace and Democracy Conference (EPD) in 1991, the Transitional Government Charter (TGC), and the Constituent Assembly in 1994 to draft a new 1995 Constitution failed. Due to ignoring or marginalizing key groups resisting these institutional and societal changes and unresolved political conflicts between diverse communities, the opportunity for a national dialogue on the structures of Ethiopian citizenship was lost, and the chance for further national dialogue on sensitive subjects was missed (Smize, 2007). As a result, what began as a loud diversity of views among a wide range of political organizations ended quietly with the EPRDF's clear hegemony (Lyons, 1995).

The ongoing transition in Ethiopia since 2018 faced serious challenges in managing the transition process and overcoming democratic political transition. The fragility of the

countervailing forces involved in the transition process, the failure to accommodate diverse perspectives in the transition agendas, the complex challenges to the rule of law, extreme polarization and fragility of opposition parties and independent civil society, the absence of strategically shared vision are a dominant challenge that this transition faced. The absence of a clear transition roadmap and a multi-party platform for inclusive regular dialogue where opposition political parties can also participate in the transition process, and the domination of unilateral and personalized measures and decisions are also contributing to the faller of transition to overcome democracy by Ethiopian (Mabratu,2021).

Scholars state that this political transition carries a vision of centralization that is undemocratic and antagonistic to multiculturalism. And since the transition seems reluctant to address critical security issues and spend more time on long-term economic plans and other meaningful development programs, including environmental initiatives, it will lead to a war of vision in the future. Due to this, in the past two and a half years or so, many troubling things have happened in the country, ranging from the displacement of millions of people from their homes; the massacre of ethnic and religious minorities; the destruction of property; the crackdown on key opposition politicians; to a full-fledged war in the northern region of Tigray (Worku & Epram, 2020).

Scholars suggest that the only way to resolve historic and present-day challenges in Ethiopia is through calls for a national dialogue, which are mounting from every corner, including political parties, public officials, civic organizations, academia, and the public. And since 2018, some studies have been conducted on the subject of political transitions in Ethiopia and their challenges and opportunities for democratic transition, specifically, Reflections on Expanding Ethiopian Democratic Space Aspirations, Opportunities, and Choices, written by Mohammed Salih and others in 2018. They focused on the reasons for change, the opportunities, and the choices the government needs to make towards ensuring democracy after the 2018 political reform. The vicious circle of Ethiopian politics: Prospects and challenges of current political reform, written by Abdisa Jima in 2021, also didn't address the national dialogue issues to overcome democratic political transition in Ethiopia and the challenges and prospects of its processes. To some extent, Abdulqadir Adem tried to show the role of national dialogue towards sustainable peace and

democratic transition in Ethiopia, but the re
the success and fragility of dialogue in Ethiopia. Therefore, the current study fills the research gap on national dialogue and reconciliation in the framework of pathways for effective and democratic political transition.

1.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions of this thesis:

I. What is/are the role of national dialogue towards democratic political transition?
II. What are the main agendas that should be addressed in the national dialogue?
III. What are major factors that influence success or failure national dialogue in Ethiopia?
IV. What is the role of national dialogue for sustainable peace building in Ethiopia?

1.4. Objective of the study

1.4.1 General objective of the study

The general objective of this research was to provide an assessment of the role of national dialogue in ensuring Ethiopia's democratic political transition since 2018.

1.4.2 The study specifically aims:

1. Explain the role of national dialogue in the democratic political transition in Ethiopia.
2. Critically examine factors that influence the effective national dialog process in Ethiopia.
3. Explore the major national dialogue agenda in Ethiopia's political transition since 2018.
4. Elaborating the role of national dialogue in sustainable peace building in Ethiopia

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was delimited to an assessment on the role of National Dialogue in Ensuring Democratic Political Transition. However, the scope of this thesis was encircled to the 2018 transition of Ethiopia by exploring the role of national dialogue to create democratic political transition.

1.6. Research Methods and Methodology

1.6.1 Research Approach and Design

This research applied qualitative research approach to address the research question, collect, and analyze the appropriate data. Qualitative research is an approach can exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research approach also concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior. The qualitative method used by researchers by concerning to understand behavior from the subject's frame of reference and, observation explain the context or the nature of the variables under investigation. Qualitative research is less structured, informal, and more participatory approaches that covered a large amount of data from participant observation, field notes, reflexive journals, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, analysis of documents, materials, articles, and notes (Belay, Abdinasir, 2015).

To achieve the objectives of the research, as well as answering the research questions, the researcher employed exploratory research design. Exploratory research design is important when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome. To provide gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when research problems are in the initial stage of the investigation. The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights, and this research design appropriate for such studies must be flexible enough to provide an opportunity for considering different aspects of a problem under study (Kothari, 2004). Since the main aim of this study was assessing the role of national dialogue to ensuring democratic political transition since 2018, exploratory research design was appropriate to address research problem because, national dialogue is new political concept in Ethiopian politics and there are few earlier studies conducted the role of national dialogue to ensuring democratic political transition.

1.6.2. Sampling Technique and Size

For this study, non-probability purposive sampling was used to select research participants. Specifically, the researcher adopted purposeful sampling. This enabled the researcher to select interviewees with relevant information and focus group discussion participants regarding the problem under study. By selecting an informed person who can provide maximum degree of

insight into the problem with compressive information, such sampling will help to provide information to achieve the study's objective, provide the required information more likely, and construct historical realities, describe phenomena, and develop something about which little is

the concept by itself is a new phenomenon. Indeed, the researcher attempted to address such limitations by cross-checking data gathered through secondary sources as extensively as possible.

1.9 Significant of the study

This study provides academic and policy justification by assessing the role of national dialogue in ensuring democratic political transition. Even though several studies are available in other countries, many studies have not been conducted concerning the issue in the Ethiopian context. This study would help academia by adding new findings. This would in turn contribute a new result to the existing literature. It can also be a baseline for future studies since the problem is not researched very well. So, this study would add new findings and perspectives to the academic literatureand academia in general.

The study also has a policy justification. The country is surrounded by several challenges. Sadly, Ethiopia is under unstable political conditions and is in the middle of a war. So, this study would help policymakers as well as the national dialogue commission to identify major national issues and major conflicting issues that should be given priority to ensure democratic political transition and build sustainable peace. It would also help the national dialogue commission to identify the main actors who should be included in the dialogue process, and it would also provide a preventive role by identifying different challenges that will face national dialogue in Ethiopia.

1.10. Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations are critical issues in conducting research. It helps to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable manners from the part of the researcher. The study took into consideration the general research principles and those that are more specific to the type of research while collecting the data. Based on this, the study considered the following ethical issues. All research participants who were involved in the study were part of the research based on their consent and willingness. Research participants had been informed about the objectives of the research before starting the interview and then started interviewing after getting their good face. Respect for anonymityand confidentiality is another ethical issue. The research participant's identity did not link withtheir responses and free to give and withhold as much

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

2.8. National Dialogue Initiative

Depending on the contexts national dialogue can be initiated through a range of actors and forums initiate unilaterally or bilaterally. National dialogue initiate by Government representatives, opposition parties but also the broader public, have advocated for the initiation of a National Dialogue, and did so for a variety of reasons. Popular dissatisfaction with the incumbent governments manifested itself in large numbers of people demonstrating and advocating for change, usually on the street. Governments launch national dialogues in response to such popular demands (Paffenholz et.al, 2017).

The process in the Middle East and North Africa Region followed the demands of popular street protests, were taken up by national (Tunisia) or international (Yemen) actors, and were later officially announced by the respective governments. In some case the motivation for change can come from popular uprisings, which then lead to formalized mandates. Sudan" s National Dialogue (2014-16) was announced by President El Bashir. Speaking on January 27, 2014, he invited all Sudanese political parties to attend a meeting to discuss and prepare a The meeting was confined to an address by the president; he later requested the Council of Ministers to transform the strategic project into a practical one (Blunck et al., 2017).

In some case national dialog initiate by civil society. In Kenya" s important role in mobilizing local and international support for action to address the crisis. Civil society organizations sent emissaries to talk with the protagonists (Kibaki and Odinga) and their supporters to stem the rising violence, collaborated with the various arms of government in addressing the humanitarian crisis and setting up peace forums, provided briefings for the international community, and consistently ensured that the public was aware of efforts to resolve

the crisis(Sanghrajka,2017). The country's most important labor organizations are undertaking a bilateral dialogue, without government involvement and without the political parties. The intent is that both sectors, labor and business, should reach consensus on an agenda and present it to civil society as an agreement reached between the productive sectors (labor and management), and suggest that society take account of what these groups think, and what changes that they deem necessary for the development of democracy

2.9. National Dialogues Framework

The institutional setup of national dialogues should be passed on to different successive functions in a variety of stages. National dialogues pass through three successive phases: preparation, process, and implementation. Each national dialogue will have its own unique structure corresponding to the highly context-specific needs and aims of each process. However, similarities can be detected. This structure tends to respond to a core set of functions: preparing the process, overseeing the process, providing technical support, facilitating broad-based/representative decision-making, and generating substantial thematic input, often organized around working groups and subcommittees for conflict analysis, fact-finding, establishing political will and positions, and gathering support (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

2.10 The Preparation Phase

The preparation phase of the national dialogue is crucial and largely shapes the next phases. The preparation phase of a national dialogue is critical because it will influence many aspects of the process, including its legitimacy, representativeness, and efficiency. In most circumstances, a preparatory committee or commission is formed to identify the agenda, the dialogue's organs, the groups that must be represented, and the procedure and criteria for selection (Heathershaw, 2016). It is the formal national dialogue phase, and it covers major aspects of implementation, such as agenda-setting, determining a convener, establishing principles, producing decision-making modalities, selecting participants, ensuring public consultation and outreach, establishing effective support structures, and considering timing and sequencing (Bruck et al., 2017).

2.10.1. Creation of preparatory committee National Dialogue

Preparatory committees may be established by presidential or governmental decree. While some leaders have used executive authority to establish preparatory committees with the hopes of consolidating a national dialogue process, these preparatory committees often suffer from a lack of support from the public. In Yemen, Presidential Decree No. 30 (2012) established a Technical Preparatory Committee (TPC) tasked with determining the size of the National Dialogue Conference, as well as the delegates' selection process and criteria, procedure, funding, and venue (Harlander, 2016).

Preparatory commission should not be dominated by one or two parties, but rather be composed of representatives of political parties, armed groups, and civil society. At Iraq's 2004 National Conference, the High Preparatory Commission (HPC) dominated by parties participating in the Interim Government, determined the rules of procedure, composition, and the agenda. As a result, parties opposed to the American military presence were not able to influence the framework of the process. In contrast to Afghanistan, the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga was mostly composed of academics, civil servants, and civil society representatives. Due to this, parties involved in the process agreed upon an agenda and identified key issues of concern to the parties to be discussed (Bassel, 2017).

In preparation stage there are different issues should under consideration. Reliable analysis of causes of the conflict and, the identification of actors or parties that have to be included in order to find a sustainable outcome; and the needs, interests, fears and options of the different parties.Learning lessons from past experiences because it is important to learn lessons from these experiences: what worked in the past and what not, and why? Selecting appropriate dialogue design which guides by collective wisdom of the facilitation field is that the nature of the process determines, to a large extent, the outcome and clarification and allocation of roles; and the coordination of collaboration (Harlander, 2016).

2.11. The Process Phase

The process phase is the most public phase of a National Dialogue. The key steps, procedures and mechanisms related to this phase include: conduct guiding principles Decision-making

Informing the public is an important responsibility during a national dialogue, and the facilitator of the process or presidium to clarify from the start the guidelines for participants in relation to the media and constituencies. Regardless of the option chosen, it is essential that the process appears to be transparent, or it might be rejected by the constituencies and the public in general, especially where a national dialogue results from public protests (Harlander, 2015). Public information, good communication, and media engagement are thus key elements, as they influence the degree of public support and perceptions of legitimacy. Public relations campaigns have contributed to generating more widespread popular support for the implementation of an agreement reached during a national dialogue (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

In national dialogue process there should be a sense of interdependence and ownership. From unilateralism towards interdependence through shared ownership: Groups divided by conflict typically struggle over ownership of process and of outcomes, as they seek to prevail unilaterally over the others. The dynamic is based on the aspiration of imposing their preferred outcome on their opponents get what you want, we cannot get what we want groups is often based on the aspiration of imposing their preferred outcome on their opponents (Barnes, 2017).

2.12.1.2. Elites support or resistance

Elites support or resistance to a national dialogue and the public's support or frustration due to the delays, diminishing legitimacy, or a lack of progress. In cases where elite agreement was missing, national dialogue processes could not independently alter existing power balances and lead to peaceful transitions. In the cases where a minimum elite agreement on the way forward was present, national dialogues have had clear outcomes and have brought about new political and constitutional orders, such as in Benin, Mali, Niger, and Congo (Brazzaville) between 1991 and 1993 (Paffenholz, et al , 2017).

In other cases, however, where an elite agreement on the way forward was missing, the dialogue processes could not independently alter existing power balances and lead to peaceful transitions. In these cases, incumbent presidents and governments attempted to use national dialogue to give limited In Togo and Zaire, national conferences failed to have a significant impact on the

struggle between incumbents and opposition. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) the conference was frequently suspended due to armed clashes between the government and opposition forces. The conference did not succeed as an instrument of democratic transition, although it contributed to opening the political space (Papagianni, 2013).

2.12.1.3 Political commitment

Sufficient political commitments also another determinant factor the success or the frailer of political parties. Sufficient political commitment and Political will is important for the dialogue to reach inclusive agreements; and for effective implementation. Political commitment is influenced by internal and external political pressure; but is strongest when participating parties enjoy a sense of ownership of the dialogue process (Odenaal, 2011). In July 1991, when the Togolese national conference stripped president Eyadema of most of his powers and established an interim government and legislature, Eyadema surrounded it with troops. He subsequently allowed the conference to proceed to a ceremonial ending, but used the army to harass his political opponents and maintain his grip on power. In Iraq the National Conference of August 2004, organized by the Coalition Provisional Authority and the appointed Iraqi Governing Council, was a failure because the organizers exercised such tight control over the process that it preempted meaningful, inclusive dialogue (Papagianni, 2006).

There must not only be room for media participation, but also a commitment from the media: Citizen Participation through "public opinion" (which exerts pressure on institutions) represents a participatory dynamic that fosters the development of a sense of citizen ownership with respect to national realities and structures. Public opinion is essential for the sustainability of the process and for ensuring that the cleanup and reform of institutions will last (Stigant & Murray, 2015). In South Sudan, arguably one of the strengths of the national dialogue was the extent of public engagement and the efforts made to involve as many citizens as possible. A number of informants underlined at least two aspects that demonstrate the transparent nature of the public debate. The first was the wide media coverage, which included televised criticisms of the president and his government, to the extent of demanding his resignation. Furthermore, deliberations were documented in various formats accessible to a wide audience.

2.12.1.4. Existing political context and national dialogue initiative

The development of a national dialogue in such an unstable and sometimes violent context constitutes a challenge to the process. In Iraq in 2004, for example, the presence of American troops and officials during the National Dialogue Conference was denounced as directly affecting the legitimacy and independence of the process and led some parties to boycott it. During the 1989 Grand National Dialogue (GND) in Guatemala, the threats, kidnapping and torture committed against some participants, as well as the quickly deteriorating security situation, limited the participants' willingness to actively led to the termination of the unfinished conference (Harlander, 2016).

Timeframe In the area of peacemaking and peace building, sequencing is crucial. National discussions must take place at the appropriate time and place, depending on the context, in order to be as effective as possible. National discussions often take place in peace processes at two points: during the negotiation process and following the signing of a comprehensive peace accord. Both Each type has its own set of pros and sides (Guo, 2016).

National dialogues must be preceded by formal or informal agreements such as a peace settlement, a ceasefire agreement, or confidence-building measures such as the release of political prisoners or amendments to the existing legislation. For example, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was preceded by the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of July 1999,. Even before a national dialogue is decided upon, a mediator or facilitator working on ceasefire or demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) negotiations might thus be requested to explore the possibility of using a national dialogue. In Myanmar, reflections on the so-called „inclusive political dialogue" took place in parallel to the negotiations on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signed in October 2015, which eventually included references to a future national dialogue (Harlander, 2019).

2.12.1.5External actors and ownership

National dialogues are widely recognized as a nationally owned process, support or resistance of external actors can also influence the degree of success of national dialogues. Relevant external actors can include neighboring countries, international support groups, or regional and

international organizations. Since regional actors may be more vested in national dialogue outcomes and may have pre-existing relationships with the key parties to the conflict, they may play a greater role in national dialogue outcomes (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

Third parties need to balance maintaining national ownership and garnering international support. One should however note that third party support is rarely disinterested and that different parties might have opposing objectives in supporting a national dialogue. During the Kenyan National Dialogue, the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by Kofi Annan, mediated the dialogue between the two major negotiators mediated between the two conflicting parties over the course of the 41-day dialogue and helped them to reach a political settlement. After the dialogue, the Union Panel remained engaged in the process by providing mediation and monitoring support during the implementation of the dialogue outcomes (Harlander, 2016). Naturally, international support should not replace or overshadow national ownership of the process, which is necessary to preserve its legitimacy. Imposition of dialogue from external actor without internal commitment will affect the success of national dialog process. Dialogue may be imposed upon parties by external actors, without adequate internal commitment to reach an agreement also as in the case of Sudan (El-Battahani, 2014).

It is thus important to strike a balance between external support and national ownership that external actors differed from local actors and each other in their interests and objectives. In Yemen, there were concerns among the local population that the NDC was more externally-driven process rather than a Yemeni national process. The US, for example, was considered largely interested in countering al Qaeda, whereas Saudi Arabia was focused on the distribution of power in Yemen. These were in opposition to internal Yemeni aspirations for change. At the same time, however, there was acknowledgement among the local population that only external pressure would move the process along in the face of weak local leadership (POMEPS, 2013).

2.13.

populations are key characteristics to look at when developing a suitable mandate and agenda. Addressing development issues and peace Paying dividends at the outset can be important to the success of national dialogues (Haider, 2019).

2.13.6 .The selection of participants to a national dialogue

National dialogue processes face strong demands for inclusion from multiple social and political groups which are eager to influence national discussions. As a result, the method adopted for selecting participants is carefully examined. According to Papagianni selection of participants of dialog should develop through a several-step process. Political agreement is the first step should reached through the work of the preparatory body, on the constituencies which are to be included in the dialogue. These constituencies might include political parties, civil society, regions, religious leaders, ethnic groups, minorities, and professional associations. Second step is sub-categories belonging to each constituency. Because a number of decisions need to be taken on how to subdivide the constituency of political parties does it include only parliamentary parties or also extra parliamentary parties; does it include older parties or also newly-established ones? Selection methodology of the dialogue participants, appointment of the dialogue participants by the preparatory body and/or the executive or parliament of the country, self-selection by the identified constituencies of their representatives to the dialogue, regional/local selection processes through caucuses or gatherings. (Papagianni, 2013)

In Iraq, the debate over the representation of political parties in the National Conference was vigorous. Out of the estimated 1,200-1,400 participants in the Conference, 144 seats were given to political party representatives according to a formula which placed parties in three categories based on the number of years since their establishment. The oldest parties received six delegates, the other categories three and one. This was understandably disputed. Leaders of new parties argued that, in the absence of elections, it was impossible to evaluate party strength and that the criterion was arbitrary. Furthermore, choosing which of the more than 150 Iraqi parties to include was a formidable challenge (Papagianni, 2006).

The third step in determining the composition of a dialogue process is to decide its size. The size of the dialogue then is a balance between the needs imposed by inclusion and efficiency. The

methodology of selecting dialogue participants is obviously pivotal to inclusivity in National Dialogues. In some cases, participants were appointed by the preparatory body, in others they were self-selected by the identified constituencies or locally selected in caucus gatherings. Most cases, however, opted for a multi-step process that required political consensus on the constituencies to be included (i.e. political parties, regions, civil society, ethnic groups and minorities). In a second step, delegates from those constituencies were elected, sometimes in another multi-step procedure which was often organized by the preparatory body (Planta, et al 2015).

2.14Political Transition

2.14 .1 what is Political Transition?

Transition in its broadest sense interval between one political regime and another and is the installation of a new regime, whatever its type or nature is. Transition define as the introduction of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and the installation of some form of democracy or the return to some authoritarian rule or the emergency of a revolutionary alternate (Donnell & Schmitter, 1998).The traditional doctrine of political transition is the shift from authoritarian regime to a democratic one. Mainly the aim of political transition is democratizing a system by changing the political regime. Yet the political transition may not bring about the intended democratic system; rather a political hybrid, something in between an authoritarian regime and a fully democratic system It may also end with the consolidation of the authoritarian system (Nifosi, 2005)

Different scholars define transition in different ways. For some it is fundamentally a shift of power; others argue it is about a new state (state building); for others it is democratization and redistribution of political power; while others are concerned about a new value system and state society relations, of which human rights are a definitive element. For some scholars, political transition is just a shift from one regime to another regardless of its effect on democratizing the system. Transition refers to the intermediate phase that begins with the dissolution of an old regime and ends with the establishment of a new one or it can be expressed as the intermediate phase which starts from the adjournment of the old regime and ends with the establishment

new one irrespective of liberalizing or democratizing the given state (Donnell & Schmitter, 1998).

Scholars like Thomas Carothers, referred political transition doctrine as «transition paradigm»; any country shifting away from an authoritarian regime toward democracy is a country in transition (2002). Similarly, democratic transitions consist of two simultaneous but to some extent autonomous processes: a process of dissolution of the authoritarian regime and a process of emergence of democratic institutions transition is a shift from authoritarian regime to a democratic one and the process presupposes democratizing the system (Guo &Gary, 2014).

This means political States undergoing transition process may not end up in democratization. There will be a probability of transiting to another authoritarian regime or in between to authoritarian rule and a consolidated democracy or prolonged transition, which is termed as "gray zone" (Carothers, 2002). The "gray zone" is an authoritarian regime and a consolidate democracy. In country political space for the opposition parties, an independent civil society, regular elections alongside a low level of political participation beyond voting, elections of uncertain legitimacy, poor performance by the state, and frequent abuse of the law by governmental officials(Nifosi,2005).

The transitional period is often associated with crafting economic models and institutional arrangements both of which could become patterns and norms that are difficult to change later Successful transitions encourage political stability, the rule of law and protected property rights, transitions marred by the suppression of competition will lead to political instability and likely a reversion to authoritarianism (Guo &Gary, 2014). The transitional process involves different groups. It typically arises from warfare or internal social conflict, the main ways through which discontent for a given political regime arises or is channeled into. The actors of political transition are the ruling group and the opposition forces, although others, such as the international community or opposition groups residing abroad may play a significant role.

2.14.2 Modes of political transitions

Political transition varies from country and country based on different circumstances like democratic culture and liberalization at the same time. Scholars come upon different classifications of modes of political transition to understand, analyze the democratic level and its effectiveness. The predominant classification are elitedominated compromises; Impositions consist of elites using force unilaterally and effectively to bring about a regime change against the resistance of incumbents forcing the transition; Reforms are present when masses mobilize from below and impose a compromised outcome without resorting to violence; whereas Revolutions consist of masses rising in arms and militarily defeat the previous authoritarian rulers (Karl,1990).

There are different methods of supervised transition, reform, succession, and change through elections by the launching of a new economic program, expanding external alliances, drawing up or modifying an official ideology, designing new techniques of social control, or clamping down on dissent and there are also numerous participants, mass population, elites, military groups, external actors and institutions (Chazan, 1999). Dominantly there are two types of transition processes: transitions from above and below. Transition above occurs when functioning rulers respond to an impending or actual crisis by initiating democratic reforms. Transitions from below occur when there are mounting popular pressures from the people resulting in national conferences, popular revolutions, coups d'état, or pact formations, all to move toward a more democratic society (Karl, 1990).

Different political researchers argued that a transition from above is the best mechanism to deliver democracy because they tend to be more specific about their time frame, procedural steps, and overall strategy. Transitions from below are said to be plagued with a great deal of uncertainty. Unlikely different recent works on gives much emphasis for the contribution of elite and, mass by arguing that such kind of explanation missed the contribution of elites with the interaction of the mass. Democracy acquired by a process of conscious decision at least on the part of the top political leadership, a small circle of leadership is likely to play a disproportional role. Virtually all of the recent transitional processes should include popular organization

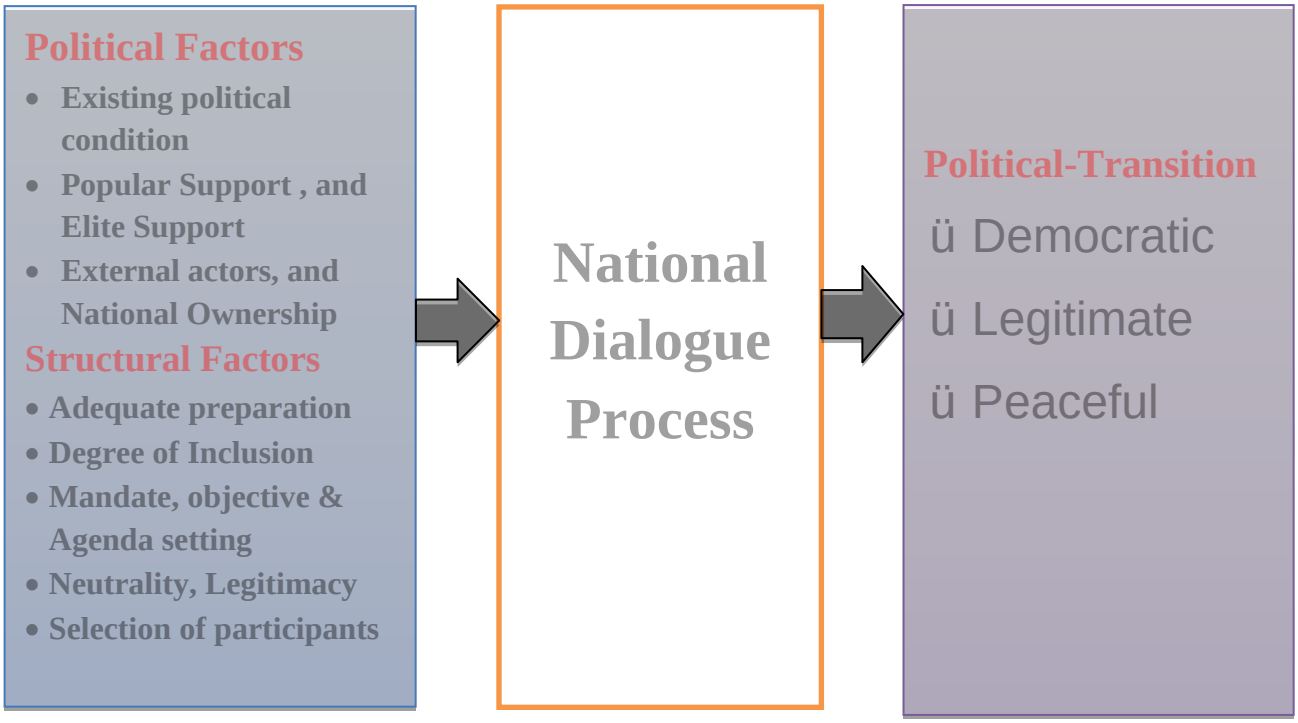
Additionally, the absence of well-established democratic institutions, independent judges, human rights institutions, civil society that works on advocacy of human rights, and democracy led the party to the high tendency of dictatorship driving factors to stand for reform (Worku & Ephrem, 2018). Without analyzing and resolving the existing problem government reported that Ethiopia has been recorded double-digit and we make poverty history instead of search a solution. Countries experience different modes of political transition the Ethiopian case there was a hybrid form because it was based on youth protests and a political transformation supported by a robust opposition within the regime. As such, the Ethiopian case has integrated elements of both popular uprisings and reform from above.

2.15. Analytical Framework of the Study

It is critical to analyze the dynamics of pre-existing conditions and underlying issues that may give rise to the creation and/or prevention of a national dialogue. An evaluation of these conditionsmay also shed light on the proper sequencing of national dialogue depending on the context of the conflict. All national dialogues are not fruitful or successful in achieving the intended goal, and there are different political contexts and process factors affecting the outcome of national dialogues that manifest during preparation, negotiation, and implementation stages and phases (Paffenholz et al, 2017).

Political context and design or process affects the likelihood of success or fall of national dialogue. Popular support, link with other political processes, the role of external actors and national ownership are among the factors of national dialog design or process effect on the base of the following contexts .The degree of inclusion and participation, representation and selection criteria Objective and scope-setting, institutional framework and support structures, the role of authority figures Decision-making procedures confidence-building measures and provision for implementation (Haider, 2019).For the sake of clarity the research will classify literature analysis of factors that affects successful national dialogue in to two, political, as preexisting condition, and process or design level effects. For the purposes of this study, the researcher only examines case in which national dialogues have occurred during a period of political transition.

Figure: 1 Analytical Framework of the Study



CHAPTER: THREE

3. Discussions and Findings

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the discussions and the findings of the study. It includes the analysis of primary and secondary sources of data to explore the problem under study. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and questions of the study. The qualitative data collected from interviewees through semi-structured interviews, FGD, and documents were analyzed through careful interpretation of meanings and contents to have a clear analysis based on the established objectives and questions. The analysis and discussions are presented under topics shaped in line with the objectives of the study. Those topics are the role of national dialogue in ensuring democratic political transition in Ethiopia; major national dialogue agendas; main stockholders; factors that influence national dialogue in Ethiopia; and lastly, the role of national dialogue for sustainable peacebuilding in Ethiopia.

3.2The Role of National Dialogue to Ensuring Democratic Political Transition

The post-2018 political change has been entangled with numerous hopes: dramatic, sudden, and unexpected changes such as the rapprochement of Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as the normalization of the Horn of Africa; a broader political landscape in which the caliber of the country's arbitrary detainees by the previous system was released; and the welcoming of various Ethiopian political parties as well as Diaspora media categorized as terrorists. Though various remarkable and dramatic changes were recorded in Ethiopia after the reform, various backlogs and challenges should hamper the speed of reform. Some of the challenges that impede the reform process include an inclination toward the previous system or a desire to repeat what the former did or did not learn from the failure of the old system; a security crisis; the prevalence of media extremists, takeovers, and political uncertainty (worku & Ephrem, 2020).

A nationally owned but internationally backed national dialogue process could serve as a vehicle for all the parties to come together and examine the different visions of the future that exist in the country and agree on a lasting settlement for the future of Ethiopia. A national dialogue would provide a means for competing ideologies and communities within Ethiopia to redefine their relationships and promote a greater understanding of divisive and polarizing issues. A national dialogue could help bridge the gap between the different actors and foster a culture of communication and collaboration (Awoll, 2021).

> Ethiopia is full of unresolved political agendas, with huge potential for fatal conflict. The current political quagmire in Ethiopia is rooted in multidimensional crises which call for dialogue involving a range of stakeholders to address the multi-dimensional causes of conflict. A well-designed national dialogue is imperative for managing political transitions and building sustainable peace in Ethiopia. The highly volatile and tense political transition that the country is in during the last two years, created serious concern among politicians and other stakeholders about the country's political future. Unless a national dialogue is made among all political stakeholders, the nation could end up in a political deadlock (*IKIPP, 2, 2022)*.

The Ethiopian government established a national dialogue commission under the proclamation number 1256/2021. Ethiopian parliament approved the establishment of the National Dialogue Commission(NDC) to address multidimensional problems in the country. According to the approved proclamation national dialogue in Ethiopia the planned national dialogue will have the following objectives. The proclamation states that:

> *WHEREAS, there are differences of opinions and disagreements among various political and opinion leaders and also segments of society in Ethiopia on the most fundamental national issues and it is a necessity to resolve the differences and disagreements through broad-based inclusive public dialogue that engenders national consensus;*
>
> *WHEREAS, enormously conducting inclusive National Dialogues is important to bolster national consensus along the way a culture of trust and of working together as well as amend degraded to restore social values; the National Dialogue process*

societal values and since it has become necessary to legally institute a system that facilitates the National Dialogue process (proclamation number of 1256/2021).

Similarly, according to academicians as stated the role of the coming national political dialogue should be more political.

> The mandate of the commission must be to set a kind of more political dialogue, by critically facilitating the cortical political problem. The real problem of Ethiopian politics emanated between government and some political groups so there is no crucial problem among Ethiopian people, all problems are caused by the elite, political elites, and government. That is why the attempt of the established ministry of peace, and reconciliation commission are trying to reconcile a segment of societies without the existence of conflict among society, rather the source of conflict and violence in Ethiopian history was more political not societal (*KIA,2 , 2022).*

According to the above discussion, national dialogue in Ethiopia will play a significant role in ensuring a democratic political transition. This political process is needed more than ever in Ethiopia to reach an agreement regarding political change or end the political crisis, to address major national issues that are controversial and cause conflict. The principle of national dialogue can be summarized as follows: A national dialogue will broaden the political space for opposite political parties, civil society, and the public to participate in political activities to resolve conflicts. It can bring controversial issues to the discussion table for open discussion. It will decree the cause of the conflict.

3.3 Major National Dialogue Agendas

There are various controversies on which major national issues should be given priority to resolve in the current political situation and bring sustainable peace through the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia. Different research and reports indicate the major criteria for identifying the agendas of national dialogue. The agenda of national dialogue must address the root causes of conflict. The agenda should provide for practical conversation around the major grievances of all key interest groups but not get mired in details, which are often better resolved by technical bodies or future governments. Importantly, national dialogue agendas

seek to reach an agreement on key issues included in the agenda-setting. Participation or consultation needs to take place to identify and agree upon these issues, which could include any number of conflict-fueling themes: national identity, political rights, basic freedoms, institutional reform, election procedures, and the structure of government, often the debate about federalism (Murry, 2015).

The data collected by FGD also asserts the above justification.

> Ethiopia's existing conditions require the critical setting of agendas that will address the root cause of the conflict and disagreements that have passed for decades. Most importantly, the issues that cause conflict and disagreement should be critically addressed. Like, historical narration, nation-building, and state structure, including constitutional issues, should be a priority. Throughout the dialogue process, agendas should be as realistic and achievable as possible. Additionally, the identified agendas should reflect the interests of the Ethiopian people rather than the interests of a particular group or individual (*FGDA,1, 2022)*.

It can also be useful to sequence agenda items such that the process begins with soft topics. This can allow participants to see that there are commonalities and can help to build confidence and trust, forming a foundation for further success. At the same time, it is essential that hot topics are not ignored and that they are given sufficient space and time to be discussed in detail and to develop a roadmap on how to address those issues. In some national dialogues, the process was rushed through without adequate time to discuss and agree on the contested items. The agenda items also needed to reflect the concerns of the general public (Blunck, 2017).

Consequently, the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia must classify national dialogue agendas based on the sensitivity of the issues they need to address. The first agenda items must include issues that need a fast response, like ending the conflict and violence among different groups at different levels. The second type of agenda should include very controversial and time-consuming issues that need wide discussion.

3.2.1 Legal and Political Issues

The constitution is one of the wings of the legal framework, which is the highest law of a state. Constitutional-related issues such as amendments, revisions, or changes can be sources of conflict in most countries. It also leads political groups to fight for constitutional reform or absolute change. Constitutional reform provides an opportunity for countries in transition to deliberate and find solutions to the divisive issues that led to crises. Equally noteworthy is the fact that processes of constitutional reform, due to their polarizing nature, could also return country to a crisis if they fail to gain legitimacy through popular participation and consensus building by the people. For a constitutional reform exercise to be considered legitimate, the processes leading to a new or revised constitution must be inclusive, participatory, and transparent, and the outputs must be based on popular consensus (Nyei, 2015).

A National Dialogue may enable and reinforce a constitution-making process. It can establish the political and social environment for successful constitution-making; it can set either a procedural or substantive framework, or both, and can provide a model of deliberation that facilitates productive discussion and decision-making in a constitution-making process. Moreover, as the example of Tunisia shows, during a constitution-making process, a dialogue may resolve underlying political problems that are blocking the process. By contrast, without an effective process of dialogue around substantial social issues, constitution-making often fails. It may be that an inclusive National Dialogue in which broad social, political, and economic issues were properly aired and some consensus reached, might have assisted Kenyans to adopt a new constitution in 2004 (Murry, 2017).

The practical experiences of some countries showed that when there are disagreements regarding constitutional issues and the issue generates conflicts and hinders the peace of the nations, the state calls for national dialogue to discuss the constitutional issues, either to repeal the constitutions or amend some articles. A formal state-initiated national dialogue or consensus exists extra-constitutionally and is designed either to play a role in the writing of a new constitution or the reform of major defects in an existing document. It thus needs to be linked to a process and set of institutions that achieve one of these objectives. For example, in Colombia, the peace process with the FARC rebel group was integrated with a constituent assembly that produced the country's 1991 constitution. For example, in South Africa, political

dialogues determined the constitutional framework and the process for the establishment of a constitution-making body and the holding of elections (Kaplan & Freeman, 2015). National dialogues address issues of overarching national importance, and their outcomes are likely to include a constitutional component. These can range from agreeing on a constitutional review process (Kenya) and making constitutional amendments (Jordan), to adopting a new constitution (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Mali, and anticipated Yemen). Constitutional changes can also include crucial measures toward the decentralization of the state, which was the case in Bolivia and Mali, among others

The constitution has been the cause of repeated unrest in Ethiopian politics for years. Thus, the current constitution, which was endorsed in 1995, is one of the most contested major legal issues. The very contentious aspects of the constitution start with the question of representation and participation during the draft of the constitution. One of the interviewees indicated that the legitimacy of the current constitution is in doubt among the public in general and the political elites particularly. Some groups argued that they were either not represented well or not well represented in the drafting process of the constitution, and there was no public consultation and

On the contrary, right from the start, the neutrality of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has been in question. It came into being without consensus building among political parties and other stakeholders. The draft proclamation was prepared by the Council of Ministers, a core part of the executive. Later, it was enacted by parliament, a body controlled overwhelmingly by the ruling part neutral.

By giving an analogy between water and the national dialogue Doctor Rahel tried to show how the preparatory stage of the national dialogue is very important to have a successful national dialogue in Ethiopia. If the source of the water is poisoned even if the pipe is pure the whole water that flows in the pipe will also be poisoned. So the source of the water should be pure to have healthy water. Similarly, in the preparatory stage of the dialogue process at least to some extent, there must be. Acceptance, agreement on the selection process of the conveners, and the neutrality of the facilitators As much as possible main stakeholders should accept the legitimacy of the conveners, and neutrality to facilitate the process. The existence of a controversy, and conflict from the initial stage, will hinder the entire process to overcome the expected outcome (Rahel, 2022).

Some informants claim that tee direct responsibility of the established commission to Ethiopian people representatives will decrease the *legitimacy* and land neutrality of the commission particularly, and they fear that the entire process will obstacle. In Ethiopia, there is no well-established democratic institution rather everything is highly relied on and determined by a few political elites. In the first place, the executive and legislative organs are fused. This implies that even if the legislative organ is vested the highest power by the FDRE constitution and has the mandate of investigating the wrongdoing done by the executive organs, they don't properly discharge their responsibility (Worku & Ephrem, 2020)

3.4.2. Political Context Factors

3.4.2.1. Public Support

Public support or lack can enable or constrain progress in the national dialogue process and the success of national dialogue. Public information, good communication, and media engagement are thus key elements, as they influence the degree of public support and

perceptions of legitimacy. Public relations campaigns have contributed to generating more widespread popular support for the implementation of an agreement reached during a national dialogue (Paffenholz et al., 2017).

In Benin, for example, radio broadcasts of the national dialogue, published images of the sessions in print media, and the availability of videotapes of the debates bolstered public support. This coverage enhanced transparency, allowed local populations, including rural populations, to remain informed about key developments in the process, and increased the perceived legitimacy of the dialogue. In contrast, if the public is unaware of the national dialogue, it will neither be able to provide input nor feel inclined to promote its results. In Iraq, for example, the national dialogue proceeded without any sound public information campaign or public debate and with minimal media attention. This lack of information sharing effectively hindered any meaningful participation by opposition groups and civil society, resulting in a narrow, politically one-sided process involving the immediate political elite. All of this reinforced the alienating nature of the event (Blunck et al, 2017).

To enhance the degree of public support all types of media are responsible to provide adequate information about national dialogue in all parts of society. Because if the entire process losing popular public support it will affect the credibility and legitimacy of the national dialogue

willingness and readiness from the population sides to solve the national issues through discussions and reconciliations.

> The general population wants the prevalence of peace and order. The societies were involved in the peace-building process throughout their lifetime. This shows us the aspiration of society to be part of the reform and the reconciliation process. The problem is from the side of the political elites. Political elites should first start the national consensus and reconciliation practices with themselves then the public reconciliation will be simple. The political elites should take a lesson from the public. Addressing the quarrels among the elites would foster and facilitate the national reconciliation and consensus process. Society is always ready to address their differences through discussion and traditional conflict management (KEPP, *6, 2022).*

3.4.2.3 Links to other transitional processes

National dialogue does not occur in a vacuum. Thinking about how the process involves, for example, regional governments and processes, such as the elections and the reconciliation commission, will strengthen the coherence of the effort. Critically, it is unlikely that dialogue can be sustained if past grievances and serious human rights violations are ignored, so links to the institutions responsible for these processes are also needed (Emebet, 2023; *Ali & 2022).*

> Establishing structured links between national dialogue and other political processes is a vital measure, which helps avoid a competitive environment. The national dialogue is just one mechanism to tackle political crises and violent conflicts and is often preceded or accompanied by other steps. National dialogues are just one way of addressing political and security crises or long-term structural factors. They should complement other political processes. To this end, the national dialogue should be linked meaningfully to ongoing processes such as those undertaken by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, the National Reconciliation Commission, and the Ministry of Peace *(KIA, 3, 2022).*

In national dialogue processes, the interplay between the dialogue and other power institutions has ranged from mutually reinforcing to ambiguous or even counterproductive. In identifying best practices for the timing of national dialogues vis-à-vis other processes and the relationships between national dialogues and permanent institutions, we will increase the likelihood that a dialogue can achieve meaningful conflict transformation and strengthen existing institutions (Murry, 2016).

3.4.2.4. The role of external actors and national ownership

Local ownership is crucial for success. Without a strong, respected national facilitator and buy-in from a sufficient coalition of the country produce any meaningful change. National authorities should bear the primary responsibility for envisioning, organizing, facilitating, and financing the national dialogue. While national ownership is fundamental, there are points at which the international community can provide important assistance. Because international assistance can fill important gaps, assistance providers must take great care to leave the fundamental responsibilities in the hands of national authorities (Stigant & Murry, 2015).

> Even though national ownership is fundamental for national dialogue in Ethiopia, there must be room for the international community to provide important assistance. In terms of technical assistance, international actors can work to build the capacity of delegates to participate effectively, particularly those who have less experience in deliberative processes. On the diplomatic side, concerned countries or multilateral organizations can help to negotiate the initial agreement that establishes a national dialogue and make public statements encouraging an inclusive and participatory process *(KII 1, 2022)*.
>
> While ensuring that the main responsibility and decision-making remains in the hands of national actors. Additionally, international actors can offer important support in the follow-up of national dialogues. External actors may provide financial support by providing provide funds to implement the policy priorities that emerge from a national dialogue. International actors can also fill a gap by providing technical guidance to assist national authorities in reaching an agreement on contentious issues that remained unresolved at the dialogue's conclusion, although this must be undertaken cautiously to

avoid perceptions of bias. NDC in Ethiopia may also benefit from international support to monitor the implementation of agreements reached through the national dialogue *(KICS, 2022, 1)*.

Contrary to many other conflict transformation mechanisms, national dialogues should be nationally facilitated processes, as this increases the likelihood of public buy-in, perceptions of legitimacy, and the likelihood of achieving implementation and transformation (Barnes, 2017). It can be challenging to navigate the involvement of various external actors as they may have opposing objectives or views in supporting the national dialogue (Harland, 2016). External actors can, for example, encourage broad-based representation and the participation of marginalized segments of society, but they can also produce tension if their vision of inclusion differs from locally held ideas. It is thus important to strike a balance between external support and national ownership (Blunck et al., 2017).

> For the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia, the facilitator must be very critical of opening the space of the dialogue process for the external actor. Why because national dialogue by its nature is an internally facilitated political process and the likelihood of legitimacy and popular support also determines the internal ownership of the process. International actors may come into the dialogue process by having strategic, political, and economic interest, and if tier interest is not fulfilled in the process, and outcome, they may interfere with the decision-making power of the authoritative organ of national dialogue. When such kind of contradiction append they be a cause of tension and disagreement *(KIPP, 7, 2022)*.

According to most informants, the authoritative body that takes the power to facilitate, and organize the national dialogue process should be very critical. Because they claim that from the past conflicting experiences we see how the international community is biased and didn't play a tire neutral role to resolve conflict among regional state and federal governments.

Support structures established by international, regional, or non-governmental organizations aimed to strengthen the role and influence of certain participants in a National Dialogue. Support structures can assist participants to build coalitions, allowing them time to agree on common positions. They also assist with the technical requirements of participating in a

National Dialogue, such as understanding legal language, preparing, and publishing material, and conducting research. This enables groups to better advocate for their respective interests, which has translated into the inclusion of specific provisions in the final agreement.

The international community has been very biased on their news by conveying fake ideas refusing to see the impossible situation the TPLF and the OLA have left Ethiopia in, and treating the federal government which did nothing more than defend itself against attacks by armed groups like an unreasonable villain. These governments, through statements and even sanctions, not only helped embolden the TPLF and the OLA but also limited the Ethiopian government's ability to swiftly and decisively end the conflict. Furthermore, they failed to sufficiently praise and at times even acknowledge attempts by the federal government to minimize bloodshed, such as repeatedly calling for ceasefires, demanding negotiations, withdrawing from Tigray, and not re-entering the region even after a decisive victory. By diminishing the efforts to build peace in the country, the international community, and especially Western nations, want to help Ethiopians leave this conflict behind, they should change course. To start with, these foreign governments should praise and encourage national dialogue efforts, rather than criticize the exclusion of armed groups from the process (Yoannes, 2022).

> The support of international and regional actors for the planned national dialogue is very important and plays an undeniable role in its successful outcomes. To end the massive civil war and its distraction external actors like non-governmental and governmental organizations should play a neutral role. The commission should be very critical to identify the aim of the external actors and be wise in evaluating the involvement of external actors in different steps. Why because in the previous two conflicting years the international community particularly led by Western governments and three mass media proponed biased news which was very different from the existingtruth *(KIPP, 8, 2022)*.

3.4.2.5 Learningfrom pastexperience

Ethiopia can learn from its neighbors about national dialogue. Dialogue processes can help achieve stability and experiences from countries in the Horn offer useful lessons. According

body that ruptured and lost trust between the people and the government and wants to restore healthy relationships at local, regional, public, and federal levels must take responsibility and reconcile with the victims. Years of ethnic and religious-based conflicts have damaged relationships and created major strife among communities in different parts of Ethiopia. Thus, conducting horizontal reconciliation is pivotal for lasting and sustainable peace. In addition, the horizontal reconciliation process must be organized to bring people from diverse communities and ethno religious groups together to restore their relationships and reconcile and heal collectively (Fisseha, 2022).

A national dialogue with a truth and reconciliation element should aspire to address reconciliation as an opportunity for national consensus and sustainable peace in Ethiopia. To sustain peace in Ethiopia, the national dialogue commission must work to break the political deadlock and re-establish national consensus through reconciliation. An important element in this regard could be a national dialogue targeted at reducing communal and ethnic tensions and improving relationships between the federal and regional states by address conflicts and war democratically by participatory official negotiation.

3.5.2 Transitional Justice and National Dialogue

Transitional justice refers to a set of measures that can be implemented to redress massive human rights abuses that occur during armed conflict and under authoritarian regimes. The different measures that together make up a holistic approach to transitional justice seek to provide recognition for victims, foster civic trust, and promote possibilities for peace, reconciliation, and democracy. From there, reparations programs that distribute a mix of material and symbolic benefits to victims (including compensation and apologies); institutional programs that seek to return dispossessed housing, land, and property; truth initiatives that investigate and report on periods of past abuse; and justice sector reform that seeks to transform the military, police, and judiciary responsible for past violations are dominant (Bradley, 2012).

Transitional justice has been a key strategy in coming to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses in international peacebuilding and ensuring accountability and stability. The main argument of this paradigm is that the violent past has to be settled before a real transition to

sustainable peace can be made. For this purpose, the mechanisms of truth and justice are seen as pivotal and have been implemented in a wide range of post-conflict societies. In this case, criminal tribunals are set up to punish those responsible for gross human rights violations and to establish a factual record. The main proponents of transitional justice claim that the prosecution of perpetrators in court contributes to an end to the conflict and sustains peace (Eastmond & Stefansson, 2010).

In the case for Ethiopia, when we talk about national dialogue, we are talking about TRC and the process must include truth, justice, reparations, and reconciliation. The TRC Ethiopia cannot easily achieve by telling only the truth rather it first and foremost, the whole truth must be told. But the truth itself will not and cannot be the only tool for reconciliation. Ethiopian society can begin to live together with tolerance and peace only after the whole truth about our history is told and publicly discussed and the crimes committed during the period are acknowledged or a consensus is reached and justice has been served, and those responsible for igniting and fanning the fire are identified and brought to justice. The future of Ethiopia depends upon truth, justice, reparations, and reconciliation in this order (Dawit, 2020).

The transitional justice system in Ethiopia must include the following elements. The first one is truth-seeking or fact-finding by Non-judicial bodies would initiate investigations into human rights violations. These would often look not only at events, but their causes and impacts including inventions and distortions of history that have been claimed by all parties to be the source of conflict and grievances. Justice is also important through criminal prosecutions for those who were responsible for the most serious crimes. Traditional tribal court systems would handle minor crimes. Reparations for human rights violations taking a variety of forms: individual, collective, material, and symbolic is another issue that should address. And finally, reconciliation must be the main concern of the national dialogue which may include forgiveness and commitment to live in peace to diversity including a federal arrangement to ensure decentralization of power (Dawit, 2021).

> Transitional justice in Ethiopia should not only be retributive but also address the injuries sustained by the victims and the community as a whole so that people can begin to get back some of what they have lost. Certainly, no kind of justice system can bring people back to where they were before these very bad crimes were committed. Victims

> and the community will live the rest of their lives with the pain of losing their loved ones and the trauma of witnessing atrocities, but restorative justice might at least bring them part of the way back from the brink of despair. This approach certainly would go a long way towards repairing the psychological injuries of the victims and the societal trauma as well (*KILE, 2, 2022*).

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms provide a great opportunity for sustainable conflict resolution, peacemaking and the delivery of responsive justice. Since indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are more reachable, inexpensive and transparent, they help for the maintenance of law and order in the local communities. In addition, since traditional elders are living and working in the community, they are close enough to feel the heat of the conflict. This makes elders to be accessible to the people and understand the conflict dynamics in a better way which helps them to provide resolutions that best suits local circumstances than the court system. Hence, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms provide an alternative forum to access justice for those members of the community who are not well served by courts (Alemie & Mandefro, 2018)

> To address the root cause of conflict and overcoming sustainable peace traditional conflict resolution mechanism plays irreplaceable roles. Ethiopia is a country rich by different traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in different levels, and the plays irreplaceable role to address conflict and build sustainable peace because, indigenous conflict resolution are developed based on the cultural concepts, values, and procedures that are easily understood and accepted by the community. As a result, local people feel sense of control and ownership over the processes involved in indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. National dialogue commission in Ethiopia must work to include traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to enhance the since of ownership of the entire process of reconciliation (*KILE, 3, 2022*).

The national dialogue commission should take some lessons from Rwanda's national reconciliation process to address the issue of justice. To Rwandans, this was a success story and to the rest of Africa, it was a model that could be adopted for their own judicial needs. The Rwandan government embarked on an ambitious and unprecedented approach to delivering justice, using both conventional domestic courts and community-based

Gacaca courts. Rwandan element of humanity, peace-existence, unity, and reconciliation of Rwandans address the establishment of *Gacaca* traditional community court system that tried nearly two million suspects within ten years was not only impeccable but also a strong signal to Rwandans that solutions to their problems are within their means (Dawit,2022).

Therefore according to the collected data "s t
Unless people are made accountable for their crimes and are punished in some way society will not be healed from this war that showed just how debased humans can become. Justice is the foundation for peace, harmony, and development. Justice means prosecution and trials. In this regard, the implementation of transitional and restorative justice systems to heal, restore and move forward. The commission with the mandate to main actors must work to initiate the reconciliation and restorative process at multiple levels. To heal, there must be multidimensional reconciliation i.e., historical, political, military, economic, and others

Chapter Four

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

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

The initial phase of the 2018 political transition in Ethiopia was hopeful by taking dramatic democratic measures ensuring democratic political transition through the release of political prisoners, the return of exiled opposite political parties, economic reforms to wide political spaces, restructures of ministries and women's empowerment, and the rapprochement of Ethno-Eritrea. Gradually, the reform could not realize the intended goals and faced various challenges arising from the multidimensional problem. These are constitutional crises due to the postponement of the election; arrest of the mass of people and members and leaders of opposition political parties; violation of fundamental rights; assassination of many people; displacement of many people; and massive civil war between the Tigray region and the central government. To address multidimensional problems and ensure a democratic political transition, building national dialogue in Ethiopia will play an irreplaceable role in addressing multidimensional problems and ensuring a democratic political transition.

- Traditional elders and religious leaders, as well as traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, will play an irreplaceable role in addressing the root cause of conflict, promoting peace and reconciliation, and increasing the sense of ownership and credibility of the ND process. The NDC in Ethiopia must set a platform to include them in different levels of the national dialogue process.

- The national dialogue commission should be very critical about including external actors in the dialogue process and must work on balancing internal ownership and the involvement of external actors by prioritizing the interests of the public over the strategic and political interests of external actors.

- The planned national dialogue should include key principles of effective national dialogue: inclusivity, transparency, credibility, and neutrality of the conveners; popular public support; and democratic participants who prioritize public interest over political interest.

- The objectives of the NDC in Ethiopia must be classified as short-term and long-term objectives based on the sensitivity of issues. Ending conflict and addressing security issues should be addressed in short-term discussion. Developing democratic cultures will be classified as long-term objectives and goals.

- It is essential to plan for the effective implementation of recommendations for national dialogue outcomes. Key decisions should be translated into legislation, policies, and strategies. It is crucial to establish specialized independent institutions tasked specifically with doing this. Furthermore, the implementation must be supported by a proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism that assesses progress and takes corrective action where there are challenges.

- The planned national dialogue must work for reconciliation and national consensus to build sustainable peace building. Incorporating transitional justice and restorative justice processes like Rwanda's and South Africa's national dialogue process

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview and FGD Guide Questions

The purpose of this in-depth interview and FGD guides is to collect data from key informantsand FGD participants in order to identify the role of national dialogue towards democratic political tarnation in Ethiopia since 2018. Specifically to identify major national dialogue agendas should include on te planned national dialogue in Ethiopia.

Note: This research used is a semi-structured interview that other probing questions were raised throughout the interview session though not mentioned here.

A. Interview Question for Key Informants

I. For Government institutions and Ministry officials

1. What is the role of national dialogue towards democratic political transition in Ethiopia since 2018?
2. Is national dialogue is genuine solution for Ethiopian existing multidimensional problems?
3. What are major national issues that the planned national dialogue commission in Ethiopia should adders?
4. What is the role of different government ministries for successful national dialogue process in Ethiopia after 2018 political reform in Ethiopia?
5. How does the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia's try to contain the principle of inclusiveness?
6. How will the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia try to contain the principle of adequate representation of important actors?
7. How will the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia try to contain the principle of public ownership and participation?
8. What are the main roles of different stakeholders towards successful national dialogue process in Ethiopia?
9. What are the expected challenges the intended the national dialogue process in Ethiopia since?
10. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both successful and failed national dialogues?

II. For opposite political parties leaders?

1. What is the role of national dialogue to bring democratic political transition, sustainable peace building in Ethiopian since 2018?
2. Is national dialogue is genuine solution for Ethiopian existing multidimensional problems in Ethiopia?
3. What are the main roles of opposition political parties for fruitful national dialogue in Ethiopia?
4. What are the major national, political, economic, and social issues that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should address?
5. What are the main expecting roles of national dialogue commission for successful outcome?
6. What are the main roles of different stakeholders, for the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia?
7. How does the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia's try to contain the principle of inclusiveness?
8. How will the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia try to contain the principle of adequate representation of important actors?
9. How will the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia try to contain the principle of public ownership and participation?
10. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both successful and failed national dialogue?
11. What are the expected factors that will affect the planned national dialogue process in Ethiopia?

III. For regional and international organizations

1. What is the role of national dialogue to bring democratic Ethiopian political transitions, since 2018?
2. Is national dialogue is genuine solution for Ethiopian multidimensional problems, is it appropriate time?
3. What is therole of External actors towards effective national dialogue process in Ethiopia?

4. What are the factors influence effective national dialog process in Ethiopia political transition after 2018 political transition?
5. What are the main roles of different stakeholders towards successful dialogue in Ethiopia?
6. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both successful and failed national dialogue?

IV. For Academicians, Researcher and Research Institutes.

1. What is the role of national dialogue to bring democratic political transition in Ethiopia?
2. Is national dialog is the genuine solution for Ethiopian existing multidimensional problems?
3. What are the main national, political, economic, social issues that the planned national dialogue process should address?
4. What are the main roles of different stakeholders both government, and non governmental organization for successful national dialogue in Ethiopia?
5. What are the key principles that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should contain?
6. What is the role of academicians, researcher institutions to pointing constrictive ideas in dialogue process?
7. What are the main challenges that will affect successful national dialogue process to overcome democratic, and peaceful political transition in Ethiopia?
8. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both successful and failed national dialogue?

V. For Journalist, humanitarians, religious and traditional fathers respectively?

1. What is the role of national dialogue to bring democratic political transition in Ethiopia?
2. Is national dialogue is genuine solution for Ethiopian multidimensional problems, and is it appropriate time?
3. What are the main national, political, economic and social issues that the planned dialogue process should address?
4. What are the main roles of different stakeholders both governmental, and non governmental organization for successful national dialogue?

5. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both fruitful and failed national dialogues?
6. What is the role of civil society in successful national dialogue in Ethiopia?
7. What is the role of academicians, and researchers towards effective national dialogue process?
8. What isthe role of Medias for intended national dialogue process in Ethiopia?

B. Guideline Questions for focus group discussions.

1. What is the role of national dialogue to bring democratic political transition in Ethiopia?
2. Is national dialog is the genuine solution for Ethiopian existing multidimensional problems?
3. What are the main national, political, economic, social issues that the planned national dialogue process should address?

What are the main roles of different stakeholders both government, and non governmental organization for successful national dialogue in Ethiopia?

4. What are the key principles that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should contain?
5. What are the main challenges that will affect successful national dialogue process to overcome democratic, and peaceful political transition in Ethiopia?
6. What are the major lessons that the planned national dialogue in Ethiopia should take from both successful and failed national dialogue?

Appendix 1: List of Key Informants, Political party &Government Officials, Academicians, Civil society.

I. Interviewees with Key informants with political parties

No	Code of the Interviewee	Place of Resident	Rank
1			